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 **November 15, 2026** **25th Sunday after Pentecost**

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMNTS

GATHERING SONG **Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory** ELW 890

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: Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

November 15, 2026 - 25th Sunday After Pentecost

FIRST READING: Zephania 1:7, 12-18

Be silent before the Sovereign LORD, for the day of the LORD is near. The LORD has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated those he has invited.

At that time, I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, 'The LORD will do nothing, either good or bad.' 13 Their wealth will be plundered, their houses demolished. Though they build houses, they will not live in them; though they plant vineyards, they will not drink the wine." 14 The great day of the LORD is near — near and coming quickly.

The cry on the day of the LORD is bitter; the Mighty Warrior shouts his battle cry.15 That day will be a day of wrath— a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness—16 a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers.
17 "I will bring such distress on all people that they will grope about like those who are blind, because they have sinned against the LORD. Their blood will be poured out like dust and their entrails like dung.18 Neither their silver nor their gold will be

able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath." In the fire of his jealousy the whole earth will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live on the earth.

The word of the Lord.
Congregation response following the reading is: ***Thanks be to God!***

<u>THE PSALM</u> **Psalm 90:1-8, 12**

<u>SECOND READING:</u> 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

The Day of the Lord

Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to
you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the
night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them
suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you,
brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a
thief. 5 You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to
the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but
let us be awake and sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get
drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting
on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9 For God
did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus
Christ. 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live
together with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just
as in fact you are doing.

The word of the Lord.
Congregation response following the reading is: ***Thanks be to God!***

<u>GOSPEL ACCLAMATION</u>:

Alleluia.
Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia.

<u>THE HOLY GOSPEL</u>: Matthew 25:14-30

The Parable of the Bags of Gold

14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and
entrusted his wealth to them. **15** To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two

bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. **16** The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. **17** So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. **18** But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

19 "After a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. **20** The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'

21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

22 "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'

23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

24 "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. **25** So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So, you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? **27** Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned, I would have received it back with interest.

28 "'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. **29** For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. **30** And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Congregational response: ***Praise to you, O Christ.***

CHILDREN'S SERMON

YOUTUBE VIDEO –



PENTECOST 25A, MT 25.14-30 11-15-2026

I Was Afraid, And I Hid

Much economic misunderstanding happens when we see the world as a place with limited goodies in it; like it is one big pie and everyone has a little slice. It's reasonable to assume that if I figure out a way to make my slice a little bigger, then everyone else's slice will reduce in size. Therefore, to be 'honorable,' I must not try to get more, and if I do, I will be considered a 'thief.' It is the assumption that rich people are rich because they steal from poor people. That's a false assumption. You can't get rich by stealing from the poor. They don't have anything to steal. You get rich by out-maneuvering other rich people. Willie Sutton, the original Slick Willie, enjoyed a 40-year career of armed robbery. When asked why he robbed banks, he said, "Because that's where the money is." Nevertheless, we are compelled to try to increase our slice of the pie. Because in the prevailing opinion, the bigger the slice of the pie that you control, the more you are blessed by God with riches. Your status will be enhanced by your wealth.

Either way, there is a convenient rationalization available for either your poorness, or your richness; the talents that you are in charge of, and how you handle them. Both viewpoints are common, and inspire a variety of economic theories, from capitalistic practical to communistic utopian.

In many societies, the merchant class is unjustly seen as a lower caste. Actually, the merchant classes are some of the best contributors to employment, innovation and overall prosperity. They make the flow of goods and services convenient. They bring together the craftsman and the consumer, the buyer and the seller, the grower and the eater. Economic civilization has been built on the backs of ambitious peasants with good agents. History has shown that equalization of all resources, like the ideals of communism, simply does not work. Give everyone a hundred bucks and you will have a hundred different outcomes in ten years, ranging from starving to millionaire. Equal opportunity is real. Equalization of resources is not even possible.

The good Lord knows I don't need another book. Nevertheless, I make an occasional trip to Half Price Books. Sometimes, I like to baffle an intellectual employee and will comment, "You know, I've been all through the Fantasy and Horror sections of the store, and I can't find anything by Karl Marx or Chairman Mao.

The way that rich noblemen got around mistaken ideas, but social problems nonetheless, was to have their slaves handle their financial affairs. Slaves had no honor anyway so they had nothing to lose. The noblemen were insulated from the social consequences of their riches, by claiming plausible deniability. "The accountant did it." This little tidbit helps to give a context to many of the parables of Jesus that spoke to financial dealings and economic issues.

Some rabbinic literature even suggests that burying your master's money was like insuring it with the F.D.I.C. If it were to up and disappear? Oh Well! It would not reflect badly

on the steward of the funds, and would instead be seen as an unfortunate 'act of God.' Some evil person dug up the treasure trove.

It is the responsibility of the slave to anticipate what the Master wants and needs the most. It stands to reason that the closer you are to the Master, the better you will be able to do that. Fearing the Master and viewing him in an adversarial position is not helpful. The discipleship/stewardship lesson here seems to be, "Use what you are given and don't fear failure." Trust the Master. Trust God.

