

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

7901 Westview Dr.

Houston, TX 77055

Tel. 713-686-8253

Website: www.holycross.us

e-mail: hclc@holycross.us

713-686-8254

Rev. Jim Berggren

July 26, 2026

9th Sunday after Pentecost

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG *Come to the Savior, Make No Delay* 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: **Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son, you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

July 26, 2026 – Pentecost 9A

FIRST READING: I Kings 3:5-12

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

⁶ Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

⁷ “Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸ Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹ So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern these great people of yours?”

¹⁰ The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹ So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have

asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹² I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM **Psalm 119:129-136**

SECOND READING: Romans 8:26-39

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

More Than Conquerors

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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 13:31-33, 44-52

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

³¹ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

³³ He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Net

⁴⁷ “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked.

“Yes,” they replied.

⁵² He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

PR. JIM'S SERMON:



PENTECOST 9A 7-26-26, Mt 13,44-52

JACKPOT SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!!!! It's Jackpot Sunday. This is the week that Jesus kindly points out to us the present reality, of the effects of the 2nd Petition of the Lord's Prayer. He taught us. We pray for it. We got it. "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven." Now it is time to pray, that we will see it when it happens. SURPRISE!!!

The Kingdom of Heaven is like: A grain of mustard seed. Easy to overlook. Starts small. Grows to unimaginable proportions.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like: Yeast. Microscopic. Invisible. Packed with powerful potential as a catalyst. Three measures stimulate the output of a hundred bakers.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like: A treasure, hidden, found by sheer luck, and then acquired by the alert maybe even devious finder, a totally chance explosion of timing, place, opportunity and joy. A perfect storm of Grace.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like: The most valuable perfect pearl found by the one whose lifetime passion, his entire wealth is in pearls. This perfect pearl is acquired by liquidating the entire lifetime search. All that is needed, is all that is left. One perfect pearl. The apotheosis, the divine perfection of creation.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like: The net that catches Everything. That includes more than we can imagine; more than we can even tolerate. No prohibition. Curiosity once led me to explore the idea of libertarianism. A libertarian might say, "All drugs should be legal and people should be free to do anything." Whoa. Wait a minute, there! Don't we have to draw the line somewhere? And yet in the world of faith, The Reverend Robert Capon writes of free grace, even to the most heinous, obviously guilty, most reprehensible persons imaginable. Can WE draw the line on God's love?

The Kingdom of Heaven hires and instructs trainees: They will cherish and treasure the precious past, and nourish and nurture the divinely proffered priceless present. God takes care of the future.

The Kingdom of Heaven changes everything. It is the life-changing JACKPOT that is a surprise, sometimes unwelcome, sometimes delightful, but ultimately a new creation, a joy.

Ah....to find the ultimate joy in life! You can!!! You can experience the Kingdom of God in your lifetime! By accident, or maybe by diligent and focused search, but always by

surprise!!!

105 years ago, Ira and Ann Yates sunk every cent they had into buying ranchland in Pecos County, West Texas. They had a dream. The land was hilly terrain with canyons and mesas, but perfect for raising sheep.

The first couple of years were dry years, bad for both finding pooled water, and good grazing. Ira and Ann had to go on government assistance, because they couldn't afford the principal and interest on his mortgage. In 1923, out of desperation, they signed a lease with Mid-Kansas Oil and Gas, partnered with Transcontinental Oil. The wildcatters only put 992 feet of pipe down when they hit oil. 80,000 barrels a day. Another well on the lease, 205,000 barrels a day. Today there are 360 productive wells on their land, and estimates are, that less than half of the oil reserves have been recovered. Ira and Ann donated the land for a town to grow and support that area of the Permian Basin oil industry, named Ira-an. Their surprise discovery changed the world.

Treasure. Surprisingly joyful, so much fun to find. When Jesus told a parable, he really knew how to get your attention! And just when we are ready to do anything to get that treasure, he drops the good news on us. That excitement and that joy, that whole life transition; that is the Kingdom of Heaven. It is here, now! Sometimes we look in the wrong place for the wrong thing. My best idea, my most cherished dream, will always be less than God's plan.

Candy and I have a favorite getaway in Virginia City, Nevada. It is a mountain community about 40 miles southeast of Reno. Every year around my birthday, the town hosts the "International Camel, Ostrich and Zebra" races, American team against the Australian team. It is a joyful occasion and the women and men who train these animals for this multi-species-style Rodeo are amazing. In hanging out with them, I learned that to train a zebra, one must midwife at its birth and virtually live with it; even sleep with it in the stall, to gain its trust. I asked them where they did this, and they told me their base was a small ranch in Nickerson, Kansas, not 40 miles from where I grew up. Joe Hedrick's Exotic Animal Farm.

Joe was a rodeo clown that loved animals and raised them in his off-season from dodging raging bulls in the rodeo arenas. In addition to zebras, camels and ostriches, he raised antelope, giraffe, kangaroos and giant tortoises. All of that richness of experience, was virtually within bicycling distance of my home. I had no idea. I might have gone to live with the zebras. But instead, I stayed at home and slept in the sun, in the pen with my pet pigs, 8 sows and a Poland-China Boar named Snowball.

