

ANNUAL REPORT

— 2018 —



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

A message from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Dear siblings in Christ,

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully. As communities of Jesus that nurture life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world, we are confident about who we are in Christ and what God is calling us to do. Whether worshiping wherever two or more are gathered, engaging in lively conversations about faith, or rolling up our sleeves and getting to work, we strive to share God's grace and love in Christ for all people and creation. This reflects the vitality we find in Jesus Christ, our own spiritual life and our desire to participate in what God is doing today.



Within each community of Jesus there are leaders who strive to model an attitude of servanthood, trustworthiness, humility, patience and listening first while striving to work with others in healthy ways. These leaders teach all ages, motivate believers, build consensus, share a vision, discern direction and facilitate action. Their attention is focused on growing disciples who are sent into their daily life to love and serve others as friends, neighbors, parents, citizens and workers. Together we recognize the importance of growing disciples and multiplying leaders who serve inside your congregation and beyond your walls.

As our congregations plan their work for the coming year and how to use the resources God has entrusted to them, I invite you all to think about the relationships that bring you vitality and the leaders you nurture for God's mission in the world. While you make many decisions, remember you are not alone. We are all partners in sharing the gospel. Together, by God's grace, we can do what God is calling us to. May you go forth to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.

Serving together in Christ's name,



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart, and with all
your soul, and with all your mind,
and with all your strength.

Mark 12:30

ANNUAL MEETING

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Libertyville, IL 60048

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January 27, 2019

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VIII. Adjournment and Prayer

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES
HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
Libertyville, IL
January 28, 2018

Call to Order

Church Council President Katie Ormson called the meeting to order at 10:20 am. Pastor Sally opened the meeting with a prayer. Katie explained that we would be conducting the meeting according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Agenda

Katie displayed the agenda and asked for a motion from the floor to accept the agenda. The motion was made by Sarah Accettura and seconded by Mark Fedyk. The motion carried and the agenda was approved.

Appointment of Tellers

Katie explained that if a written ballot was necessary, tellers would be necessary. Katie appointed Judy Frank-Gonwa, Jessica Brown, Angie Lindsey and Bill Miksch as tellers.

Approval of the Minutes from the January 29, 2017 Meeting

Sarah Accettura moved to accept the minutes of the congregational meeting of January 29, 2017 as presented in the annual report on page 3 and the motion was seconded by Mark Fedyk. There was no discussion or change noted: motion carried.

New Business

Election of Council Members

Since Katie is up for re-election as Council President, Eric Christensen presided over the election of new Council Members. Eric asked for a motion from the floor to start the discussion of candidates for the church council. Gary Franzen made the motion to accept the discussion for the election of council members and Jen Christensen seconded the motion.

The constitution of this congregation states that members are elected for a three year term and can serve no more than two consecutive terms. Currently Angie Lindsey, Judith Frank-Gonwa, Katie Ormson and Lori Fedyk's terms are concluding. All have tirelessly served the congregation. Katie and Lori are eligible for a second three year term. Eric explained that two addition candidates have been identified to fill the spots vacated by Angie and Judy. These candidates are Andy Eidson and Rich Yocius. Eric opened the floor for additional nominees, and there were no additional nominations. Eric closed the nomination process and asked for motion from the floor to approve the slate of candidates as presented for election to the church council for 2018. Carole Kenney made the motion to approve the candidates as presented and Dan Accettura seconded the motion. All approved by voice of acclamation. Motion carried.

Katie introduced Steve Oelschlager, Director of Engagement and Generosity. Steve thanked the congregation for making Holy Cross the vibrant, thriving, remarkable congregation that it is. Steve explained that although this is the annual business meeting, it is also a celebration when we come together. It is a celebration for all the ministries that happen as we try to live up to God's call to help make the world a better place. It is inspiring to look through the annual report and see all the ways Holy Cross is able to touch lives, inside the congregation, and beyond. As we try to make sense of our complicated lives when the congregation meets we also celebrate being on this journey together, supporting each other, and recognizing that we are all trying to learn from Jesus how we might taste the abundant life that Jesus promises to us.

Presentation and Approval of the 2018 Proposed Ministry Budget

Katie asked for a motion from the floor to place the budget into consideration prior to the proposed budget presentation. Val Maxwell made the motion to place the budget under consideration and Chuck Chianelli seconded the motion.

Eric Christensen, church council Vice President and member of the finance committee, presented key points on the 2018 proposed budget. Eric explained all of the generosity of the congregation is represented here. We bring ourselves, our time, and our possessions to serve and support Holy Cross. Eric thanked the

congregation for giving their resources to causes and moments that matter: from moments of grace with a veteran, to packing backpacks, donating boots for kids, Sunday school, PADS, Winchester house services, decorating the sanctuary for Christmas, packing food for starving children, music ministry, and so many more. The congregation's gifts allow of these things to happen.

Eric stated the Church Operating report is on page 5 and a high-level summary is being presented. With a very strong December, Holy Cross ended the year in solid financial condition and with Total Receipts approximately 5.7% above 2016. We expect 2018 member contributions (church operating support) to come in slightly higher than 2017. Holy Cross isn't planning on any net receipts from Early Childhood Ministries (ECM), even though the operations from Celebration Childcare and Crossways preschool have had a positive net contribution in the last few years. The total receipts for 2018 are slightly less than 2017, and overall expenses are budgeted to be flat in comparison to the 2017 expenses. This includes a 2% cost of living increase, as recommended by the ELCA, for our office and pastoral staff. Given that we plan a zero-based budget (putting the non in non-profit) our planned receipts and expenses for 2018 are \$1,289,853.

In the Annual Report (pp 14-17), the other consolidated financial reports are listed. Eric also noted that the operating cash position was healthy at the end of the year (+\$23k vs the prior year) and the restricted cash balances continue to include a "Capital Replacement" account, which is funded from savings generated by the mortgage refinancing of 2014, and that now sits at \$72k. As a reminder, this fund is reserved for use on unexpected maintenance or replacement needs of Holy Cross's aging facilities. Eric explained to the congregation that like a lot of non-profits, most of those contributions come towards the end of the year, while expenses remain consistent from month to month.

Eric presented a slide that depicted the cumulative, net deficit for the whole year until December when Holy Cross makes it all up. Eric explained this is a common pattern for most churches. At Holy Cross, this typically bottoms out in August, but in 2017 it stayed low in November until December. Holy Cross budgets accordingly, which requires a cash reserve, but it does make things a little stressful at the beginning of December. Eric encouraged any sort of consistent month-to-month giving if possible. The easiest way to give consistently is to take advantage of online giving which spreads out giving throughout the year. This helps Holy Cross with cash-flow throughout the year. Currently Holy Cross has 100 households that have automated their giving. In 2017, about 40% of our member giving came in through online giving. Eric closed by asking for questions. David Norby pointed out the slide did not match the annual report but there were no questions. Katie then called for a vote to adopt the budget as presented. The congregation was in favor and responded "aye" and no one was opposed. The budget passed as presented.

Ministry Reports

Katie encouraged the congregation to read through the inspiring ministry reports on pages 6-13. These pages highlight the many pastoral acts as well as the many ways we celebrate living in Christ together. Katie asked for a motion to receive the reports as presented. Marge Stueckeman made the motion, and motion was seconded by Jennifer Christensen. All were in favor of the reports and none were opposed, so the motion carried.

Administrative Board and Ministry Board Reports

Katie noted that the Administrative Board and Ministry board reports began on page fourteen and run through page fifty-two. On these thirty-eight pages, an amazing number of people have contributed to all the things that happen during the "hour that has seven days" that is Holy Cross. These reports represent who we are as a congregation, how we share our gifts, time, and talents, and how we minister to people inside our walls, in our local community, and the broader global community. Katie appreciated how Holy Cross has continued to add to the ministries to meet the varied schedules of our congregational members: from Milestone Ministries, Saturday night services, and At the Table, as well as expanding our outreach with the first ecumenical Easter sunrise service and continuing with the interfaith service at Advocate Condell. From ministering to the very youngest at Celebration! Childcare to the adults attending the Free Spirit events, Holy Cross is making connections in the community. In 2017, Project Healing Waters increased its program offerings, and in the fall, we filled over 300 backpacks that were delivered to children at LSSI sponsored elementary schools. During the December FMSC MobilePack, we packed over half a million meals for Feed My Starving Children. These are all examples of our ministries and connections to the larger community.

On behalf of the staff and council, Katie thanked the congregation for its strength, leadership, involvement and generosity. Katie asked for questions and a typo was noted by Kat Meyer. Katie asked for a motion to accept

the administrative and ministry board reports as corrected Val Maxwell made the motion, and it was seconded by Jessica Brown; all in favor of the reports, no opposed motion carried.

Adjournment and Closing Prayer

Katie explained during the first half of 2017, Vicar Todd Wright finished his year with Holy Cross. He has since graduated from the seminary, been ordained, accepted a call, and has begun his ministry in Glasgow, Montana. Katie thanked Dan Accettura and the intern committee for helping guide Vicar Todd through his year with us.

Celebration! Childcare and CrossWays Preschool had another very successful year and Katie thanked Wayne Luplow, president of the ECM board and the other board members: Judy Frank-Gonwa, Kathy Pfister, Elizabeth Moy, Betsy Wells, Krystal Padfield, Rachelle Dio, Cara and David Heiser, Katy Hurvitz, Danelle Meyer, Karl Nygard, Jan Schmeiding and Pastor Sally. Katie also said a big thank you to Val Maxwell, head of ECM Marketing and her board: Kathy Pfister, Elizabeth Moy, Judy Frank-Gonwa, Kari Brown, Rachel Bliefneck and Pastor Sally.

Katie also thanked those in Christian Education leadership roles: Judy Frank-Gonwa, Felicia Brandt and Terry Berger. Also thanked were Dixon Brandt and Greg Kveton for providing IT and audio/visual support. Thank you to Tom Zombollo, Diane Gaines and Maria Roberts for filling in while staff members were out on medical leave.

A thank you to Mike Price, Tim Mahoney, and Dixon Brant for their work in the purchase and installation of the LED road sign as well as the work on the purchase and installation of the new security and alarm system that were installed in response to the 2016 break ins.

A thank you to the rest of the Church Council and Church officers including Mark Fedyk, Tom Miller, and Lisa Dunbar, Eric Christensen, Jessica Brown, Karl Nygard, Lori Fedyk, Barb Cannon, Mick Garrison, Bill Miksch, Beth Ann Koenemann, and Maria Roberts. A big thank you for six years of council service to Angie Lindsey and Judy Frank-Gonwa.

Katie asked if there were any more questions. None were noted. Then Katie asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Dave Kenney, and the second by Karl Nygard. All were in favor and none opposed. Congregation applauded.

Pastor Bob then thanked Jan Schmeiding for her years and years of service. Jan was presented with a quilting square and plaque.

Pastor Bob said a closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 10:48.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Dunbar

Ministry Reports

Pastoral Ministry

Rev. Dr. Robert A. Davis, Senior Pastor

Relevancy and Vitality...

With our personal lives always moving and recreating themselves around us, our need to handle change is unavoidable. When people are wrenched out of the relationships or situations in which they've grown comfortable, people often wonder if they will be up to the task of putting their world back together again. It is in these moments of being "undone" that there is an opportunity for the mystery of God's grace to become transformational in our life and our faith. The same is true for congregations in general and Holy Cross specifically.

Christianity has always been a religion that exists both in stark tension with its culture, and also in a process of adapting and translating the message to meet the needs of those who seek a new relationship with God. The point is that Christians living in any era have *always* needed to translate the message, whether it's for a new culture or a new generation. The tension between secular culture and the church waxes and wanes through history. Now, that tension seems to be at a breaking point. The world is just changing so quickly. There is not agreement on "one" particular path to respond to this changing reality.

Each congregation is unique, and Holy Cross is no exception. We enjoy a congregational culture of vitality expressed through our hospitality, compassion, and diversity of thought. However, our life together is not defined by spending our energies arguing over the vicissitudes of who is correct/incorrect or right/wrong, but, going deeper.

Being "church" in the 21st century means dealing with secular trends and historical shifts in the way we practice community. A great deal of energy, effort, and thoughtfulness is put into understanding the themes of relevancy and vitality and how they manifest themselves in a congregational setting. What we enjoy at Holy Cross as a community of believers does not happen by accident. The challenge in the 21st century for organized religion is that we dare not become more myopic in our views about what "church" is, should be, could be, or might be. This challenge may be a contributing factor to what Richard Rohr and George Barna hint at in some of their work.

Richard Rohr talks about organized religion behaving with "cosmetic piety." In other words, it is when faith communities look good on the surface, but lack real depth and complexity. He later comments, "belonging systems do not necessarily lead to transformation and in fact, they often become inoculation against transformation or a total substitute for it."

In addition, according to Christian pollster George Barna, a rapidly growing segment of the population is choosing not to be involved in organized religion of any flavor. He refers to this movement away from perceiving organized religion as a matter of pure conformity and expediency to being "passionately disinterested."

These ideas of "cosmetic piety" and "passionately disinterested" become a larger part of the conversation about what "church" is in this century.

In 2018, the church council has consistently wrestled with the idea that our focus at Holy Cross is not about what we want "from" our members; rather, it is what we want "for" our members. Church council is attentive to certain paradigms... mission and methodology; translation and transformation; and membership and engagement. Each month, we have conversations around ministry moments that embody these paradigms in specific congregational situations and experiences as we celebrate 2018 and dream for 2019.

Part of that larger conversation embraces the idea that our faith community and our life together matters. Whether you're thinking about this as a layperson or a rostered leader, know that Holy Cross lifts up each and every individual because they matter. However, organized religion and congregations need to be attentive to the major shifts that have happened in the past few decades and how postmodern people of faith perceive church and the role it plays in their lives. I think that if we ignore this new reality then we may not like the

unintended consequences of assuming that “status quo” is still viable. Here’s why.

There are many different strategies for Holy Cross to consider. For example, virtually everyone lives both a digital life and an analog one. And it serves no purpose to argue that one is superior to the other one. They’re simply different. The challenge is understanding the difference between the two. A healthy spiritual community in the next decade will take imaginative leaders who know a paradox exists, and choose to walk a fine line balancing the two extremes. This cannot be an either/or proposition. Relationally, it needs to be defined and understood as a both/and relationship.

Since the advent of the internet, people find real, substantive community online. I’ve personally witnessed how an online Twitter recovery community has flourished and offered people suffering from addiction a new resource they previously didn’t have. This is especially important for people who might not otherwise find a support group. There are groups for gardeners, prairie-restoration forums, muscle-car enthusiasts, virtual-spirituality meetings, or scheduled parenting chats. Just about anything you can dream up is online— both good, and unfortunately bad.

Another part of this larger conversation about new realities for organized religion has to do with how the perception of time and place have significantly shifted in the past thirty years. If we stick to the Sunday-at-our-building formula, we’re only going to see further decline in participation. We need to be open to new methodology as we practice integrity to our mission. Being creative and flexible in our methods supports an entrepreneurial spirit! Meeting in different places and at unusual times makes a statement that is willing to be present where people are. In theological terms, let the *kairos* seep into the *chronos* and see what happens.

These ongoing conversations at Holy Cross sometimes state the obvious, proclamation and teaching need to go hand-in-hand. But teaching without moving the heart turns very quickly into dry intellectualism. The latest neuroscience tells us that human beings actually tend to make decisions more on an emotional level than we’re even aware of. In the same stroke, preaching without substantive teaching can swiftly stray into emotionalism.

The new reality is that when we gather for worship in these postmodern days it is more a matter of the heart than it is the head.

We need to move people’s hearts! After all, just look at the parables of Jesus— did Jesus cite recent studies or lay out the facts to convince people? Or did Jesus share strange, disturbing-but-surprising stories that have managed to stay firmly embedded across multiple cultures throughout centuries? I believe you know the answer. Now it’s our turn to strike the right balance. In the next year, we need to continue to find a balanced approach to proclamation that will become more and more important in a world where the confusion of what’s fake and what’s real becomes increasingly blurred.

In the conversations I have with Holy Cross’ leadership, there is the strong belief that investing in our faith community and our life together is still of great value. I think face-to-face relationships in the coming decade will become even more valuable and precious than they have been in the past. I think that people still want and value social support that’s “real.”

In fact, face-to-face social support is a strong predictor of wellbeing and health. Perceived emotional support has been shown to protect against stressful life events linked to depression, while social isolation has been associated with the risk of depression in later life. Children and adolescents who spend an increasingly inequitable time devoted to screens experience reduced brain development, social skills, and develop other risky behaviors when compared to their peers who spend less plugged-in time. What’s more is that people need face-to-face relationships to expose them to people who think differently than them.

Throughout 2018, we attempted to provide a variety of opportunities for face-to-face relationships. The more ways that Holy Cross can find to interact with people and address the questions they continue to have for themselves, the more we will find common ground to encourage not just settle for self-directed spirituality, but also a spirituality for the community of believers. Our ministry repertoire has expanded to include many relationship group opportunities, e.g., Project Healing Waters, At the Table, MP3, etc.

