

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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Rev. Jim Berggren

April 12, 2026

2nd Sunday of Easter

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG

With High Delight Let Us Unite

ELW 368

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 Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthens 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: **Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

April 12, 2026 – Second Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Peter Addresses the Crowd

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

²² “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵ David said about him: “I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, ²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.

²⁹“Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 16

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Praise to God for a Living Hope

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

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: John 20:19-31

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with

you!”²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Purpose of John’s Gospel

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response:

Praise to you, O Christ.



PR. JIM’S SERMON: EASTER 2A, 4-12-26, John 20.29-31

FAITHFUL THOMAS, DOUBTING DISCIPLES

The young man was enlisting. He wanted to be part of the 82nd Airborne Division. They jump out of perfectly good airplanes. He was nervous and a little afraid. He asked the recruiter,

“What’s a HALO jump? High Altitude, Low Opening, what does that mean?”

“Well, son, you exit the plane about five miles up, around 27,000 feet so the enemy won’t hear the plane. That’s still not as high as Mt. Everest. The air’s thin and you might need oxygen but mostly it’s painfully cold up there. But that’s ok. You are falling at 120 mph, for 26,000 feet. That’s only going to take about 30-35 seconds, for you to enjoy the view. Then you pop your chute at 1,000 feet, so you won’t be a hanging target for the enemy, for very long.”

The recruit asks, “How do you train for that?”

“Well, the first week they separate the men from the boys with extreme physical training, and the second week they separate the men from the fools with rigorous study concerning windage, drop rate, terminal velocity, altitude, and aerial orientation.”

“Then what?”, asks the eager recruit.

“The third week, the fools jump.”

The disciples are afraid; not sure what to think or how to react to the new development of a missing Jesus. Mary Magdalene, Peter and probably John the unnamed disciple, saw the empty tomb with the graveclothes neatly folded, left behind. Peter and John ran back to tell the others about this new development. Mary stayed and encountered someone in that garden. Eyes clouded with tears, she thought he was the gardener. He says her name and then she knows that voice. It is Jesus. He is wearing the gardener’s clothes or apron, since he left the graveclothes behind. They talk.

Here’s the score so far. Two disciples saw the empty tomb and reported on it. Mary saw two angels AND Jesus and interacted with all of them.

She goes back to the disciples with the news, “I saw the Lord!” Even in your wildest imagination that is not likely. You can explain empty tombs. Grave robbing vandalism; Exhumation and then reburial. But interactions with divine beings, and your friend and Lord, who you just saw brutally taken apart piece by piece and murdered? Humor the lady.

Everybody’s totally stressed and afraid. You can’t blame the disciples for saying things like, “Poor Mary, bless her heart, she loved him so, and she is hysterical, delirious!” “Meanwhile, we are cautiously afraid of making any waves right now. They will kill us next, or blame us for the empty tomb and torture us to death! We are going on lockdown. Shelter in place!!”

That is a normal human reaction. We gladly enter into lockdown conditions when we are afraid, when we doubt. The disciples are full of doubt.

As it turned out the fearful lockdown of the Covid years, probably did more harm than the actual virus. Social distancing is social engineering. The Romans were adept at these things. Make everybody move like Mary and Joseph, to pay taxes in their hometown during a holiday season. When everybody is on the road, they can’t start a revolution without cell phones. Crucify several hundred Jewish rebels on Main Street. People will get that picture real fast.

The media and the news cycle selectively promote ‘the fear of the week,’ for us. Are

you afraid of dementia? Take this. Afraid of insomnia? Take this. Afraid of low energy? Take this. You should also fear 30 or 40 other advertised conditions, and the snake-oil hucksters have a pill for all your ills, that is very expensive and profitable. And don't forget the pill that handles the side-effects of all the other pills.

I have a strange collection of words. Watching TV I began to notice that the predominance of commercials is now featuring new words, made up out of thin air, the names of new medications. I collected at least 50 in a week. It's like fishing and finding a new hole to drop a line in. Change channels and different pharmaceutical offerings are featured for your delight. A couple of nights ago I was thrilled; I caught two new medicinal names I had not yet collected. Fishing for these words and catching them is like hooking an 18inch Rainbow Trout, or a 5pound Bass. Spravato....Bimzelx.... Rezdiffra.....Journavx.....Opzellura. The names are so incredible that I don't know what they are supposed to fix.

All of them have similar rejoinders. 1. Ask your doctor to give you this amazing cure-all. 2. The list of possible side-effects is a horror show, ending with possible death, but not excluding maybe growing the hand of a possum out of your belly button. And 3. It always works best with diet and exercise. Of course, diet and exercise are still the best cure-all ever! But they involve work and discipline which are time-consuming and not always so fun.

If that's not enough to scare you into lockdown, there is the 'disaster of the week' to fear. Train derailments are about weekly now. It's probably just a coincidence that when pipelines are restricted, trains are the next cheapest way to move oil plus a variety of other commodities. Old diseases are making new comebacks. Marburg virus killed a bunch of primates in a U.S. lab, 30 or more years ago. Get ready to be afraid. And there is always urban murder and mayhem selectively reported so you never hear about the 20 kids killed every week in the wrong neighborhoods of big cities. Maybe because it is predictable, it is not fear-worthy. Just the new normal.

Spy drones, political violence, crime, and World War 3. Distractions to keep us watching the ads that make us uncertain about ourselves, so that we will go out and get what's wrong with us fixed by buying the right products. By age 3 more children recognize Micky Mouse and the Golden Arches, than recognize a cross and what it represents. Living behind locked doors. All of us have been there.

