



Holy Cross Lutheran Church

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Making peace by the blood of his cross — Colossians 1:15-20

Grace, peace, and mercy to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We have been going through a fascinating study of the book of Job in our weeknight Zoom class. I admit I have some sadness that we don't see more of the brothers and sisters making use of the blessings God is giving in our Bible study time. I keep asking, what can I do to bring about more participation? I hope with a new year, we will find more of us addressing our spiritual diets and looking to join the feast!

Over the past weeks, we've seen that God's appearance in Job is comforting and inspiring. Part of the key to this is understanding what Leviathan is. The first references to Leviathan come in the very first speech of Job. In Job 3, the suffering man of faith wishes he had never been born. He curses his own birthday: "Behold, let that night be barren; let no joyful cry enter it. Let those curse it who curse the day, who are ready to rouse up Leviathan" (3:7-8).

These are dark words from Job. Remember, he has lost everything, including his children. More than by the loss of possessions and even of people, Job is hurt by what this means about his relationship with God. Whether you say God did this or allowed it or whatever, Job has been faithful and doesn't deserve this. Job wishes if this is what the world is, better never to have been born.

The specific curse Job uses is for Leviathan to swallow the sun during its course through the seas at night. Sometimes we balk at how the ancients described the world. Though we know more about the course of planets and stars, they still can teach us wisdom in the course of human hearts. The figure of Leviathan is a beast of chaos and disorder. He is the opposite of God's providential ordering of the world. Leviathan is not a giant squid, a whale, or a hippopotamus. Leviathan is the accuser, the liar, the great dragon of Revelation 12.

Job is willing to give in to the opposite of creation. He would be unmade. But God takes up Job's cause. Job hopes for an advocate as he argues with his friends. He says, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth" (Job 19:25). When God appears, we see God isn't just in a polite parlor match with the devil, wagering over Job as if Job were a plaything. The storm God appears in is itself a rebuke of chaos; Jeremiah, for example, sees God's storm bursting on the head of the wicked (Jer. 23:19).

There is more to come in our Job and Leviathan Bible class. I can't spoil it, because I want you to join and see. But I can't keep myself from pointing out that these very themes take on extra meaning in Christmas-time. The book of Job explores our place in creation. Job wants to know God's attitude toward the cosmos He made, yet we led in rebellion against Him. That means God joining creation in the Incarnation is a magnificent turn of events! As we read on Christmas day, "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:10-12).

God is not neutral. He has taken sides. He has taken our side. He is with us, fighting off evil, crushing the head of the accuser, declaring us His own family. Praise the Lord!

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Daniel Guagenti



Celebrations in January

Birthdays

- 9- Joe Jager
- 11- Dani McKinley
- 18- Ellie Themer
- 20- Dustin Shreve
- 21- Ann Penfold Amyx
- 22- Gabriel Guagenti
- 23- Alena Guagenti
- 25- Brenda Moody
- 25- Kim McKinley
- 28- Sean Feole

CHILI COOKOFF AND FUNDRAISER: FEBRUARY 19

Members and guests, the tentative date of the Chili Cookoff fellowship event is scheduled for Saturday, February 19, 2022, time to be determined. Please mark your calendars. More details will follow. See you there! Greg and his 'Campaneros'.



FOOD BOX GIVEAWAY

The Senior Fellowship group has established a food box giveaway for those in need. The box is located on the driveway of Holy Cross Lutheran Church at the corner of Hwy 53 & Old 7 Mile Pike. The idea is if you need staples for your family check the box and take what you need. Give back to the box when you can. We hope this will be a blessing to those in need as it is a blessing to those who supply the box.



CHURCH COUNCIL

Thanks go to Greg Rutledge, Cindy Alvano, Nancy Kovach, Dave Themer and Pastor Guagenti who served on the nominating committee this year. After prayers and deliberation, we have our council for 2022.

President- Dave Themer
 Vice President- Greg Rutledge
 Treasurer- Charlie Adams
 Trustee- Jennifer Harrod
 Education- Mark & Marilyn Murray
 Youth Leader- Max & Danielle Themer
 Evangelism- Don Saltzman
 Stewardship- Suzanne Rutledge
 Church Secretary- Corrie Brian
 Elders- Charlie Moody
 Fellowship- Rita Whitehouse

Thank you to each who has agreed to serve. Your work is a blessing! We pray you also will be blessed in your service in 2022.

To our outgoing council members we thank you for your dedication and service in 2021!

THANK YOU FROM PASTOR'S FAMILY

Pastor and his family want to thank the congregation for all the generosity and love shown to us this Christmas. Thank you for the gifts and good cheer! We love our church family!