In an online world dominated by echo chambers, we need to move outside of our comfort zone and actively listen to other voices. Diversity is a good thing— especially when spirituality is concerned. The “gathering of the like-minded” has especially plagued the church in first-world countries. Unfortunately, online activities have only exacerbated this issue. People thought the internet would become the great equalizer where all voices held value. Instead, in many ways, it’s driven many further into their own shells. Once again, creating a healthy spiritual community requires Holy Cross’ leadership to be attentive to how we navigate through these new realities. In the future, it will take more imagination and vision to choose to walk a fine line, balancing the extremisms of the 21st century.

The quality of engagement that Holy Cross provides when we actively participate in people’s lives recognizes that the path toward transformation will be different for every traveler (e.g. early childhood, children, youth, and adult ministries) while still honoring the need for transformation to be an integral part of the human experience. The theologian Bob Dylan once wrote, “If you’re not busy being born, you’re busy dying.”

To continue to enjoy a robust and vital congregational ministry, we need to pay attention to engaging people where they are at. We have our traditions. Tradition and the rich heritage of liturgy and a variety in our music ministries can remain without clouding the reason why we’re doing them together in the first place: engagement in people’s lives and offering meaning and purpose through service. The most engaged people, people who serve, give, invite, and who are in a community group, are the people for who their faith actually means something beyond simply “going to heaven” or trying not to feel guilty. I think that as we move through the 21st century, the most engaged churches will continue to thrive and serve as an outlet for people to create community.

When I read the 2018 annual report, it brings to mind the significant moments and experiences that we share. The statistics and documentation do not always do justice to the substance of our life together. As followers of Jesus today, we must continually translate the message of the Good News, so that it’s comprehensible and relatable for all. I appreciate the depth and breadth of the ministries that we enjoy locally, nationally, and globally. Because of these ministry moments, we continually strive to keep the focus on “why” we behave the way we do. As we attempt to be faithful, the most promising reason for why we do what we do is I believe that Jesus gives purpose and meaning to Holy Cross’ existence. We embrace the relevancy and vitality of our ministries when we remember Jesus’ teachings that love is valued for its own sake and when we serve others we find ourselves.

Thank you all for another amazing year of ministry. 2018 was filled with moments of joy and sadness, fears and hope, opportunities and blessings, and of course, love. What happens at Holy Cross is attributable directly to the individuals and families that share their interests, passions, and gifts. For the past 28 years, I have been blessed to be part of this community of faith and for us to walk daily with each other and God. I appreciate your support, and I never take for granted the trust we share with one another.

On a personal note, Nancy and our family keep me grounded and energized so that I may have the privilege of serving Holy Cross as faithfully as I can.

God bless us and encourage us as we continue to navigate daily life and compose lives of faith.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Dr. Robert A. Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style and includes a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rev. Dr. Robert A. Davis, Senior Pastor

Pastoral Ministry
Rev. Sally Hanson, Associate Pastor

A Year of Gratitude...

For many folks, the beginning of the year brings an opportunity to reflect back and look forward. Some have even developed the practice of having a word or a phrase that helps to focus the year. As I look back on 2018 at Holy Cross, the word that overwhelmingly comes to mind is gratitude.

In 2018, there were an incredible number of things to be grateful for as Holy Cross continued to be a beacon of hope and light in the community. We have enriched the lives of students through our Early Childhood Ministries, Sunday School, confirmation, and high school. This year brought the ELCA Youth Gathering where 50 participants from Holy Cross were able to experience living faith among 35,000 other ELCA Youth and chaperones. It was a marvelous experience for which we are incredibly grateful.

We give gratitude to the strength provided for the faith journey through our relational groups, retreats, discussion and study groups, and music opportunities. We are blessed and grateful to inspire one another through relationship with each other, God, and the greater community.

We are grateful to be known in the community as a place of generosity and compassion as we serve our neighbor. This year, Holy Cross continued to serve the community across the spectrum of food and feeding programs, including ELCA World Hunger, COOL Food Pantry, and a Feed My Starving Children MobilePack. We provided special meals for those a part of COOL Transitional Housing, and gifts for the children to enjoy at Christmas.

Food is not the only place we serve our neighbor. The effort of serving runs deeply in the heart of Holy Cross as we utilize a broad spectrum approach of serving areas of housing, creation care, music, relationship building, education, faith formation, community and more.

There is so much to be grateful for that one almost does not know where to start!

As you peruse the Annual Report, join me in gratitude for each ministry, the gifts that you bring to enable these ministries, and your discipleship.

But most importantly, I am grateful for you and God placing you in the life of Holy Cross during 2018.

Grateful to be in ministry with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Sally Hanson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Sally Hanson, Associate Pastor

Council President's Report

Katie Ormson

At the Holy Cross Council member retreat last winter, Pastor Bob challenged all of the council members to work to make "connections" during the upcoming year. Just to take a few minutes to reach out to someone and start a conversation. To make a connection with a church member or visitor with no agenda other than to deepen or elevate a relational culture at Holy Cross. As a good Lutheran introvert that I am, the idea sort of made my stomach flip. We were given the challenge with the opportunity to share our experiences at monthly council meetings. Over the year, I came to enjoy the challenge and was able to learn from and share with so many people who enter the doors of Holy Cross. It also became one of the highlights of the council meetings, as council members took to the challenge and engaged with others to share about the wonderful connections that were made. I would like to challenge all members of Holy Cross to reach out and find ways to make connections with others.

We were able to make connections with our own members through programs such as At the Table, Bible studies, MP3, Grounded in Grace, prayer ministries, and Milestone Ministries.

We were able to make connections with people in our community with programs such as Project Healing Waters, COOL, PADS, Waukegan to College, Quilting and More, and the Global Leadership Summit.

We were able to make connections to people in the broader community with programs such as Feed My Starving Children, ELCA World Hunger, the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, T□ and AMMPARO.

I thank you all for the many generous and caring ways you shine the light of Christ into our world as members of Holy Cross. I hope 2019 brings many opportunities for each of you to make connections in our world through the prism of our loving God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Our Early Childhood Ministries (ECM) experienced another year of robust growth both during the school year as well as its summer programs. Thank you to Elizabeth Moy, director of CrossWays Preschool, and Kathy Pfister, director of Celebration! Childcare. Special thanks to our entire ECM board and ECM staff for their continued work to sustain and grow this important ministry.

Church council is comprised of twelve members who give their time and talents for monthly meetings, events, and serve graciously and selflessly throughout the year. I thank each one of you for your time and dedication. Three members will end their tenure on council in January 2019, and I would like to acknowledge Jessica Brown and Barb Cannon for their service to Holy Cross. I would also like to extend a special thank you to Eric Christensen who has served on the council for a full six years including membership on the finance committee, staff support committee, two years as Vice President, and two years as President. His leadership, insight, and commitment to Holy Cross has been invaluable.

We thank Roz Diegan for her years of service as Administrator of Congregation Activities, and Tim Mahoney for his service as Director of Property. We welcome Katie Bernabei and Tom Zombolo into their positions. We also thank Beth Zupkus as she completes her first year with Holy Cross as Financial Administrator.

Many thanks to our church office staff and pastoral staff, who continue to joyfully and enthusiastically give of their time, talents, and faith.

It has been a privilege to serve as Council President for these past two years. I thank you for the opportunity to witness all of the wonderful connections of this amazing congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Ormson
President, Holy Cross Lutheran Church Council

Pastoral Acts

Baptisms

January 7, 2018	Everett Scott Leeson	July 22, 2018	Roselyn Jean Westman
March 11, 2018	Bentley George Amann	August 19, 2018	Mckenzi Lynn Little
March 18, 2018	Lucy Patricia Weiss	August 19, 2018	James Nicholas Riemer
April 8, 2018	Benjamin Michael Dane	September 2, 2018	Parker Elliott Kasprzyk
April 8, 2018	James Christopher Tournas	September 8, 2018	Mia Lee O'Connell
April 22, 2018	Quinn Virginia LaBrie	November 18, 2018	Genevieve Paige Flexsenhar
May 20, 2018	Raylan Richard Szalkowski	November 24, 2018	Charles Thomas Baldino
June 30, 2018	Jill Corey Wechselberger	November 24, 2018	Addison Zurek
June 30, 2018	Lia James Wechselberger	December 2, 2018	Jacob Allen Filippi
June 30, 2018	Kylee Grace Wechselberger		

Funerals

January 12, 2018	Irene Peppel	August 18, 2018	Deborah E. Kacmarcik
January 29, 2018	James K. Olson	September 1, 2018	Joanne Blessing
April 29, 2018	Linda J. Ellsworth	September 15, 2018	Donna Lowright
May 12, 2018	Sally L. Schmidt	October 1, 2018	Carl C. Hansen, Jr.
May 21, 2018	William Fuller	October 7, 2018	Beverly Reimer
June 2, 2018	William Fleishcmann	November 28, 2018	William Johnson
June 30, 2018	Doris E. Troesch		
July 21, 2018	Betty E. Carlson		

Marriages

January 5, 2018	Ally Yarc & Thomas Cronin
March 3, 2018	Hannah McClellan & Joseph Brooks
May 5, 2018	Karen Deiss & Jeff Meyer
May 27, 2018	Megan Liaboe & Christopher Ramos
June 15, 2018	J. Krause & D. Crawford
June 24, 2018	Melissa Maki & Matthew Berger
July 7, 2018	Theresa Romes and Robert Schachner
July 21, 2018	Dana Zucco & James Ori
August 25, 2018	Gabrielle Weil & Timothy Baker
October 6, 2018	Megan Kenney & Ryan Solomon
October 27, 2018	Nicole Krampien & Mark Krygeris
November 17, 2018	Randi Bockman & Michael Giacinto

First Communion

Evelyn R. Bemrich	Madelyn G. Greer	Jack Wells
Vanessa M. Cardenas	Samantha J. Pink	Audrie White
Ella A. Evans	Colten D. Siebert	
Molly A. Granfeldt	Nora L. Siebert	

Affirmation of Baptism

Zoe Boileau	Abby Gordon	Zachary Ryan Samonds
Grace E. Caldwell	Katelyn Lee Jacobs	Ella Sophia Skelton
James Lorien Coyne	Aiden M. Jones	Harper St. John Thompson
Hailey Carol Dunbar	Christian Michael Roberts	Aidan Reese Valentine
Ellie George	Mark Joseph Samonds	Tommy John Winegardner
Grady William Georgia		

**Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Congregational Report
2018**

	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
Beginning of 2018	1991	1439
Received		
Baptism	16	0
Affirmation of Faith	5	3
Transfer ELCA	32	28
Transfer	12	10
Other	0	0
Total Received	65	49
Youth Confirmed		16
Total Increase	65	57
 Sub Total	 2056	 1496
Removed		
Transfer ELCA	3	3
Transfer Other	2	2
Death	2	2
Other	8	4
Total Removed	15	11
 END OF YEAR TOTALS	 2041	 1485

At Holy Cross Lutheran Church, we aspire to ...

Gather as diverse individuals, coming together to be a supportive community, inspired by Jesus and each other to live life more abundantly, and working with each other to make the world a better place.

Love like Jesus taught and modeled as a way of life, including loving God, loving the world that God loves so much, and loving each other.

Grow into more mature, thoughtful, and generous followers of Jesus, nurturing hope, cultivating joy, promoting peace, and discovering meaning and purpose in concerns bigger than ourselves.

We believe that following Jesus is a pathway to better lives and a better world. Please join us as we journey together.

Vision & Mission

Vision

As a Christian community we provide strength and encourage people of faith to grow... by celebrating Christ and his message of grace and hope in our lives, through our acts of compassion which transforms peoples' lives, and, by nurturing community that reminds us that we are connected relationally.

Mission

We are a Christian community committed to celebrate God's Love for all creation. We boldly proclaim the Gospel that frees us to witness, minister, and live the Christian faith in our everyday lives.

Core Values

Core Values create the foundation that informs our ministry and life together. Core Values shape our congregational culture and character. Core Values drive our priorities and decision-making. Core Values engage our creativity and imagination. Core Values communicate our distinctiveness and are descriptive of our life together in a faith community.

"Come as You Are" and **"Come Where You Are"** in your personal faith journey. You are welcome and will discover a place of hospitality as individuals and families move towards the ultimate goal of knowing God.

Be inspired to **"Embrace God's Gift of Grace"** in a setting of openness and honesty through intentional engagement with the Christian tradition as embodied in faith practices.

As people created in the image of God, we explore the connection between our passions and a sense of vocation as we **"Share our Gifts"** in a dynamic, authentic and genuine environment.

Compose a Christian way of life through Christ-centered opportunities for personal transformation and discernment through sharing stories, risk taking, sharing the Word, praying, contemplating, and participating in truthful conversations around questions that surface in life.

Core Beliefs and Teachings

The Bible: We teach that the Holy Bible is the Living Word of God and functions as the authority in matters of faith and life.

God: We teach that there is one God, eternally existing in three persons: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. A relationship with God is a gift not an accomplishment!

Jesus Christ: We teach that Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully human, who by His death and resurrection has redeemed us.

The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is truly present at work in the community of believers. Its gifts vary from person to person and no one is left out .

Human Nature: We teach that no one is perfect and that everyone has sin and needs the grace, love, and forgiveness of God.

Prayer: We are a people of prayer and believe that God will answer prayer and longs for all of us to grow in prayer.

Baptism and the Lord' s Supper: We believe, teach and confess that Jesus is truly present in, with and under the elements of water, bread, and wine nourishing our lives on earth with these gifts.

The Church: Holy Cross Lutheran Church is a small part of a greater body of Christ alive in the world and affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Our Evangelical Lutheran Heritage and Identity: Our Evangelical Lutheran Heritage and Identity We believe, teach, and confess our faith in the Lutheran reformation themes of: grace through faith alone, scripture alone, and Christ alone!

Administrative Ministry Reports
HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHURCH OPERATIONS - STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Actual for years ended December 31, 2017 and 2018
Proposed Budget for year ended December 31, 2019

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019 Budget</u>
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Member Contributions			
Operating Support	845,439	810,138	856,000
Special Benevolences	65,777	89,235	40,000
Building Fund Offerings	60,000	84,000	84,000
Program Receipts			
Early Childhood Ministries (ECM)	1,410,737	1,627,869	1,689,300
Christian Formation	15,315	8,486	9,000
Other Programs & Activities	8,821	12,441	6,500
Building Use	7,045	6,910	10,000
Other Miscellaneous Receipts	17,927	12,703	9,000
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	<u>2,431,061</u>	<u>2,651,783</u>	<u>2,703,800</u>
EXPENSES			
Benevolence			
ELCA Benevolence	84,200	81,013	85,600
Special Benevolences	65,777	89,235	40,000
Program Expenses			
Early Childhood Ministries (ECM)	122,358	130,020	197,790
Christian Formation	15,032	15,416	15,200
Other Programs & Activities	15,547	18,531	34,000
Administration Expenses			
ECM Salaries and Benefits	979,004	1,110,747	1,154,000
Staff Salaries and Benefits	546,864	569,152	571,897
Administration	124,907	137,296	152,365
Worship and Music	20,214	25,272	26,300
Property	63,531	60,993	63,000
Capital Replacement	60,000	60,000	60,000
Mortgage	303,648	303,648	303,648
Other Non Budgeted Expenses	13,353	4,862	-
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>2,414,434</u>	<u>2,606,185</u>	<u>2,703,800</u>
NET SURPLUS	<u>16,627</u>	<u>45,598</u>	<u>-</u>

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
STATEMENT OF RESTRICTED CASH & FUND BALANCES
For years ended December 31, 2017 and 2018

	Balance			Balance			Balance
	Dec 31, 2016	Receipts	Expended	Dec 31, 2017	Receipts	Expended	Dec 31, 2018
Church Operations							
Operating Cash Contingency	30,000	-	-	30,000	-	-	30,000
Prepaid Pledges	25,683	26,000	25,683	26,000	13,000	13,000	26,000
Fund Balance	55,683	26,000	25,683	56,000	13,000	13,000	56,000
Church Program Funds							
Early Childhood Ministries	5,713	7,050	7950	4,813	14,505	15,121	4196
Program Development	8,232	1,162	5000	4,394	3,140	-	7,534
Youth	44,452	34,193	33743	44,902	52,884	66,171	31,615
Around the Cross	(1,577)	6,096	6919	(2,400)	4,500	2,100	-
Thrivent Receipts	3,588	737	4,230	95	608	-	703
Fund Balance	60,408	49,238	57,842	51,804	75,637	83,392	44,048
Building & Property Accounts							
Capital Replacement	92,946	87,377	107433	72,890	62,000	27,739	107151
Building Fund	120,381	80,805	70,215	130,971	78,233	100,625	108,578
Housing Furnishings	-	950	1,192	(242)	1,442	1,200	-
Undesignated Memorials	22,110	1,780	8,317	15,573	2,690	-	18,263
Fund Balance	235,436	170,912	187,157	219,192	144,365	129,565	233,992
Columbarium Ministry							
Subscription Receipts	26,452	2,720	29,172	-	-	-	-
Non-Subscription Receipts	43,600	-	43,600	-	1,400	-	1,400
Reserve for Perpetual Care	4,200	408	449	4,159	-	125	4034
Construction Expenses	(68,217)	-	(68,217)	-	-	-	-
Fund Balance	6,036	3,128	5,004	4,159	1,400	125	5,434
Mission Endowment - Drawn							
Undesignated Endowment Proceeds	10,000	12,861	22,861	-	13,088	3,088	10,000
Designated Endowment Proceeds							
Scholarships	-	2,600	2,600	-	4,100	4,100	-
Pastor's Discretionary	10,639	27,241	10,214	27,667	2,893	11,401	19,159
Fund Balance	20,639	42,703	35,675	27,667	20,081	18,589	29,159
Restricted Benevolence Accounts							
Mission Projects	1,190	636	-	1,826	686	1,000	1,512
Healing Waters	2,006	-	263	1,742	-	-	1,742
Rosebud	15,136	6,938	11,382	10,692	5,478	8,213	7,958
Fund Balance	18,332	7,574	11,645	14,260	6,165	9,213	11,212
TOTAL RESTRICTED CASH & FUND BALANCE	396,534	299,555	323,007	373,081	260,648	253,884	379,845

