

# Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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713-686-8254

**Rev. Jim Berggren**

**April 19, 2026**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter**

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## WORSHIP SERVICE

### PRELUDE

### WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

### GATHERING SONG

**Alleluia! Jesus is Risen!**

**ELW 377**

### 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:**    **O God, your Son makes himself known to all his disciples in the breaking of bread. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in his redeeming work, 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 2:14, 36-41**

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> “Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what should we do?’ <sup>38</sup> Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.’ <sup>40</sup> And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ <sup>41</sup> So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

*The word of the Lord.*

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

**THE PSALM**

**Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19**

**SECOND READING: 1 Peter 1:17-23**

<sup>17</sup> If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. <sup>18</sup> You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. <sup>20</sup> He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. <sup>21</sup> Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

<sup>22</sup> Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. <sup>23</sup> You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

*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: Luke 24:13-35**

<sup>13</sup> Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup> but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup> And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup> Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, ‘Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?’ <sup>19</sup> He asked them, ‘What things?’ They replied, ‘The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. <sup>22</sup> Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.’ <sup>25</sup> Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter

into his glory?’ 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’ 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!’ 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

*Congregational response: Praise to*

*you, O Christ.*

**PR. JIM’S SERMON:**



**EASTER 3A 4-19-26, LUKE**

**24.13-35**

**EMMAUS**

Where is Emmaus? Well, back then, it was a little village, west of Jerusalem. I suppose nothing too surprising happened there. For the two disciples on the road, Cleopas and his companion, most probably his wife, Emmaus was a place of refuge from the political storm, the urban chaos of Jerusalem. Also, it probably was a place of resignation and despair. The revolution had been lost, before it had even been mobilized. Its leader was dead.

There had been reports just that Sunday morning, that the tomb was empty and someone had seen Jesus. Most who heard these stories considered them idle tales, wishful thinking. Before he died, they remembered: Jesus told them to go north and meet him in Galilee. What’s the point? They went west to forget. To a familiar place, an escape from helpless disappointment. The Geographic Cure. Changes in latitudes, changes in attitudes.

Emmaus may be whatever we do or wherever we go to help ourselves forget that things simply aren’t perfect in our world. The universe is awesome and full of wonder, and still a temporary kingdom. We delight in wisdom, courage, beauty and intelligence. It too will pass. Emmaus is where we go to try to heal our lives in spite of crushing defeats and the failure of hope. Emmaus can be a temporary distraction, a healing escape, a safe place. It can also be an addiction to distraction: to substances, to excuses, a big one these days is the ubiquitous handheld device. The family was in a crowded restaurant. The waiter delivered the food. Everyone at the table was looking down. Wow, they are praying, saying grace. No sorry, they are looking at their phones. I’ve seen people almost get run over, immersed in telephone reality, completely unaware that they are crossing a busy street, or about to be assaulted by a lurking bad

guy. Situational awareness is always a necessary component of personal safety.

In spite of the fact that Easter Resurrection has entered this world, we still stay fairly earthbound creatures most of the time, and as a rule we are always looking down and not too far ahead, out front. You might say that we really have our eye on the goal---the ground. And oddly enough, we call that “paying attention to business.” That is why deer stands work. The deer graze, head down. They don’t look up.

We miss a lot, looking downward to the things of this world. We miss God’s surprise in Christ. I wonder what Jesus was doing on the road to Emmaus. Out for a little seven-mile stroll? He just started walking with a couple of disciples, and before they knew it, they were a couple of miles out of town, headed down the wrong road; not the one to Galilee? Perhaps he was redirecting them. Perhaps he was showing them a safer way. Perhaps he was trying to keep the small group of disciples from scattering to the winds.

There is permission and commission involved. OK, go to Emmaus if it makes you feel better. I’ll walk with you. That’s permission. On the way maybe we can get you out of the dialogue in your head about success and failure, by hearing the reality and truth of the scripture and the prophets. We will go to Emmaus together, but we won’t stay there. We have work to do. That’s commission.

At the point of giving up, going to Emmaus and maybe starting over, Christ comes to them. Emmaus is kind of like a last-ditch attempt to take personal initiative and go out and find the real Messiah. But he is right there walking with us and talking to us all along. He comes to us. We just don’t always recognize him.

The great composer, Aaron Copland had just finished an autograph session promoting the publication of his book, *What to Listen for in Music*. The crowd had all left and he was relaxing. A woman was about to check out and she had a large edition of Shakespeare’s works, and at the last minute she grabbed a copy of Copland’s book. He went up to her and asked, “Would you like me to autograph your book for you?”

Puzzled she looked at him and asked, “Which one?”

Clearly, she did not recognize the composer, who was obviously not 500 years old.

