

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

October 4, 2026

19th Sunday after Pentecost

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG **When I Survey the Wondrous Cross**

ELW 803

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 God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

October 4, 2026 – Pentecost 19A

FIRST READING: Isaiah 5:1-7

The Song of the Vineyard

I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard:

My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. ² He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.

³ “Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.

⁴ What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?

⁵ Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled.⁶ I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.”

⁷ The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 80:7-15

SECOND READING: Philippians 3:4b-14

⁴ though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 21:33-46

The Parable of the Tenants

³³ “Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some

farmers and moved to another place. ³⁴ When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

³⁵ “The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶ Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. ³⁷ Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.

³⁸ “But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ ³⁹ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

⁴⁰ “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

⁴¹ “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

⁴² Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

⁴³ “Therefore, I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴ Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them. ⁴⁶ They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

YOUTUBE VIDEO – PR. JIM’S SERMON:



PENTECOST 19A 10-4-2026 MT 21. 33-46

WHOSE VINEYARD?

A very important meeting was convened by three top world leaders, to plan the future of the world: President Putin, Chairman Xi Jinping, and Mr. Bill Gates. During the meeting, an asteroid hit the conference room. All three arrived at the Pearly Gates at the same time. The Almighty is there on his throne to interview them.

“President Putin, what do you believe in?”

“I believe in uniting Western Asia, Eastern Europe and all the Slavic countries under the

Russian flag, for worldwide peace and prosperity.”

“Very nice intentions, Vladimir. Come sit by me so we can discuss this further. And you, Chairman Xi, what do you believe in?”

“I believe in controlling all of the planet’s oceans, waterways, and ports to insure fair trade, economic prosperity and peace throughout the whole world.”

“Very admirable intentions, Xi. Come sit by me so we can develop a plan. And you Mr. Bill Gates, what do you believe in?”

“I believe,” Gates replies, “You are sitting in my chair.”

George Harrison of the Beatle’s wrote about the deceptions of the personal and possessive pronouns, “I, Me, Mine.” There is a tendency to believe and act as if the world around us, is our personal possession: My ideas, my religion, my possessions, my people, my spouse, my children, my territory, myself. Jesus tells a story about whose vineyard it really is. WHOSE VINEYARD IS IT? God’s, of course. Forgetting that, invites disaster.

The vineyard, in the parable, does not belong to its stewards, its trustees. If the tenants, the trustees, become proprietary about the vineyard, they will have failed in their stewardship. Sometimes we reject our status as beloved and valued trustees of God’s world and we begin to think of ourselves as outright owners, and in so doing, position ourselves as equal to God.

The authorities who face Jesus and hear this story, assume that judgment is an event that is a long way off in the unforeseeable future and not an incentive toward accountability. When it finally comes, they assume that the Messiah will set right all the things that they perceive as unfair, unjust and un-avenged. The Messiah will intervene, punch the “bad” guys in the nose, and by executive order, command utopia to happen. Because this is not Jesus’ political platform, he is automatically aggravating the authorities into getting rid of him. Extreme cancellation.

They weren’t expecting Jesus. They didn’t see him coming. After all he was born in a barn. God has sent many messengers. They weren’t recognized, either.

God sent Isaiah, naked and barefoot for three years as a warning of judgment. Isaiah 19,20. He was the first recorded streaker, after Adam and Eve, who didn’t even know what streaking was, until they ate the fruit. But God doesn’t give up on us (thank you, Lord) even when we don’t recognize his servant messengers.

The allegorical point of Jesus’ parable stresses this. Galilee in the 1st century felt much resentment against absentee ownership and this incident most certainly played out often, in real time. Except for one difference. No landowner would be dumb enough to send three consecutive delegations including a son to be beaten and killed, by unfaithful stewards. Any normal landlord after the failure of the first servant to return in one piece, would send his militia, get his vineyard under control, and use the faithless tenants for fertilizer.

How nice that God doesn’t work this way. He has this marvelous history of keeping on, trying with us, even though we block his efforts. He sends messengers and our job is to recognize them and take to heart their message, no matter how different they may seem. It is his

Vineyard! God is in charge. He has us covered!!!

The rulers of the Jews, made the error, so common in administrators of states, and churches, and families, of admiring too much their own authority and system and losing touch with the great living Source of all Authority. Whose Vineyard Is It?

That is how you hear this parable as a privileged political administrator. And now here is how you hear it as a peasant with fond hopes for revolution and freedom from Roman rule. Shift gears with me.