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
STATEMENT OF RESTRICTED ENDOWMENT FUNDS
For fiscal periods ended November 30, 2017 and 2018

	Balance			Balance			Balance
	Nov 30, 2016	Additions	Draws	Nov 30, 2017	Additions	Draws	Nov 30, 2018
MISSION ENDOWMENT - INVESTED							
ELCA Pooled Trust #1	75,000	-	-	75,000	-	-	75,000
ELCA Pooled Trust #2	-	20,000	-	20,000	10,000	-	30,000
Market Fluctuation	(3,123)	12,137	(2,861)	6,152	(2,767)	(3,088)	297
Fund Balance	71,877	32,137	(2,861)	101,152	7,233	(3,088)	105,297

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHURCH OPERATIONS STATEMENT OF CASH ACTIVITY
Actual for years ended December 31, 2017 and 2018

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
OPERATIONAL CASH BALANCE, START OF YEAR	120,664	143,498
Operational Surplus (Loss)	16,627	45,598
Inc (Dec) in Other Assets/Liabilities	6,207	(12,123)
Changes in Cash Balance	22,834	33,475
OPERATIONAL CASH BALANCE, END OF YEAR	143,498	176,973

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHURCH OPERATIONS - STATEMENT OF BENEVOLENCE
Actual for years ended December 31, 2017 and 2018

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
EXPENDITURES		
Synod Benevolence		
Member Contributions	84,200	81,013
Other Benevolences		
Care Bags	400	438
COOL	7,908	8,283
ELCA Disaster Relief	4,322	15,368
Feed My Starving Children	24,320	40,750
Habitat for Humanity	-	2,004
Healing Waters	263	-
LSSI Projects	5,025	5,458
Mission Fund Projects	-	1,295
Olivewood	1,194	841
Pads	6,688	2,349
Rosebud	12,957	5,478
Waukegan to College	-	1,000
ELCA World Hunger	14,346	12,135
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	161,623	176,412

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHURCH OPERATIONS - STATEMENT OF MORTGAGE
Actual for years ended December 31, 2017 and 2018

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
PRINCIPAL BALANCE, START OF YEAR	4,345,036	4,223,707
Interest Expense	182,319	177,061
Payments	(303,648)	(303,648)
	(121,329)	(126,587)
PRINCIPAL BALANCE, END OF YEAR	4,223,707	4,097,119

Mission Endowment

The Mission Endowment Fund was created in 2000, through a gift from the Paul & Irene Bruggemeier Family. This fund supports ministries beyond the operating budget of the congregation. An initial gift of \$75,000 established the Endowment. Additional gifts from Holy Cross members have been added since 2000, and designated to scholarships. These funds are invested with the ELCA Foundation Pooled Trust with the earnings being distributed each year in the following categories:

- College Scholarship support for congregation members
- The HCLC Music Ministry
- Ministry opportunities beyond the Congregation
- Discretionary needs determined by the Pastors

The concept of this fund is to preserve the original amount and to only distribute the dividends each year. Our Mission Endowment Funds are invested with the ELCA Foundation. These investments are utilized by church wide to assist in areas of new mission development. Holy Cross benefited from such investments when it first organized in 1979.

We have preserved the principal and its current market value as of November 30, 2018 is \$105,297.

With the distributions this year, we have distributed cumulatively since the inception of the endowment fund the following amounts:

Scholarships	\$56,691
Music Ministry	\$17,034
Social Ministry	\$11,684
Pastor's Discretionary	<u>\$ 6,940</u>
Grand Total	\$92,349 (more than the Bruggemeiers' originally donated)

In 2018, the Holy Cross Mission Endowment fund earned \$3,088 in dividends from the Bruggemeier family gift.

In accordance with the Fund's guidelines, one third of the dividends (\$1,030), supplemented by additional gifts of \$3,070 (for a total of \$4,100), were awarded in scholarships to the following recipients:

Lian Boucek, Nicole Casler, Mia Clark, Sara Clark, Alex Dikelsky, Jacob Dikelsky, Jason Edmunds, Nathan Edmunds, Christa Eidson, Megan Fahey, Amanda Fischer, Kelsey Gaines, Nicholas Gaines, Emily Hilldale, Tim Husemoller, Ana Karris, Christopher Koenemann, Jonathan Koenemann, John Lubenow, Isabel Matthei, Charlie McKeon, Leah McKeon, Paul McKeon, Hannah Oelschlager, Emily Partlow, Lauren Petreanu, Matthew Rudolphi, Allison Southwick, and Morgan Zupkus.

One third of the earnings (\$1,029) were distributed to the HCLC Music Ministry in support of the Around the Cross Concert Series.

Two thirds of the remaining third of the funds earnings (\$686) were distributed to ministries beyond the congregation (LSSI Backpacks), and the remaining portion of the earnings (\$343) were distributed for Pastor's Discretionary needs.

A second fund has been established with a generous gift from Brad and Lana Meyer. This fund will benefit housing ministries and will begin with disbursements in 2019. To date, \$30,000 has been donated.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Ormson

Staff Support

During 2018, the Staff Support Committee was able to do most work over email and phone calls and only needed to meet together one time. During that meeting we had a long discussion about compensation for the ECM staff. We also discussed budget recommendations for our Pastoral and non-Pastoral staff compensation.

We were happy to welcome Katie Bernabei into the position of Administrator of Congregational Activities, as well as Tom Zombolo in a regular position as Director of Property.

Thanks go to Business Director Mike Price and council member Bill Miksch for their significant amount of time put into securing insurance for our building and health insurance for our staff.

Members of the Staff Support Committee during 2018 included Jenifer Christensen, Harold Sargent, Mark Remissong, Mark Fedyk, Eric Christensen, Dave Kenney, Katie Ormson and Pastor Davis. I thank everyone for their service.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Ormson

Administrative Staff

Sarah Accettura, Katie Bernabei, Ellie Rautenbach

Worship Participant Schedules

Holy Cross is blessed with an active congregation who help support each worship service through a variety of ministries: *Acolytes, Assistant Acolytes, Altar Care, Assisting Ministers, Bread Bakers, Coffee Hosts, Communion Assistants, Greeters, Prayer Assistants, Readers and Ushers*. While some ministries are self-scheduling, the majority of the ministries are scheduled randomly, schedules are published, emailed and then weekly Gentle Reminder emails are sent. When you or your family members are scheduled and you are unable to serve, it is always best that you work out your own trade with another ministry member so that everyone has a chance to serve. Please contact the church office with your trade information. If you are not on a worship participant list and would like to join one, please contact the church office at office@holycrosschurch.org.

Altar Flowers

Everyone who worships at Holy Cross may commemorate a happy occasion or the memory of a loved one by purchasing flowers to decorate the sanctuary each Sunday. You may note your request for altar flowers on the bulletin board across from the church office, or email us at office@holycrosschurch.org. Please make checks payable to Holy Cross and write "Altar Flowers" in the memo line of your check, and submit your donation of \$35. You may also pay online at donate.holycrosschurch.org

Key Fob Requests

In order to gain access to the church building outside of worship, special event and office hours, a key fob is required. Key fob request forms are available in the church office or can also be emailed to you upon request. Key fob requests may take one to two business days to process.

Communications

The Cross Connection Newsletter

Our newsletter, **The Cross Connection**, reaches over 1,000 households every month. We continue to use fonts and graphics that keep all communications consistent. Our mailing service continues to provide us a mailing list that verifies each address and provides a bar code unique to each address. This not only helps to keep our mailing list more accurate and up-to-date, it also eliminates a step at the post office and newsletters reach homes more quickly.

Our monthly newsletter includes letters from the pastors and staff, upcoming events, youth news, other ministry news, and news from beyond the congregation. We encourage everyone to keep the church office updated with their current mailing address to insure receipt, and keep down our costs which we pay for returned mail. Going south for the winter? Please call to stop the newsletter, and call us when you return to town.

If you would like information about your ministry or event published in the newsletter please submit your article no later than the 1st day of the month prior. Space can be limited! Contact the church office in advance if you have questions.

Websites

Since the overhaul of Holy Cross Lutheran Church's website in early 2018, it continues to provide information to members and the community at holycrosschurch.org. All aspects of the website's design, production, updates and maintenance is done in-house. Options to improve the manner in which content is displayed and the user's interactive experience are continually considered and improved upon.

The early childhood ministries of Holy Cross, CrossWays Preschool and Celebration! Childcare received new website domains in order to distinguish between the two programs. An overhaul of the content of those websites were started mid-year and phase one was completed at the end of 2018 with the new websites going live just after the beginning of 2019. CrossWays Preschool can be located online at cpreschool.org and Celebration! Childcare at cchildcare.org.

Branding

CrossWays Preschool and Celebration! Childcare shifted its branding focus to the names of their respective programs instead of the umbrella name of Building Blocks Childhood Center. In 2018, we continued to update the logos for advertising on physical signage, online, and print publications. A strong emphasis is placed on the fact that CrossWays Preschool and Celebration! Childcare consist of a half day preschool and a full day preschool that follow the same curriculum.

CrossWays Preschool and Celebration! Childcare updated their respective program brochures with current information. Copies of the new brochures are available in the Narthex, at CrossWays Preschool or Celebration! Childcare entrances, or online at cpreschool.org and cchildcare.org.

Social Media Ministries

The Holy Cross Facebook page now has 300 followers.
LIKE us on Facebook: [facebook.com/HolyCrossLibertyville](https://www.facebook.com/HolyCrossLibertyville)

CrossWays Preschool and Celebration! Childcare's Facebook shared a joint Facebook page that has 101 followers. Facebook: [facebook.com/buildingblockschildhoodcenter](https://www.facebook.com/buildingblockschildhoodcenter)

Holy Cross continued to utilize Facebook ad campaigns in 2018. Facebook ad campaigns are more affordable than print ad campaigns, and they have the added benefit of a more targeted audience. Ad campaigns were created to promote the Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Worship Service, The Global Leadership Summit, "Everything Under the Harvest Moon" Ladies Night Out event, and the Christmas Eve Worship services. In addition, Holy Cross and Celebration! Childcare utilized Facebook to promote available job opportunities.

Email Outreach

Through email, Holy Cross is able to reach over 1829 individual email addresses every month. Members and visitors of Holy Cross are encouraged to keep their email addresses up to date by calling the church office at (847)367-4060 or emailing: office@holycrosschurch.org. If you have not received one of the new emails, but believe the church has your email address on file, please contact the office. This email outreach is also an important way for young adults who are away at college or out of town to stay in touch with their church family.

Brochures

Around The Cross 2018/19 Concert Series
Milestone Ministries 2018

CrossWays Preschool Program Brochure
Celebration! Childcare Program Brochure

Visual Communications

The outdoor LED church sign and internal TV monitor messages are created and maintained in-house. We hope you find the information displayed on the monitors in the gathering space and at the entrance to CrossWays Preschool, helpful.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Accettura, Receptionist and Office Support
Katie Bernabei, Administrator of Congregational Activities
Ellie Rautenbach, Administrator of Congregational Communications

**Director of Business Affairs
Mike Price**

2018 was another great year at Holy Cross Lutheran Church. I feel truly blessed to be associated with such an incredible organization.

As with all organizations like HCLC, things are always changing and evolving, and this year has had its share of change. Jan Schmieding, Financial Administrator, retired after eight years with Holy Cross in that position, and Beth Zupkus was hired on and has been doing an amazing job. Additionally, two key staff personnel that had been with HCLC for more than five years chose to move on with their careers: Roz Deigan, Administrator of Congregational Activities, and Tim Mahoney, Senior Building and Property Manager. These two individuals were highly valued members of the staff, and their dedication and expertise was very hard to replace. Fortunately, solutions do present themselves and a very talented young lady, Katie Bernabei, accepted a position as Roz's replacement. Katie was an immediate fit at HCLC and has brought some fresh new ways at looking at her duties and responsibilities. It was decided to Mr. Mahoney's position and responsibilities would be delegated during normal business hours to myself, and Tom Zombolo would take care of larger issues on nights and weekends, and so far, all is well.

In 2018, I continued with putting the financial wellbeing of HCLC that fell under my control first and foremost. All projects and repairs were put out to bid from a minimum of three service providers, and after careful analysis and evaluation of those bids, the jobs were awarded to the best and most competent firm.

In 2019, my list of repairs, projects, and improvements is already very long, and I'm looking forward to an exciting and busy year at HCLC.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as member and employee at Holy Cross Lutheran Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Price
Director of Business Affairs

**Director of Engagement and Generosity
Steve Oelschlager**

Thank you for your participation, leadership, and financial support of Holy Cross during 2018, and more broadly, for all the ways you make a difference through your life!

I'm a firm believer that religion and faith at their best have something of transcendent value for everyone. While it isn't difficult to conjure up examples of defective or dangerous religion (they appear in our headlines regularly), the answer to bad religion is not life without religion, but instead, the positive transformation of religion to something that can feed our spirits, fuel our faith, inspire us to love, and help us to make the world a better place. Just as Martin Luther was instrumental in reforming the church 500 years ago, we too get to participate in these exciting times to help religion be all that it can be.

I think people can sense within minutes if a faith community is remarkable, or not. The vibes congregations emit signal whether they are joyful, inclusive, generous, hopeful, vibrant, hospitable, mission-minded, spiritual, authentic, and open to change, or not. How people behave isn't accidental but is influenced by how life-giving and generative their theology is, or not. In a world where toxic ideas and behaviors seem to be multiplying, extraordinary congregations offer healthy alternatives and collaborative cultures that truly make a difference in people's lives and in the world.

Holy Cross, the way I see it, is one of these exceptional communities that strives to offer religion and faith at their best. I'm not saying we are without challenges, but our congregation is sound and thriving. At a very high level, here are the things I notice that make Holy Cross what it is.

- Effective, competent, emotionally intelligent leadership, including pastors and lay people, who understand the importance of vision and mission, and who intentionally invest in strong relationships.
- Christian spiritual nurturing and growth as a foundational ministry, that embraces mystery and "living into the questions" as opposed to pat answers or tired orthodoxy.
- Pastoral care and peer-to-peer mutual support during the natural and inevitable joys and sorrows that come with life.

- Support of our ELCA denomination and ecosystem, as well as deliberative outreach to ecumenical and interfaith people of faith in a world that is increasingly diverse and pluralistic.
- A broad array of ministries and partnerships that positively affect the lives of many, many people beyond our congregation, including the personal ministries that each of you live into during your daily lives.

Of course, none of this would be possible without people like you who are interested in the benefits of a life of faith in the context of organized religion. I'm grateful for your continued participation and for all the gifts you bring to the community of Holy Cross. I hope and pray that you continue to be nourished and sustained by your faith and by our life together here at Holy Cross. Thank you!

Steve Oelschlager
Director of Engagement and Generosity

Director of Property
Tom Zombolo

Thank you again to all who have helped and supported all the projects and improvements throughout the year, and the support you have given me since taking over this position. Over the past year we have completed the following projects:

Church Building and Office

- We began the year with building a much needed storage closet in the confines of the Gathering Space, along with a new storage closet on the north end of the basement.
- We converted the Gathering Space lighting to a high efficient L.E.D. Halo pendent, removing the dated lights and giving the space a whole new look.
- We also converted the lighting in all office, hallways, closets, and bathrooms from fluorescent to L.E.D. In doing these changes, we have reduced the energy consumption by 2/3, resulting in reduced electricity costs and maintenance costs due to the extended life of these bulbs.
- All exit signs and emergency lighting have also been replaced with high efficiency L.E.D. units.
- We purchased a new scissor lift which affords us additional options for projects at the church. It has already saved us rental fees associated with the lighting projects.
- Our church facility is used 7 days a week. There are many maintenance matters related to plumbing, painting, electrical and HVAC that I oversee.
- We did replace one of two primary air conditioning compressors that services the sanctuary.
- There were exterior painting projects that involved soffit and fascia trim and the pergola on the patio. We also painted the interior of the Gathering Space.
- We finished the exterior security lighting project on the north side of the church building. Once again, we utilized L.E.D. fixtures.

