

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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713-686-8254

Rev. Jim Berggren

July 12, 2026

7th Sunday after Pentecost

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty

ELW 533

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, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

July 12, 2026 – Pentecost 7A

FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:10-13

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. ¹² You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.¹³ Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever."

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM: Psalm 65:1-13

SECOND READING: Romans 8:1-11

Life Through the Spirit

8 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

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 13:1-9, 18-23

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear."

¹⁸“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

PR. JIM’S SERMON:



PENTECOST 7A, 7-12-26, MT 13:1-9

DIG UP DIRT TO HIT PAY DIRT

Fulford Cave in Eagle County, Colorado is the highest altitude cave in the continental U.S.A. Ironically, deep underground, in the Stygian pitch blackness of the center of the earth, a person is 9,977 feet above sea level.

At the trailhead is a register which careful explorers use to indicate their itinerary. By all means, Log in! Your life depends on it. If you go missing and you have let people know where you are, there is a better likelihood of you being found in case of an accident, hypothermia or dehydration. Understandably, we bring urban assumptions of safety and predictability into the wilderness with us. Most people are dangerously domesticated. It is easy to get lost. It is exponentially easier to get lost in a cave. Even with the best equipment, every step is a challenge.

Tourists unaware of this sensible protocol use the register for a suggestion box: It is comedic reading. “Dear Forest Service, Too many bugs and spiders. Please spray area to rid of pests.” “A McDonald’s would be nice at this trailhead.” “The coyotes are too noisy and kept us awake. Please trap and remove them.” Some people just aren’t meant for camping.

In the parable of the Sower and the Seed, Jesus seems to say that our faith is for everybody and the Word is equally available to all, but not everyone is a good candidate to enjoy the Word and the faith. God is the sower. Jesus is the seed sown. We are the soil into which the seed is broadcast. Jesus has been sown everywhere without any effort on our part. It is an interesting missional conceit, that we think Jesus isn’t there with the ‘heathens’ until we bring him there.

Instead, all of us have received the Word sown by God and it is our job to nurture and point that out. After all He's the Word. Articulate the word. Enunciate. Indicate his presence. Announce the Seed of all Creation, Jesus the Word of God.

Jesus teaches in the context of the ancient Jewish faith. The common story that everyone knew was that of The Creation. Genesis 2:7 says that God created the whole human race and all life from the dust of the earth, watered, and breathed full of God's Spirit. The mission instructions from God to humanity are to till and keep the ground and all that springs from it. Go and be a happy and productive Earthling. (The Earth's surface is 70% water, and we're not called Waterlings on the planet of Water? How odd. Unless you consider that water was a symbol for chaos. By the third Day of Creation, God has contained all the chaos water with the boundaries of dry land, from which all else emerges.) Jesus speaks in a parable to ask, "What kind of ground are you? Are you righteous dirt, a grounded earthling?" If we are good soil, we are perfect candidates for God's Creative Word and Work to spring out of us.

While our scriptures are a unique expression of the particulars of our faith, it is heartwarming to note that many cultures worldwide have tried to express this mystery with similar narratives concerning creation and salvation.

Farley Mowat reports the stories of the Ihalmiut, People of the Deer in north central Canada, who tell of the great hole in the ground that their god, Kaila, instructed the first man and woman to dig and then go fish in it. The woman caught a wolf, set him free and told him to multiply. Then she caught all the beasts of the land, and of the air, and of the sea, all released and told to multiply.

The man fell asleep. Creation happens during the secret quiet renewal of sleep. Typical. You just ate a big meal and sat down to watch the game. You nodded off and were awakened by your beloved saying, "Are you asleep?" Of course, you quickly answer, "No, I was just checking my eyelids for leaks."

Then, the woman caught the caribou, shouted with joy, and cried, "It is you and your kind who will feed me and my children's children for all time." For them reality and sustenance came from the Ground of Being. What kind of Ground are we?

Farther south in Montana, the Blackfoot tribe tells of a great flood that covered the earth. From his canoe, their hero sends out a beaver, a loon, an otter, and finally the muskrat who found the bottom and brought up mud. With this mud, the hero formed the new world and the people in it. For them reality and sustenance came from the Ground of Being. Is our dirt pay dirt?

In the 6th century BC, the Greeks told of Deucalion, son of Prometheus and Pyrrha, daughter of Pandora. Prometheus told Deucalion and Pyrrha, to take shelter in a chest after which the world was flooded. After the water receded, they found a temple and there gave thanks for their escape. A voice told them, "Veil your heads and cast behind you the bones of your mother." So, they took dirt and stones and threw them behind them, and as they fell, they took human shape. For them the world and its people came from the Ground of Being. Pay dirt!

