

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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Rev. Jim Berggren

July 5, 2026

6th Sunday after Pentecost

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG

My Country, 'Tis of Thee

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: **You are great, O God, and greatly to be praised. You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant that we may believe in you, call upon you, know you, and serve you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

July 5, 2026 – Pentecost 6A

FIRST READING: Zechariah 9:9-12

The Coming of Zion's King

⁹ Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰ I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹ As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. ¹² Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 145:8-14

SECOND READING: Romans 7:15-25a

¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

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 11:16-19, 25-30

¹⁶ “To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: ¹⁷ “‘We played the pipe for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ ¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ ¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”

The Father Revealed in the Son

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

²⁷ “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

PR. JIM'S SERMON:



PENTECOST 6A,

7-5-26, Matthew 11:28-30

THE EASY YOKE

The Home Owners Association was vigilant in its inspections and warning letters. I fell afoul of their ministrations when I decided to let some of the front yard return to its native grasses and perennials. It is easy to do better than domestic crabgrass which is a nice term for St. Augustine. They sent me a letter and told me to landscape. I appealed. I said, "I've set aside a section of the front yard to celebrate God's nature. They said, "Manicure it." Oooh. "Manicure?" Isn't that River Oaksy? What color polish should I use. Perhaps forest green astroturf, with a pastel lime ombre fade.

The summer heat was broken by a violent thunderstorm that raked Candy's Garden Center with gusty talons that snapped two sixty-foot hackberry trees down the middle. They grow fast and the grain is not tight. Two 20-year-old trees, top-heavy, split ten feet up, at the first crotch. Half of each tree was stuck in the air, tons of wood, hanging overhead on the good graces of their strained neighbors. The logging industry calls them widow-makers for all the obvious reasons.

Frankly I was worried. One was poised over South Post Oak looking like Beelzebub's flyswatter on the prowl for a SmartCar, and the other imperiously threatened a frequently used pathway. Climbing high into the branches, to top my way down, didn't seem wise. Low heights are dangerous. A stepladder can kill you. There's no time to get your parachute open. I worried about what would happen if the damaged tree resumed falling while I was high in the branches and had to ride it down like Slim Pickens on the A-bomb in "Dr. Strangelove." I chose to wait and think about it. I called it strategic procrastination. Lucky me, several days later, another violent storm came whipping through the neighborhood from the opposite compass direction. The wind blew the trees up and over, past their gravitational fall line, and slamming down to the ground. One tree fell harmlessly into an empty lot, only crushing a fence. The other tree smashed a shed I'd been meaning to tear down for ten years. I was impressed and excitedly told Candy how God had just saved me a lot of work.

She said, "Great, what are you doing to do now, with all that spare time?" I said, "I'm gonna get a sponge and wash the car while it's raining, and then wait for an earthquake to shake the potatoes out of the garden."

In actual fact, no one in our culture is really truly that laid back about work. We are a

frantic bunch driven to the feed bins of conspicuous consumption by advertisers and one must WORK HARD to support that behavior.

Jesus clearly wants us to balance work and rest. Both are natural. Both are absolutely necessary. In World War I, when Eddie Rickenbacker and the Red Baron were engaging in aerial dogfights over France, their plane engines had two power positions: On and Off. Adjustable throttles came later. Ground crews spun the prop and ran for their lives. Engines burned out quickly running at full power. People are the same. But from Creation on, Sabbath is built in for our benefit.

Christ stands up against the culture of obsessive hurry, and says, “Come apart and rest for a while.” You not only have a religious responsibility, but also divine permission to rest. At the heart of the Ten Commandments is a requirement for a holyday, a Sabbath, a day of re-creation.

It is a biblical mandate, an order from headquarters, for you to enjoy leisure; for discontinuity from your normal routine, a full and holy time, a time to re-image your experience of life.

Six days a week I look at that lawn with malice in my heart, knowing I’m going to have to manicure it. On the seventh day I look more closely and in awe say, “Look how wonderful that grass is, how it grows and cools the area and exchanges carbon dioxide for pure oxygen to help me breathe. It’s a miracle.”

