

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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713-686-8254

Rev. Jim Berggren

February 8, 2026

5th Sunday after Epiphany

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

GATHERING SONG

Shine, Jesus, Shine

ELW 671

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen.*

P: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: *Amen.*

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

C: *We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.*

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of V Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

C: *Amen.*

PASTORAL GREETING

THE KYRIE

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

This is the Feast

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also, with you.**

P: Let us pray, together.

C: **Lord God, with endless mercy you receive the prayers of all who call upon you. By your Spirit show us the things we ought to do, and give us the grace and power to do them, though your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

February 8, 2026 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

FIRST READING: Isaiah 58:1-9a

“Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the descendants of Jacob their sins. ² For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them. ³ ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’

“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. ⁴ Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. ⁵ Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶ “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to lose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? ⁷ Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? ⁸ Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. ⁹ Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

The word of the Lord.

*Congregation response following the reading is: **Thanks be to God!***

THE PSALM

Psalm 112:1-9

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12

And so, it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. ² For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. ⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

⁶ We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ However, as it is written:

“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”—the things God has prepared for those who love him—¹⁰ these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

The word of the Lord.

*Congregation response following the reading is: **Thanks be to God!***

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

ELW Pg. 151

*Alleluia.
Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia.*

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 5:13-20

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches

these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.

R. JIM'S SERMON: <https://youtu.be/ITBArkbgxMg>

EPIPHANY 5A 2-8-26 MT 5.13-16

SALT & LIGHT

Nasty, Brutish, and Short.....is not the name of a legal firm led by unpleasant lawyers. It is part of a quote from Thomas Hobbes book, *Leviathan*, written in 1651, 375 years ago. He uses the phrase to describe the life of humankind, with no principles, in a state of war. To paraphrase a fairly lengthy quote: "Anarchy is a time when every man is enemy to every other man. Each has only their own strength and cunning. There is no reason to work, because its fruits are uncertain. So, there is no Culture. No Navigation, and so no Trade. No big buildings. Or large machines to help move heavy things. No Maps. No History. No Arts or Letters. No civilized society and continual fear and the danger of violent death. And the life of man? Solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

These are realities that are ancient, and contemporary, and future realities, depending upon where one lives and how one's life is used and governed. Jesus addresses this sad state of affairs with solutions and motivations in today's Gospel.

"You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. I have not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. Fulfilling the law is important. Ignoring the law is anarchy. Nothing is fair in anarchy!

Jesus is saying that we are valuable and we are born to be useful in the salvation of the world. The root word for salvation is sal. S, A, L, the first three letters of salt. Salt heals wounds, but stings. Dig into that bag of salty popcorn and you will discover where the paper cuts are on your hands.

Roman soldiers were paid with salt. If they didn't work, they weren't worth their salt, their salary. Salt was connected with purity. Because it came from pure things, the sun and the sea. Salt is the tasty ingredient and necessary nutrient for the good life. As salt we can become nurturing agents to those around us, caring and helping. Enriching and teaching.

Salt prevents food from spoiling and preserves its goodness. Jesus doesn't tell us to be agents of preservation. He proclaims that we are agents of preservation. We will prevent spoiling and corruption when it threatens the goodness of life and health.

Salt is flexible. It can make ice cream colder or melt ice. On the farm we had a tractor-

pulled grader, and Dad and I graded the township roads when conditions were bad. Dad drove the tractor, and I stood on the grader platform to adjust the height and angle of the blade with two large wheels. One year the county engineers added salt into some sections of blacktop while repaving the roads, to see if it would prevent ice in the winter. Those sections froze over first. It was the ice cream effect. Salt lowers the freezing/ melting point of water making the mixture cool and harden faster. The county dump trucks had to spread salt on top to counteract the freezing effect of the salt underneath.

To keep life fair and to keep it from being bland and unrewarding, we season it with Christian commitment and the taste of Love for all of God's children.

Jesus doesn't say we are pepper. Pepper tends to call attention to itself, sometimes in unforeseen ways. Pepper dominates flavor. I brought a spicy jalapeno to the Men's Breakfast, for my omelet. I diced it. It was great. Then I forgot all about it, until I rubbed my eye.

Salt simply highlights and enhances the world it flavors. It allows civilization and creation to become more meaningful. It is in itself, unprepossessing.

“Say a prayer for the common foot soldier.
Spare a thought for his back-breaking work.
Say a prayer for his wife and his children.
Who burn the fires and still till the earth.