George Burns, as you know was an amazingly talented comedian and entertainer. He was however, very modest about his singing ability and rightly so with his gruff and scratchy monotone. At one party in his honor, he announced, "At 12:30, I am going to sing a few songs." He recounted that, "All the guests formed a circle around the piano, and by the time I broke through, I was too tired to sing."

The slave who buried his talent wasn't necessarily a bad man. He did what he thought was the right thing. Given a vast treasure, an entire lifetime's wages, he is probably stunned and afraid. Never in his previous experience would he have had to deal with something like this. He wouldn't even know how to start using it, much less investing it or risking it. He is probably deeply grateful that he didn't get saddled with 5 lifetime's wages or even 2 lifetime's wages. A vast amount of spiritual counseling is centered, not with bad people, but with people who are afraid to use the talent that God has given them. They are afraid to move to the next level. Doing that involves moving outside a comfort zone. There is pain and risk. We work hard to avoid those changes. We play defense out of fear. Famous hockey legend, Wayne Gretzky said, "You miss 100 % of the shots you don't take."

The managers with the most talents didn't do hardly any work at all. Financial managers call it, "Enjoying Passive Income." The one that worked the hardest was the one-talent guy. He dug a hole. He worried that someone might have seen his efforts and would steal the buried treasure. He undug the hole to retrieve the talent. He cleaned it up and gave it back without a loss, and he probably got ulcers from stubbornly worrying that whole time. He could have let go and let God provide the increase. Stubbornness can get in the way of effective living.

A Montreal newspaper reported a conversation between Canada coast guard and a U.S. Navy ship:

U.S. ship: "Please divert your course 15 degrees to avert collision."

Canada: "Recommend <u>you</u> divert <u>your</u> course 15 degrees."

U.S.: "This is the Captain of a U.S. Navy ship. I say, 'Divert your course'."

Canada: "I say again, divert YOUR course."

U.S.: "This is an aircraft carrier of the United States Navy. We are a large warship. Divert your course at once!"

Canada: "This is a lighthouse. Your call."

We really have only one thing. Our joyful dependence as a servant of Master Jesus, of

God himself. How do we perceive our relationship to God? Can you take risks in life based on your understanding of God? Do you trust Jesus? Do you know the Master of the Universe?

Ultimately, the high-talent servants know they have nothing. So, they have nothing to lose. It is all the Master's. His riches are investments in us. They will reproduce on their own. Put your God-given talents in a position where there is interaction with the world. They'll do fine.

Just ponder, "If the Master were here, what would he do?" Well, he might risk a Cross. And then a Resurrection? That hasn't been done before. And then an Ascension, which is like going away so He can be present forever. Going away so he'll never be gone. God is not going to discard his investments. The abundance of love and grace that we receive, should decondition us enough so that we can work in the world of God's blessings without fear. The parallels between this passage and Genesis 3 are amazing.

"I was afraid and I hid myself." Genesis 3:10.

"I was afraid and I hid your talents." Matthew 25:25.

"He drove out the man (from Eden)." Genesis 3:24.

"Throw him into the outer darkness." Matthew 25:30.

Still, we protest, "But we may lose it." And the fact is that if we don't use it, we will lose it anyway. So, jump right in! I once confessed my fear, and ignorance, and lack of self-confidence to an old ex-missionary from the East African mission field. He told me, "Your people won't care how much you know as long as they know how much you care."

Just for kicks we ought to remove the word, 'talent', and insert 'love' or 'grace'. It might contribute a helpful nuance to our understanding. Then we wouldn't be tied down by counting stuff and we could jump for joy celebrating God's amazing gifts.

You bury love or grace and it atrophies and dies, a cold, dead, dark and bitter husk. You give love or grace and it multiplies at least double, usually five times. And the whole world just gets better if you take little bits of unused love and grace and give it to the folks who really crank out lots of wonderful love and grace, because then everything gets better and everyone benefits, even the fearful, do-nothing grumps.

The alternative is the only universe that the one talent servant could recognize. You know, the one that is infinitely expanding and eternally cooling and forever getting slower and darker and darker……

I was afraid and I hid, in the Genesis beginning.

But, because of my Master, I can be bold and trade in love and grace! Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY **As Saints of Old** ELW 695

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*

THE OFFERING PRAYER

All pray together:

Eternal God, our time, talents, and treasures are gifts from you.
Receive what we offer, and all that you entrust us, until hungry no more, all the world is fed, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. 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:

Holy God, we have received your never-ending mercy in this meal. You continuously seek the lost, bind the injured, and feed your people abundantly. Now send us out, awake to your presence, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

THE BLESSING

SENDING SONG **O God, Our Help in Ages Past** ELW 632

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
- ♣ Eli Gonzalez
- ♣ Jack Griffin
- ♣ Ron Hatcher
- ♣ Audrey Holtan
- ♣ Paul Houghton
- ♣ Joyce Huey
- ♣ Bryan Kile
- ♣ Ernest Luker
- ♣ David Magrill
- ♣ Stuffy Martinez
- ♣ Jeremy Mitchell
- ♣ Geraine Moore
- ♣ Ed Peterman
- ♣ Dorothy Preuss
- ♣ Scott Spates

