



Cross Currents

January 2021



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150 Days in the Psalms

*"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
Give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever;" Psalm 136:1-3*

Congratulations, dear friends, you have (almost) successfully made it to the new year! Soon 2020 will be over and we will be on to 2021. Out with the old and in with the new as they say. More importantly you have successfully made it through all 150 psalms, a feat that many people have not accomplished. Lutheran theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer says that "Whenever the Psalter is abandoned, an incomparable treasure vanishes from the Christian church. With its recovery will come unsuspected power."

You have now found this incomparable treasure and I hope you will keep it in your heart and at your side at all times to use whenever the adversary rears his ugly head. Dietrich Bonhoeffer knew the power of these Psalms all too well, having been part of the Confessing Church which opposed the rise and reign of Nazism in Germany and eventually being sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp where he would later be killed by hanging. He and his unshakable faith are a testament to the power that the Psalms have in the life of Christian. Dietrich knew that these Psalms were given to him and to all Christians to pray as their own.

They are the Word of God and as such they have power through the Spirit to change the heart of the believer and comfort him when his life is at its worst. The psalms point us in our time of suffering to the suffering that our dear Savior endured on the cross for us. In this context we know for absolute certainty that God is merciful and loves us above all else because He sent His son to suffer for our sake. To quote Dietrich Bonhoeffer again, "With such a prayer we stand in the center of the New Testament, in the community of the cross of Jesus Christ."

Bonhoeffer wasn't the only Lutheran theologian who relied on the psalms for his comfort during the storms of life. Martin Luther absolutely loved the psalms, though you already know this after reading his commentary every single day for the last 150 days. When his father died in 1930, Luther fell into despair, writing to his friend Phillip Melactheon that the

Continued on page 2

death of his father Hans has “shaken me in the innermost parts of my being, so that seldom if ever have I despised death as much as I do now.”. Another one of Luther's friends, Viet Dietrich, wrote that “After two days he had recovered although it was very hard. While reading the letter, he said to me, ‘So my father is dead.’ Then he promptly clutched his Psalter, went into his room, and wept so profusely that the next day his head hurt. “What more did Luther need then to turn to the psalms in his moment of pain? The psalms were a constant refuge for Luther during his life and they should be for us as well, for they point us to our dear and loving Savior.

I can't guarantee you that this coming new year will be a better year for us. I'm sure for a lot of people it will be but for others they may face unimaginable hardships and suffering. It is impossible for us to know what the future has in store for us. There are no constants in life except for our heavenly Father and what His Son did for us that first good Friday and the first easter morning. As Psalm 136 so rightfully tells us, *“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.”*

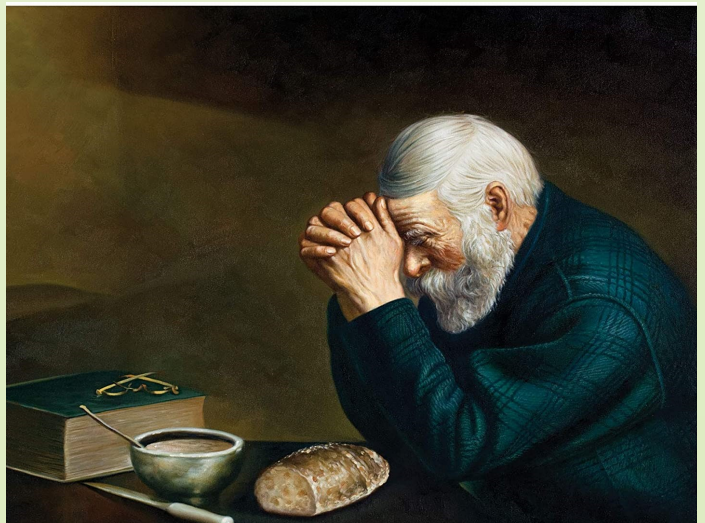
Indeed, the world will eventually fade away, but God's love is steadfast, and it endures forever. The mountains may come crashing down, the seas may rise and cover the land, but none of that can take away from the love that God has for us in Christ Jesus. May we continually give thanks to the Lord by remaining in psalms daily. They are a great treasure and a sturdy weapon against the evil one. Use them! Pray them! Learn from them! God has given you a blueprint on how to pray; whether it be in joy or sadness, peace or anxiety, or in thanksgiving or in pain. The psalms were written for you to use in your daily lives as a constant reminder of the hope that we have in Jesus. I pray that you will find comfort and joy in them much like Bonhoeffer and Luther did in their lives. It has been a great pleasure to be able read through the psalms with you these past 150 days! I will leave you with a couple quotes from Martin Luther about the importance of the psalms in our daily lives as Christians.

