

# Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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713-686-8254

**Rev. Jim Berggren**

**May 3, 2026**

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

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## WORSHIP SERVICE

### PRELUDE

### WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

**GATHERING SONG**     **Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation**     power point

### 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 God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen**

**SCRIPTURE LESSONS**

**May 3, 2026 – Fifth Sunday of Easter**

**FIRST READING: Acts 7:55-60**

<sup>55</sup> But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup> “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

<sup>57</sup> At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, <sup>58</sup> dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

<sup>59</sup> While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” <sup>60</sup> Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

*The word of the Lord.*

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

**THE PSALM Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16**

**SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:2-10**

<sup>2</sup> Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, <sup>3</sup> now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

### **The Living Stone and a Chosen People**

<sup>4</sup> As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— <sup>5</sup> you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” <sup>7</sup> Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” <sup>8</sup> and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

*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 14:1-14**

#### **Jesus Comforts His Disciples**

**14** “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going.”

#### **Jesus the Way to the Father**

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” <sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” <sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

*Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.*

## **PR. JIM’S SERMON: -**



### **EASTER 5A, 5-3-26, John 14.1-6**

#### **HOLY SPACE!**

Everybody thought he had passed on, but as he was being transported to the funeral home, he moved. Later, his friend asked him, “When you were dead, where did you go?”

He said, “I wasn’t dead, and I knew it. I was hungry and my feet were cold! If I was hungry, I knew I wasn’t in heaven and if my feet were cold.....well.....”

Where is that Holy Space? That Holy Place? We talk about Eternal Time, the Eternal Now. So, what about Eternal Space? Let’s say Eternal Time, is past, present and future, merged into the moment you find yourself inhabiting. That would be sort of timeless and all time. So maybe Eternal Space is everywhere; before, now and after. And Jesus said to his disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you...I will take you into myself. So, where I am, you are. I am the way.” Earlier, in John 2:19,21, Jesus told the temple leaders, “Destroy this temple, and in three days, I

will raise it up....he was speaking of the temple of his body.” This foreshadows his promise that there is a place for us, eternally; Eternal Space. The mutual indwelling, emplacement in Jesus Christ, Creator. Not a typical space. A person. All space.

Graduate school, the Lutheran School of Theology, was near the University of Chicago, on 55<sup>th</sup> Street in a neighborhood called Hyde Park, site of the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893, the Columbian Exposition. The fastest way from there to downtown was to take Lakeshore Drive, but the most interesting and colorful route was to drive north from 55<sup>th</sup> street, on Michigan Avenue. Along the way you will go through some rough neighborhoods. At one time, along that route, there was a small, dingy storefront church with a cracked and tape-patched window. Painted on the window in bright, bold letters was the raucous pronouncement, “HOLY SPACE!!”

For some reason, this never failed to elicit guffaws and snide commentary from seminarians in the car: “Holy Space Batman, there’s a crime wave in Gotham!”

“Is that place a holy space or is that space a holy place?”

“Space with holes? Isn’t that redundant? Aren’t holes *a priori* space?” (Seminarian practicing Latin).

“Yes, but space is not a hole.”

From the back seat: “Space is too, whole; the Universe is One!”

Met with the retort, “Yeah, you’re one, too.”

“No, I’m one, two, three!”

On and on it goes, until it becomes completely obvious how intelligence leaks from the brains of burnt-out graduate students. Pun at a time.

Creator God has prepared a place of grace. He put us in it. In Him. We live in His Holy Space! I’m so glad that it is called a Garden. A Garden assumes and implies Order, not Chaos, Intelligent Design, Careful Anticipation, Loving Nurture.

I presume that part of our Lutheran derision derived from the earliest Sunday School bible verses we all learned. “For God so loved the Cosmos, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the Cosmos, not to condemn the Cosmos, but that the Cosmos might be saved through him.” John 3:16-17. Yes, I know we learned it ‘world’, but the Greek word is ‘kosmos’, and it warms my heart, to stretch the awareness of God’s love and approval, out to billions and billions of other galaxies, containing trillions and trillions of stars circled by quadrillions and quadrillions of planets. Nice-sized chunk of holy real estate in which to realize grace.