The ONLY absentee landowners of this time in Israel, were the Roman Senators who foreclosed on and bought up ranch-sized acreages of land for pennies. This was easily accomplished in collaboration with the Temple rulers. It was a plantation system of agriculture. Grain crops were stripped out and vineyards and orchards were cultivated instead, for a higher profit margin, that benefitted the Italian peninsula and not the Holy Land.

Jesus describes a huge estate. It requires its own wine-press and watchtower. It is completely surrounded by a protective wall. Imagine a wall around King Ranch. The mistake, that is going to cost the landowner, is that he hires back the people that he stole the land from in the first place, to now work it as slaves. Now they are working harder, not seeing any profit, and they and their families are starving. There are no unions and the owner doesn't care about anything other than the profit from the grapes. He lives 400 miles away, 40 days travel and he owns other people to do his collections.

The tenants, wage slaves, assault and kill the landowner's representatives. And Good For Them!!! Whose land is it really? They are now successful revolutionaries redeeming their land. The owner can't make the trips so he sends a second wave of representatives to collect. They are also assaulted and killed by the tenants. Yippee!!!! Now the tide is turning our way in the revolution against the cruel establishment coalition of Rome and Jerusalem.

So, the Landowner now sends his son. Clearly, this dumb Roman Senator does not understand the depths of antipathy and hatred toward him. He might be a nice guy. He might pay his stewards well, but the point is getting the occupied land back. Whose vineyard is it?

The tenants aren't really counting on being in the will if the landowner were to die. They're counting on taking their own land back from the hated master by killing his son..... And they will be HEROES for doing it.

So, Jesus asks, "And what happens next? Finish the story for me, please."

The leaders of the Temple are hearing this story on several levels. Rome is a threat to them, and if they could pull it off, ousting Rome from the Holy Land would be great. However, they are in a bind. In a material sense, their collaboration with Rome with tribute and temple taxes, makes them no better than the absentee Roman landholders. They are on the same team. In the spiritual sense, they have rejected the clear-thinking prophets, and hamstrung the Spirit of God, whose vineyard; Israel and the whole world, really is. They aren't actually looking for a Messiah. They feel like it is their vineyard, begrudgingly shared in a dubious partnership with the Roman Empire.

The question is, “What happens next?” They can only speak an answer that also, on a variety of levels, judges them.

“Well, the senator landowner, at the public expense of taxation will hire a fighting force to come take back the disputed land, and we will be paying Romans good tax money to come back and kill us and steal our land a second time.” And Jesus says, “Right, and more poor people will be hired as tenants, and this time they’ll work for less than nothing, and comply with a fresh negative example of a rebellion destroyed.”

The subtext, the meta-message, to the Jewish religious authorities, from Jesus becomes: “What right have you to incite to rebellion, poor innocent folks who have lost everything anyway? They are dying while you are prospering in your collaboration with the enemy. If you don’t produce taxes, tribute, the Romans will crush you, your temple, and your economy too! You’re thinking politics and leverage, and they’re thinking power and expedience. You are naïve cultural moralists, a small snack in the voracious mouth of an amoral legion. Why the anti-Rome rhetoric at home, and the Pro-Rome behavior when the Senators are in town. How are you any better than the Romans in your shabby administration of God’s Vineyard?”

The problem is we act like owners when we are tenants. We forget we are stewards of God’s unbelievable abundance. Remember whose vineyard it is. God gives us the management of his vast estate, which includes our very own personal selves. But it all belongs to God. His name is on the deed of Creation. God’s VIN number is on your soul. He provides abundantly and asks for a small portion to recognize his ownership.

Golgotha, site of the crucifixion, looked like a skull, because it was a rejected marble quarry. The limestone was too soft. The Place of the Skull and the cross became the cornerstone for hope and salvation. The cornerstone serves double duty. It is strong and sound enough to serve as a binder between two walls. Christ as cornerstone joins walls: the walls of Judaism and Christianity, the walls of sacred and secular, the walls of Rome and Jerusalem, the walls of science and art. The walls, all of which protect God’s Vineyard created for us.

What we build, thinking that it is our vineyard only, without Christ the Cornerstone, will buckle under the strain of poverty, injustice, and violence. What we, as a world community, built in the first world war to make the world “safe for democracy,” succeeded in two decades at making it tolerably safe for dictatorship. It is risky to forget whose vineyard it all really is. Thomas Jefferson said, “Indeed I tremble for my country when reflecting that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep forever.”

