

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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Rev. Jim Berggren

August 16, 2026

12th Sunday after Pentecost

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG *Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service*

ELW 712

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: **God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

August 16, 2026 – Pentecost 12A

FIRST READING: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

Salvation for Others

56 This is what the LORD says: “Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed.

And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” ⁸ The Sovereign LORD declares— he who gathers the exiles of Israel: “I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered.”

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM **Psalm 67**

SECOND READING: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

The Remnant of Israel

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ² God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel:

²⁹ for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. ³² For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

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 15:21-28

The Faith of a Canaanite Woman

²¹ Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly."

²³ Jesus did not answer a word. So, his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

²⁵ The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.

²⁶ He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

²⁷ "Yes, it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

²⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

CHILDREN'S SERMON

PR. JIM'S SERMON:



PENTECOST 12A, 8-16-2026, MATTHEW 15.21-28

LOST SHEEP AND PAMPERED DOGS

She told her husband, “You left the light on in the garage. He thought, “I haven’t been in there.” He looked out and saw people in the garage piling up tools by the door. He called the police who said, “there are no responders in the area. Someone can be there to make out a report in a couple of hours. He said, “OK.” He waited a minute and called back.

“Hello, I’m the guy that just called a few minutes ago. Don’t worry about the people in my garage. I shot them.” Within two minutes there were 6 police cars from 3 jurisdictions, a SWAT team, 4 ambulances, a firetruck and 7 wreckers. They caught the burglars red-handed.

One of the police said to him, “I thought you said you shot someone.” He replied, “I thought you said there was no one available.”

Sometimes you have to get someone’s attention. The Syro-Phoenician woman and Jesus clarify for each other Kingdom goals: An unusual and unprecedented diplomatic conversation.

Having catered a meal for 10,000, and walked on water, saved the panicked disciples on Galilee in a storm, and debated with Pharisees about regulations concerning ritual cleanliness, JESUS WAS TIRED. He was a busy man.

Andres Segovia, at age 92, played a concert in London. People loved him so they kept calling him back to the stage. He played two encores, and then apologized to the worshipful fans, “Thank you so much for your support. I must go now. My guitar is tired!”

Managing a revolution is exhausting. Simply modifying unrealistic expectations is a daunting task. Working out the finances and economics of resistance is brutal. Jesus goes north into cooler hill country and west to the Mediterranean beaches for a rest. While travelling, he networks and connects with international representatives like the Syro-Phoenician woman.

If we were to context the first half of the book of Matthew in this new Messianic Jesus Movement, the desperately hoped for New Revolution against tyrannical Empires, seemingly unrelated narratives would tie together.

Let’s Review: Jesus’ is tempted in the wilderness in the 4th chapter. Every wilderness mentioned in Matthew, thereafter, is a reprise of this first temptation. The biggie: world dominion. Jesus counters in chapters 5, 6, and 7 with the Sermon on the Mount, a whole new kind of constitution.

Chapters 8 and 9 feature healings and exorcisms, leading to the calling of the 12. They

are sent on a mission---a recruitment---to the lost sheep in the house of Israel. To join the movement, you must flunk the physical. Qualifications for membership are hardship and will include being sick, lame, a leper, demon possessed or even seemingly dead. And then being healed, cured and redeployed.

Chapter 10, your life will be threatened, because Jesus brings not peace but a sword. Them's fightin' words.

Matthew 11: John the Baptist's disciples need mission clarification. They were expecting a different kind of Messiah. 13---parables are told to focus troops. Notably the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds. We already know that Senators and Herodians hired saboteurs to sow barley in wheat fields to disrupt grain futures and force continued reliance on sheep futures, the economic backbone of the temple sacrificial system. Chapter 14---John the Baptizer is beheaded as Herod's human sacrifice to assure his battle outcomes. It is the opening shot of war. And finishing chapter 14---Jesus feeds 5000 troops and disperses them before military disaster.

Chapter 15 starts with the extended debate of Jesus and the Pharisees about what constitutes ritual cleanliness as assurance of victory in battle. The Pharisees clearly understood him to be a revolutionary leader. And they knew the history of Israel's losses in battle because of impurity. Then, on to today's Gospel featuring this woman recruit from Syro-Phoenicia, formerly known as Canaan.

To join this army, you have to be initiated by death, fatal illness, crippling impairments, hunger and poverty. Then you qualify. Initiation requires great desire and sacrifice to join.

Young boys of 10-14 wishing to become lamas and live the monastic life of Tibetan Buddhism would gather at the gates of the great lamaseries, poorly clothed, little food, shoeless in the snow. Sometimes the wait was up to 14 days before admittance. Some died of exposure. The tough ones were qualified for a life of hardship and incredible demands of endurance.

