

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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Rev. Jim Berggren

August 30, 2026

14th Sunday after Pentecost

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG

Son of God, Eternal Savior

ELW 655

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: **O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

August 30, 2026 – Pentecost 14A

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 15:15-21

¹⁵ LORD, you understand; remember me and care for me. Avenge me on my persecutors. You are long-suffering—do not take me away; think of how I suffer reproach for your sake.

¹⁶ When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, LORD God Almighty. ¹⁷ I never sat in the company of revelers, never made merry with them; I sat alone because your hand was on me and you had filled me with indignation.¹⁸ Why is my pain unending and my wound grievous and incurable? You are to me like a deceptive brook, like a spring that fails.

¹⁹ Therefore this is what the LORD says: "If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me; if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be my spokesman. Let this people turn to you, but you must not turn to them."²⁰ I will make you a wall to this people, a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you to rescue and save you," declares the LORD. ²¹ "I will save you from the hands of the wicked and deliver you from the grasp of the cruel."

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 26:1-8

SECOND READING: Romans 12:9-21

Love in Action

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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 16:21-28

Jesus Predicts His Death

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

²⁸ “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

PR. JIM’S SERMON:



PENTECOST 14A 8-30-26 Mt 16. 21-28 TEMPTATION

Temptation. It’s a regular feature of life. Expect it. How could it possible surprise you? Jesus faced it on a regular basis.

In Luke 4:12, Jesus told the devil, “Don’t put the Lord, ***YOUR*** God, to the test.” That rendered the devil, momentarily speechless. A little reminder to the devil there, of who his God really is! Verse 13 reports, “The devil left to wait for a better opportunity to tempt Jesus.” Matthew forgot to mention that the devil was sulking and lurking. The devil hates to be reminded that he himself is not god. He can’t be..... because God is Love. Satan can only feast on his gourmet diet of human hatred, confusion and rage. If you hate, you are starving yourself, but feeding the devil. Way to go!!! That tempting stinker just won’t give up now, will he? What could be more opportune than using one of Jesus’s best friends, Peter, to go to his devilish defense?

Jesus says, “I am going to suffer and die and be raised from the dead.” Peter hears that suffering and dying stuff, and he doesn’t want that to happen to his best friend. Peter is praying, “God be merciful to you, Jesus. This can’t happen to you. God would never let this happen!” One could say that this is Jesus’ 2nd official temptation, and Peter’s 1st official denial, but who’s counting? These things are sneaky, just like one would expect temptations to be.

Jesus admits: **Not** suffering and dying is dangerously tempting. He calls the idea of a triumphal conquering of the world a “*scandalon*”. One sense of that word in Greek describes the trigger on a trap where you place the bait. The animal touches the bait, the trap springs shut and the animal is caught. Jesus communicates a great deal to Peter with that image. Yet, there is also

the humor of gentle chiding. “Yes, Peter, you are the Rock on which the church is built. Try not to be a stumbling block, a hidden curb, a Lego at midnight.”

Peter’s window is not big enough to fit Jesus. Following Jesus is not always easy. He knew that some were highly committed. And even then, their commitment was driven by their cherished ideas of what the future should look like in a messianic age. Others enjoyed his celebrity status. He was challenging and entertaining. We always enjoy the cachet of recalling the amazing performances and people that we have seen. “Dude, I almost got trampled getting tickets for Michael Jackson in 1984!”

“Yeah, well I saw Jeff Beck and Stevie Ray Vaughan play a duet on dueling Fender guitars, at the Coliseum. They’re jamming in heaven, now!”

The Apostle business was tricky. Jesus wasn’t interested in a highly competitive, spin doctoring, public relations team, promoting a revolutionary new conqueror of the world. That is the devil’s tried-and-true-but-failed constant temptation. Peter and his disciple friends were in a position to pool resources, marshal support and clear a path to the highest office with shekels and swords. They were invested in this movement. That was a good and desired possible scenario, their best idea of what could happen.

Jesus advises to detach from all of that stuff. Chill out, take up your cross and simply follow his lead. The holiest followers really want to smash sin. Jesus said, “Smashing is sin.” The righteously judgmental want to see evil getting punished. The revolutionaries wanted to fight the bad guys. Jesus says, “If you fight’em, you join’em.” Three words. Rules of Engagement. Fair ways to do unfair deeds. If you are lucky enough to survive the first volley!!

Here’s a thought..... If you want to get rid of your enemies and change deplorable sinners, pray for them, forgive them and love them. Hatred and revenge is cancer of the mind. Spiritual Plague. Try love. It works better. Don’t get stuck in your temporary notions. Forget self. Love God, instead.

Throughout our lives, many things assume great importance, at least for a while. Relationships and experiences that gave us meaning and dominated our attention were: Parents, brothers and sisters, the house, your bicycle, school, music, garden, pets, high school yearbook, marriage, children, career..... every life has a full list of important things to hold on to, simply for identity. In their time, they fill us with meaning and joy. But they are not ultimate. They are penultimate. Nevertheless, at least temporarily, we are tempted to engage them as ultimate concerns.