SENIORS MEETING: JANUARY 12

The next Seniors meeting will be on January 12 at 9:30am here at Holy Cross. For information please see Charlie Moody.

LADIES LUNCH OUT: JANUARY 10

Ladies Lunch Out will meet at La Cocina de Mama's in Shelbyville on Monday, January 10 at 11:30am. Please let Rita know if you will be attending.

THANK YOU

I would like to pass on a special 'thank you' to all the council members who served during my tenure as president. The period was challenging, contending with the Covid-19 virus, to say the least. There was much, blessed work done behind the scenes that many times went unnoticed- thank you. May the Lord continue to bless you and keep you. John

Dear Family and Friends, *of Holy Cross*

Christmas 2021

"For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, ... and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Prince of Peace."

What a gift we were given. How Serene and I pray that this gift will bring you much joy not only this Christmas, but all the days of the new year, namely, 2022.

Serene and I continue to take one day at a time. In October and November, she found herself enjoying leading a Women's Bible study on Wednesday mornings. Her lymphoma is inactive and her rheumatoid arthritis is trying to slow her down. She has a pacemaker that needed a new battery this November. The first one lasted for nine years. Her doctor says she is good for another 9 years.

I had cataract surgery this year. What a blessing that was. My night driving certainly has improved. I only preached once this year and had the honor of officiating Brian's oldest son, Matthew and his fiancé, Rachel Bachman's wedding ceremony October 16.

Our children and grandchildren are all doing fine. Our youngest daughter, Amy, is serving as the principal of Suburban Bethlehem School in Fort Wayne, IN. Covid really continues to be a challenge. But the Lord has certainly given her the strength to make bold decisions that are blessing the children.

Serene and I enjoy reading. Our daughter, Sara, sent me a book called "We Will Not Be Silenced," by Erwin W. Lutzer. I would like to share just a few paragraphs from page 250 of the book.

"It's easy for the gospel to get lost in a social justice-driven world. Let us remember that **the gospel** is not what we can do for Jesus, but **what Jesus has done for us**. We must tell this generation that social justice, even at its best, is not the gospel."

"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Let us resolve to share the gospel and live it without shame.

May we all continue to keep our eyes on Jesus, no matter what the cost.

Although you may not know this hymn, namely #372 (LSB), I like the words of verse 6 which reads:

"The world may hold her wealth and gold;
But thou, **my heart, keep Christ as thy true treasure.**
To Him hold fast until at last
A crown be thine and honor in full measure."

May this letter find you in good health, not only physically but also spiritually.

Have a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In His Love,
Nancy + Serene



Thank you to Kathy Adams for organizing the ingathering for A Loving Choice Pregnancy Center again this year. Thank you also to all who donated baby items. ALC which is a 501c3 nonprofit offers services free of charge to anyone experiencing an unplanned pregnancy and / or who needs peer counseling, pregnancy tests, baby clothing and items, food and formula, diapers, classes in Parenting, Bible Study and Homemaking, Abstinence information., Adoption referrals, Male Mentoring or Post Abortion Recovery.

They are located at: 7121 Henry Clay Street in the back of the same building as Operation Care.

Thank you to everyone who contributed so generously to The ingathering for A Loving Choice. It is always so heartwarming to see the generosity of our church family. They were extremely appreciative and I think they were surprised by the quantity of our donation. Thank you so much. Kathy



Ladies Lunch Out December 7, 2021 at the Bell House in Shelbyville.

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



Thanks to Steven Willis (See Genesis 6-8)

01-14-2011

YOU KNOW YOU'RE A LUTHERAN WHEN...

- The third service each Sunday is coffee hour.
- Potluck dinners are your favorite indoor sport.
- You ask for "A Mighty Fortress" on the love song request line.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The flower chart has been updated for 2022. Please pencil in the date in which you will be providing flowers for the altar and fill out a form, located below the chart, with the information you would like to have printed in the bulletin. Please leave the form in the pocket provided, also located, beneath the chart.



LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

Lutheran Hour Ministries is a Christian outreach ministry supporting churches worldwide in its mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nation—and the Nations to Church*. Lutheran Hour Ministries produces Christian radio and TV programming for broadcast, as well as Internet and print communications, dramas, music, and outreach materials, to reach the unchurched in more than 30 countries. LHM's flagship program **The Lutheran Hour**, is the world's longest-running Christian outreach radio program. It airs Sundays at 9am on 102.7FM. For information, visit www.lhm.org (<http://www.lhm.org>)

BOOK CLUB

Nothing is set in stone as far as meeting times, but if members wish to participate, we are going to read 1st and 2nd Maccabees, as they pertain to Hannukah. I have attached a study guide that can be used as you are going through the books. The books themselves can easily be accessed in pdf format just by Googling them. If anyone needs help accessing materials or wants to know more about meeting up to discuss the readings, please contact Shelah using either her email or text messaging listed below.