Raise your glass to the hard-workin' people.
Let's drink to the uncounted heads.
Let's think of the wavering millions
Who need leading, but get gamblers instead.

Let's drink to the hard-workin' people.
Let's drink to the salt of the earth.
Let's drink to the two thousand million.
Let's think of the humble of birth.”

Jagger and Richards, inadvertent theologians, call us also to the same salty mission that Jesus releases us to engage. Salt isn't fancy. It is just wonderful, that's all. Salt doesn't work unless it is freed from its container, whether it is a salt dome, like Avery Island in the Gulf, south of New Orleans, where McIlhenny's hot sauce comes from, or a deep mine, in Hutchinson, Kansas, where Carey Salt comes from to be put in a shaker on the table. Jesus empowers us to purify, heal, nurture, thaw the frozen, preserve and season the world around us. As salt we are essential agents of fairness.

Salt is wonderful, but Jesus says we are light also.

Edwin Markham, American Poet and renowned Teacher of the 19th and 20th century, once

asked, “Did it ever occur to you that no human being can come into this world, without increasing the sum total of this world’s happiness, or decreasing it?” I want to be on the right team.

Jesus says, we can be on the Light Team with him. In religious circles, light is very much a universal symbol for divinity, spirituality, knowledge and wisdom. John 8:12 reports that Jesus calls himself the ‘Light of the World.’ What an honor and a responsibility that Jesus would share this title with us. “You are the light of the world” he says. We are a light that can be useful always, because it never is extinguished. The world will be visible and fair, because of you!

Many sermons say funny things about Jesus mentioning lighting a lamp and then putting it under a bushel basket. It is very simple. When it gets dark, you light your oil lamp. When it is time to retire, you put it out and place a bushel over it to contain the smoke and the fumes. No one lights a lamp and then puts a bushel over it. What’s the point?” There would be only enough light to snuff the light out. That would be self-defeating.

We are light. Light has a job. A light house tells ships where the rocks are. A light bulb saves you from stepping on a toy, stubbing your toe, or falling over a sleeping dog.

We never say, “Wow, that’s a beautiful light bulb!” or, “The flame on that candle is exquisite.” We just like the light. It makes life better. It increases the world’s happiness.

Jesus is saying that we are a valuable resource to be poured out and never be hidden. As followers of Jesus, it is not enough to know about God. We are the activity of God to redeem a world that is not always friendly. We are here to expend ourselves to increase the fairness level of the world.

Yes, in some places, life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. The material world, the ‘fallen’ creation does not promise fairness or salvation. It only offers constant change and a dispassionate tendency to balance matter and energy.... stuff. The Universe is not in the business to care. It is in the business to balance. The Universe doesn’t understand fair. But we are not victims.

Never.... ever.... mistake the Universe for God. God is the Creator. The universe is the creation. They are not the same. God unconditionally loves and cares about you. The universe is unconditionally indifferent. The brick that you drop on your toe is not mad at you. That is just what bricks do when you are interacting with them and you are maybe tired or distracted or careless.

On the whole, bricks are really neutral. If you want to have a fair relationship with a brick, you must release your best conditions for fairness. Here’s how. Knowing a bit about the nature of bricks, we can interact with them and they will appear fair, when we are rested and strong. We can handle them with respect, knowing their implacable nature. And we can wear steel-toed shoes. We understand fairness, and in our heart of hearts, we know the merciful nature of God that arcs toward justice. It is up to us to create conditions of fairness in a chaotic world. You can do that with everything you encounter in the world. It works with everything. You are the salt that can do that! You are the light.

Jesus isn’t telling us what we should be doing. He is telling us what we are. We are the Salt that tantalizingly pervades the whole meal of life and heightens its flavor and fairness. We are the light that shows the way to the God who loves us all. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Master, Let Me Walk with You

ELW 818

APOSTLES' CREED

P: God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith:

**C: I believe in God the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**



**On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

THE LORD'S PEACE (Please share the Peace with a neighbor)

THE OFFERING

“Sing Praise to God”

arr. C. McClure

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

ELW Hymn 142

THE OFFERING PRAYER

All pray together:

God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. Amen.

AGNUS DEI

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have, mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, Our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it for all to drink saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

The Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and preserve you in Eternal Life.

POST COMMUNION SONG *Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Presider:

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

Congregation: Amen.