Then there’s Acts 10:10-16. Peter is napping. He’s not just hungry. He’s probably hangry. He is having drooling dreams of dirty delicacies, like lobster tails stuffed with lizard liver, a pork roast, smothered in catfish butter, and Creamy Chunk-O-Sidewinder Stew. God smiles and says, “It’s good, have some!” And Peter says, “No way, I’ve never eaten anything profane or unclean.” And the Lord says, “Looky here Rocky, I’m God. If I say it’s clean, IT’S CLEAN. Now finish up those crabclaws, and go baptize us some Gentiles!”

We're not talking some unattainable pie-in-the-sky heaven here. If God serves the food, it's holy. If Jesus prepares a place, it's holy space. The place he prepares is holy heaven...the Body of Christ. He prepares the place. He meets us on the cross of the world. He incorporates us! We die with Him. We are raised with him.

Still, we tend to set apart areas and people and times as more reverent or divine than others. But these are merely a rendezvous with God where we can practice the reverence that we could feel, moment by moment, everywhere. If indeed God loves the cosmos like John says, then it's kind of moot when we try to distinguish between sacred and profane, neither of which can possibly exist outside the domain of a God-Saved Cosmos.

Between six and eight congregations of different denominations worshipped in the same space at the Interfaith Chapel in Vail, Colorado, and at the Beaver Creek Chapel in Beaver Creek, Colorado. The scheduling was complex. I was one of at least ten religious leaders on site. The rule of board meetings was "No Doctrinal Debates"! The purpose of the board was to keep a holy space operational and scheduled out at peak occupancy.

Little unspoken consensuses would tend to pop up every once in a while, that to me, made no sense. Unwritten rules, like no religious activities could take place on the mountain unless it was in a place already previously used for worship. Like, no weddings on Kicker Ramp Deadfall. "Nobody ever worshipped there before."

It was a fifty-foot big air drop onto a fifty-degree slope, so if you didn't stick your landing it wouldn't hurt too bad. You would just slide a hundred yards. But at least you wouldn't experience terminal friction, as in Splat! Unless of course you hit a boulder or a tree.

"Yeah, nobody worshipped there before, but I never saw anyone fly off that ridge that wasn't praying that they'd live through the landing."

"That's different. Anyone can pray anywhere."

"Bingo." My point exactly.

So, who does the first worship in a place to make it legal for subsequent worship ceremonies? You got it! I'm your man! I took it upon myself to create new worship areas. One couple wanted to get married on a craggy promontory with steep and deep drop-offs on either side. I knew that it wasn't yet an official worship area because you couldn't get more than five people at a time out on that narrow edge in space. So, one day, I skied up there with a backpack full of the Communion of Saints. We prayed and worshipped there and holified the place real good, even dancing for the Great Spirit and throwing corn at the four winds to honor what had to have been an obvious magnificent promontory for Indigenous American worship. The Medicine Man stood here, and prayed for his tribe, at the center point of 359 degrees of open spherical space. Holy Space.

The day of that wedding was blustery and frigid with a whiteout blizzard blowing in. We skied to the spot, set up the video camera and shiveringly said the ceremonial words. It's funny how eternity opened up in that place, and the cosmos was blessed by a marriage that would support humanity and Creation. The recording camera said 8 minutes. The Eternal Now!

The winter of '88 hit pretty early and the new construction of the Beaver Creek Chapel halted at the foundation and two walls. Meanwhile, I was worried. Had that location been worshipped in, adequately enough for a whole chapel to be built there? Was the groundbreaking service enough?

Louie and Mary from Buda, Texas, decided that they wanted to be married in the Beaver Creek Chapel on January 20. I told'em, "Sorry, it's not there, yet."