Parsonage

The two old sliding doors and two windows on the lower basement walkout were replaced with a more efficient window. Due to the extent of the work, we also needed to replace the lower sections siding and finish it with a new coat of paint.

CrossWays Preschool

We continue to maintain the CrossWays Preschool area to keep the children safe and comfortable, and DCFS and the health department happy.

Celebration! Childcare

The lighting in all classrooms along with the reception area, office, lunchroom, and hallway were also changed to L.E.D. bulbs, resulting in added savings in energy and maintenance costs. 2019 will see the completion of the open area lighting retrofit.

We could not have done all the projects without our volunteers. Volunteer help is crucial in keeping our repair costs down. Please consider volunteering some time to help in the building and maintenance areas.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Zombolo
Director of Property

Adult Ministry Reports

Adult Bible Study, Tuesday Mornings (Second & Fourth Tuesday each month)

Each month, a book from the Bible is selected for personal study at home. In 2018, we studied the Gospel of Mark and the book of Revelation. Using the resources of Bibles, dictionaries and maps, the Gospel and its message comes to life and continues to influence the faith and life of each person.

At The Table

At The Table (ATT) is a ministry for Holy Cross that happens through monthly dinners at an area restaurant, where we have the opportunity to share both a meal and conversations with one another about life and faith. We gathered on the second Tuesday of most months from 6:30 - 8:30 pm. Each person pays their own way and comes and goes when it works with their schedule. Topics of discussion covered throughout 2018 included; sharing our faith journeys, technology, money, diversity, and mission, meaning and purpose. Our conversations are grounded in these ideas of respect and curiosity: all thoughts are welcome without judgment, practicing community means we are all in this together, God is present and ready to connect in a fresh way, there is no pressure to talk, as well as listening brings renewal and insight. Advertising for ATT is done online through our Facebook page, via the newsletter, e-newsletter and bulletin as well as on the screens throughout the church building.

<i>Month</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Location</i>
January	"Sharing Our Faith Journeys"	Ristorante Bottaio
February	"Mastering Mobile Technology Instead Of It Mastering Us"	The Liberty Restaurant
April	"Money in Our Lives"	Pizzeria DeVille
May	"Being Generous to Each Other"	Jimmy's Charhouse
September	"Seeing Life as a Gift"	Pizzeria DeVille
October	"Mission, Meaning, and Purpose"	The Liberty Restaurant
November	"Embracing Diversity and Pluralism"	Tacos El Norte, Gurnee

Book Club

The book club at Holy Cross has existed since 2000 and over the years, the members have enjoyed selecting monthly books and places for discussion and participating in lively discussions generally about the book. The host/hostess who provides the discussion location (generally in homes) also provides the goodies and leads the discussion of the book. Reading group guides with discussion questions are often available in the book or online. During 2018 we read and discussed the following books: **Hillbilly Elegy** by J.D. Vance, **Victoria's Daughters** by Jerrold M. Packard, **The Thin Man** by Dashiell Hammett, **Truman** by David McCullough, **"A" is for Alibi** by Sue Grafton, **Radium Girls** by Katie Moore, **A Fall of Marigolds** by Susan Meissner, **The Readers of Broken Wheel Recommend** by Katarina Bivald, **War Paint** by Lindy Woodhead, **I am Malala** by Malala Uousafzai, and **The Witch Doctor's Wife** by Tamar Myers.

As you can see, the subjects vary widely, often exploring other cultures— including non-fiction, biographical, historical, fiction, as well as classics or something just for fun. The upcoming book is always listed in the newsletter and featured on the TV monitors in the public areas. New participants are welcome to join at any time.

Care of Creation

"For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth." Colossians 1:16

Making the congregation aware of environmental issues and encouraging various behaviors to aid our beautiful earth is the goal of the Care of Creation team. We have current notices posted on our three sided kiosk in the Gathering Space which features articles on climate change, issues with Illinois animals such as the Asian carp, air pollution, plus clean energy sources such as solar and/or wind.

Members of our team receive updates on their computers on various issues— banning dangerous chemicals, legislation that would help encourage cleaner air and water, and keeping our politicians focused on what is best for all of us. With just a click of a mouse, we all help make our voices known as supporters of caring for the earth.

As a member of the Lake County Green Congregations, a group of eleven local faith communities, we helped sponsor the Green Fair at the Libertyville Civic Center on March 17, 2018. Multiple speakers on environmental topics, a collection of Styrofoam, bikes and bike parts, Christmas lights, corks and more help make this free event very interesting.

In 2017, we raised the \$120 needed to “adopt” a female Blandings turtle hatchling, part of the Lake County Forest Preserve’s push to restore this native turtle’s population. We named her Katie Von Bora Luther, for Martin Luther’s wife. She grew just fine and was big enough to be released into a Lake County wetland this spring.

We offered reusable bags for sale in the spring and also at the “Everything Under the Harvest Moon” event in the fall. Once again, we had milkweed seeds given out in the spring to help encourage more milkweed to feed more monarchs.

In November, December, and January, we once again collected natural corks to recycle, encouraging our members to choose this kind of stopper for wine and not the plastic ones that can’t be recycled.

For the past several years, Holy Cross has participated in the Lake County Adopt-a-Highway program. Our goal is to beautify Saint Mary’s Road. The Care of Creation group organized and supervised two clean up events, one in the spring on April 15, and one in the fall on September 8. Adults and children from Holy Cross helped us clean up the 1.5 miles stretch between Oak Spring and Peterson. Once again this fall, our local Boy Scout Troop #194 and their leaders joined us. Thank you to all of our volunteers and we’ll see you in the spring!

It is a joy to focus on these issues and make them known to our congregation.

Submitted by Marge Stueckemann and Mick Garrison

Columbarium Ministry

The Christian faith offers a perspective on the way we construct our lives and offers a perspective about the end of our life. The Columbarium Ministry is about some of those end of life decisions that need to be made.

The columbarium is identified as the Holy Cross Resurrection Garden and is a dedicated structure on the south side of our building containing niches for the interment of cremated human remains. There is also a Remembrance Wall available for members to honor their loved ones even if their remains are elsewhere.

A special task force and the church council developed documentation that provides clarity about the protocols and procedures associated with this ministry. We are operating with documentation that meets legal standards while representing the conditions of what will be provided if one chooses to become involved with Holy Cross’ “Columbarium Ministry.” If more information is needed or a conversation is desired to discuss specifics pertaining to the columbarium ministry please contact the church office.

Common Threads & Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry includes shawls and lap blankets made by those in Common Threads and others. These prayer shawls and blankets are blessed in the worship service and passed on to someone in need of comfort and prayer. In 2018, Holy Cross dedicated 32 prayer blankets and shawls to individuals. All shawls and blankets were crafted by participants in this ministry. Those who attend Common Threads may work on personal projects, learn new stitches, and create prayer shawls. Common Threads is always looking for those who will contribute their gift and talent for this ministry, and if you are unable to attend meetings, you may still work on prayer shawls. Patterns can be provided. If you, or someone you know would be comforted by the receipt of a prayer shawl, please contact the church office. The group also appreciates donations received in the form of gift cards to craft stores or cash donations so they may purchase yarn and supplies for this ministry. The group meets during the day at the church from 1 to 3 pm on the second Monday of every month.

Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) Meal Pack Group

Individuals have made a commitment to do one meal pack and prep session a month for FMSC. Throughout the year, this group goes to the facility on Park Avenue (Rt. 176) to pack food or label packages on the 4th Wednesday of each month from noon to 2 pm. Individuals register via the FMSC website, visitors are

encouraged and no previous experience is required. Special meal packing events are also arranged close to Good Friday and the high school youth participated in a pack during November. Families are encouraged to join us during the summer and vacation times; please review the guidelines set by FMSC as to child age and adult supervision requirements which are available online. The church supports this ministry by making funds available for Feed My Starving Children, allowing the members to have the privilege of packing at their time. This year, Feed My Starving Children had their highest packing of meals in one facility. Congratulations volunteers! Thank you!

Financial Peace University

In the fall of 2018, Holy Cross partnered with Grace Lutheran and First Presbyterian to offer Dave Ramsey's 9 week course, *Financial Peace University*. Classes were held weekly on Sundays from September 16 through November 11. The classes alternated meeting at all three churches. Each session included a DVD lesson presented by Dave Ramsey followed by small group conversation facilitated by leaders from each congregation. Topics included budgeting, saving, getting out of debt, money and relationships, insurance, investments, and more. For more information, please contact Steve Oelschlager at steve@holycrosschurch.org.

Free Spirits

Enjoying the years of older age and eager to explore places in the community, this is a group of people over the age of 55 who enjoy food, fellowship, and exploration. Details about the events are included in the monthly newsletters. In 2018, Free Spirits participated in the following excursions:

January 18	Potluck, planning session, and screening of <i>The Shack</i>
February 15	Lunch at The Chocolate Sanctuary in Gurnee
March 16	Chicago Botanic Garden Garden Orchid Show and lunch at Lake House, Lake Bluff
March 29	Maundy Thursday service and lunch
April 19	Lake County Museum and lunch at Omega, Mundelein
May 17	Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center and lunch at Hackneys
June 20	Annual Potluck Picnic at the Wasemillers' home
July 20	Main Street Libertyville's Lunch in the Park (rained out), Lunch at the Liberty
September 4	"Silence & Solitude" Field Trip to Illinois Beach State Park
September 25	Royal Oak Farm Orchard in Harvard
October 18	Kenosha Public Museum and lunch at House of Gerhard

A few people were able to attend the annual Carthage College Christmas concert, but all of the tickets had been taken the day before online distribution began, so Free Spirits was not able to attend as per usual.

Green Thumbs

Several plant-savvy volunteers shared their time and gardening talents with the congregation this year. Not only did they keep all the annual plants looking beautiful all summer, they worked to keep the indoor plants thriving too. The Green Thumbs team is instrumental in design, planting and maintaining the planters on the patio, at the entrances and in the beds by the Columbarium and at the main entrance. Our sincere thanks to the *Green Thumb Team*: Nancy Alban, Laura Flexsenhar, Sally Parkhill, Ellie Rautenbach and Susan Williamson.

Hospitality At Home

There is a long history at Holy Cross of members providing meals or direct assistance to those in the community who are in need of temporary support. Acts of kindness are important values at Holy Cross Lutheran Church. This ministry was created for individuals who are interested in creating a more organized approach to providing meals or other assistance to our fellow members when needed. If you have interest in participating with this ministry by providing meals, helping coordinate this ministry, or if you find yourself or know of a member who might appreciate a meal, please contact Jackie Levernier at (847) 204-7607 or the church office.

Men's Ministries

In 2018, men at Holy Cross participated in the following events and groups:

Being Authentic: Fellowship & Conversation for Men

Men came together three times over the summer for a meal, fellowship, live music, and conversation led by Pastor Bob and Phil Kirschbaum. The three topics over June, July, and August were "Authentic Living," "Authentic Relationships," and "Authentic Spirituality." The conversations challenged men to not just show up, but be actively involved in their lives and in their relationships.

Men's Breakfast Group

This group meets every Tuesday morning at 7 am at the Liberty Restaurant. Their topics for discussion come from conversation raised by the individuals, usually focusing around the activities of the congregation, etc. For further information, men may contact Pastor Bob.

Saturday Morning Men's Group

Men of faith come together on Saturday mornings throughout the year to share their faith and thoughts about life-giving topics that are challenging. We support one another through our personal journeys. In 2018 we used the following materials to facilitate our conversations:

January - June	"Living the Questions 2.0"
July - September	<i>Grateful</i> by Diana Butler Bass
October 6 & 20	Conversation around the Global Leadership Summit
November - December	<i>Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America</i> by Eboo Patel

The men attending bring donuts and/or rolls and prepare the coffee. Men who are interested in attending should check the monthly church calendar and join us starting at 7 am on Saturday mornings.

Men of Purpose, Principle, & Prayer (MP3)

MP3 is a men's group that began meeting in October of 2018, and will continue to meet quarterly. The topic in October was "Adventurous Civility," and this was discussed during an evening of fellowship, food, and conversation.

Music Ministries

Adult Choir

Music remains an integral part of life at Holy Cross with the Holy Cross Choir being the bedrock of the musical efforts. All of us received a jolt this past October, however, with the death of our dear friend, Carl Hansen. Carl had been the caretaker of our fine organ since its installation and his passing was the end of an era for all of us, whether such was truly realized or not. I am pleased to report, however, that just prior to Christmas an organ tuner with whom Carl had been in touch, contacted me, and we met and discussed the future care of the organ. I like to think Carl would be pleased with our arrangements. Also, please know that the Steinway in our sanctuary is being cared for by John Koelle of Gurnee. John is a lifelong restorer of Steinway pianos who just happens to live nearby. I am grateful for his care of my piano. Otherwise, the Holy Cross Choir presented the Ralph Vaughn Williams "Fantasia on Christmas Carols" in December and it was well received. In addition, Carrie Mack leads our children's choirs, Beth Malecha leads our handbell group, and the Praise Band plays regularly.

Randy Casey
Director of Music

Contemporary Worship Music

This past year has been an absolute blast! All year long, we've had tons of exciting, fun and engaging events at the church and I'm so proud to have been a part of it.

Most recently, we've started up our men's chorus again, and we were able to sing "O Come O Come Emmanuel" as a large ensemble on a Sunday in December. We are always looking for more men to come sing, so if you or someone who know wants to come join in the fun, feel free to email me or text me.

During Advent, I also started coaching small groups of guitarists on how to play some Christmas carols, and I'm looking forward to working more with anyone who wants to join our little guitar club. By summer, I'd love to have everyone join in the "Christmas in July" Party on the patio, and hopefully some more players can join us this year to play at the Easter Ecumenical Sunrise service.

Some new musicians are coming to play with the contemporary band, which is super exciting. We welcome Sam, Adam, and Rob to the core team. I would also like to thank Bill Miksch for sitting in on a whole Sunday morning with me!

Over the year, it's been a privilege to play at the MP3 men's events, and the summer series, VBS for the early childhood ministries, the intergenerational VBS, Saturday Night Live on the Patio, and the Advent Breathers. It's been an astounding year, and I can't wait to see how much more we can all accomplish together in the upcoming year.

Submitted by Dale Tippet, Jr.,
Director of Contemporary Music

Handbell Choir

Red Rose Children's Choir generously shares the usage of their bells, donated to them by Libertyville High School, with the Holy Cross congregation. The HCLC Handbell Choir has been performing with Beth Malecha as the choir director. The Handbell Choir rehearses on Thursday evenings and performs in church during the academic year. In 2018, the Handbell Choir performed during worship on the following dates: January 7, March 4, April 15, November 4, and December 2.

Submitted by Beth Malecha,
Director Handbell Choir

New Member Breakfasts

In 2018, we welcomed new members to our congregation on February 11, April 15, August 26, October 21, and December 9. Part of that welcome is a New Member Breakfast on the Saturday before the Reception of New Members the next day during worship. The breakfast team gathers together and prepares a light breakfast of fresh fruit and pastries that are enjoyed while visiting with the new members. A brief introduction is then given to explain the workings of the church and the faith opportunities available to all members. Member support was provided by: Heather Decker, Roz Deigan, Therese Delli Paoli, Heidi Dinter, John Froemke, Cheryl Miller, Steve Oelschlager, Kathy Pritts and Kathy Roscher. Breakfasts are hosted by Pastor Bob and Pastor Sally. Thank you to all of them for their contributions and for helping our new members feel comfortable and at home at Holy Cross. All are welcome to join this team at any time.

Parents of Children with Special Needs

Parents of Children with Special Needs was formed for parental support. Parents that have a child with any special need (whether or not formalized by 504 or IEP) can meet to offer ideas, guidance or prayer. The group meets monthly and continues to invite other parents, regardless of religious affiliation. This group meets at Holy Cross on the third Sunday of each month at 4 pm. It is open to all people in the community. For more information, please contact Lisa Dunbar at (847) 309-6035 or Terry Berger at (224) 775-1470. Food is furnished by the Lexi Kazian Foundation for the members who attend.

Pilates

Physical and mental health are crucial to one's well-being. Pilates is designed to improve physical strength, flexibility and posture while enhancing mental awareness for everyone, male or female. Body Works instructor, Laura Meyer, leads those who attend Pilates on Monday nights at 6 pm at Holy Cross in the childcare atrium (west wing). The sessions are organized by Jodi Zombolo and are open to all. A floor mat is required for all classes and participants should also have a stability ball and small hand weights. Not sure if this is for you? Try a class for free! This past year we had an average of 10 participants and we would love to have more!

Prayer Ministry & Assistants in Prayer

The Prayer Ministry & Assistants in Prayer were formed to lift up the prayers and concerns of all who come in need of prayer. These ministry members pray during the week for people listed on the prayer concerns, those listed in the book provided in the gathering space, as well as serve as Assistants in Prayer. Individual greeting cards are sent to members of Holy Cross who are in need of prayer, to remind them someone is praying for them. Ann Witbeck has volunteered her time over the years to accomplish this part of the ministry.