How appropriate to discover this in Virginia City. During the gold rush people moved there to make a fortune. The gold ore was hard to find. It was so covered with mud and muck, that the miners decided to use the ooze for adobe, stucco, and paving on the streets. To haul the mud, they hired Native Americans from the southern desert country. When the workers arrived, they were astounded. Many were silversmiths who worked with precious metals. The excavated muck being used to pave streets was coming out of one of the biggest silver lodes in history. Virginia City streets were paved with silver. It was the Comstock Lode.

There is a Comstock Lode in your life that you might be overlooking. You are a

Christian. That gives you power and treasure that you don't even know you have! The Kingdom of Heaven is something like that. We are using/enjoying it even while it is still waiting to be discovered. His Kingdom is coming on earth now, as it is in heaven whether we notice or buy into it or not.

These parables, as Jesus told them, were not comfortable bedtime stories. He speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven and it does not sound at all like a bigger, better Roman Empire, Roman Empire 2.0, with a nicer guy as the boss. Instead, Jesus is talking about nobodies with nothing, common laborers, working stiffs with dead-end jobs, domestic laborers and inauspicious vagrants, making it big, serving extravagantly, and reaping benefits far beyond reasonable expectations. There is hope, possibility and meaning for everything and everyone. That is not the ideal of exploitative and tyrannical political systems, which gain power by pitting people against each other. These are disturbing little snapshots that lead us to the treasures of life that we overlook or discount.

There is a British artist named Tracy Emin who did a work entitled *My Bed*, in 1998. It was displayed in the Tate Gallery, a controversial piece. It was her bed, messed up, sheets, pillows, and towels wadded up and stained, with vodka bottles, slippers, cigarette packs, trash all around it and a perfect white fluffy toy. Critics called it "A Regurgitation of Domestic Chaos." The art media moguls were outraged. Charles Saatchi bought it for his gallery for around \$200,000. Recently, Saatchi sold the work, at auction for \$3,770,000. 20 years for a 3.57-million-dollar appreciation. Almost 19 times what he paid for it. Go figure.

Maybe the Kingdom of Heaven is kind of like that. A little too dangerously realistic, common looking but with unseen, unknown gifts, at first glance maybe not even desirable. But if you see it, you can't be indifferent anymore. You will either appropriate it or push it away.

Jesus talks the language of earthiness to bring us into the new language of heaven. And as it is said, a new language is a new soul.

And we don't even have to buy the farm, because Jesus bought the farm for us. We have been baptized into Jesus, lived in him, died in him and are raised in him. We are already in the net which is so full, that no one will ever need to be without Jesus' atonement, salvation and reconciliation. As The Reverend Dr. Robert Capon, so aptly puts it, "Hell is just a courtesy for those who insist they want no part of forgiveness."

The Kingdom of Heaven is the most valuable treasure you can trove. Unfortunately, too many folks have accepted and promoted a two-kingdom timeline: A kingdom of earth for now and a Kingdom of Heaven for later with death as the dividing line. Jesus does not agree. He says it is in everyone's reach, here and now.

Hey, I think we are about to hit..... JACKPOT SURPRISE!!!"

AMEN.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Be Thou My Vision

ELW 793

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

Count Your Blessings

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
- ♣ 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
- ♣ Becky Terry
- ♣ Dave Trickett
- ♣ Jaime Urbanski
- ♣ Bennie Valites
- ♣ Susan Wiles
- ♣ Michael Williams

COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday, **August 16**, 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

WELCA MEETING

WELCA will have a meeting Sunday, **August 2**, after service.

We will meet in the annex.

The agenda is short so the meeting should not take long.

All ladies of the church are invited to attend. Hope to see you there.

Nancy Beamesderfer

HCLC Fellowship Club

Invites you to a Summer

B*B*Q

Saturday, August 15, 2026 - 4:00 PM

Lyndon's Pit BBQ - 5320 Hollister St

Houston, Texas 77040

Come One * Come All * Great Times

(buy your own meal)

Marsha Thompson

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		Price	Day	Date	Time
Adult CPR			Sunday	9-Aug	1:00 pm - 4:30 pm
	CPR Only	\$74	Sunday	13-Sep	1:00 pm - 4:30 pm
	CPR + First Aid	\$92	Sunday	18-Oct	1:00 pm - 4:30 pm
Adult & Pediatric CPR			Saturday	1-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm

	CPR Only	\$98	Saturday	5-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
	CPR + First Aid	\$108	Saturday	10-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support		\$94	Saturday	11-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Friday	17-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Friday	31-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	8-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	15-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Friday	21-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Friday	4-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	12-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	19-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Friday	25-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Friday	9-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	17-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	24-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Friday	30-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
CPR Instructor course		\$299	Friday	24-Jul	9:00 am - 5:30 pm
			Friday	28-Aug	9:00 am - 5:30 pm
			Friday	2-Oct	9:00 am - 5:30 pm
RCP para adulto, niño y bebé			Saturday	18-Jul	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
	RCP solo	\$49	Saturday	22-Aug	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
	RCP + primeros auxilios	\$59	Saturday	26-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	31-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	5-Dec	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
*Classes listed for September and later are subject to date changes					

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

27 Mon	28 Tues	29 Wed	30 Thurs	31 Fri	1 Sat
		<i>12 pm Bible Study —VR</i> <i>4 pm Food Pantry Board meeting --FLCA</i>	<i>8 pm AA Women mtg. —FLCA</i>	<i>1—5:30 pm SST Basic Life Support —MR/YR</i>	<i>1—5:30 pm SST Adult & Pediatric CPR —MR/YR</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)