Six days a week I bemoan the clutter in my life. On the seventh I give thanks for prosperity, for the gift of more stuff than I can handle. Six days a week bad drivers deserve severe invective, but on the seventh, I thank God for extra opportunities to practice defensive driving and courteous behavior in the complex community of road-rage traffic. Six days a week, annoying jokers foul things up, slow things down, and act ignorant, but on the seventh, isn’t it wonderful that I can celebrate a challenge to my self-understanding and maturity. You see how it works? This re-imaging stuff is powerful if you can make it a Sabbath habit in your life.

Without a day of rest, we can become a misshapen caricature of what God really imaged us to be in the first place. The Sabbath offers an opportunity to line back up with his image. Come apart for a while and rest. This is an invitation from someone who is kind, believable and has no ulterior motives. This is the only place where Jesus describes himself for us in his own words: “I am gentle and humble in heart.” He is not laying a trip on us, but is instead fitting us with the perfect tool to make our lives more manageable, and our work easier to do well.

We are not bearing the load by ourselves. Our Lord and Savior, synergistically teams with us to do amazing and miraculous things.

One Clydesdale horse, a huge draft horse, can pull 4 tons by itself on a sled. I’ve seen it at county fair competitions in the deep country flyover territories of our fair land. It stands to reason that two Clydesdales can pull 8 tons. But a trained team can easily pull 16 tons. Teamed together they create an unlikely miracle. On record in 1924, a pair of Shire Draft Horses pulled over 40 tons. Two horses together pulled ten times more weight than one horse by himself. That is synergy!

You have a dollar, and I have a dollar. We trade dollars. Each of us gets a dollar. You

have an idea and I have an idea. Now each of us have two ideas which can stimulate an infinity of ideas for each of us. That's synergy. Christianity makes us free to multiply strengths and gifts and assets to the world. Free, not independent. Free because we are interdependent. We are trained to work together. We are yoked together with Christ to make the heaviest of loads, easier!

Permit me to point out a cool pun in Matthew's use of the Greek language. Four or five times, Matthew uses the word "*Christos*," as a proper name/title of Jesus: Once in the genealogy in Chapter 1:16, and four times in Chapter 26 and 27, spoken by the high priest and the elders who humiliated and tortured Jesus on Good Friday, and out of the mouth of Pilate in the final trial scene as he addresses the crowd seeking a verdict for 'he who is called Christos.'

Jesus says, "My yoke is easy." The word for 'easy' in Greek is "*chrestos*." I think that we can agree that there is nothing easy about Good Friday. But Jesus steadfastly maintains that his yoke is easy. Together, Jesus and you can handle anything that life dishes out and make it look easy, because **the yoke of Christos is chrestos**. Two oxen together in a doubletree yoke are massively powerful. A large ox can be paired with a small ox. The large ox will bear much of the load at first, while the small ox learns the life.

Chrestos---easy---is best translated as "fits well." A yoke that doesn't fit an ox or a horse will cut deeply into his hide and injure, even cripple him. A yoke that fits well, will let the animal bear a heavy load easily and comfortably. Don't look at the load you have to carry in life. Look at your tools, the harness that you have to bear it....a *chrestos* partnership and synergy with Christos himself. Divine help with transitory and mere mortal problems.

I used to be proud of how tough I was, not wearing gloves in the field and doing heavy labor. I threw bales until my hands blistered, and then calloused. By the time school started in the fall, my hands were like rocks. I hauled bricks and mortar; hundreds of pounds balanced in a wheelbarrow. And one day in enough pain to finally listen, I heard my Dad quietly point out how much easier life is with gloves. The pain went away. The hide of an animal substituted for my hide, and my work output increased. Now I could outhaul and outlift any farm hand.

The chrestos/easy yoke of Christ fits each of us perfectly. Life fits well in it. Jesus wants to help us. The easy yoke 1. gives us control over our work, mission and life. 2. We have choices, direction, energy and freedom. 3. The easy yoke balances our load. With this easy yoke, our characters don't get lopsided with straining in the wrong direction. 4. The easy yoke harnesses our energies so that we can be effective and powerful in life, fully human. We are invited to both rest and work in the easy yoke of Christ. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Before You, Lord, We bow

ELW 893

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

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

ELW Hymn 142

THE OFFERING PRAYER

All pray together:

Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. 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:

Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

THE BLESSING

SENDING SONG

God of Our Fathers

power point

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.*



- ♣ Fred Abrego
- ♣ Anita Cooper
- ♣ Paul Houghton
- ♣ Joyce Huey
- ♣ Bryan Kile
- ♣ Nancy Lancaster
- ♣ Ernest Luker
- ♣ David Magrill
- ♣ Geraine Moore
- ♣ Ed Peterman
- ♣ Dorothy Preuss
- ♣ Lupe Romero
- ♣ Wayne Schaper
- ♣ Myrtle Slade
- ♣ Scott Spates
- ♣ Patricia Steapp
- ♣ Jaime Urbanski
- ♣ Bennie Valites
- ♣ Susan Wiles
- ♣ Michael Williams

COUNCIL MEETING

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

Church Council

USHERS

Month: July

Team # 05

Leader: Barbara Neumann

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

JULY

5 Reader — Ruby Schaper
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

12 Reader — Charlotte Jaster
P/E — Julie Kilkenny

19 Reader — Scott Wegner
P/E — Wendy Lambeth

26 Reader — Jay Fort
P/E — Sharon Wagner

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.



Holy Cross Lutheran Church prides itself on giving back to our community.

To continue this mission, we have partnered with
Memorial Assistance Ministries to help children get new school
clothing through their **Back to School Program**.

Families living in poverty in our community
often have a hard time paying the bills and feeding their children.

Additional costs for Back to School, means they might fall behind on rent or bills.

We encourage our Holy Cross members and friends to join us in supporting
MAM's Back to School Program.

Each \$50 donation means a child will start the school year
with new uniforms, ready to learn.

Please consider sponsoring a child today!
If you would like to donate, please make a check payable to:

Memorial Assistance Ministries.

Include in the memo: **Back to School Program.**

Please send or bring your check to the Church Office.

If you prefer to donate directly from your phone,
you can scan the QR (Quick Response) code on the poster located in the Atrium.

Sussy Terry

KEEP THE JULY 4th CELEBRATION GOING!!

Sunday, July 5th Potluck Lunch

at 11:00 a.m. in the Family Life Center (Gym)

We'll provide the hot dogs — RSVP so we'll know how many to get.

Please sign-up to bring fixin's. Sides and Desserts.

(Sign-Up Sheet in the Atrium)

Questions: Contact Julie Kilkenny

FELLOWSHIP CLUB

The Fellowship Club will be meeting **Saturday, July 18**,
at the church for a pot luck supper.

We will begin to gather at 4:00 pm and eat at 5:00 pm.

Please bring your favorite dish to share. Hope to see you there!

Nancy Beamesderfer

Safeguards Safety Training

Holy Cross Lutheran Church - 7901 Westview Drive, Houston, TX 77055

Call John Lambeth @ 713-854-8085 to register, or register online:

<https://events.humanitix.com/host/634c6d6ed7a0c9053d9f6f58>

Class		Pric	Day	Date	Time
Adult CPR			Sunday	9-Aug	1:00 pm - 4:30
	CPR Only	\$74	Sunday	13-Sep	1:00 pm - 4:30

	CPR + First Aid	\$92	Sunday	18-Oct	1:00 pm - 4:30
Adult & Pediatric CPR			Saturday	1-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30
	CPR Only	\$98	Saturday	5-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30
	CPR + First Aid	\$108	Saturday	10-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30
Basic Life Support		\$94	Saturday	11-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	17-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	31-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturday	8-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturday	15-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	21-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	4-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturday	12-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturday	19-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	25-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	9-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturday	17-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturday	24-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	30-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30
CPR Instructor		\$299	Friday	24-Jul	9:00 am - 5:30
			Friday	28-Aug	9:00 am - 5:30
			Friday	2-Oct	9:00 am - 5:30
RCP para adulto, niño y bebé			Saturday	18-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30
	RCP solo	\$49	Saturday	22-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30

RCP + primeros	\$59	Saturday	26-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
		Saturday	31-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30
		Saturday	2-Dec	1:00 pm - 5:30
*Classes listed for September and later are subject to date changes based on enrollment or church use of training area				
Holy Cross Congregation Members receive a 15% discount. Use coupon code: HCLC2026				

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 and potluck in **Celebration of Independence Day** following the service —Gym

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

6 Mon	7 Tues	8 Wed	9 Thurs	10 Fri	11 Sat
<i>Independence Day Observed</i> --Office closed--		<i>12 pm Bible Study –VR</i>	<i>12:30—2:30 pm Food Pantry Cooking class –Gym kitchen</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)