They said, "No problem, just find out where the altar's gonna be. We'll do it there." So, I got out the blueprints and sighted off the aspen grove, west, the mountain stream, south, and the logging road, north, to triangulate the altar's future position. We waded to the spot through waist deep snow for the wedding ceremony. Talk about a white wedding!! It was pristine powder snow so crystalline soft and dry, that it would take four feet of snowmelt, to make one inch of water. Perfect for powder skiing in the White Room. We made snow angels for extra bridesmaids and groomsmen. The children and dogs frolicked at our hay bale altar. Afterward for anyone who was concerned, I would crow, "It's safe to have a chapel there now. We worshipped in that very place! The first wedding in Beaver Creek Chapel!" "Wholesale worship might break out anywhere on the mountain if we're not careful."

A few years ago, at the Synod Assembly, a resolution passed to form a mental health committee to care for mental health problems and burnout in pastors and rostered church leaders. The next annual assembly was looming in the very near future, when a quick survey was sent out at the last minute, to assess mental health needs, so that a report could be made on progress. (It's interesting how institutional procrastination signals neurotic resistance.) There's a mental hygiene issue, right there.

Actually, I procrastinated also, until the second of three notices came, asking me to please fill out the mental health assessment form. Apparently, everybody else was pleading the Fifth. Nobody wants to confess to being crazy. That's like calling in the artillery on your own position. It's like being asked if you suffer from mental illness. If you answer, "No," that's denial. Call the shrinks. If you say yes, it's a cry for help, call the shrinks. The only good answer is, "I don't suffer from it. I enjoy it. Still, I thought, "This'll be fun."

One of the questions was, "Where do you daily find God?"

My answer was, "Everywhere! Funny question. Where don't you find God? Just curious." I never heard back.

Jesus prepares a place and it is in Him. He is raised up and we are brought along for the most wonderful ride in Creation. It's heavenly!

Christ demonstrates for us boldly that even in the face of crucifixion and death, things are not collapsing. He has prepared us a safe place! Heaven can't wait for our faithful witness to say, "Even in the worst, He is here, holding us in His Eternal Holy Space and Time." Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

**The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done**

power point

## **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**                    **“When Morning Gilds The Skies”**                    Rachel Aarons

**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**

**Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing**

**ELW 389**

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

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**COUNCIL MEETING**

Council meeting will be today, **May 17**, at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

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## **USHERS**

**Month:** May

**Team #** 03

**Leader:** Linda Cuzzort

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## **LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS**

### **MAY**

3 Reader — Mallory Hileman  
P/E — John Stokes

10 Reader — Ruby Schaper  
P/E — Steve Schulze

17 Reader — Jay Byerly  
P/E — Alma Byerly

24 Reader — Julie Kilkenny  
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

31 Reader — Alice Braun  
P/E — Sharon Wagner

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

We meet on the **3<sup>rd</sup> 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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## FELLOWSHIP CLUB

The Fellowship Club will be meeting Saturday, **May 16**,  
at Hunan Chef (8404 Katy Fwy Ste 100) at **4:00 p.m.**

Be sure to come hungry as they have a huge buffet stocked with Chinese and American foods! If you prefer, you can order from a menu.

If you plan to attend, please contact Linda Cuzzort (513-477-1002).

Nancy Beamesderfer

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## **"SAVE THE DATE"**

We will be having a party to celebrate Pastor Jim's 51 years as an Ordained Minister and his 20 years at Holy Cross on Sunday, **June 7**.

Please join us in the Parrish Hall (Gym) after the service for a light lunch.

Nancy Beamesderfer

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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

**1—5 p.m.** Early Learning Center Patti Portice Retirement Party —Gym

**5—6 p.m.** Girl Scouts meeting —Gym room

### THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

4 Mon	5 Tues	6 Wed	7 Thurs	8 Fri	9 Sat
<i>11—12 pm ELC Chapel —WC</i>	<i>11—12 pm ELC Chapel —WC</i>	<i>9 am Men's Breakfast</i>  <i>11 am Choir practice —CL</i>  <i>12 pm Bible Study —VR</i>	       <i>1 pm Ruth Circle meeting —FLCA</i>      <i>8 pm AA Women mtg. —FLCA</i>		<i>6 pm Saturday Informal service —AT</i>

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)