- ♣ Patricia Steapp
- ♣ Gary Sundberg
- ♣ Bill Tempel
- ♣ Dave Trickett
- ♣ Jaime Urbanski
- ♣ Bennie Valites
- ♣ Michael Williams

COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday, **November 29th**, at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

USHERS

Month: November **Team #** 05 **Leader:** Barbara Neumann

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

NOVEMBER

1 Reader — JR Abrego
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

8 Reader — Ruby Schaper
P/E — Julie Kilkenny

15 Reader — Bert Martin
P/E — Penny Schick

22 Reader — Linda Cuzzort
P/E — Sharon Wagner

29 Reader — Scott Wegner
P/E — Alma Byerly

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

THANKOFFERING

Saturday, November 21, and **Sunday, November 22**

The idea of collecting in small offering boxes goes back to the very early 1800's when women formed "mite" or "cent" societies to raise money. Lutheran women were given small Thankoffering boxes to place in a special location in their homes as a visible reminder of blessings received.

Women would add coins to those boxes almost daily as particular blessings were noted. From their use came the idea of an annual church service to celebrate their collection.

Thankofferings show gratitude for God's blessings and give us an important and tangible way to express that gratitude. It is a tradition grounded in our celebration of community, of meeting together to joyfully give thanks for what God has given us. Thankofferings have always been and still are, our opportunity to say thank you to God in both significant and ordinary moments.

The women of Holy Cross are encouraged to express their thankfulness by donating "coins" and/or items for the East Spring Branch Food Pantry.

Nancy Beamesderfer

FELLOWSHIP CLUB

Fellowship Club will have a potluck Mexican Food Feast

Saturday, **November 21st,** 3:00 pm here at the church!

It's gonna be a good one!

Bring your favorite Mexican dish to share!

Nancy Beamesderfer

BABY CARE KITS
FOR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

With the birth of our daughter Laura's first child coming in January, I have felt the leading to help with making more Baby Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief.

I just can't imagine as an expecting mother not having the resources to keep my baby warm, clean and dry. I am asking for your help either donating money or items from the list below.

Sizes should be between 6 to 24 months.

Please contact me at (713) 870-1297 for any questions. I will also put up poster in the Family Life Center. Thank you so much for your love and support!

Alma Byerly

THANKSGIVING LUNCH

GIVE THANKS TOGETHER!

Thursday, November 26, 2026

Doors Open: 11:30 AM | Lunch: 1:00 PM Family Life Center (Gym)

Join your Holy Cross family for a Thanksgiving Day lunch filled with good food, warm fellowship, and grateful hearts! All HCLC members and visitors, their families and friends, are warmly invited. Turkey and ham will be provided. If you are able, please bring a side dish, dessert, or beverage.

PLEASE RSVP!

Help us plan enough turkey and ham for everyone. Sign up at church with the number of adults and children attending and what you plan to bring. Or call/text Julie at 713-464-3430. We look forward to sharing Thanksgiving with you.

HEAVENLY QUILTERS SILENT AUCTION

Friends there is still time to get your bid in for this gorgeous quilt with winner to be announced at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 5,

at the Annual “Sip & Shop” event.

There is already a bidding war going on so don’t be left out in the cold.

Make this beautiful quilt an addition to your home.

Bids must be in $20 increments and remember this is Tax Deductible.

See Tillie Remmert to get your name in the running.

Good luck everybody!

Linda Cuzzort

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 & Pediatric CPR					
	CPR Only	$98	Saturday	14-Nov	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
	CPR + First Aid	$108	Sunday	22-Nov	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support		$94	Friday	13-Nov	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	21-Nov	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	19-Dec	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
CPR Instructor Course		$299	Friday	6-Nov	9:00 am - 5:30 pm
			Friday	11-Dec	9:00 am - 5:30 pm
RCP para adulto, niño y bebé			Friday	4-Dec	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm

	RCP solo	$49
	RCP + primeros auxilios	$59

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*

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

16 Mon	17 Tues	18 Wed	19 Thurs	20 Fri	21 Sat

11—12 *ELC Chapel –WC*	***11—12*** *ELC Chapel –WC*	***9:30 am—12 pm*** *ELC Thanksgiving Feast – Puppet show -YR* ***10 am*** *Roundtable Group –Annex* ***11 am*** *Choir Rehearsal –CL* ***12 pm*** *Bible Study –VR*	***9:30 am—12 pm*** *ELC Thanksgiving Feast – Puppet show -YR* ***8 pm*** *AA Women mtg. —Annex*		***9—10 am*** *Women's Bible Study –Annex* ***1—5:30 pm*** *SST Basic Life Support –MR/YR* ***3 pm*** *Fellowship Club potluck Mexican Feast Food –Annex* ***6 pm*** *Saturday* ***Thankoffering Informal service*** *–AT*

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)