1-and-2-maccabees.pdf (biblesociety.org.uk)

Shelah Shreve

sesme@bellsouth.net 502-640-4293

LUTHERAN HOUR PROJECT CONNECT

The booklets we have on the turning display are on-line, several of them in audio format so you can listen while doing other things. It's a great way to get solid Bible-based content in a digital way.

Christmas Poinsettias

Our beautiful Christmas Poinsettias given to the glory and honor of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose birthday we celebrate, were provided by the following...

Rev. Daniel & Alena Guagenti & family—2 poinsettias in celebration of Nate and Hannah's baptismal birthdays.

Rutledge Family— 1 poinsettia in celebration of the Glory of God.

David & Lori Franke— 1 poinsettia in memory of loved ones.

Charlie & Brenda Moody— 2 Poinsettias in celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Kathy Adams— 2 poinsettias in memory of loved ones and in honor of family.

John & Merrie Feole— 2 poinsettias in memory of loved ones and in celebration of birth of Christ.

Cindy Alvano— 2 poinsettias in memory of Richard Van Evera and in honor of Gloria Nielsen.

Shelley Hermann— 1 poinsettia in memory of Bart Helmus.

Barb Eaton— 1 poinsettia in memory of departed loved ones.

Mark & Marilyn Murray— 1 poinsettia in memory of tornado victims.

LIFE QUOTE

"The world needs your voice to declare Jesus' words of eternal life. The world needs your voice to declare God's value of life in all of its stages. The world needs your voice to declare God's convictions born of His Word. The world needs your voice to declare that God's word of forgiveness purchased with the blood of Jesus extends to all of us sinners, including those who have chosen abortion. The world needs your voice!"

Rev. David Eibel, Living Word Lutheran Church, Grapevine, Texas –

"A "LIFE QUOTE" FROM LUTHERANS FOR LIFE-WWW.LUTHERANSFORLIFE.ORG

KNOW YOUR BIBLE



Tearful Prophet

What prophet of the Old Testament is known as the "weeping prophet"?

Look for the answer in the February's Newsletter
December's Answer: Jeremiah (see Jer. 9:1)

Heartfelt
THANKS
TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

SUNDAY	ACOLYTE	READER	USHERS	CLEAN	NURSERY	ALTAR GUILD
January 2	Gabriel Guagenti	David Franke	Alex VanPelt Charlie Adams	Don Williams Bob Myers	Danielle Themer	Rita Whitehouse Cindy Alvano
January 9	Nathaniel Guagenti	Charlie Moody	Corrie Brian Greg Rutledge	Theresa Tippet Jennifer Harrod	Brenda Moody	No Communion
January 16	David Themer	David Themer	Cindy Alvano John Feole	Roxanne Pontius Guagenti family	Merrie Feole	Jennifer Harrod Cindy Alvano
January 23	Eden Guagenti	Nancy Kovach	Don Saltzman Bob Myers	Dave Pontius Don Saltzman	Anita Themer	No Communion
January 30	Brenyn Botkins	David Franke	Charlie Moody Rita Whitehouse	Charlie Adams	Suzanne Rutledge	Brenda Moody Cindy Alvano
February 6	Gabriel Guagenti	Charlie Moody	Alex VanPelt Charlie Adams	Franke family	Danielle Themer	Rita Whitehouse Karen Hite

If you cannot serve on the appointed day, please call someone to serve in your place. Thank you!