At the same time, in China, Taoism was developing its understanding of the universe. Dr. Herrlee G. Creel, distinguished professor of Sinology for 40 years at the University of Chicago, studied early Chinese civilization and concluded that the best translation for the word, 'Tao', is 'The Great Clod', that fertile stuff from which all things are realized. For them, everything comes from the Ground of Being, and we are a privileged part of the dirt that is life and gives life. William Cullen Bryant poetically wrote, in *Thanatopsis*, "Earth that nourished thee, shall claim Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again."

If you really want to get down and dirty, to find the dirty truth, then you need to understand the stories of the 'opposition party' as well. You might like this.

In 1986, Richard Dawkins, Neo-Darwinist and avid promoter of Atheism, wrote *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the evidence of evolution reveals a universe without design*. In the 6th chapter, entitled "Origins and Miracles," he argues with elaborate reasoning that all life begins with crystalline clay. As he sees it, most likely, inorganic clays and muds caught sticky organic molecules which clustered and self-replicated, eventually becoming conglomerations of live, one-celled things.

Surprise! Mr. Dawkins thinks that there is no intelligent design because life came from mud. I guess that nobody told him that the word adam, in Hebrew means 'clay'. 5000 years after the Genesis stories were told over and over in front of campfires, Dawkins comes along and thinks he is a misunderstood genius because he is (ahead?) of his time, because he's pretty sure that the world came from the clay ground of being? There's a little humor in that. But still, the big question is, "Can we be a fertile place for life and the Word to grow?"

Jesus' parable of the Sower and the Seed makes the point that the seed of the Word is going to do its thing regardless of what our contribution might be. It is going to come up!! The disclaimer is, "Actual results may vary." If it gets eaten by a bird it will show up somewhere else after a digestive detour and still keep doing the same thing, unfazed and undeterred. The seed of the Kingdom of God is small and persistent, with unimaginable potential and mystery.

Perhaps the best point of the whole parable is that the fruitfulness of the Word is available especially to those who interfere with it the least. God will do what he is going to do regardless. So, it's simple. Don't do things that'll get in his way. And value the small hints of life that will change the world. We can't imagine the potential of the seed we grow in the soil of our lives.

In 1991, the whole system of the Soviet Union changed. Boris Yeltsin showed great courage as he challenged the vested interests of communism, and 'drained the swamp'. His inspiration was Lech Walesa, the union electrician who fought for democracy in Poland. Lech Walesa claimed as his inspiration, the sermons and writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the American Civil Rights Movement. Dr. King said he was spurred to action because of a little lady, Rosa Parks, who refused to go to the back of the bus. Communism fell because of a lady who had worked all day, was too tired, and wouldn't move to the back of the bus.

Every moment and every event of every person's life on earth plants something in us. Each moment brings with it germs of spiritual vitality that come to rest imperceptibly in our minds and wills. God is eternally sowing the seeds. Most certainly, God knows, 'Actual Results

Will Vary.' Many of these innumerable seeds perish and are lost, because we are not prepared to receive them. But God is a prolific broadcaster of grace. The love of God seeks us in every situation, and seeks our good. When we really look for God, every event and every moment will sow, in our wills, grains of His life that will spring up one day in a tremendous harvest.

Whatever kind of soil you see that you are, till that soil deep. Stir it up. Dig up the dirt and hit pay dirt!

See you in worship.....BERGY

HYMN OF THE DAY

Take Time to Be Holy

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

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

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

ELW 547

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

Family and Friends of Pablo Martin
upon completion of his life's mission.

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

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

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Women's Bible class will be Saturday, **July 18th**, from 9-10 a.m. in the Annex.

Please come and study some of the great ladies of the Bible.

Contact Alma with questions.

Julie Richter

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	\$92	Sunday	18-Oct	1:00 pm - 4:30

Adult & Pediatric CPR			Saturda	1-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30
	CPR Only	\$98	Saturda	5-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30
	CPR + First Aid	\$108	Saturda	10-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30
Basic Life Support		\$94	Saturda	11-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	17-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	31-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturda	8-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturda	15-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	21-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	4-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturda	12-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturda	19-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	25-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Friday	9-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturda	17-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30
			Saturda	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			Saturda	18-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30
	RCP solo	\$49	Saturda	22-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30
	RCP + primeros auxilios	\$59	Saturda y	26-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm

		Saturda	31-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30
		Saturda	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 following the service —Gym

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

13 Mon	14 Tues	15 Wed	16 Thurs	17 Fri	18 Sat
		<i>12 pm Bible Study —VR</i>	<i>8 pm AA Women mtg. —FLCA</i>	<i>1—5:30 pm SST Basic Life Support —MR/YR</i>	<i>9-10 am Women's Bible Study —FLCA</i> <i>1—5:30 pm SST Spanish CPR classes —MR/YR</i> <i>4 pm Fellowship Club potluck supper —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)