But then, you outlive your parents. You and your siblings have a falling out. The house you grew up in isn’t even there anymore. Now, it’s a parking lot. Somebody stole your bicycle, and you graduated from school and moved. You got busy with life and didn’t play music anymore. Forgot to water the garden. It shriveled up in the heat. Unless you have a parrot or a turtle to leave in your will, you will outlive your beloved pets. Your high school yearbook didn’t help at the reunion, but the name tags did. Marriages end. Children move away.

All the balloons pop that held you up, and you drift down, to land on the foundation word of all reality: the *Logos*, Jesus Christ, the WORD! “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my Word never will.” Matthew 24:35

Jesus is simply calling us to attention. And then to partnership. Our ultimate loyalty is to Jesus. He is sometimes called Christ the Mediator. Jesus stands in the midst of us in every situation. A marriage without Christ the Mediator standing in the middle of it, will suffer without forgiveness. Temporary emotions will get in the way. Same with a friendship. A therapy, or a legal contract will somehow take on more importance and be more binding with a mutual recognition of the presence of Christ the Mediator.

Be aware of the tempting half-measures that provide temporary comfort, and jump wholeheartedly into life in Christ! Let important realities be graciously modified or set aside in light of the Ultimate Loyalty we enjoy with Christ the Mediator. Ultimate loyalty to Jesus has a by-product. Sharing in the servant life of Christ, over time, we discover that we enjoy more effective loyalty in the horizontal world of relationships with things, ideas, ourselves and other people.

It is a call to rational covenant behavior, based on our relationship to Jesus. Attachments are wonderful when they lead us to rational decisions to do the right thing no matter what! No matter what seems best or easiest or even wisest, at the time.

Jesus talks about a transformed relationship to everything and everyone that we depend on, to define our identity. With Christ the Mediator we can be transformed and renewed within a wider context of loyalty. That new loyalty can break the selfish holds that prior affiliations and connections have over how we live. Forget self and follow Jesus.

Faith is relinquishment. Not striving. Everyone should know how to swim. Nevertheless, even the best swimmers can easily get into trouble in the water. The lifeguard can't save you unless you quit fighting, quit trying to save yourself. The panic mode is self-defeating. If you are flailing, inhaling and gulping water, out of control, the lifeguard is instructed to dive deep where the drowning person does not want to go, and approach, unseen, underwater, grab your legs and turn you, coming up behind you to firmly and safely wrap you in his arms and swim you to safety. He is in control. The death struggle with self is exhausting and fruitless.

Christ the Mediator has us. Even exhaling is faith that God will give you another breath. Relinquish control even over life itself, and the real living in discipleship begins.

Too often we think of the cross as the end of an otherwise happy-go-lucky life. For us, in our baptism it is the beginning of a full life in communion with Christ. Life lived in the spirit of self-surrender does cost, but it enriches the universe. A life lived only unto self alone, impoverishes and cheats society, self, and God.

It really isn't self-denial in the sense of giving up things. It is more self-surrender in giving ourselves to the world, to each other and to Almighty God Himself. Amen.

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

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

ELW 656

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
- ♣ Ken Beamesderfer
- ♣ Nancy Beamesderfer
- ♣ Susan Caradec
- ♣ Jessica Coleman
- ♣ Paul Houghton
- ♣ Bryan Kile
- ♣ Ernest Luker
- ♣ David Magrill
- ♣ Jeremy Mitchell
- ♣ Geraine Moore
- ♣ Ed Peterman
- ♣ Dorothy Preuss
- ♣ Lupe Romero
- ♣ Scott Spates
- ♣ Patricia Steapp
- ♣ Ann Taylor
- ♣ Bill Tempel
- ♣ Becky Terry
- ♣ Dave Trickett
- ♣ Jaime Urbanski

- ♣ Bennie Valites
- ♣ Susan Wiles
- ♣ Michael Williams

COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday, **September 20**, 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.

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

It's going to be a bushel of fun!

FELLOWSHIP CLUB

will meet

Saturday, September 19, at 4 PM

Harris County Smokehouse

19811 Northwest Freeway - Houston, TX 77065

ALTAR FLOWERS

Altar Flowers were given by Nancy Beamesderfer

in honor of her parents.

TRUNK OR TREAT

Save the Date!

Saturday October 31st.

Trunk or Treat. More info to follow.

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		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

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

31 Mon	1 Tues	2 Wed	3 Thurs	4 Fri	5 Sat
		<i>9 am Men's Breakfast</i> <i>11 am Choir Rehearsal —CL</i> <i>12 pm Bible Study —VR</i> <i>6—7:30 pm Boy Scout meeting —Gym/room</i> <i>7 pm ELC Parent meeting —WC</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 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)