On a personal level, when we build relationships, if Christ is our cornerstone the relationships will be everlasting. We are servants, stewards and sturdy, because of the stone. We stand solid, working and enjoying God’s Vineyard. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY Lord Christ, When First You Came to Earth ELW 727

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

"Sinfonietta"

G. F. Handel

Piano / Organ Duet

Pr. Jim/ Rob Carty

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

THE OFFERING PRAYER

All pray together:

God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. 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:

Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

Congregation: Amen.

THE BLESSING

SENDING SONG

The Church of Christ, in Every Age

ELW 729

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
- ♣ Eli Gonzalez
- ♣ Audrey Holtan
- ♣ Paul Houghton
- ♣ Joyce Huey
- ♣ Bryan Kile
- ♣ Ernest Luker
- ♣ David Magrill
- ♣ Stuffy Martinez
- ♣ Jeremy Mitchell
- ♣ Geraine Moore
- ♣ Ed Peterman
- ♣ Dorothy Preuss
- ♣ Lupe Romero
- ♣ Jim Schwabenland
- ♣ Scott Spates
- ♣ Patricia Steapp
- ♣ Gary Sundberg
- ♣ Bill Tempel
- ♣ Dave Trickett
- ♣ Jaime Urbanski

- ♣ Bennie Valites
- ♣ Michael Williams

COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday, **October 18**, at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.
Church Council

USHERS

Month: October

Team # 04

Leader: Julie Kilkenny

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

OCTOBER

4 Reader — Mallory Hileman
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

11 Reader — Linda Cuzzort
P/E — John Stokes

18 Reader — Charlotte Jaster
P/E — Jay Byerly

25 Reader — Steve Schulze
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 GROUP

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

We meet every 2nd and 4th Wednesday
from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Youth Room.

Additional information will be available
on the church website: holycross.us and [Facebook](#).

Pr. Jim Berggren

TRUNK N TREAT

[Saturday October 31st](#).

Trunk N Treat is coming to Holy Cross.

We have 6 cars signed up. Sign-up sheet is in Atrium. We need at least 10.
Ask friends and neighbors if they would like to join us. Set up between 4-5.
Costumes are always welcome. BYOC&C! Bring your own car and candy.

If questions, see Julie Richter.

MAM

1625 Blalock Rd. - Houston, TX 77080

Amazing things happening at MAM - **Mark your calendar!**

- Saturday, **October 17** 9 am – 12 noon MAM Shred Day
- Fri. & Sat. **November 6-7** Resale Half-Off Sale (Blalock location)

Resale store - Need volunteers for Restock Days at Blalock,

Scheduled for November 8, 1—4 p.m. Interested please contact Sussy.

The Store is always in need of plastic shopping bags so please consider recycling and donating those bags, especially in preparation for the Half—Off sale in November.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Sunday, [October 25](#).

Pot luck lunch followed by worship sponsored by WELCA.

A JOYOUS CELEBRATION!

Russell and Julie Richter

invite the Holy Cross congregation to celebrate with them as they mark
25 years of marriage and Julie's 65th birthday!

Russell and Julie will renew their wedding vows on Saturday, **October 17**,
at 2:00 p.m. in the main church.

Please join us for this joyful occasion as we celebrate 25 years of love,
faith, and life together!

Following the ceremony everyone is invited to continue the celebration with cake
and light refreshments in the FLC.

Please, R.S.V.P. via text message to 713-464-3430, or to Julie in person.

No gifts please!

FELLOWSHIP CLUB

Fellowship Club will not be meeting for the month of October!

However, ...

Save the Date: **Saturday, [November 21st](#), at 4:00 p.m.**

We will have a potluck Mexican food feast here at the church!

It's gonna be a good one!

Bring your favorite Mexican dish to share!

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					
	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			
			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	2-Oct	9:00 am – 5:30 pm
RCP para adulto, niño y bebé					
	RCP solo	\$49	Saturday	26-Sep	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
	RCP + primeros auxilios	\$59			
			Saturday	31-Oct	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	5-Dec	1:00 pm – 5:30 pm
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 - available for small children during the service — Crib Room

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

2—5 p.m. Bayou City Band practice —Gym

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS					
5 Mon	6 Tues	7 Wed	8 Thurs	9 Fri	10 Sat
<i>11—12 ELC Chapel –WC</i>	<i>11—12 ELC Chapel –WC</i>	<i>9 am Men's Breakfast 11 am Choir Rehearsal –CL 12 pm Bible Study –VR</i>	<i>1 pm Ruth Circle –Annex 8 pm AA Women mtg. —Annex</i>	<i>1 —5:30 pm SST BLS –MR/ YR</i>	<i>1 —5:30 pm SST Adult & Pediatric CPR –MR/YR 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)					