THE BLESSING

SENDING SONG

You Servants of God

ELW 825

GO IN PEACE, IN SERVICE

C: *Thanks be to God!*

PSALM 19:14

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.*



- ♣ **Ken Beamesderfer**
- ♣ **Jim Berggren**
- ♣ **Jim Fritze**
- ♣ **Eliseo Gonzales**
- ♣ **Paul Houghton**
- ♣ **Joyce Huey**
- ♣ **Lane Kelly**
- ♣ **Nancy Lancaster**
- ♣ **David Magrill**
- ♣ **Jeremy Mitchell**
- ♣ **Geraine Moore**
- ♣ **Ed Peterman**
- ♣ **Dorothy Preuss**
- ♣ **Lupe Romero**
- ♣ **Wayne Schaper**
- ♣ **Steve Schulze**
- ♣ **Scott Spates**
- ♣ **Marilyn Thigpen**
- ♣ **Jaime Urbanski**
- ♣ **Bennie Valites**
- ♣ **Michael Williams**
- ♣ **Lin Worsham**

**The Congregation of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church
and Family & Friends of Pastor James Giannantonio
upon completion of his life's mission.**

COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday, **February 22, 2026**,
at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

USHERS

Month: February

Team # 04

Leader: Julie Kilkenny

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

FEBRUARY

1 Reader — Charlotte Jaster
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

8 Reader — Ruby Schaper
P/E — Alma Byerly

15 Reader — Scott Wegner
P/E — Sharon Wagner

22 Reader — Nancy Beamesderfer
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

P/E stands for Prayers and Eucharist

Nancy Beamesderfer

ATTENTION HOLY CROSS MEMBERS

Following the Church Safety Protocol, if you would like to make a reservation to use the church facilities for private events, please contact Sussy.

You must to fill out a Calendar Request Form as well.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING PART II

Holy Cross Congregational meeting will be Sunday, **March 22, 2026.**

Please send your 2025 Reports to Sussy by Sunday, March 8.

Church Council

FELLOWSHIP CLUB

The Fellowship Club will be meeting at Don Jose Mexican Restaurant, located at 5305 Antoine, at 3:00 pm Saturday, **February 21.**

Please mark your calendars and make plans to join us for some good fellowship and good food!

Nancy Beamesderfer

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

We are looking for volunteers to support our Sunday School and Nursery!

To give our weekly teachers the opportunity to attend services,
we are building a rotation.

Whether you can help **once a month or even once a quarter**, we need you.

The role is simple: supervise 2–4 children, bring them in for Bible Time, and lead a small activity. It's a low-pressure way to serve our church family.

Please reach out to Wendy Lambeth or Julie Richter if you can help!

Julie Richter

LENTEN SCHEDULE - 2026

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

FEBRUARY 18th

12:00 noon and 7:00 p.m.

LENTEN SERVICES will be held on Wednesdays

at 12:00 noon in the Atrium the following dates:

FEBRUARY 25, MARCH 4, 11, 18 & 25,

followed by a light meal after the services.

LENTEN MEALS

This is the schedule for the Lenten Meals:

- 2/25 Council
- 3/04 Choir
- 3/11 Ruth Circle
- 3/18 Fellowship Club
- 3/25 Men's Breakfast Group

LENTEN STUDY

for Wednesday Noon Services

This year we will explore the Lenten study “**Killing Jesus**”

by Bill O’Reilly and Martin Dugard.

Pastor Jim Berggren

SAFEGUARDS SAFETY TRAINING
HOLYCROSS COUPON CODE FOR 15% DISCOUNT: HCLC2026

CLASS	DAY	DATE	TIME
Adult CPR *CPR only (\$79) *CPR + First Aid (\$92)	Friday	1/23/2026	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Sunday	2/8/2026	1 pm — 4:30 pm
Adult & Pediatric CPR *CPR only (\$98) *CPR + First Aid (\$108)	Saturday	1/31/2026	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	2/14/2026	1 pm — 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers and Professional Rescuers (\$89)	TEMPORARILY DISCONTINUED WILL RETURN IN LATE FEBRUARY / EARLY MARCH		
CPR Instructor Course (\$299)	Friday	2/20/2026	9 am — 5:30 pm

Classes are in the Youth Room, Media Room and in the Annex.

You can sign up online for classes by going to

www.safeguards-safety.com and choosing “Register for Classes.”

Or call 713-854-8085 for more information

Congregation members and their families will receive a discount of 15% for any class by using the above-mentioned coupon code when signing up.

John Lambeth

