

*Our mission statement:  
Celebrating God's love  
by worshipping God,  
caring for each other,  
and serving in community.*

# Crossties

*"Sharing the  
Ointment for Jesus'  
Feet, Giving God  
our Very Best"  
Cf. John 12:3*

<p>January 2026</p>	<p><i>Holy Cross Lutheran Church</i></p>	<p>Vol. 32 No. 1</p>
-------------------------	--	--------------------------

## BERGY'S BABBLE: "A NEW NORMAL"

After the celebration of Jesus' birth, there comes a real jolt: Matthew's brutally honest report of the Slaughter of the Innocents in Bethlehem and surrounding area. Make no mistake. Herod is evil, brutal, and heartless. He kills imagined opposition with obscene and enthusiastic ruthlessness. He is beyond enraged, after the Wise Men show up with no gifts for him, and interrogate him like he is a peasant on the street.

Some people like to promote the term "new normal," as they begin to witness life-changing events. In comparison to the normal death and destruction of Herod's heavy-handed rule, an estimated guess of 20 infants dead in Bethlehem by Herod's sociopathic order, is not remarkable. It's a statistic. Of course, saying "Only one dead child," is deeply and heartlessly cruel, beyond insensitive.

"New Normal" is defined as the state to which things settle after a crisis and how life becomes different thereafter. Most applications of the term are expressions first of deep grief and then poignant longing for the previous time of "normalcy".

In 1918, Henry A. Wise Wood, American inventor, worried about how we would move from War to Peace in the 'new normal.' It is no wonder. The dark cloud of World War I was unbelievably overshadowed by the darker cloud of the Spanish Flu. The flu killed 50,000,000 people. WWI killed only a third of that number, 17,000,000 people. It was new and there was nothing normal about it. Everything changed.

... /// ...

... /// ... Bergy's Babble

The contemporary death tolls of around 20 children have been invoked as occasions for the institution of "new normal." This is sadly shocking:

Near Easter, 1993, 28 children plus two pregnant moms, died in the flames of the Branch Davidian compound near Waco. A leading justice department official commented, that the 54-ton tanks used in the assault, "were not military, but were more like rent-a-cars."

The alleged motive for the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City near Easter of 1995 was revenge for Waco. But still 19 more children died. This horrible event, simply killed more children. A new normal of vigilance against domestic terrorism was invoked.

One would think that heightened awareness of this "new normal," might prevent something like the deaths of twenty, 6 and 7-year-olds at Sandy Hook Elementary school in 2012, or 19 children at Robb Elementary in Uvalde in May of 2022. It hauntingly looks like the same old normal.

New normal isn't at play here. It is sadly the same old, plain old, deadly normal.

Because Jesus is Immanuel, *God is With Us*, the REAL "New Normal," is in effect! But because he is all the way with us, he shares with us all of the aches, pains, deaths and sorrows of the old normal. The shepherds in all humility, the pregnancy and the birth in a lowly stable, the poverty of the Holy Family in their offerings at Jesus' dedication in the Temple, the old normal disguises the fact of the new dimension brought into human life by the Christchild, the Lord of all Creation!

It is the Wise Men, The Magi, who blow his cover. They are alert for a future radical ruler that will save the earth and birth a reign of peace for the planet.

The Magi were trans-national king-makers. High-level ambassadors and political strategists on a global scale. Their allegiance was to humanity. The 'normal' world was brutal. It was feared even then, that warfare would destroy humanity.

... /// ...

... /// ... Bergy's Babble

World domination was sought by the Persians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Mongols, the Chinese, the Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, and strategically, in the middle of all of that deadly conflict, was the Holy Land.

Magi knew that God's people of Israel, and their renowned rule of law and covenant could be the only rational base for a wonderful movement hopefully uniting both Rome and Persia, the Mongols and the Egyptians. The Magi were civilized. They assumed that this could be accomplished with a joyful and peaceful transition of power. A Star, a Constellation, led them to Tetrarch Herod's territory. He thought he was a king but he wasn't. He was Rome's errand boy.

As a professional courtesy, the Magi notified him of their presence in his small region of limited power. To them, he was a small fry. They arrived in caravan, surrounded by elite body guards, camels loaded down, rich with spices exotic fragrances, gold and the most perfect textiles to give to King Jesus. Herod is offended! He considers The Magi, inferior Gentiles, pagans. The inferior person is supposed to approach the superior with gifts. Herod gets nothing but questions asking for directions. He's just Google Herod; a tool. He is being used, not out of malice, but simply because he is seen as irrelevant.