During communion distribution on communion Sundays, volunteers from the prayer ministry serve as Assistants in Prayer. They stand at the back of sanctuary and offer to pray with people who approach them for a brief, personal prayer. If you are interested in being a part of the prayer ministry at Holy Cross, we need you! If you wish to become an "Assistant in Prayer," please contact Ann Witbeck or the church office for more information.

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing – North Chicago Program

This February marks the third anniversary of our Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Program (PHWFF). The North Chicago Program, which works in conjunction with the Recreational Therapy Department at the James A. Lovell Federal Health Center, is one of two programs in the Chicago-land area. The other program is one of the inaugural PHWFF Programs called Hines and works with veterans at the VA Hines in Maywood, Illinois, and features one of the only programs in the county focusing on fishing with the blind. Both programs are part of PHWFF's Midwest Region. The following are highlights from this past year:

Program Growth

We essentially run two programs under the North Chicago Banner. One is our legacy program, which we call the Day Program, that serves veterans in Lovell's Recreational Therapy Department. The other program, which is a year old, is called the Evening Program. This program serves veterans who are in outpatient treatment and have only evenings and weekends to participate. We have had steady participation in the Day Program with 8 to 12 veterans and have grown to 16 veterans total in the program. One new veteran is a 96 year old female marine. The Evening Program held its first formal session in October 2017, and now has worked with nearly seventy veterans this past year- both male and female. Outside of these two programs, Joshua Coppola, who served in the Afghanistan War, hosts a Facebook blog where vets can "kick the tires" on fly fishing and tying to reach the younger demographic as well as vets who might not be in the program yet. Our web page (www.projecthealingwaters.org) and our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/PHWFFNorthChicago) have also opened doors as well as keeps our followers updated on the latest events.

Partnership and Networking

Partnership and networking has been the key to our success. This partnership circle continued to grow this past year with the addition of Trout Unlimited participants from the Elliot Donnelly Chapter (EDTU). This now means that all four chapters of Trout Unlimited in Illinois participate in our program. From this relationship came a connection with Dr. Kelly Hoffmann, the wife of EDTU President Jeff Hoffman. This connection will be valuable in the years to come as Dr. Hoffmann leads the outpatient treatment clinical practice at Lovell. She has also offered to help us develop an "engagement strategy" to reach younger veterans.

Our existing relationship with Amy Lefstadt at Lovell brought us Suzanne Brown and Avery Wilson, who work with veterans on an outpatient basis in their respective Recreational Therapy programs. This has allowed our Evening Program to grow, as mentioned earlier.

We continue to enjoy our relationship with the Boy Scouts, Troop 194, as they serve lunches at one of two sessions throughout the summer. We continue to benefit from a relationship with the Vernon Hills Park District who has arranged for our programs to use Century Park Shelters free of charge.

Participation and Leadership Growth

This past year program volunteer participation totaled nearly 2000 hours. Program lead Jeff Reinke logged over 1000 hours. The volunteer base has maintained 75 volunteers with growth and loss equaling around six per quarter. Due to our exponential growth in two programs, we will continue our commitment to recruit all interested volunteers and provide training in tying and casting. Our training programs have been retooled recently to focus on basic skills to bolster participation in the mentor base. As PHWFF continues to grow and evolve at a national level, the Program Lead's position continues to gain many new responsibilities which include compliance, fundraising, and public relations. Last year, we expanded our leadership group to engage individuals with a focus on aspects of the program where they excel and can further develop those aspects of the program. The following are those leaders and their roles:

Assistant Program Lead– Sam Sides. Sam is the liaison to Holy Cross and the hospitality volunteers.

Outings Lead– Darwin Adams. Darwin leads the fishing outing and continues as the casting director.

Tying Lead– Barry Coddens. Barry develops the tying curriculum and coordinates tying sessions.

Public Relations Lead– Dina Lissner Nanberg. Dina uses her connections with veterans and her skills in networking to help promote PHWFF.

Lovell Liaison– Amy Lefstadt. Amy helps connect PHWFF to veteran's programs and Lovell.

Veteran Liaison– Joshua Coppola. Joshua serves as PHWFF's outreach to vets at ABBVIE as well as the larger community. Joshua will be instrumental in connecting our programs to the next generation of returning military personnel.

This past fall, Program Lead Jeff Reinke was asked to advance to the Regional Coordinator's role. This role has oversight on fourteen current programs located in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. This new position started on January 1 of this year, and it will require the leadership group to step into many of the roles Jeff served. This may also require additional leaders to be identified to assist in the day to day program responsibilities for the North Chicago Program.

Networking, Public Relations, and Fundraising

This past year we have attended a few events as we continue to reach out into the veteran community. North Chicago presented to the largest VFW in the city to gain support. We also continue to be a guest on AM 1590 WCGO on "Mike Jackson Outdoors" providing an overview of our programs. Mike Jackson, who also writes for the Daily Herald, has asked to write a feature piece about our program. Additionally, we have represented North Chicago at booth tables at local fishing shows.

Additionally in this past year, we submitted a budget of \$7,500 to Headquarters which included money set aside for guided day fishing trips for our Evening Program veterans. We received approximately \$1,400, and it is the program's responsibility to make up the rest. This means our program could use a minimum of \$6,000 to achieve the goal of taking our vets on guided outings. This past December, Jeff Reinke raised \$600 through a Facebook donation drive that will help with our shortfall. Discussions are underway to hold a fundraising dinner and auction that we hope will raise \$20,000, which should allow for both the trips and greater growth in veteran numbers. Fundraising will continue to be the major focus over the next year, and work groups will be required to help develop the venue.

Summary

Overall, this has been our most successful year, and we look forward to continued success and growth. Additionally, we look forward to the continued support of our partners at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, the James A. Lovell Federal Health Center, Troop 194, Trout Unlimited, WCGO, and the Vernon Hills Park District, all of whom have made this a pleasurable and memorable experience for volunteers and participants alike.

Steering Committee: Charles Dierker, Sam Sides, Ron Rank, Barry Coddens, Darwin Adams, Pastor Bob Davis and Jeff Reinke

Quilting & More

The quilting group meets in the resource room (west wing 404) on the lower level most Wednesday mornings beginning at 9 am. Quilts created in 2018 were donated to COOL Family Housing. Projects other than quilting may be decided on by the individuals present for sewing. Ten quilts were displayed and dedicated during worship services in late September 2018. For more information, or if you're interested in joining this group, contact Deb Sherrock at (847) 356-1176.

Stewardship Lending Library

The goal of the stewardship lending library is to make it easier for you to connect with transformational ideas and stories. The following list includes books added to the library in 2018 that you may borrow simply by picking one up at the table just inside the main entrance. When you are finished reading, please bring the books back to Holy Cross and take another title.

Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks by Diana Butler Bass

Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy by Sheryl Sandberg & Adam Grant

Women's Ministries

Grounded in Grace: Women's Friday Night Group

"...and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpassed knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:17-19

This group was started in 2016 by a small group of women who were seeking a time to connect with other women around scripture, faith based conversations, fellowship, and authenticity. This seems to have hit a need in the lives of many women as this group continues to grow and new friends are brought each time. The group

began the year by completing a series inspired by John MacArthur's *Twelve Extraordinary Women*. In the fall, we switched to a DVD based discussion format with engaging conversation from *Living the Questions 2.0*. The group meets monthly on various Friday nights, and continues to grow and bring new people in each time it meets. Come and join us!

Women's Discussion Group- Tuesday Mornings

The Women's Discussion Group is a very fun, supportive, educational and relational group. This group of women meets on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 9:30am in the Gathering space. This year's books included completing John MacArthur's *Twelve Extraordinary Women*, *With: Reimagining the Way You Relate to God* by Skye Jethani, *The Way of the Heart: Connecting with God through Prayer, Wisdom, and Silence* by Henri Nouwen, and *The Lies We Believe About God* by Dr. Chris Thurman. Our time together even brought a field trip to Illinois Beach State Park to practice what we were learning from *The Way of the Heart*. Each of these books brought lively conversation and moments of connection for each of the attendees. This is an open group where women come from a time or two, or have been an avid attendee for years. It is an open invitation for women of all ages to come and join us when they are available.

Women's Retreat

February 2018 brought a Holy Cross Women's retreat that spurred excitement and connections. With ages spanning from early 30s to late 80s, women of all ages enjoyed conversation, fellowship, and connection with women across the age span. We welcomed Deb Hornell, author of *Good Things for a Full Life*, as our facilitator. Conversations around life, faith, happiness, trials, and triumphs were abundant as we took stock of our own lives individually and collectively as people of God. It was an inspiring weekend filled with connections and could be seen throughout the year at Holy Cross.

Worship Participant Ministry

The primary responsibility of the Worship Participant Ministry is to support the regular schedule of services for our church, including the three on Sunday mornings, mid-week during Lent, and festival observances such as Christmas, Holy Week and Reformation.

We are very thankful to have had very dedicated coordinators who schedule and oversee the participation of over 40 volunteers each week in support of our worship services. The following people served as worship coordinators for a number of years and we thank them heartily for their help:

Therese Delli Paoli: Greeters
Church Council*: Worship Coordinators

All other worship volunteer efforts are scheduled or assigned through the church office. Please contact the church office if you would like to participate in any facet of worship. Worship volunteer schedules are released twice a year for Spring/Summer (April-September) and Fall/Winter (October-March) worship.

** The Church Council schedules its members to serve as worship coordinators for each Sunday morning service to verify that scheduled volunteers have arrived and to get on-the-spot replacements if needed, although it is appreciated when members are able to find their own replacement in advance if they encounter a schedule conflict.*

Every week there are plenty of opportunities to participate and assist in our worship services. New volunteers are always needed and welcome. If you would like to help, please contact the church office.

Ministry Events

Advent Breathers

The Advent Breather lunches provided some time to catch your breath and gain some focus in the midst of the race to prepare for Christmas. Devotions and discussion were shared along with one hymn for each lunch. A soup lunch was provided by the pastoral and church office staff. The breathers were held on the following Wednesdays in 2018 from 12 noon - 1 pm: December 5, 12 & 19.

The theme for 2018 was "Bringing the Light" and each week respectively was "Bearing the Light of Peace," "Bearing the Light of Hope," and "Bearing the Light of Joy" as the participants reflected on the arrival of Jesus, the "light of the world."

Around the Cross Concert Series

Begun in 1997, the purpose of the *Around the Cross Concert Series* at Holy Cross was to supplement the worship life of the congregation. In 2018, the following performances were hosted by Holy Cross Church as part of the 21st season of the series:

February 3	Coffeehouse Concert featuring Mike & Sue Blair (Fundraiser for the youth of Holy Cross)
March 21	"Ich habe genug" by Johann Sebastian Bach, Rick Ziebarth
May 20	"Missa brevis" by Telemann, Holy Cross Choir
December 9	"Fantasia on Christmas Carols" by Ralph Vaughan Williams, Rick Ziebarth, Holy Cross Choir, and Randy Casey

Ash Wednesday, Lent, Maundy Thursday & Good Friday

During the season of Lent in 2018, Midweek services focused on the theme of "The Music of Lent." Service dates were as follows:

<i>Ash Wednesday</i>	<i>February 14</i>
<i>Lenten Worship</i>	<i>February 21 & 28, March 7, 14, 21</i>
<i>Maundy Thursday</i>	<i>March 29</i>
<i>Good Friday</i>	<i>March 30</i>

Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Worship

In 2017, Pastor Bob presented the idea to area churches about working together to offer a sunrise Easter worship service. Every congregation already celebrates Holy Week and Easter Sunday with a myriad of worship opportunities. However, this was an opportunity to witness in a public way - that while there may be differences between Christian denominations - there is not division when it comes to celebrating the love God makes known to the world through the resurrected Christ.

The second annual Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Worship was held at the North Bay Pavilion at Independence Grove. The service was from 6 to 7 am and gave everyone the opportunity to worship with their brothers and sisters in Christ as well as at their home churches.

Blue Christmas - December 16, 2018

A worship service of lament and hope, anticipation and longing, restoration and renewal. The service is structured around three distinct movements of "hearing us," "healing us" and "sending us." We provide space for personal and communal reflection. The worship experience provides generous amounts of silence that are woven throughout.

There are years when we hurt at Christmas time and may not be able to navigate through the festivities as others seem to do with joy. It is at such times we need to be mindful and attentive to our feelings and concerns. We need to know that we are not alone in moments like these.

We hope you consider joining us one year or inviting others who may accompany you as you support them. This is a time of the year when we long for peace on so many different levels. It is our profound joy to offer the opportunity to journey together with meditation, prayer, music and acts of restoration that help us entertain a renewed message of hope.

Flu Shot Clinic

As a result of a partnership between Advocate Health Care and Walgreens, Holy Cross was able to host a flu shot clinic on October 28. Around 130 flu shots were provided free to all persons over the age of 10 years through Walgreen's Program titled "Get One-Give One". For every flu shot given, Walgreens donates a flu shot for a child in a developing country. Younger children were provided with a free voucher to receive the shot at a Walgreens location.

Global Leadership Summit

On August 9-10, 150 people attended the 2018 Global Leadership Summit at Holy Cross to hear inspiring stories and new ideas on the potential we all have to make a difference. The scenarios discussed included: leading with relational intelligence, maximizing your time and potential, creating a positive culture, identifying future opportunities, building enduring organizations, and understanding your life purpose. Speakers included Sheila Heen, David Livermore, Angela Ahrendts, Carla Harris, John C. Maxwell, Danny Meyer, Danielle Strickland, Dr. Nthabiseng Legoete, Craig Groeschel, Strive Masiyiwa, Eriwn McManus, Rasmus Ankersen and Simon Sinek. Holy Cross hosted people representing over 45 different organizations.

Holy Cross has committed to hosting the Global Leadership Summit event again in 2019, and we would like you to join us! Next year's event is August 8-9, 2019. You can register at bit.ly?GLS19atHC.

Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration

The 10th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration was hosted by Advocate Condell at the Centre Club on November 18. This celebration included leaders of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim communities. Food and fellowship followed the service. Offerings of books were collected to support Bernie's Book Bank. Students from our 6th-8th grade Confirmation classes were invited to attend this service in place of regular Confirmation meetings. Over three hundred people were present to celebrate the theme of "peace."

Ladies Night Out

The 5th Annual Ladies Night Out event was held on October 25, and featured raffles, a silent auction, shopping, appetizers, wine labels, and taffy apples. Ladies were busy enjoying the theme of "Everything Under the Harvest Moon" as they sipped on wine, took a chance on an array of raffles, purchased wine labels, and participated in the Silent Auction full of items created by students from CrossWays Preschool and Celebration! Childcare. Proceeds generated by this event helped Holy Cross' Early Childhood Ministries (ECM) enhance their curriculum materials including technology, religious materials, classroom lessons, and gross motor equipment. It also allowed our ECM programs to enhance their professional development. Once again, wish list items of new educational enrichment toys and aids were available to purchase, and the attendees bought every item off the list. New to this year's event were charming gentlemen servers, made up of the men of Holy Cross. This night raised \$5,429 for our early childhood ministries.

Thank you to the Ladies Night Out Committee: Judy Frank-Gonwa, Val Maxwell, Carrie Siebert, Rebecca Bemrich, Betsy Wells, Laura Reutzel, Heather Ryan, Nicole Radcliff, and Andrea Young.

Saturday Evening Worship at Holy Cross

We enjoy a rich worship life at Holy Cross. We utilize liturgical seasonal themes, a variety of styles and music, rich prayer and confessional traditions, and time with God's Word. In addition to Sunday morning worship, the major festivals, seasonal Advent & Lenten services, ecumenical and interfaith worship opportunities, we also offer Saturday Evening Worship. We have successfully provided Saturday evening worship services at 5:30 pm on the "first" Saturday of the academic year (September through May). During the summer months of June, July and August we offer a Saturday evening worship every Saturday at 5:30 pm. We celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion at all of these services.

Saturday Night Live on the Patio

Saturday Night Live on the Patio continued for its 5th year this summer. Worship was held indoors or outdoors on the patio (depending on weather conditions) and was followed by dinner and fellowship. The entrée was provided and attendees contributed sides and desserts.

Themes were introduced this year: June 16th – Cibo Italiano; July 21st – Christmas in July; August 18th - Southern Comfort. The menus, décor and Dale Tippett, Jr.'s musical entertainment reflected each of the themes.

Attendance ranged from 60-100 participants. Val Maxwell & Manny Flores organized the set-up and prepared the entrée for each event. Additional helpers included; Wayne & Judy Luplow, Theresa Neyrinck, Patty Moyer, Charles & Monique Dierker as well as many attendees assisting as needed.

Screenagers: Growing Up in the Digital Age

Holy Cross presented a screening of “Screenagers: Growing Up in the Digital Age,” a documentary about one of the most significant parenting issues of our time: technology. Physcian and filmmaker Delaney Ruston created a film to help uncover how tech time impacts kids’ development and to offer practical resources and solutions on how adults can empower their kids to best navigate the digital world to find balance. This screening was held on April 29, and was followed by optional breakout conversations. Free childcare was also provided. Over 100 people participated in this event.

Women’s Ecumenical Candlelight Service

A worship service for women during advent, hosted by First Presbyterian Church in Libertyville, took place on Wednesday, December 5, 2018. The theme was *All Creation Waits*. Women from the local faith community enjoyed an evening of fellowship, special music, readings, worship, carols and contemplation.