Christ is always with us, right by our side, right there with wisdom in the midst of foolishness, with courage in a storm of fear. Something special will help us recognize him. Be alert for God’s visitation in your life!

A young boy decided he was going to try to find God. He thought it might take all day, so he packed some Twinkies and a couple cans of Root Beer. He stopped at the park to rest and sat down on a bench with an old woman who was watching pigeons as people fed them.

He got hungry so he pulled out a Twinkie. He offered the woman one and she took it and smiled the most beautiful smile he’d ever seen. He wanted to see that again, so he gave her a can of Root Beer, too. She had such a warm beautiful smile.

They sat there watching pigeons and smiling at each other, eating Twinkies and drinking Root Beer and never saying a word. Then he decided he needed to go home, so he got up to leave and turned around and gave her a big hug. The moisture in her eyes made her smile even more radiant.

When he got home, his Mom noticed he was happy but unusually quiet. “What did you do today,” she asked.

He said, “I had lunch in the park with God and you know, She has the most beautiful smile in the world!”

The woman also left the park and went home, and her son noticed an unworried serenity about her. He asked, “What did you do today, Mom?”

She said, “I went to the park to watch pigeons and God shared his Twinkies and Root Beer with me. You know, He is a lot younger than I imagined.”

And so, Christ is recognized in the breaking of the bread together. To those on the road to Emmaus, it became clear to them who he was as he took the bread, blessed the bread, broke the bread and gave them the bread, telling them, “Anytime you eat and drink remember the presence of my person within you.” It is the common meal where we are suddenly surprised by his presence.

Breaking the Bread, was one of Luke’s favorite terms for worshipping and sharing together in the Christian community, whether at common meals at home or common meals at the Lord’s Table. In either context it is a time to recognize God and his blessings to us and his nourishment in our lives.

C.S. Lewis said, “Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holist object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbor, he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also, Christ...is truly hidden.”

We don’t get the point quite as well unless we are to some degree surprised and amazed by God. The biblical record is accurate in noting that we seldom enter an Emmaus of ecstasy that restores us, until we pass through a Jerusalem of difficulty. You can’t climb a smooth mountain. It is the rocks and roots and jagged edges that provide the handholds and footholds, that keep launching you upward.

The creative Christian question is not “How can I bear this thing?” but instead, is “How can I use all the events of my life and gain from them?” Along life’s road to Emmaus, we are strengthened and revived as Christ appears to us by surprise even in our shattered dreams or suffering. Don’t let the past change your path from Galilee to Emmaus. Don’t let the past be your master. Make the past your disciple. A starting block for the race, a foothold into your future in the presence of the Lord.

As we share our daily bread, we recognize that the ground and strength and promise of all our fellowship is Jesus Christ. He is always there in our journey with his real presence in the Word and the Breaking of the Bread here in Emmaus. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY      As We Gather at Your Table      ELW 522**

### **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**                    **"This Joyful Eastertide"**                    arr. V. Hoyle

**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**

**Thine Is the Glory**

**ELW 376**

### **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**
- ♣ **Betty Larson**
- ♣ **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**

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**Altar Flowers are donated by Warren & Penny Schick in Celebration of their**

## Wedding Anniversary

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### **INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS**

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

Church Council

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### **COUNCIL MEETING**

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

Church Council

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### **USHERS**

**Month:** April

**Team #** 06

**Leader:** John Wenger

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### **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

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## **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!

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## **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.

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*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

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## **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

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## **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*

**11:00 a.m.** *Church Council meeting—FLCA*

## THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

20 Mon	21 Tues	22 Wed	23 Thurs	24 Fri	25 Sat
<p><b><u>CROSSTIES</u></b> <b><u>DEADLINE</u></b></p> <p><b>11—12 pm ELC</b> Chapel -WC</p>	<p><b>11—12 pm</b> ELC Chapel -WC</p>	<p><b>10 am Roundtable</b> Group -FLCA</p> <p><b>11 am Choir</b> practice -CL</p> <p><b>12 pm Bible Study</b> -VR</p>	<p><b>8 am—5 pm ELC</b> Parent Conferences -Gym</p> <p><b>11 am—12 pm</b> ELC Teacher Lunch -VR</p> <p><b>8 pm AA Women</b> mtg. -FLCA</p>	<p><b>7—9 pm</b> BCB — Gym</p>	<p><b>6 pm Saturday</b> Informal service -AT</p>

AT =Atrium, CL=Choir Loft, CR=Choir Room, ELC=Early Learning Center,  
 FLC= Family Life Center = **GYM**, FLCA=Annex, KiM= Kids in Motion, MR=Media Room,  
 VR=Volunteer Room, WC=Worship Center, YR=Youth Room,  
 SST=Safeguards Safety Training (CPR classes)