Who's the guy in boot camp who loves you the most? The loud, mean, sadistic, hated and feared Drill Instructor. He wants you to sweat enough today that you won't have to bleed tomorrow. That's a higher love than being friendly and conciliatory.

You are a musician if you have practiced hours, bled and grown callouses in the places where your instrument requires to have thick skin, trained your mind to self-forgetful focus, struggled in frustration at the difficulty of mastering certain passages and marveled at the work of the artist who composed such beauty..... if your life has been taken, uprooted, twisted into knots and then restored by the music, you are a musician.

If your life has been taken, uprooted, twisted into knots by the events of the world, and then restored by Lord God, Son of David, Jesus, then you are a disciple.

The qualifications of joining the Jesus Movement Revolution are counterintuitive. Its strength is not in human perfection but in human failing, in order to release divine perfection.

The Dirty Dozen was based on a real group of commandos in WW2 called "The Filthy Thirteen". They were led by a wild warrior, a Native American Choctaw from Oklahoma, named Jake McNiece. His friends called him McNasty. He feared nothing. He refused to recognize

rules of engagement. He and his troops shaved their heads in mohawks, put on war paint and parachuted behind enemy lines with blood curdling war whoops to terrorize the enemy. They didn't think about personal safety. They were already dead to this world.

You and I have already been drowned to death in baptism. "You say I'm going to die? Well, la-ti-dah! Been there, done that. Whyn'tcha tell me something really scary, like you hate your brother or sister, or you think being right is better'n being righteous?"

And so, the woman from Canaan wants to join the ranks of this fearless, fearsome army. Her qualifications for combat are a demon-possessed daughter.

You can tell by the way she addresses Jesus, that she wants to be a part of the agrarian revolution against the empires of Jerusalem and Rome. She represents a seismic economic shift connecting Jerusalem to Rome and passing through the coastal shipping areas of Tyre and Sidon. The sheep-based sacrificial system of the temple, through tax and tribute has inflated the sheep industry which is stripping the land of pasture and grain. Life will be unsustainable without grain.

She is detained by the disciples, Secret Service for the Executive of the Universe. They advise Jesus to send her away, just like they advised Jesus to send the hungry multitudes and children packing.

Jesus is speaking to the disciples, not the woman, when he says, "I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

The disciples are saying, "She's annoying, she's unclean, for God's sake, she's a she, and she's not fully Jewish." Jesus tells them, "I am exactly where I'm supposed to be, with her, with the lost sheep of Israel." Who are they?

They were the ten tribes of the north, carried off into exile in 734 BC. They were known as the lost tribes, the lost sheep of Israel. Later some exiles came back to rebuild. They were despised by the religious establishment in Jerusalem. The two tribes of Jerusalem, Judah and Benjamin looked down on the lost sheep of Israel. They were hillbillies/rednecks. Don't underestimate them.

The mountain people of the north were hard people. They scorned the elite of Jerusalem as sell-outs to Rome. They saw them as pampered lapdogs, unable to do anything significant in terms of revolutionary action, so pitifully urbanized and compromised, that they are unable to even provide their own food.

Here in Jesus' time and place, the economics of food production and distribution are collapsing. The export from the Middle East to Rome of sardines, mutton, and pork is being replaced on Phoenician trade ships by grains which will not spoil in transit like meat. Crops and grains are boycotted in the Temple marketplace as insufficient offerings. But the general economy is experiencing the movement from sheep futures, which support the inefficient temple sacrificial economy, to grain futures, which will feed starving people, and create a middle class. Sardines are luxury items for elites in Rome, but Peter, Andrew, James and John know firsthand that the market for sardines is volatile if they are not preserved and shipped exactly right. The

future of the resistance lies in the general direction of disrupting the corruption of the Temple economy. As we say, Draining the Swamp. Flushing the Toilet, in other words, Cleansing the Temple.

This could be the death knell of the sacrificial system which will surely go down in 70 AD, with the fall of Jerusalem. It started in Genesis 4. There Abel's livestock was approved sacrifice. Cain's grain was not. Abel represented the established order of offerings. Even though Cain's grain was labor intensive, it was also much more efficient in providing calories. Cain was the smart one. Cain was the survivor. Cain is even protected by God. From that time on, there has simmered conflict between farmers and herdsmen.

Jesus sympathizes with the woman's dilemma, her possessed child, her desire to engage with him and support his movement. This doesn't have to be her fight unless she is an insistent volunteer. She can stay in Tyre and Sidon on the seashore and be a Baywatch Babe and lifeguard for tourists. This may not be the hill she wants to die on. But....