Community Ministry Partners

Boy Scouts of America Troop 194

Troop 194 is part of the Aptakisic District of Illinois and they meet in our facility on Monday evenings. Holy Cross holds the charter for this fine group of 5th grade through 18 year-old young men, who help out the community by volunteering for PADS, highway trash pickups in our area, and other community service projects.

The Order of the Arrow is an organization within Boy Scouts that was founded on the idea of cheerful service. As a chapter, there are monthly meetings to plan service projects and other events. It was another great year for Boy Scout Troop 194; some of highlights from 2018 include:

- Our Scouts earned more than 188 merit badges and achieved 40 rank advancements.
- An additional 6 Scouts were awarded the prestigious Eagle Scout rank.
- As a Troop, we participated in 23 different service projects totaling 1,137 service hours. This included several service projects assisting Holy Cross with Saint Mary's Road clean-ups, and serving lunch to veterans at Project Healing Waters.
- We completed 9 camping or overnight trips including having 30 Scouts spend the week at Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan Scout Reservation in Wisconsin. Additionally, 4 Scouts attended the National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT), one as a staff member and three as participants.
- We welcomed 6 new Scouts into the Troop during Cub Scout crossover and one more joined in the fall.
- Our Troop is now 36 Scouts strong and is supported by more than 20 active parents.

Our program and success would not be possible without the support of Holy Cross Church! We appreciate the church's role as our charter organization and supporting our fund raising efforts, especially bake sales and October's pumpkin sale.

Christian Outreach of Lutherans (COOL)

The COOL mission is to give comprehensive assistance to families in need, by reducing hunger and homelessness while encouraging personal growth and self-sufficiency. The COOL Pantries - Pantry EAST Waukegan and Pantry WEST Ingleside provide meals supporting over 65,000 individuals and 25,000 families in our community. The COOL Family Housing program provides housing for homeless families and a comprehensive program to develop life skills for long-term self-sufficiency.

Holy Cross supports COOL throughout the year in a number of ongoing and special projects including weekly food donations that the children and others bring, the annual COOL Spring Plant sale, participation in the annual golf outing and 5\10K run and walk and the donation of quilts to families in need. In April, the congregation collected over 100 Easter Baskets of food, 200 treat bags assembled by Sunday School students, and \$815 in donations toward Easter hams for the COOL Food Pantry.

In December, the Giving Tree collected and distributed 110 gifts purchased for families in COOL Transitional Housing. Additionally, Holy Cross raised over \$700 toward the purchase of COOL Holiday Meal Boxes. We are thankful for and appreciate your ongoing support and prayers for COOL ministry in our local community. Thank you to Holy Cross member Katie Ormson for her service on the COOL Board in 2018. Overall, Holy Cross supported the COOL Ministries in the amount of \$8,283 in 2018.

The following members delivered food to the Pantry East in 2018: Lee Fischer, Randy Kuceyeski, Kerry Nowicki and Dave Klein.

ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Relief

The first Sunday of each month we provide our members the opportunity to support the ELCA World Hunger Effort. Additional informational materials are inserted in the bulletins throughout the year. In 2018, Holy Cross Lutheran Church contributed \$12,135. For more information, visit elca.org/Resources/ELCA-World-Hunger.

In addition to supporting ELCA World Hunger, Holy Cross also offers special offerings for ELCA Disaster Relief to help those affected by wildfires, hurricanes, or other natural disasters. This year, HCLC contributed \$15,368.

Feed My Starving Children

In past years, Holy Cross Lutheran Church provided the leadership to organize and support four mobile packing events in Lake County. The first mobile packing event was held in 2008 at a recycling facility located in the northeast part of the county. We packed 330,000 plus meals with the help of about 1500 volunteers. The effort was so warmly received that the next year we decided to set a goal of 1,000,000 meals. We moved the mobile packing event to the new Lake County Fairgrounds in 2009 and with the help of almost 6,000 volunteers we were able to pack in excess of one million meals. In 2010 and 2011 we continued our efforts and after four years of mobile packing events, Holy Cross created the opportunity for over 3.3 million meals to be packed for starving children throughout the world with the help of over 16,000 volunteers and the financial support of over \$750,000.

In 2012, a new chapter with FMSC was realized with the opening of a permanent FMSC packing site in Libertyville, IL. This is FMSC's third permanent site in the metro Chicago area. The other two are located in Aurora, IL and Schaumburg, IL. The new site is the largest of their permanent packing sites and in its first four years, the Libertyville site packed over 100,000,000 meals.

In 2013, a group from Holy Cross formed to participate in a monthly volunteer effort. On the fourth Wednesday of each month, beginning at 12 noon, people from Holy Cross may choose to register for a pack event at FMSC. Registration for the pack is done online through the FMSC website. Visitors and friends are encouraged and there is no previous experience required.

In 2017, we sponsored a special meal pack on Good Friday. This was a time for individuals, families and groups to do God's work, join in prayer and pack meals as a way to remember Christ's sacrifice for us and the blessings we share. In December, we sponsored a MobilePack at the Pet Factory. We packed 544,320 meals at the event.

In December 2018, we once again sponsored a MobilePack called Hunger 2 Hope Lake County. The MobilePack was held at Pet Factory in Mundelein, IL. Holy Cross members Tom & Cheryl Miller generously donated the warehouse space needed for the event. Over the course of 3 days, approximately 1,391 volunteers worked to pack meals. We packed 1,990 boxes of food to feed malnourished children around the world. That means 429,840 meals, feeding 1,177 children! Holy Cross financially supported the MobilePack with a total of \$40,750.

It has always been about the children and the harsh reality is that approximately 18,000 children die everyday from hunger and related health conditions. FMSC is one component in our congregation's continuum of ministries addressing hunger in our world. Holy Cross has made a significant difference as it provided the vision for Lake County to bring generous people together in such a thoughtful and intentional way. We were able to be faithful in these efforts through one of the most challenging economic climates in the past 50 years. We have come a long way.

Lake County United

Holy Cross is one of the founding institutions of Lake County United. We have various levels of involvement beginning with representation on the steering team; members involved with various working groups; on aging with dignity, housing and healthcare; and, members who have participated in training opportunities. Here is a summary of Lake County United's activities and our partnership in ministry. You can find more information at lakecountyunited.org about current initiatives.

What is Lake County United?

Lake County United is an independent, non-partisan organization of churches, synagogues, mosques, civic and non-profit institutions from across Lake County that have joined together across religious, geographic, racial, and economic lines to fight for the common good on issues of shared concern. Founded in 2003, Lake County United is an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the oldest and largest network of community organizations in the U.S.

What does Lake County United do?

Builds Relationships. Lake County United puts a priority on organizing by building relationships and bringing together the broad diversity of Lake County citizens. Lake County United leaders include Christians, Muslims, Jews, and seculars; blacks, whites, and Latinos; and people from every economic class. Out of this deliberate, painstaking work of building relationships, Lake County United is helping to create a vibrant and inclusive political culture in Lake County.

Since 2003, Lake County United has made a significant positive impact on the lives of families in its member institutions and thousands of others across Lake County. Examples include:

Education. LCU established Waukegan to College, a college-readiness program that currently serves 146 at risk kids from 5th to 12th grade. A total of 19 have graduated from college, and there are 50 currently in college. What makes this program unique is the parent engagement component, not just in their child's education, but in the community.

In December, LEARN Charter Network President and CEO, Greg White, formally acknowledged and thanked Lake County United for their role in educating the community about charter schools, and laying the ground work for community support that ultimately led to the authorization of LEARN 9 Charter in Waukegan. LEARN 9 has 328 students K-4 enrolled. LEARN Charter has an impressive track record meeting or exceeding state academic performance standards in low-income minority communities.

Affordable Housing and Senior Care. Over the past 10 years, we have continued our advocacy for Winchester House, Lake County's facility for long term health care for the elderly. LCU leaders have worked collaboratively with Lake County Board Members and Staff, who have a commitment to quality care for residents, as well as construction of a new Winchester House.

A new residential facility, Fairhaven Crossing, has been constructed in Mundelein, IL and it began operations in February of 2017. Fairhaven is a 40-unit affordable housing building that gives everyone, including residents with disabilities, the opportunity to live as independently as possible.

Mental Health and Supportive Housing. On average, one-third of those in the county jails and state prisons are mentally ill, contributing to a prison recidivism rate that, in the next five years, is expected to cost Illinois more than \$16.7 billion. In Lake County the top 100 highest utilizers returned to jail 8 to 17 times in one year. The delay in seeking treatment due to stigma, lack of awareness, fewer treatment options, and the scarcity of supportive housing has meant that jails and prisons have become the default destination for those with mental illness. Focusing on diverting mentally ill from our criminal justice system is not only 'humane, but one way to address our crippling fiscal crisis and political gridlock. This strategy will address resources impacting all those with mental illness. Initially, LCU is working toward 3 goals to reduce the flow of people with mental illness into the criminal justice system:

- Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for police and sheriff in Lake County– the proven and primary way police learn to use de-escalation tactics in dealing with a person with mental illness
- Improving access to crisis stabilization centers, another component of diverting people with mental illness from the criminal justice system and towards appropriate treatment and services rather than emergency rooms
- Increasing affordable/supportive housing opportunities

A total of 246 full-time sworn Lake County Officers have received 40 hours of CIT training. The Sheriff Department received a Department of Justice Grant to increase training capacity. In addition, 22 out of the 27 sheriff's dispatchers have been trained.

Gun Violence. LCU leaders support efforts to reduce gun violence. This issue can be a politically polarizing one, leading to no action, which is why Lake County United is working with our Metro Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) affiliates to pressure gun manufacturers to produce smart guns, which only allow the gun owner to use the gun. This reduces accidents and illegal sales of guns.

On Tuesday, September 25, 85 leaders from Lake County United, DuPage United, and United Power for Action and Justice in Cook county and affiliates in Connecticut and Ohio held local actions centered around the American Outdoor Brands Company (Smith and Wesson) annual shareholders meeting. This was a virtual meeting with individual leaders from our organizations, as well as large investors like Black Rock and Vanguard, who voted with their shares requesting the company to issue a report on what they are doing to curb gun violence, and the resolution passed.

Develops Leaders. Lake County United works with people from all walks of life to give them the opportunity to lead in their own congregations and communities as well as across the metro Chicago region. Through regular training and a steady routine of preparation, action, and evaluation, people from all walks of life are able to develop the skills and habits of strong leaders and to use them effectively.

Renews Congregations & Institutions. Whenever clergy and lay leaders are seeking to strengthen their institutions, Lake County United offers training and support on how to use organizing tools and techniques in revitalizing and renewing leadership teams with a clear sense of mission and direction. With the IAF, Lake County recently published *Effective Organizing for Congregational Renewal* highlighting several local examples of this work.

Lutheran Campus Ministry Dinner

Lutheran Campus Ministry at Northwestern (LCMNU) is a welcoming community experiencing, living, and sharing the love of God through scholarship, service, and faith. LCMNU is a student-led ministry that welcomes all of God's people regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, parental status, marital status, disability, citizenship, or veteran status. As one of 180+ campus ministries of the ELCA, LCMNU shares in the mission "to invite people in academic settings to engage more deeply with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the community that bears his name, so that they can discover and fulfill their vocation as disciples."

Holy Cross members hosted two dinners in April and November for the LCMNU students at Northwestern. These dinners are a wonderful time of fellowship for both students and Holy Cross members. If you would like to participate, please contact Patty Moyer at patty@concertedsystems.com.

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

For the fifth year, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) asked Holy Cross to contribute to the LSSI back-to-school backpack and supply collection for the elementary and middle school students they serve. Thanks to the generous donations of time and funding (\$5,458) given by members of the Holy Cross Community along with a Thrivent Financial Action Team grant, a total of 312 backpacks were assembled on Sunday morning, August 5, 2018.

Thank you to Felicia Brandt, who applied for the Thrivent Action Team grant, and to Tracy Kinsella, Patty Moyer, Andrew Oelschlager, Sharon Pierluissi, Jeri Powers, Carol Wasemiller, Patty Kozak, Cheryl Miller, and Deb Sherrock who helped organize the supplies in advance of the packing extravaganza. Deb Sherrock coordinated the packing event, ordered the supplies and with Ellie Rautenbach, shopped for the remainder of the supplies. Thank you to everyone at Holy Cross who helped pack the backpacks between services on Sunday morning. Thank you to Felicia Brandt, Roz Deigan, Sharon Pierluissi, and Deb Sherrock who did a quality control check on every single backpack to make sure each one was complete. Helping to load the LSSI truck were Maria Roberts, Annie Whitehead, Kathy Pfister and the children from the Celebration! School age camp and their teachers. Additional pencil sharpeners, scissors, and pocket folders were also donated to the Waukegan Public Schools' supply drive.

During our Thanksgiving and Advent Season, Holy Cross Members also donated 50 pairs of snow boots to the LSSI Head Start Daycare Center in Chicago. Thank you to Katie Ormson, who organized this successful collection.

Visit LSSI.org for more on this organization.

Olivewood Project Products

In October, November and December 2018, Holy Cross continued to offer olive wood products from The Olivewood Project for sale, with sales at Holy Cross in 2018 totaling \$841. This money is sent to a cooperative of Christian carvers in Bethlehem, headed by Micheal Zoughbi, to help the carvers earn a living amid difficult circumstances. Special thanks to Holy Cross volunteers who helped with olive wood sales, and everyone who generously supported the Olivewood Project with their purchases.

PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter)

Support for PADS continued in 2018, ministering to the homeless in our area. Our congregation provided a warm and healthy breakfast meal to homeless men, women, and children at Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church in Grayslake on the 4th Tuesday of each month. Church members donated breakfast foods, beverages, paper goods, toiletries, socks and their time. Our Confirmation classes assemble bag lunches for the homeless to take with them following the breakfast.

We thank all of you who contributed to this ministry. Through your continued support we were able to help the less fortunate. Thank you to Holy Cross member volunteers Pat & Chuck Chianelli who organize the donation board and deliveries to Shepherd of the Lakes, Heidi Gutowski who shops for the food for the PADS lunches, Josh Gordon, Matt Valentine and Lisa Dunbar who have helped coordinate the youth lunch packing, and to Chuck & Pat Chianelli who deliver to Shepherd of the Lakes.

Rosebud Indian Reservation

2018 Christmas Cookie Walk Annual Report

Our *Holy Cross Gingerbread Lady* welcomed approximately 100 cookie lovers to our 10th Annual Cookie Walk! Over 90 cookie bakers graciously donated their delicious cookies and brought them the night before and morning of the Christmas Cookie Walk. The Cookie Walk opened at 8:30 am but by 8:00 am, there were cookie lovers lined up outside the church ready to begin their cookie shopping. This event not only benefits the Two Strike community, but it also offers the Holy Cross families an additional opportunity for fellowship and to celebrate seasonal joy with others. In all, 382 pounds of cookies were sold on Saturday morning and then the remaining cookies on the next Sunday morning.

Cookie Walk sales (which included cookie purchases, raffle purchases, dog treats/toys and blanket donations) totaled \$4,700 this year. This surpasses past years' sales. We thank all who donated cookies, baked and donated extra batches of cookies, made donations for blankets and donated items for gift baskets. A huge thank you to two talented ladies who created and donated items for our Cookie Walk raffle: to Kris DeGregor for, once again, creating her beautiful gingerbread house and special thanks to Pat Komashka for designing and sewing the table runner and ornaments for our gift baskets.

We mentioned this in our report last year, but feel it bears repeating: While we are thrilled with how our event has grown each year, we will not lose sight of the real reason the Cookie Walk was started. The profits raised from our annual Cookie Walk event are dedicated to our mission work at the Two Strike Community on the Rosebud Indian Reservation. Each year, we work with Dorothy Peterson, our missionary, to determine the best use of the funds we raise, then we put those dollars to good use on improvement projects in or around the Two Strike Community Center. These projects include updating/repairing playground equipment, repairing bikes, and purchasing supplies for Vacation Bible School, community meals, and fun activities for the Two Strike children. Once again, as requested by Dorothy Peterson, through our Cookie Walk fund, we sent 150 full/queen size blankets to Two Strike families. Their winters are harsh and their homes are poorly insulated so these blankets will bring warmth and comfort to many Lakota families.

Congratulations to our raffle winners: Susan Beck and Linda Norby who won the two "Baker Thank You" gifts; Lisa Dunbar who won the "Winter Treats" Basket; Jean Moyer, "Silver Anniversary" Basket; Susan Ingold, "All Wrapped Up for the Holiday's" Basket; Karla Johnston, "Ladies Night In" Basket; Roberta Froemke, "Peace & Wine" Basket; Ellen Stelter, "Winter Wonderful" Basket; Stephanie Suo, "Baby It's Cold Outside" basket; and Evan Dunbar won the beautiful "Gingerbread House" created and donated by Kris DeGregor.