“Every Christian who would abound in prayer and piety ought...to make the Psalter his manual... everything that a pious heart can desire to ask in prayer, it here finds Psalms and words to match, so aptly and sweetly, that no man...nor all the men in the world — shall be able to devise forms of words so good and devout...In my opinion, any man who will but make a trial in earnest of the Psalter...will very soon bid the other pious prayers adieu, and say, “Ah, they have not the sap, the strength, the heart, the fire, that I find in the Psalter; they are too cold, too hard, for my taste!”

“The Psalter should be precious to us if only because it most clearly promises the death and resurrection of Christ, and describes his kingdom, and the nature and standing of all Christian people. It could well be entitled a “Little Bible” since everything contained in the entire Bible is beautifully and briefly comprehended and compacted into...a Manual. It seems to me as if the Holy Ghost had been please to take on himself the trouble of putting together a short Bible...touching the whole of Christianity...in order that they who are unable to read the whole Bible may nevertheless find almost the whole sum comprehended in one little book...the Psalter is the very paragon of books.”

May you all have a very blessed New Year and may God continue to shower you with His grace and blessings in Christ Jesus our Lord.

-Rev. Andrew Munding, Rev Matthew Schettler
Holy Cross Lutheran Church Concord, CA
Resurrection Lutheran Church Chicago, IL

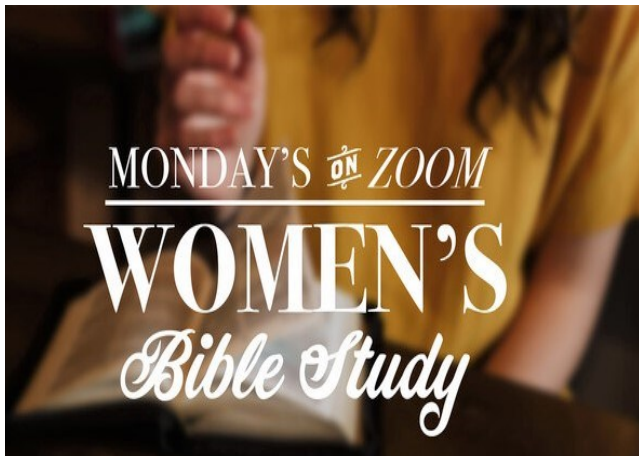


January Holy Cross Bible Studies

Adult Sunday School, 1pm, Zoom

Join us for Sunday School with Eric!

The link is the same & is in the
Friday Announcements.



Monday Women's Bible Study, Zoom

We will resume our study on
Monday, January 11, 10-11:30am.

The link is the same &
is in the Friday Announcements.

Questions? Contact Annaliesa,
annalialiedtke@gmail.com or 827-3385

HCMKK

Holy Cross Men's KaffeeKlatsch



**Mandatory ZOOM formations at 0830
hours on the 3rd Thursday of every
month unless otherwise scheduled.**

**The article below was published in our January 2020 Cross Currents.
The Vision Committee feels it is worth repeating...
all are possible, with or without COVID restrictions!**

New Years Resolutions

At New Years it is traditional that people make resolutions about positive changes in their lives; possibly more healthy eating, more exercise, or revitalizing relationships. As Christians, this is a great time to make our own resolutions to feed our spiritual growth and exercise our witness muscles. Here are ten ideas for resolutions from your Vision Committee.

1. Participate in more worship opportunities, whether weekly services or special festival services.
2. Join a Bible study, and share your ideas for new Bible studies.
3. Participate in the weekly prayer group, in person or virtually.
4. Check on a church family member or neighbor who may be in need.
5. Use Portals Of Prayer for a daily personal or family devotion.
6. Participate in fellowship activities with your church family and guests.
7. Share your time and talents with your church family.
8. Assist in your community and with those in need.
9. Reach out to relatives, local or distant.
10. All of the above.

Blessings to you for the New Year!