Thomas is courageous. He helps us step out, by following him. He does not go on lockdown. I guess he is simply kept on going about his daily business. He does miss Jesus' first appearance to the group where Jesus gives them both peace and the Holy Spirit. But he is the guy who is always there verbalizing everyone else's questions. Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you and you know where and you know the way." Thomas says, "Whoa!! Wait a minute here, I'm not sure where, and I don't know the way." To which Jesus clarifies, "I am the way, the truth and the life." The other disciples are afraid to ask.

The disciples say, "We saw Jesus but we are still scared and on lockdown." Thomas says, "Your reactions aren't convincing me. If Jesus comes back and I see clear evidence of his death, then it's game on." To the disciples and to us, Thomas would say, "Faith transcends fear. Faith is

busy. Faith brings us out of our minds filled with ourselves and our tortured regrets. Faith is strong. Faith doesn't do lockdown. Faith is mission work. Faith is courageous. And furthermore, gentle disciples, it is too bad for them, that they've surrounded us, because that means we can attack in any direction and make progress!"

Doubting disciples need a brave and faithful Thomas who verifies for us, recognizes for us, our resurrected Jesus. "My Lord and My God."

Jesus says, "Follow Thomas. He has seen and believed for you and blessed you." "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe!!!" Thomas elicited a Beatitude from Jesus, just for us. A Beatitude for every believer down through the ages. A Beatitude for you and for me. You believe. You are blessed!!! Jesus and Thomas coax us away from fear and paralysis, and out of our lockdowns. Because of the courage of faithful Thomas, we understand that we are created anew in resurrection life, and brought into community with each other and service to the world. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Now the Green Blade Rises

ELW 379

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 **“Carol of St. Thomas”** arr. A. Greening

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful* ELW Hymn 142

THE OFFERING PRAYER

All pray together:

Merciful God, accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory. You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day when we will hunger and thirst no more. Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus, that goodness and mercy may follow us and bless the world you love. In the name of Jesus. 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:

Holy One, through this meal you have made your home among us and are making all things new. Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts, to love our enemies, and to bring your healing to the nations. In the name of Jesus.

Congregation: Amen.

THE BLESSING

SENDING SONG **That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright** **ELW 384**

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.*



- ♣ **Pat Boessling**
- ♣ **Jim Fritze**
- ♣ **Paul Houghton**
- ♣ **Joyce Huey**
- ♣ **Bruce Jaster**
- ♣ **Charlotte Jaster**
- ♣ **Bryan Kile**

- ♣ Nancy Lancaster
- ♣ David Magrill
- ♣ Geraine Moore
- ♣ Ed Peterman
- ♣ Dorothy Preuss
- ♣ Tillie Remmert
- ♣ Lupe Romero
- ♣ Wayne Schaper
- ♣ Scott Spates
- ♣ Marilyn Thigpen
- ♣ Jaime Urbanski
- ♣ Bennie Valites
- ♣ Susan Wiles
- ♣ Michael Williams

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Installation of Holy Cross Officers will be Sunday, **April 19**,
during the service in the Worship Center.

Church Council

COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday, **April 19**, at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

USHERS

Month: April

Team # 06

Leader: John Wenger

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

APRIL

5 Reader — Scott Wegner
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

12 Reader — Jay Fort
P/E — Wendy Lambeth

19 Reader — Russell Richter
P/E — Julie Kilkenny

26 Reader — Alice Braun
P/E — Linda Cuzzort

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 church or private events, please contact Sussy.

You must to fill out a Calendar Request Form or send an email. Thank you!

WOMEN'S MORNING STUDY GROUP

Ladies, join us for a new monthly study starting **Saturday, April 18!**

We will meet on the **3rd Saturday** of each month from **9:00 am to 10:00 am** in the **Annex**. Our first series will focus on the *Women of the Bible* examining the lives of biblical women to discover spiritual lessons, focusing on their faith, struggles, and roles in God's story.

Come enjoy coffee and a bite during our time of fellowship and growth as we dive into God's Word together. We hope to see you there! Invite a friend.

This is open to all women.

Contact Alma Byerly 713-870-1297 with questions.

FELLOWSHIP CLUB

The Fellowship Club will be meeting at the church
for a pot luck on Saturday, **April 18**, at **4:00 p.m.**

Please bring your favorite dish to share
(and maybe the recipe if it's not a family secret).

We will be eating at 5:00 p.m.

Sure hope everyone comes to enjoy some good fellowship and good food.

Nancy Beamesderfer

Kindly reminder:

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

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all who purchased Easter Lilies for our Easter Celebration.
Our Sanctuary looked so pretty and our Service was beautiful and so meaningful.

Due to a series of events out of his control,
our supplier was not able to supply our Lilies this year.

But, thanks to quick work by a wonderful team, we were able to secure
the lilies we needed.

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard for this to be accomplished.

Our special thanks to Randalls, Kroger and HEB for their help.

Sharon Wagner

SUNDAY'S SCHEDULE

9:30 a.m. *Traditional Worship service with Rev. Jim Berggren —WC*

*Sunday School / Nursery is available for small children during the service
— Crib Room*

10:30 a.m. *Coffee fellowship following the service —Gym*

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

13 Mon	14 Tues	15 Wed	16 Thurs	17 Fri	18 Sat
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