Special thanks to all of our cookie walk helpers who worked during our event or behind the scenes to make our event a success each year and they include our Cookie Walk Committee, Pastor Bob, Pastor Sally, Susan Beck, Ana Boucek, Pat Komashka, May Sprenger, Beth Ann Koenenman, Barb Sargent, Julie Eberspacher, Sarah Accentura, Katie Bernabei, Ellie Rautenbach, and Mike Price.

Our work is truly appreciated. The welcome we receive from the Two Strike children and adults through their smiles, hugs and handshakes as we pull into their community are evidence that our work with them is resonating and goes way beyond the week that we physically spend with them. Your generous support allows us to build upon each positive response we receive from the Two Strike community. Holy Cross is making a difference in the lives of those living on the Two Strike Reservation. Thank you so very much.

Again, thank you to all of you: our cookie bakers, all of you who generously bought blanket donations and those who purchased raffle tickets and our other items. We could not have done this without you. May God bless you for your outreach and support.

*With sincere appreciation,
The Cookie Walk Committee*

Karla Boucek, Therese Delli Paoli, Gail Kelly, Carole Kenney, Amanda Komaschka, Patty Moyer, Joyce Kveton, Melody Schneider, Pastor Sally, and Karen Yocius

Rosebud Ministry Report Dorothy Peterson

Mission Statement: *"Without a vision the people perish."* - Proverbs 29:18.

We continue to share Christ's Gospel with the Sicangu Lakota people with the goal to develop in Word and Sacrament a relationship that builds on established Ministry and relationships on the Rosebud Reservation.

Thank you Holy Cross ELCA congregation for your continued prayers and support for this ministry on the Rosebud.

The Bishop Hare Episcopal complex houses our double wide, the St. James Chapel, and the Broken Leg House, where visiting youth who spend a designated time on the Rosebud Reservation for ministry experiences stay. There are opportunities to be involved in the Boys and Girls Club in Mission, helping with the youth ministry at Trinity Episcopal Church in Mission, and projects involving the local schools at Mission and Rosebud. Barbour Hall is also located on this campus and houses Habitat for Humanity and the office of the Episcopal Church Rosebud West and Dr. Reverend Lauren Stanley. It also houses visiting mission teams through the year who come to enjoy the facilities at the Bishop Hare Complex. The restored Chapel of St. James continues to be a blessing. We have Bible Studies there as well as the double wide where I live. The firewood supply project for the elders at Bishop Hare Center continues to grow and be fruitful. Mother Lauren Stanley has developed a large supply of wood stored at the center and is supplied by several resources interested in this project. A new, much larger open shed has been built by visiting mission groups for storing the wood supply. They are doing a wonderful job of delivering wood to the elders in the community.

OUTREACH EXPERIENCES FOR 2018 INCLUDE:

June Family Camp was held at the Outlaw Ranch ELCA Camp near Custer in the Black Hills. Fifty people from Two Strike families along with Trinity Lutheran Church members from Rapid City came to our camp. The campers from Two Strike traveled together by bus arriving on Friday afternoon and left Sunday noon. They had a wonderful time of camping, hiking, swimming, boating, crafts, eating and worshipping together. A very special friend from Two Strike, Mary Iron, passed away in February and a memorial service was held to honor her memory. Pastor Wilbur Holz was our camp pastor this year. We celebrated a wedding ceremony for Trisha Red Tomahawk and Morris Oakie. Our worship services were led by Pastor Holz. It is here at camp that the families have the opportunity to get away from a place that is not peaceful. Many homes are uncertain about a night of sleep and regular meals every day. The meals at Outlaw Ranch are awesome, and we all enjoyed them. The camping trip included an afternoon at the lake with swimming, boating, fishing, and a great picnic lunch; all of which added a big plus to the fun time we had sharing the beauty of the Black Hills.

Christmas Comforters from Holy Cross are on their way, and we look forward to delivering those.

Our annual Christmas Party was held on December 15 at the Rosebud Community Center. Trinity Lutheran, Rapid City, families from Two Strike, Rosebud, and the ambulance crew from Rosebud Hospital all joined together to celebrate. Thanks to Russ and Delaina Salamun, Pastor Holz, Penney Steinekin, Duane Abata, and the Trinity Lutheran Mission Team. A turkey dinner, gifts, a craft, and good fellowship made this a special time.

A Special Thank You: For all of the prayers, gifts, and resources sent to Two Strike this past year from Holy Cross. We all extend a special thank you to the office staff for the fifty Bibles sent for our Bible study ministry.

Financial help during this past year has made it possible for me to be more actively involved in the community. Some of you have special relationships with the families through Facebook, letters, telephone calls, and gifts throughout the year. Thank you for the special gifts you have given me and the people throughout the years. They are gratefully received.

GOALS for 2019

Strong emphasis on prayer and Bible Study: We presently have Bible study and prayer in my home at Bishop Hare weekly. My Lakota friend, Theresa Eastman, who lives with me, helps with these when I am not there. Theresa also has an active jail ministry with four other friends at Mission. They hold Bible study at the jail five days a week. This has become a very beautiful part of the ministry. There is also Bible study at the two shelters in Mission often led by Theresa. Theresa grew up on Two Strike, and then became a street person for several years in Chicago and Minneapolis. She is a powerful Christian witness due to her own experience and because she knows so many people.

Pastor Harold Marshall comes twice a month and holds services at White River on Friday evening and at Two Strike on Saturday afternoon. People from Two Strike, St. Francis, Grass Mountain, Parmalee, and Mission are attending these services. A meal is provided by the families. Pastor Marshall's mission team visits are an answer to our prayers for ongoing worship services.

Our Lakota friends and neighbors say "Thank you." As they continue to struggle against poverty and the violence that comes from alcoholism and drugs, many lose heart. Suicide is still a huge problem. Education and the contacts that come through Christian ministries are helping to combat this problem. Our established AA group is a very welcome addition to our community. Thank you to everyone who supports this ministry with your prayers, your gifts, and your presence. You bring strength and blessing to the Lakota people and to those who serve. In times of discouragement, it is often your prayers that help all of us at Rosebud. The face of a child or an elder, a hug, and the call of God on our hearts moves us to continue going forth in Christ's name. A basic need is someone willing to be a support person. A prayer, a phone call, a visit: all of these bring encouragement that we may never realize. Holy Cross has developed a very real presence at Rosebud. You are well known as good friends with a strong spiritual emphasis in your relationship. God sees your outreach, and the people feel your love. Please continue your prayers. They are the most powerful gift we can share and receive in God's Kingdom.

"Come Holy Spirit with your Holy Power. May the wind of your spirit blow gently, but strongly in our presence. May our hearts be open to you. In the name of our Lord, may we continue to go forth sharing God's gifts of love, joy, and peace. Amen."

Respectfully submitted,
Dorothy Peterson
ELCA Lay Minister to Rosebud

Waukegan to College (W2C)

The path to college is wrought with obstacles for Waukegan students. Their school system is broken, with only 24% of high school seniors "college ready" as measured by standardized test scores. A single college counselor serves the more than 4,500 Waukegan High School students. Guidance counselors have caseloads of up to 350 students. For a first generation student who needs guidance and encouragement, there is almost none to be had at the high school. Waukegan to College (W2C) steps in to fill this void through tutoring, the "Read to Achieve" program, and mentoring. Holy Cross members have volunteered through W2C and Holy Cross also supported W2C with a donation of \$2,000 this year.

Willow House . . . Where Hope Lives

Willow House exists because when a child and family experiences the death of loved one, their life and family is changed forever. Willow House provides support in a safe place where children, teens, young adults, and their families grieving a death can share their experiences. At Willow House, families gain strength by connecting with others who are grieving as well and move through their grief experiences... together. Holy Cross hosts a Willow House group on the first Monday of every month. The evening is open to all in the northern suburban region. For more information about Willow House please visit willowhouse.org

Winchester House

Holy Cross leads worship services at Winchester House, a Lake County long-term care facility in Libertyville. Volunteers of all ages from Holy Cross help bring residents to a common room, participate in the worship service, and share in Christian fellowship with the residents. During the school year, Confirmation small groups often attend the services as part of their service ministry.

In 2018, Holy Cross led worship services at Winchester House on ten Sunday afternoons: January 28, February 25, March 25, April 22, May 27, June 24, July 22, August 26, September 23, and October 28. Special thanks to our talented pianists Nancy Alban, Jean Moyer, and Ruth Schnell, and all those who attended the services.

We will continue this ministry in 2019 by hosting the worship services on the fourth Sunday of each month from January through October. Please consider choosing one or two Sundays in 2019 to attend a Winchester House worship service. Families and volunteers of all ages are welcome. Residents especially enjoy seeing children and youth from Holy Cross. We are always looking for pianists and other musicians (including student musicians) to play hymns and prelude music for worship. If you play the piano or a musical instrument, please consider sharing your gifts during a worship service.

Children, Youth and Families Ministry Reports

Milestone Ministries

Our faith journey begins at birth and continues through life eternal. Along the way, there are important events, rituals and milestones that mark the passage of time through our lives. Through Milestone Ministries we celebrate and mark these important events and times in the lives of children and youth. Each milestone becomes an opportunity to proclaim that God is with us. Milestone Ministries serve as an important way of connecting, supporting, and equipping families and the congregation to pass on the faith, to live out the promises that are made when someone is baptized and to provide strength for the faith journey.

The following are the Milestone Ministries we offered during 2018 at Holy Cross:

Baptism

For most of us the formal beginning of our faith journey occurred at the baptismal font. Last year, 19 individuals were baptized at Holy Cross. Through the waters of baptism, we are publically claimed as a Child of God and become a part of God's family. The congregation and the parents/sponsors of the individual promise to support this person on their faith journey as they grow in age and wisdom.

First Word

At this Milestone, children under age 2 and their families will have an opportunity to explore the First Words of faith by introducing Bible stories and stories of faith into their child/ren's life. How do we begin talking to our children about faith before they can even talk? Participants will also receive a children's Bible and an opportunity to get to know other folks at Holy Cross with children the same age. A special thank you to Kathy Pfister, Holy Cross member and Director of Celebration! Childcare for assisting in leading this milestone.

Rally Day Kick-off & Blessing of the Backpacks

The Sunday School year began with a Blessing of the Backpacks and a welcome of students beginning the Sunday School year on Rally Day.

Commissioning & Blessing of the Teachers

A time was set apart to lift up and bless all those called to live out their faith by serving as a teacher and mentor of faith for our young people. Our Sunday School volunteers, CrossWays Preschool, and Celebration! Childcare staff were lifted up and sent out to serve, after receiving a special blessing.

Welcome to Sunday School

We welcomed our three year olds into the formal Christian Education of Sunday School. We know these transitions can be difficult for parents and children alike. We met before the first day of Sunday School and walked through what a Sunday morning looks like and families had a chance to meet the teachers and Core Stories coordinator.

First Grade: Worship

The worship milestone was a time for parents and children to explore our worship space, the meaning behind what we do in worship and a time to ask questions about all the things they see in worship but may not understand. They all asked wonderful questions and were excited to return to church to worship with a greater understanding of the space around them.

First Communion Preparation

Children who are in second grade or older were invited to prepare to receive Communion. Prior to their first communion, both children and their parents attended a class to learn more about the mystery and gift that is Holy Communion. The class time included making bread, learning about the Passover, tasting some of the foods of the Passover meal, the events surrounding Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper, what happens in Holy Communion and the general "how-to's" of receiving Holy Communion. On Maundy Thursday and World Communion Sunday, the first Sunday of October, students received their First Communion.

Bible Presentations & Bible Bootcamp

At baptism, parent/sponsors and the congregation promise to place the Holy Scriptures into the hands of each baptized person. During Sunday morning worship on October 28, third graders received their Bibles to help

fulfill this promise and to bring families together around the Word. Bible Bootcamp is a time for parents and children to gather around the Word to dive deeper into how to use a Bible, how the Bible is organized and share one's faith with each other through favorite Bible verses, was offered in November.

Fourth Grade: The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments are one of the things that parents/sponsors and the congregation promised to place in each baptized person's hands. What are the Ten Commandments really all about? How does that apply to today's families and a life of a fourth grader? These were questions of faith and learning that were explored as we dived into scripture to discover God's will in our lives through the Ten Commandments.

Fifth Grade: Discipleship

What is a disciple and what does it mean for today? How does being a disciple of Christ impact your relationships or how you interact in the world? These are the questions that were discussed with fifth graders and their parents in a fifth graders ever expanding world of friendships. The conversations brought fruitful insights for all who participated.

Sixth Grade: Intro to Confirmation and Acolyting

In September, all incoming sixth grade confirmation students completed acolyte training during a fellowship and orientation night to confirmation. Students were taught why we do worship, the role and importance of the acolyte and how to be a leader in a worship service. It was also an opportunity for sixth graders to begin building relationships with other sixth graders entering confirmation and small group leaders.

Affirmation of Baptism

After completing the Confirmation program, students in ninth grade are invited to publically affirm their baptism. In addition to the preparation that occurs in the Confirmation program, each student writes a faith statement and discusses it with one of the pastors. This fall, 16 students made public affirmation of their baptism, proclaiming the baptismal promises that their parents/sponsors previously made on their behalf and claiming their faith in Jesus Christ as their own.

High School Graduation Recognition

Graduation from high school is an important milestone and time of transition for students and families. In June we celebrated this milestone in worship with a prayer and blessing of those who graduated and their families.

Nursery

Each Sunday the nursery is open at all services for children three years old and under. A special thank you to Jennifer Radtke and Roxanne Kupfer, our Holy Cross paid nursery attendants who make the nursery a welcoming space for all children. Parents who utilize the nursery are asked to volunteer in the nursery periodically as well to support staff and other families and children who use the nursery.

Volunteers are continuously needed at the 9:30 am service (10 am in the summer months) when the nursery is most used. Please contact the church office if you are willing to share your love of children by serving in the nursery ministry.

Sunday School

We have continued to use DEEP BLUE in Sunday School, and are pleased with the positive feedback. The well-crafted series of lessons are centered around a 5 week long topic. The teachers and children really like the lessons and correlated activities and the parents are happy to see a weekly Family Letter come home with their children. Our 3rd grade students received a DEEP BLUE Bible this fall, bringing the program full circle.

Our preschool through Kindergarten students are continuing to learn about God's love through specially selected Core Stories and activities. All students enjoy a weekly music class as part of their Sunday School experience. We are grateful to Carrie and Jamey Mack for teaching our children a variety of songs and preparing them for the two music programs – Christmas and Spring.

This fall, we registered approximately 180 children, ages three through 5th grade, with around 60 children attending regularly. We continue to rely heavily on volunteers who teach, shepherd, and help in many ways throughout the year to provide instruction, music and creative projects for our children.

We have continued the rotation model for our first – fifth grade students, feeling that it allows all children to experience the Sunday School lesson from 5 perspectives. Each week, the students rotate to a new “learning center.” These learning centers are selected at the beginning of each rotation and may include: Art, Drama, Spiritual Practices, Missions, Science, Games, or Worship.

Sunday School continued to offer opportunities for the children to complete service projects.

All of the children helped to:

- create 200 Easter Treat bags to share with the children of families who are served by COOL Food Pantries. As always, the congregation was most generous with donations to fill the treat bags.
- make cheerful cards to be given to Veterans who may be hospitalized in our area
- create festive decorations to enhance our Christmas Music program

Field Day in May 2018 was a great success. We were able to be outside and the children could choose from 8 different stations to play games and complete other activities. In September, we had a great kick-off to Sunday School and it was a beautiful beginning to our Christian Education program.

Our Sunday School programs rely heavily on volunteers and we are so grateful for those who help. We are always looking for additional volunteers to join the Sunday School team and to share in the great joy and satisfaction of working with the Holy Cross children!

Many thanks to Felicia Brandt who coordinates Core Stories, Carol Wasemiller who assisted coordinating DEEP BLUE, and Judith Frank-Gonwa who assisted with Advent lesson planning and other areas. We would also like to thank all of our Sunday School teachers and volunteers– we could not do this without you.

Intergenerational Vacation Bible School (VBS)

After a great response to our new format in 2017, we continued to offer an intergenerational VBS in summer 2018. For three nights, we explored spiritual practices from a variety of angles. Each of the nights included a topic of teaching, an activity, music and a meal. The spiritual practices we explored this summer were the Lutheran Rosary and creating prayer bracelets and rosary, living in a prayer and utilizing our indoor prayer path and discovering the use of icons as a spiritual discipline and learning more about the history of the Holy Cross Mosaic.

A special thank you to Dale Tippet, Jr for providing music and to Manny Flores and Val Maxwell in assisting with the meal planning and prep for these wonderful evenings.

Youth Music

Music is one of the many blessings children experience here at Holy Cross. Creating music is an exciting way for students to contribute and participate in worship. Children participate in Sunday School music each week as a part of the Sunday School curriculum. The music ties in directly with the Bible lessons in the curriculum, the theme of the curriculum or the church calendar. The excitement and joy of sharing God’s Word through music shines through each time we make music together.