2021 Christmas and Year End Thanks go to...

- All who faithfully serve as church officers, board members, committee members, trustees and representatives to various organizations.
- Max and Danielle Themer for providing Sunday School material during the year.
- All who purchased a poinsettia for Christmas and lilies at Easter to decorate our sanctuary.
- All the faithful people who cleaned the church this year.
- All who planted flowers, mowed the grass, trimmed trees and shrubs, mulched, weeded and took care of the brush pile.
- Lori Franke for all the wonderful music she has provided us during our worship services.
- Isaac, Eden, and Gabriel Guagenti for playing the preludes and postludes during our Christmas Eve service.
- All who purchased flowers to beautify our sanctuary this year.
- John Feole for organizing the Trick or Treat and for those who donated candy for the event.
- Those who talked to visitors and made them feel welcome.
- Alena Guagenti for handling our prayer chain and those who prayed for people who are sick and in need.
- Our acolytes, readers, ushers, soloists, worship assistants, technical assistants, altar guild, we thank you.
- Rita Whithouse for organizing the Ladies Lunch Out.
- Everyone who helped the church this year with special offerings.
- Jim Weed for the beautiful stain glass artwork he has made and donated to the church.
- Pastor Guagenti for leading the Adult Bible Studies, Jr. Confirmation, and Adult Information classes.
- Pastor Andy Guagenti for assisting Pastor Guagenti on the YouTube videos and for preaching on Sundays.
- Nancy Guagenti for leading the women's Bible study this year.
- All those who provided transportation for our shut-ins to and from the church for services, functions and shopping especially, Pastor Guagenti, Merrie Feole, Bob Myers, Jennie Shreve and Greg and Suzanne Rutledge.
- John Feole and the church council for faithfully leading our congregation.
- Shelah Shreve for organizing the monthly Book Club.
- All who volunteer in the nursery.
- For the Ladies who made and distributed Easter Baskets to our shut-ins.
- Corrie Brian organizing Helping Hands.
- John Feole who volunteers to do maintenance on the furnaces each year with his brother, Chris.
- Dave Themer, John Feole and Mike Carlson for the maintenance on the lawn mowers.
- John Feole, Dave Themer, and Jennifer Harrod for their work with getting the new roof on the church and also on the A-frame.
- Kathy Adams for organizing the ALC ingathering at Christmas.
- All of those who did maintenance in and around the church.
- Bob Myers, our jack of all trades, who also takes care of the recycling within the church.
- Charlie Schufer for making the house number pedestals and for the new American flag and flag pole which he erected himself.
- The seniors for their organizing of the food box and donations. For Charlie Schufer for building the food box.
- All who helped with sanitizing and organizing during this COVID-19 year.
- All of you for the many things you do without being asked. We have accomplished so much by pitching in and working together especially during this difficult year.

We hope that we have not forgotten to thank anyone. If we have please forgive us, but the Lord knows who you are and the work that you do. We appreciate all your willingness to help in whatever service you perform.

Thank you and may the Lord continue to bless you as you use your gifts to serve HIM.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

January 2022

'Tis More Blessed to Give Than to Receive

"In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " (Acts 20:35)

And indeed, it is. Does this not strike a chord that resonates in us all? Which of us can't recall the look of surprise and thanks for the Christmas gifts that we labored to give to those whom we love? And the joy written on their face when that gift is received with thanksgiving means more than all the gifts we have received. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Our Lord knew this because He practiced it. He gave of Himself – sparing not even His life in death – in order to give us back to our Father in heaven. He knew that in giving you get more because joy is multiplied in giving. The one who receives and the one who gives both rejoice in what is given and received. And, what is more, the one who receives only wants to give back to the one who gave so generously in thanksgiving.

So it is with our tithes and offerings in church. We want to give because we have received from God all that we are and all that we have. Our giving does not originate in what we must do to earn God's favor. We have God's favor because of His gift of His Son, given through Word and Sacrament. Thus, we are made free from the compulsion of giving so that our tithes and offering are freely given in thanksgiving for what God has so generously given to us.

Why then does the church struggle to make budgets? Why does the church always seem stretched so thin when it is the place where God continually gives us His forgiveness of sins? Why does the church struggle when God, out of love for us, generously pours out His grace and mercy?

It is because we are sinners. Our fallen nature makes us selfish and miserly. It leads us to believe that we can have our cake and eat it, too. Because of sin, we want God's grace and mercy; we want His blessings of body and soul. But we don't want to share it with those around us. We want to remain comfortable in our own self-contained, neat, and tidy lives – without the headaches of loving those around us by helping them in their time of need.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
"Remember that God has placed you in a church, not only to receive His grace and mercy, but to press His eternal and temporal blessings into service to your neighbor.

Your tithes and offerings ensure that those around you have a pastor to preach the life-saving and life-giving Word of God. They ensure that the lights, heat, and air-conditioning are working. They ensure there is water for Holy Baptism as well as bread and wine for Holy Communion. They even ensure that your pastor has food and clothing and presents for his own family. The gifts of God are immeasurable. They multiply and redound to everyone's good as the fish and loaves in the feeding of the five thousand.

So, remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And remember the joy that attended the gifts you gave at Christmas. This same joy attends your gifts to the church.



SHARING THE POWERFUL GOSPEL!

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Every Sunday
Bible Study and Sunday School-9:45am
Divine Service-11:00am

JANUARY NEWSLETTER 2022



The Epiphany of Our Lord
January 6, 2022