To Our Holy Cross Family, a BIG THANK YOU for all the support, words of encouragement and love shown to us during this past year. Your cards, phone calls, text messages, notes, etc. have all been so very much appreciated. It is such a blessing to have a wonderful support group to get one through times that are uncertain, difficult, sad and yet also very exciting and new. God has lead us to this new place and we know we are where we need to be.

We wish you all at Holy Cross God's peace, comfort, safety, joy, and love as we enter this New Year.
God bless you all, Scott and Idalene



1/7	Brittany	1/24	Addison
1/15	Josh	1/26	Grace
1/16	Christl	1/27	Britney
1/17	Ricky	1/28	Marc
1/22	Pat	1/29	Samantha
1/24	Bill	1/31	Bob



1/10	Peter & Liz
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WoHC (Women of Holy Cross)



As this year comes to an end, let's reflect on the words below, as well as the emotions they bring out in us.

“2020”

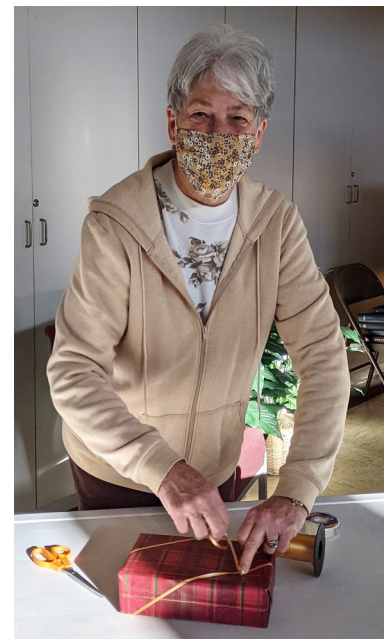
This year has been marked with reflection and change;
some days feel good and others feel strange.
We've learned to work differently;
and love more unconditionally.
We try to tune out the stress;
but sometimes life still feels like a mess.
We find ways to turn negatives into good;
and learn new skills that we thought we never could.
We find ways to travel to less congested places;
and we meet our friends with covered faces.
Hopefully this year has been filled with opportunity;
and we've tried to exercise and strengthen our immunity.
2020 hasn't been like we expected;
but we've found new ways to stay connected.
Hug your kids and enjoy the outdoors;
worry less about the very small chores.
Things will get better because they usually do;
enjoy what you love and learn something new.
Don't forget to pray and always be kind;
try to stay positive and learn to unwind.
The story has been written, good wins in the end;
prayers for all my family and friends.

(Craig Alter, Mercy Health marketing manager from Cincinnati, OH)



WoHC (Women of Holy Cross)

Our congregation was happy to once again support LSS Angel Tree Holiday Gift Drive. This program offers the opportunity to create a happy, joyful holiday season for children, families and former foster youth in their supportive housing programs. Here are before & after pictures. Thank you Melarie for coordinating! And thank you to all who contributed gifts and cash!





**Lutheran
Social Services**
OF NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA

December 23, 2020

Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Attn. Melarie Seidel
1092 Alberta Way
Concord, CA 94521

Dear Melarie and Holy Cross Lutheran Church members,

Thanks to your generous congregation, Christmas was a bit merrier this year for 50 children or youth in our supportive housing programs in Concord and Sacramento.

Using stable housing as our blueprint for success, LSS assists more than 3,800 individuals of *all ages*, every day, in seven Northern California counties as they rebuild their lives, confidence and dignity after experiencing homelessness. Many share a common history - time in foster care or long-term poverty - that is further complicated by physical and mental health issues.

We appreciate your support thoughts and support in this work. You are part of the solution to keep individuals housed and on the path to becoming productive members of society.

Sincerely,

Stephanie

Stephanie Casenza
Director of Development

*You all are truly
angels!
Happy New
Year*



Well, another first in 2020: Sunday (12/13) worship in the parking lot during rain! ☔
There were light, steady showers. It wasn't cold (inside the car anyway 😊).

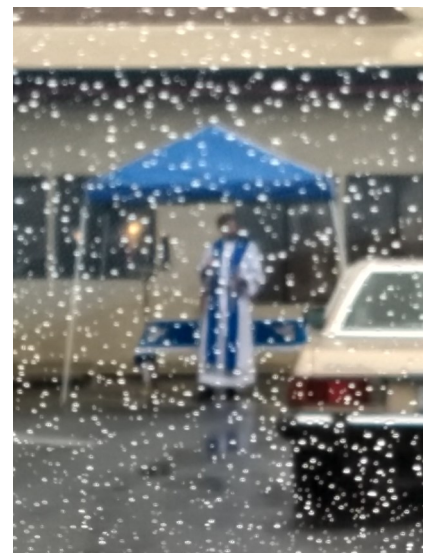
*No, in all these things we are more than
Conquerors through him who loved us.
Romans 8:37*



Our views of Pastor Mundinger!