As in the past, Sunday School music is team taught by myself and a group of middle and high school students. Jamey Mack accompanies us on piano each week. The student leaders are such an integral part of the program. They model for our youngest learners about how to worship and be an active part of the congregation. The student leaders’ enthusiasm is evident in their involvement in music each week. This is a key component to the successful children’s music at Holy Cross. This is where our youngest members first get a chance to learn to praise and worship. The older students are also gaining leadership skills in a positive environment. Many of them use this opportunity to share their musical skills as well! Some of our Youth Helpers who have helped lead youth have been called to become music educators themselves.

The 1st-5th grade Sunday School students continue to have music before they break into their grade level classes for their lessons for Sunday School each week. The students gather in the basement as a whole group for a short music lesson on the songs that accompany the lessons they are learning about. Large group openings are also a part of this music time that help introduce the Bible lesson as well as give the opportunity to sing about it. The elementary school age students know the expectations and always achieve or surpass my expectations in our music time together. The 3,4,5 year old and Kindergarten Sunday School age students have

their music all together after their lessons. Again, the youth music leaders are such an important part of this program. They help with Sunday School music each and every week by singing, modeling motions, helping organize and plan lessons or leading the music. I can call on them as leaders in our group.

The Christmas program and Spring sings are always a highlight for our youth musical calendar. Both Sunday School age groups gave wonderful musical/drama performances. The 5th grade Sunday School students are called upon to lead these programs with speaking parts as well. These two larger scale performances not only give the students a chance to share what they are learning, but it allows them to lead the adults in worship as well.

The middle school youth have once again been very active this year! In 2018, we again had many middle school students participate in Confirmation band. We have adults, high school students and middle schoolers coming together to lead the music portion of the Confirmation family service on Sunday evenings during our Confirmation education time. Students are performing contemporary Christian music as well as some standard hymns revamped and old favorites. Thank you to all who give their time to be part of this team! Again, this is a great way to model for the children of Holy Cross.

Respectfully submitted,
Carrie Mack, Director of Youth Music Ministries

Middle School Youth/Confirmation

Confirmation at Holy Cross is open to all 6th-8th grade students, with the Affirmation of Baptism service coming in the fall of ninth grade. This three year program provides a boost of strength for the faith journey as our young people enter a new stage of life. Confirmation is an opportunity for students to gain a deeper understanding of scripture, our Lutheran heritage and theology, and what it means to compose a life of faith.

Students meet weekly for a Confirmation session which includes a worship experience with Holy Communion in which they learn worship leadership skills by helping to write prayers and lead the service. Students participate in large group teaching times followed by small group activities and discussions to help dive deeper into their personal faith journey for 20 sessions a year.

Throughout the school year, students put their faith into practice by participating in a variety of service opportunities. Confirmation small groups take turns assisting in worship at Winchester House and packing PADS meals. Other service opportunities include packing food at Feed My Starving Children, collecting canned food for the COOL food pantry through Trick-or-Canning, assisting with roadside clean up along St. Mary's through adopt-a-highway and other special events as they arise.

The middle school Confirmation program also provides retreat opportunities. Retreats provide a way to cover a topic more in depth and an opportunity for students to get to know each other better. This year students attended a retreat at Phantom Lake Bible Camp which explored the topic of discipleship. In the fall, the ninth graders had a final retreat at Lutherdale Bible Camp in Elkhorn, WI to look at the five baptismal promises they would affirm. Each of these retreats brought a deeper perspective of one's faith and provided further strength for the faith journey.

Peer Ministry

In 2016 we launched a new high school program called Peer Ministry. Peer Minister Leadership Training is an opportunity to learn more about the art of caring conversation as a ministry tool. It is leadership training for students to live out their faith journey in community while accompanying one another to compose a life of faith. This group began with a training retreat at Lutherdale Bible Camp in January and had follow up session of additional training and support throughout the year. In 2018, we trained 5 new Peer Ministers and continue to support previously trained youth as they grow as Peer Ministers. A special thank you to Peer Minister leader, Amanda Komashka in assisting and guiding these youth leaders. We are looking forward to training another group in January.

ELCA National Youth Gathering

2018 once again brought the triannual ELCA Youth Gathering with an incredible theme of, "This Changes Everything." This theme was expanded to Grace, Hope, Love and Jesus changes everything. This incredible opportunity brought 50 youth to Houston for this 4 day gathering of service projects, mass gatherings, time with other students from the Metro Chicago Synod and time at the interactive center.

Students are still talking about the incredible speakers that transformed their lives and provided a new way of looking at the world. They had opportunities to participate in a protest march if they wanted, assist in cleaning up a cemetery that had been forgotten, learn from one another and have a lot of fun. We even had a little time to explore Houston as well.

None of this would have been possible without the incredible generosity of the congregation to help us fundraise for this kind of trip. We had a number of wonderful fundraisers that the congregation generously responded to and we are grateful. A special thank you to all of the parents and families for their support but also to the adult chaperone of this trip: Dan & Terry Berger, Karla Boucek, Lisa Dunbar, Beth Ann Konemann, Amanda Komashka, Patty Moyer, Steve Oelschlager, Nancy Ryan and the pastoral staff.

College Students

As college students prepared to leave the area and head all over the country and world in pursuit of knowledge, we blessed their comings and goings in a blessing of college students during Sunday morning worship as we handed out the academic scholarships for this year. As students left for opportunities abroad, we also lifted them up in a special prayer and blessing as their time of departure drew near. College students were also invited to reconnect with each other and the pastoral staff over a breakfast just before Christmas. Six students and both pastors attended this breakfast.



CrossWays Preschool



Celebration! Childcare

Early Childhood Ministry Reports

The early childhood ministries of Holy Cross seek to acquaint children with a world that lies beyond the home and to provide a broad base of learning to develop each child's God-given gifts: socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually, and educationally. Our extremely high-quality, Christian-based childcare, preschool, and related programs are a superior competitive value for families in the Holy Cross broad service area, and are dedicated to provide parents with safe, nurturing environments for children to grow, play, and learn.

There are two unique ministries:

- CrossWays Preschool (CP): Providing part-day Preschool for 2,3,4 and 5 year olds.
- Celebration! Childcare (CC): Providing childcare and Preschool for children 6 weeks old through school age as well as an afterschool program.

Each of these ministries is headed by a dedicated and talented director, as indicated by their accompanying reports. Our directors, in turn, are supported by two dedicated staffs of teachers and helpers. CP and CC are operated as not-for-profit ministries of Holy Cross under the oversight of the Early Childhood Ministries Board which provides support and policy direction to the entire program. The Board consists of the directors, parent-representatives from each program, a representative from church council, Pastor Sally Hanson, and several Holy Cross member volunteers. Both programs are licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

The ongoing support of all members of Holy Cross, and not just those with children in the programs, is recognized and sincerely appreciated.

Be sure to visit each of these respective early childhood ministries at cpreschool.org and cchildcare.org for more specific information. For those Holy Cross members who are normally not at the Church facilities during the week, do take time to visit our childhood facilities on weekdays and see God's work in action.

Respectfully submitted,
Wayne Luplow, President, Early Childhood Ministry Board



The 27th successful year of operation for CrossWays Preschool has come to a close. This past year was full of memorable moments! During the early months of the year, we collected items (10 shopping bags full) for troops serving overseas. We also held our third annual Family Outreach Series event, Growing Up Healthy. Both events were wildly successful. In addition, we welcomed the men in our preschoolers' lives into our classrooms for "Men's Day," where the men got a chance to see what kinds of things we did at school.

As spring came, we enjoyed our annual ice cream social. This event, held in conjunction with Celebration! Childcare, provided an opportunity for our families to socialize with one another and enjoy a special night out. We had the first of our biannual "museum room" events, where we transform the basement area into a large dramatic play site for all who attend our program to enjoy. Our theme was "Noah's Ark," and the children enjoyed exploring the ark and trying their hand at taking care of the animals on board. Later in the spring, we invited the special ladies in our lives to join us for a day at school, similar to Men's Day. We also celebrated the end of the school year with an all-school picnic at Independence Grove for our 51 students and their families.

During the summer, we offered our very popular summer programming, Little Sprouts and Seedlings camps. Our theme this year was "Trees." During camp, the 50 children who attended explored all aspects of trees through crafts, songs, stories, and games. Through growing our garden in our outdoor classroom, we were able to donate produce to COOL Food Pantry throughout the summer, and had a presence at the Libertyville Days festival as well.

Our 2018-2019 school year started with over 50 children, ages 2-5, attending one or more of six classes we offered this year. This school year we implemented "Godly Play" into our faith curriculum. This published curriculum introduces faith stories to children through verbal storytelling and exploration of simple, open-ended materials. The program was well received by our students and is now a permanent piece of the faith component of our programming. This fall, we held our second annual diaper drive, resulting in over 5,000 diapers going to local families in need. We also started a "A Bench for Caps" plastic cap drive. In conjunction with a regional company, we look forward to creating a bench out of the plastic caps collected. To date, we are almost halfway to our collection goal! We held our second "Museum Room" of the year as well, with this time's theme being "Grocery Store." We enjoyed having over 200 people come together to enjoy our annual Thanksgiving Feast. Before we closed for the Christmas holiday, we held our annual Christmas concert, where our students and their families enjoyed the sounds of the season and fellowship at the reception afterwards.

Throughout the year, many classes went on at least one field trip. In addition, the large Holy Cross campus allows our students to enjoy learning outside the classroom, and they had fun at chapel twice a month with Pastor Bob, Pastor Sally, and Mr. Dale.

The CrossWays ministry is blessed to have nine teachers who are passionate about working with young children. Along with our extraordinary teachers, we celebrate our parents who volunteer in the classroom, or who help in other ways, such as doing laundry, making play dough, or serving on committees. Their commitment to our school is unwavering and appreciated. Through encouraging parent participation in the education of our students, we foster that home-school connection. We celebrate parents as a child's first teacher, and consider them a vital part of the educational team.

Our school relies on many people to make it the great place that it is. Some people are on the front lines, like our teachers, but others work behind the scenes. The marketing committee works tirelessly to find ways to spread the good news about our school, and the members of the Early Childhood Ministry Board work to set forth a vision for CrossWays and support us in any way we may need. Both of these groups deserve our praise, as they do so much to help keep our school one of the best in the area. We are truly blessed to have such great support!

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Moy
CrossWays Preschool Director



Celebration! Childcare is in its twelfth year of providing educational childcare, and we are currently serving more than 130 families every week.

We started our 2018 year with our community service project for COOL Food Pantry. The children created a “Can Castle” during our “Fantasy” and “Let’s Pretend” curriculum weeks. Over 150 cans were delivered to COOL Food Pantry in Waukegan as a result of this.

Additionally, Family Outreach also presented the “Growing Up Healthy” program in January. This event gave families the opportunity to join us for an afternoon of crafts, yoga instructions, and speakers from Advocate Condell Hospital. The speakers informed parents about the importance of nutrition for children.

February brought the first Parents Night Out (PNO) event of the season, which was “Love You to Pieces,” an evening of Valentine’s fun. The other Parent’s Night Out events were in April “April Showers Bring May Flowers!” and December. Parents’ Night Out gives parents the opportunity to have a night to themselves while their children have a fun-filled evening at Celebration! Childcare with activities, dinner and movie.

Our restaurant fundraisers in March and September were well attended. These fundraisers support our Playground Upkeep Program (PUP). The PUP provides fresh woodchips, new toys, and other playground equipment. The funds give us the ability to restock our playground with new equipment that keeps our playground well kept and interesting to the children.

Spring brought with it fun events and new additions to Celebration! Childcare. In April, we had 120 plus families attend our Ice Cream Social with magician Kevin Kelly providing magical entertainment for the evening. The proceeds from the ice cream social are used to purchase seedlings, soil, and seeds for our children’s garden. Thanks to Eagle Scout Michael Gadek, we now have raised garden beds for the children. Michael built them, and because of these beds, our garden yield of tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, & fresh cut flowers tripled during harvest times. The raised beds allowed the children to add quality soil and better drainage. Many trips were made to the COOL Food Pantry to deliver fresh vegetables for the clients of COOL.

During the summer months, Crossways Preschool and Celebration! sponsored a little league team in Libertyville. We were happy to provide a pizza party for the team at the end of the season.

In October, we had our Enchanted Forest Book Fair. We were able to sell enough books to earn points from the book sale to purchase seventy new Spanish books for a library in Mexico. We were connected to this opportunity through Don and Anna Simes, Holy Cross members who live in Mexico. The village has roughly 14,700 children but no books. The Simes’ friend started the library to help improve the literacy rate, which was at 20%. Many times we do outreach projects because we see a need, and we were blessed to have the ability to help. Our children wrote little notes to the children and placed them inside each book. Our children were excited to see correspondence from the children in Mexico when we received letters back, and our staff who are fluent in Spanish were able to read the letters to the children. It’s been a blessing for the children and the staff to see what a difference our donation made to a community far from us. We look forward to working again with the fine group of people at Biblioteca.

In December, we had a “Good Gifts” Christmas tree where parents were able to pick an ornament and donate to Good Gifts through the ELCA. With this, Celebration! was able to help purchase: 88 animals; a micro loan for a woman; food for a refugee family; Bibles for a global church; a water filter for a start up well, and were able to feed 200 people at a soup kitchen.

I would like to thank all the volunteer groups that help in so many ways. Between the Eagle Scouts, the Early Childhood Ministry’s marketing group, nurse volunteers, the Early Childhood Ministry Board, parent volunteers, speakers and many others, the Celebration! program couldn’t do it without you.

We also appreciate the support of the Holy Cross congregation, and we look forward to all the opportunities that being a part of such a vibrant and active congregation present to our educational childcare program.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Pfister
Director of Celebration! Childcare Center

Annual congregational meeting opening liturgy

Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

1 Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;
 2 I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,
 3 Have you not bid me love you, God and King;
 4 Teach me to love you as your an - gels love,

wean it from earth, through all its puls - es move;
 no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay,
 all your own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind?
 one ho - ly pas - sion fill - ing all my frame:

stoop to my weak - ness, strength to me im - part,
 no an - gel vis - i - tant, no op - 'ning skies;
 I see your cross; there teach my heart to cling.
 the bap - tism of the heav'n - de - scend - ed dove,

and make me love you as I ought to love.
 but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.
 Oh, let me seek you and, oh, let me find!
 my heart an al - tar, and your love the flame.

Text: George Croly, 1780-1860
 Music: MORECAMBE, Frederick C. Atkinson, 1841-1897
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 hymn #800. May be reproduced without restriction.

Litany

- L Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.
- C And also with you.
- L Teach us, O Lord, to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.
- C Lord in your name we pray.
- L Descend on our hearts, O Lord, that we may love others in the way Jesus loves us.
- C Christ in your name we pray.
- L Empower us, O Lord, to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.
- C Lord in your name we pray.
- L Move us, O Lord, to engage issues in our community in Christ-like ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those we serve and partner.
- C Jesus in your name we pray.
- L Strengthen us, O Lord, to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others although we may not agree.
- C Lord in your name we pray.
- L Give us, O Lord, the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.
- C Christ in your name we pray.
- L Guide us, O Lord, to be a healthy congregation that learns from our failures as well as our successes and offers wisdom to others.
- C Lord in your name we pray.
- L Let us pray. As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, help us to grow leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Help us to take a fresh look at our baptism each day so we may discover vitality in our relationship with you, each other and those we serve in the world.
- C Amen.

Reflections on understanding a living and vital faith

In Mark 12:28 Jesus is asked by a scribe: "Which commandment is first of all?" Jesus responded with "the Lord is one," and went on to say, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). These words are very similar to those that served as Israel's central confession of faith (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Joshua (22:5) later reminded the people of Israel to observe these words. With this text as a guide, how do we begin to explore the ways we will nurture a living and vital faith in each person and the congregation?

Within the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, congregational vitality is defined as "communities of Jesus where there are life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world." These are three important dimensions of our work together. But it is the way in which we bring our heart, soul, mind and strength into our life and work that shows how the light of Christ shines in and through us. Our heart is the way we feel and sense God's presence in and through emotions. The soul is our mindful awareness of the presence of God within us and the world. This awareness encourages us to find meaning and purpose in life, both individually and as a community of faith. The mind is how we learn our beliefs, perspectives and practices that shape our understanding, knowledge and expressions of faith. And strength is the way we use our abilities, passions and skills to shape and live a life of faith.

The vitality of our faith as Christians, and as a church in the Lutheran tradition, finds meaning and purpose in Jesus' words from Mark 12:30. As we engage our strategic directions for the future, we find both power and insight by reflecting on what brings us vitality. Please consider the following:

Heart

- When are the times you feel or sense God is present?
- How are these experiences different when you are with others rather than alone?
- How do these emotions bring vitality to your faith and relationship with God?

Soul

- What Scripture passages give you an awareness of life or "living faith"?
- How does this awareness of a living faith help you find meaning and purpose in life?
- What about your life experiences brings a sense of vitality to your faith?

Mind

- What motivates you to continue growing in your relationship with God?
- What have you found helps you learn more about God?
- Where do you find vitality through your learnings and spiritual practices?

Strengths

- What God-given abilities, passions and skills have you discovered in your life?
- How does your faith guide you in using these?
- What about using these abilities, passions and gifts gives you vitality?

May your responses to these questions help you gain new insight and vitality into your relationship with God, each other and the world.