Across the social continuum, faithful Jewish shepherds all the way to Gentile Wisemen of great means, intelligence and influence, totally understand who this baby Jesus is. He is the true New Normal, who, in his incarnational immersion in the brutal "old normal," will somehow restore and redeem the Universe to God Almighty.

Jesus' birth upsets the old normal, which is pronounced inadequate by every human aspiration, We cannot make anything newer or different without the power of Christ in our lives and in the world.

The news that Matthew brings to us is dark and difficult in a time of holy days, and mid-winter celebrations of all cultures. He lets us know that in Jesus, Immanuel, *God Is With Us*, has taken on our lot and our life in the old normal, and experienced and endured all that we have or will experience: The New Normal is: We are not alone. We are at one.  
... /// ...

... /// ... Bergy's Babble

God entering our reality is not good news for Herod and his shaky seat of power. Not all of the world welcomes God's presence in human affairs. That might be just too new a normal. Herod and Christ are in conflict both in the world and in the heart of every person. Who shall rule?"

See you in Worship! BERGY



Pastor Jim & Candy, Sussy & Vern, extend to all our members and visitors our best wishes for a truly happy New Year.

May the New Year bring you an abundance of blessings and joy.

## FELLOWSHIP CLUB

The Fellowship Club will be meeting **January 17, 2026**, at Katz, located at 10321 Katy Freeway (713-510-5001).

Please let Nancy know by text, email or phone call **(281-814-4153)** by Wednesday, January 14, if you plan to attend.

We will begin to gather at 3:00 pm.

Hope to see y'all there!

Nancy Beamesderfer

## COUNCIL MEETING

Council Meeting will be Sunday, **January 18<sup>th</sup>**, 2026,  
at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.



---

Holy Cross members celebrating  
Birthdays in the month of January:

---

03 Natieli Pazdra	18 Ellen Carter
05 Rose Mary Schwalm	20 Shawn Walton
06 George Schwalm	22 Laura Neilsen
08 Maureen Fredrickson	23 Kris Drosche
Chris Abrego	William Allcorn
09 Alexander Young	Fred Gardner III
14 Jan Walker	24 Megan Schomburg
15 Bruce Elijah	26 Cathy Elijah
16 Susan Clark	30 Wayne Schaper, Sr.
Nell Spates	

*If your name is not listed or if this is incorrect information  
please contact the Church Office so that the list can be corrected.*



**THANK YOU!!!!**

Thank you to all who purchased Poinsettias for our Christmas Celebration.  
 A beautiful way to celebrate our Savior's birth.  
 You may pick up your plant after the Christmas Eve Service.  
 Christmas Blessings to All!

Sharon Wagner



**READINGS and PSALMS**



**JANUARY 2026**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> READING</b>	<b>PSALM</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> READING</b>	<b>GOSPEL</b>
1/04/2026	Jeremiah 31:7-14	147:12-20	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1:1-9
1/11/2026	Isaiah 42:1-9	29	Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 3:13-17
1/18/2026	Isaiah 49:1-7	40:1-11	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	John 1:29-42
1/25/2026	Isaiah 9:1-4	27:1, 4-9	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Matthew 4:12-23

**USHERS**

**Month:** January **Team #** 03 **Leader:** Linda Cuzzort

**LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS**

1/04	R	Jay Fort
	P/E	Wendy Lambeth
1/11	R	Ike Thompson
	P/E	Penny Schick
1/18	R	Alice Braun
	P/E	John Stokes
1/25	R	Mallory Hileman
	P/E	Russel Richter

**R = Reader P/E = Prayer and Eucharist**

Nancy Beamesderfer

**CHURCH OFFICE  
HOURS**

Monday—Thursday: 9— 4 p.m.  
Friday: 8:30 a.m. — 2:30 p.m.

**ALTAR FLOWERS**

You may sign up for flower  
arrangements in the Narthex.  
Suggested donation is \$70.<sup>00</sup>



## **TO ALL GROUP LEADERS**

Choir Rehearsal, Crafty Ladies, Early Learning Center (ELC), Fellowship Club, Food Pantry, Hymn Selection, Lutheran World Relief (LWR), Men's Breakfast, Roundtable Group, Ruth Circle, WELCA, etc.

### **2026 CALENDAR REQUEST FORMS**

Once again, you are kindly reminded that you must fill out a Calendar Request Form to schedule your meetings/events in 2026, on the pink forms located on the table in the Narthex and in the Atrium.