Pastor's view of his congregation!



Our First Candlelight Advent Service, 12/2. Yes, it was cold.



Lights in trees & on the parish hall, candles on tables, & luminaries lighting the courtyard walkway.

Pastor Mundinger wrote: "It still amazes me just how adaptive this congregation has been to all the changes and adversities they have had to face this year in California. The Devil can try his best to hinder God's children from hearing God's Word but much to his chagrin they are more than willing to sit out in the cold huddle up in blankets so that they can hear the sweet words of the Gospel. ".

We had our **third & last Advent Midweek Candlelight Service** on 12/16 in the courtyard. We hoped to finish before the predicted rain, however during the last half of Pastor's sermon, we had a light shower. Then it cleared as he finished!



Pastor continued the theme: Theophanies Of Our Lord. This week he shared the story of King Nebuchadnezzar, Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego. When we go through difficulties, remember we are not the first to do so. There are many examples in the Scriptures that can help us. We can learn from this story, to be strengthened to endure & overcome just as they did. God will come through for us. Even if the entire world is destroyed, it is not the end.

Our Christmas Eve service. Not the normal & that's ok. We still can gather together to hear the Word & celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Light dawns in the darkness for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous. Psalm 112:4



Pastor Mundinger as he is walking out to start the worship service.



The congregation bundled up and ready to hear the Christmas Eve message.

More views of our Christmas Eve service.



THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD (CHRISTMAS DAY)

December 25, 2020




**"The Word was made flesh
and dwelt among us,
and we have seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son from the Father,
full of grace and truth."**

(This is a screenshot of part of the Christmas Day sermon video taken on my iPhone.
Not bad quality. And shows Pastor's enthusiasm for Christmas Day!)

Our Advent wreath. This was taken on Christmas Eve, after lighting the final, center, Christ candle!



January 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 OFC CLOSED 	2 9am Vision Mtg
3 9:30am Worship Service/Parking Lot 1pm Adult Sunday School Zoom	4 OFC CLOSED 9-9:45am Women's Coffee Zoom	5 11a Prayer Group, Sanctuary	6	7	8	9
10 9:30am Worship Service/Parking Lot Facility Committee Mtg (Zoom?) 1pm Adult Sunday School Zoom	11 OFC CLOSED 9-9:45am Women's Coffee Zoom 10-11:30am Ladies Bible Study Zoom	12 11a Prayer Group, Sanctuary	13	14	15	16
17 9:30am Worship Service/Parking Lot 1pm Adult Sunday School Zoom	18 OFC CLOSED 9-9:45am Women's Coffee Zoom 10-11:30am Ladies Bible Study Zoom 6:30pm Council Mtg (Zoom)	19 11a Prayer Group, Sanctuary	20	21 8:30am HC Men's Kaffeeklatsch Zoom	22	23
24 9:30am Worship Service/Parking Lot 1pm Adult Sunday School Zoom	25 OFC CLOSED 9-9:45am Women's Coffee Zoom 10-11:30am Ladies Bible Study Zoom	26 11a Prayer Group, Sanctuary	27	28	29	30
31 9:30am Worship Service/Parking Lot 1pm Adult Sunday School Zoom						

cl=choir loft, C=Conference Room, E=Ed Bldg., PH=Parish Hall, L=Library, ws=wing room

Holy Cross Lutheran

Church, LCMS

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Concord, CA 94521

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Elders: Bill Riechmann, John Coyne,
Eric Roman, Herb Neumann

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editor@holycrossconcord.org

Sunday Worship Schedule:

Sunday Service **9:30AM**

Adult Sunday School 1PM Zoom

Youth Bible Study 11AM (on hold)

Sunday School 11AM (on hold)

Week Day Bible Study Schedule:

Monday (Ladies) 10AM

Wednesday (Adult) on break during Advent

*****Above subject to change due to COVID*****

Bulletin & Cross Currents Publication Deadline:

Bulletin: Noon, Tuesday

February 2021 Cross Currents: January 22, 2020