She says, "Lord, help me." There is that highly effective 3-word prayer, again. That is Peter's sinking prayer. We know it works!! Jesus' statement follows exactly on the heels of his admonishment to the disciples. He tells her, "It is not fair to take your food, the children's food, the food of the lost sheep of Israel, and throw it to the pampered lapdogs of Jerusalem." It is like he is musing, talking to himself, and to the woman and to God all at the same time.

The Lost Sheep of Israel are poised to be the breadbasket of the Mediterranean and the Middle East, perhaps after the Cleansing of the Temple in Matthew 21.

In a great show of tolerance and ecumenicity, she points out to Jesus that still, even the pampered lapdogs of Jerusalem will feast on the crumbs of grace and glory that fall from Jesus' table. ----- Wow. ----- Jesus is impressed, stunned by the faith, business acumen, and gracious understanding of this lady. She is proposing a nurturing network of international cooperation and mutual benefit. Those in charge can't imagine such a thing!

Jesus calls her "Woman". An honorific title of courteous respect. He calls his Mother, "Woman" at the wedding at Cana, and from the cross. Homer's has Odysseus addressing his beloved wife Penelope as Woman. Augustus uses the title Woman, for Cleopatra. It is a term of highest honor.

And so, the good news echoes through the centuries. You may be an outcast, you may be impaired, exhausted or crazy. You may be beside yourself or helpless. These conditions qualify you for enlistment in the army of the Kingdom of God.

That may sound like a crummy deal, but as the great theologian, Pastor Edwin Peterman explained to me, "A crumb from the banquet table of God is far better than a feast at the table of demons."

You are qualified and invited to fill your life to overflowing with the banquet of crumbs from God's Table. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

insert

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

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
- ♣ Susan Caradec
- ♣ Jessica Coleman
- ♣ Paul Houghton
- ♣ Joyce Huey
- ♣ Bryan Kile
- ♣ Nancy Lancaster
- ♣ Ernest Luker
- ♣ David Magrill
- ♣ Jeremy Mitchell
- ♣ Geraine Moore
- ♣ Ed Peterman
- ♣ Dorothy Preuss
- ♣ Lupe Romero
- ♣ Wayne Schaper
- ♣ Scott Spates
- ♣ Patricia Steapp
- ♣ Ann Taylor
- ♣ Bill Tempel

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

Family and Friends of Fredda Yurk and Mary Alavi-Seleshki
upon completion of their life's mission.

COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday, **August 16**, at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

USHERS

Month: August

Team # 06

Leader: John Wenger

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

AUGUST

2 Reader — Shannon Martin
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

9 Reader — Linda Cuzzort
P/E — Steve Schulze

16 Reader — Alma Byerly
P/E — John Stokes

23 Reader — Ruby Schaper
P/E — Russell Richter

30 Reader — Alice Braun
P/E — Wendy Lambeth

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.

BACK TO SCHOOL

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

We invite all Preschoolers through High Schoolers, Teachers, College Students, Grad Students, and Professors to bring those backpacks and schoolbags to Holy Cross during church service on **August 16th**. Bring them empty or full.

Pastor Jim will bless the bags during the 9:30 a.m. service, to honor all the hopes, dreams, and fears that accompany the new school year, and to ask for God to strengthen, sustain, and encourage all our children

as they learn and grow throughout the year.

YOUTH PROJECT

Come together in faith and friendship to our new Youth Project meetings.

We will meet every 2nd and 4th Wednesday, starting **September 9th**, 2026,
from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Youth Room.

Pr. Jim Berggren

MAM

Easy, Fun Volunteer Opportunities at MAM

- Friday and Saturday, August 21-22 MAM Resale Store 1/2 off Sale
- Sunday, August 23, 1—4 pm Restock Workday (volunteers)
- Saturday, August 29, 10 am—2 pm Campus Completion Celebration

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 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

*Back to School - **Blessing of Backpacks** during the service.*

Sunday School / Nursery is available for small children during the service — Crib Room

10:30 a.m. Coffee fellowship following the service —Gym

11:00 a.m. Church Council meeting —Annex

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

17 Mon	18 Tues	19 Wed	20 Thurs	21 Fri	22 Sat
<u>CROSSTIES DEADLINE</u>		<i>12 pm Bible Study —VR</i>	<i>8 pm AA Women mtg. —Annex</i>	<i>1—5:30 pm SST Basic Life Support —MR/YR</i>	<i>1—5:30 pm SST Spanish RCP—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)