**Anything not written on the calendar may lead to a conflict in scheduling.**

This applies to anyone and/or any group that meets and uses the church facilities, and if any church related group or circle meets somewhere else and would like to be scheduled on the church calendar as well.

Your meetings/events will be announced in the weekly Sunday News, Crossties Newsletter and Crossties Calendar and on the Church website.

Thank you and Happy New Year!

Sussy Terry  
Office Manager & Events Coordinator



The homebound, disabled,  
long-term ill and  
prolonged recovering.

- † Dolores Abrego
- † Alberto Basurto
- † Candy Berggren
- † Elvin Bethea
- † Pat Bethea
- † Barney Boeker
- † David Dukleth
- † Gloria McGarvey
- † Todd Miskel
- † Larry Polzin
- † Rosie Stork
- † Bennie Valites



*Prayer Request emails are  
sent out often.  
If you would like to receive  
them please contact:*

***Renee Allcorn***  
***[allcornr@gmail.com](mailto:allcornr@gmail.com)***  
*or call at (713) 254-8638*

## PRAYER list

Ken Beamesderfer	Ed Peterman
Jim Fritze	Dorothy Preuss
Eliseo Gonzales	Lupe Romero
Joyce Huey	Wayne Schaper
Nancy Lancaster	Scott Spates
Kelly Langridge	Jaime Urbanski
David Magrill	Bennie Valites
Jeremy Mitchell	Michael Williams
Geraine Moore	

### TREASURER'S REPORT

If you have any questions call  
Ricki Finstad at 713-465-5968

#### NOVEMBER 2025

Receipts	\$ 15,228. <sup>00</sup>
Expenses	<u>27,038.<sup>60</sup></u>
Balance	(\$ 11,810. <sup>60</sup> )

#### Operational receipts

Year-to-date received ....	\$ 244,494. <sup>98</sup>
Expenditures year to date ..	<u>361,966.<sup>24</sup></u>
Balance	(\$117,471. <sup>26</sup> )

### AVERAGE ATTENDANCE

#### NOVEMBER SERVICES

Saturday Informal service	: 17
Sunday Traditional service	: 56

**Holy Cross Lutheran Church**  
in Spring Branch

*A Congregation of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)*

7901 Westview Dr.  
Houston, Texas 77055  
Tel. (713) 686-8253  
E-mail: [hclc@holycross.us](mailto:hclc@holycross.us)

*“Holy Cross Lutheran Church is a community of Christians  
gathered by God’s grace and reaching out through God’s love.”*

<b>TELEPHONE EXTENSIONS</b>		
<b>100</b>	Church Office	
<b>101</b>	Sussy Terry	Office Manager & Events Coordinator
<b>103</b>	Rev. Jim Berggren	Senior Pastor
<b>104</b>	John Lambeth	Bookkeeper
<p><b>SATURDAY WORSHIP SERVICE</b> Informal Service 6:00 p. m. —AT</p> <p><b>SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE</b> Traditional Service 9:30 a.m. —WC</p>		
<p><b><u>EARLY LEARNING CENTER</u></b> ELC (713) 461-5535 email: <a href="mailto:holycrosselc4@gmail.com">holycrosselc4@gmail.com</a></p>		

  

<b><u>CHURCH STAFF</u></b>								
<p>Rev. Jim Berggren — Senior Pastor email: <a href="mailto:jlberggren@holycross.us">jlberggren@holycross.us</a></p> <p>Sussy Terry — Office Manager &amp; Events Coord. email: <a href="mailto:hclc@holycross.us">hclc@holycross.us</a></p> <p>John Lambeth — Bookkeeper email: <a href="mailto:finance@holycross.us">finance@holycross.us</a></p> <p>Robert Carty — Musical Director / Organist email: <a href="mailto:robcarty1@outlook.com">robcarty1@outlook.com</a></p>								
<b><u>OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION</u></b>								
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Steve Schulze</td> <td style="width: 50%;">President</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jay Byerly</td> <td>Vice-President</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Julie Kilkenny</td> <td>Secretary</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ricki Finstad</td> <td>Treasurer</td> </tr> </table>	Steve Schulze	President	Jay Byerly	Vice-President	Julie Kilkenny	Secretary	Ricki Finstad	Treasurer
Steve Schulze	President							
Jay Byerly	Vice-President							
Julie Kilkenny	Secretary							
Ricki Finstad	Treasurer							
								