

CONGREGATIONAL  
LIFE  
Pages 1 - 5

RELATIONAL MINISTRY  
Pages 6 - 7

YOUTH MINISTRY  
Pages 8 - 9

BEYOND THE  
CONGREGATION  
Page 10

CALENDAR  
Page 11

*I am grateful for the opportunity to connect with you through The Cross Connection, particularly with this monthly column. In this edition, Edwin Andrade, Director of Youth and Family Ministry, will discuss the importance of our Youth Ministry and how you, as a ministry partner, can help to support and develop it as a congregation this year.*

*Blessings to you all,  
Pastor Chris*

## Here, Now, Today

by Edwin Andrade

“The youth are the future of the church...” But what if there is no church for the youth to inherit? Growing up my mother used to love going to Sears, and my grandmother used to collect the Big Book catalogs. Do you remember them? When I opened and flipped through the pages it was like stepping into a time machine and veering into the past. Brick-and-mortar stores were a hoot for decades but then they went away. They used to be the talk of the town, but now all that remains are empty stores and parking lots and collector’s items. Sears couldn’t keep up with the times. The department store became more and more something of the past, not the future. It was popular back then but not today. I tell you about the brick-and-mortar stores and catalogs because for a growing number of people in our modern world, especially young people, God is a bit like the Sears catalog. The world has changed. It may have worked for our parents, but it’s not relevant anymore.



In my previous ministry position, one of our youth had her parents pass away tragically in a car accident. She lost both parents, and her world was turned upside down. In the weeks that followed, she continued to attend church but became withdrawn from the group. One of those Sundays we explored the story of Lazarus. Jesus didn’t make it in time to heal him and he passed away, but then Lazarus was raised from the dead. The youth threw her Bible and shouted, ‘This story isn’t real. If this story was real, my parents would be here!’ I didn’t say a thing. I wept just like Jesus wept. As I listened to them, I learned that it is not beneath God to feel or care for us when we hurt and cry. If you want to be more like Jesus, learn to weep when others weep. If you want to be more like Jesus, learn to listen to our young people instead of dismissing them. Learn to take them seriously now, not when they become adults.

As a youth pastor what I have seen again and again is young people with a growing sense that their faith is in some vital and yet mysterious way central to who they are as a person. They have many questions, but their doubt is a sign that their faith has a pulse. During my time at Holy Cross, young people have shared with me that the dominant ideas of God they’ve encountered along the way are not working anymore and are failing them.

I believe there are other ways, better ways of talking about God. Salvation is a holistic experience. Sunday is a dress rehearsal for the week. When we leave the building our worship continues, it doesn’t end with worship service. Our lives can be a reflection of worship (Romans 12:1). To be a Christian means more than checking boxes and being confirmed. Being a person of faith means that Jesus wants to heal and transform us and the world. Here and now. I believe God is with us and for us and I believe God is ahead of us calling us and drawing us and inviting and pulling us all every one of us into a better future than we could ever imagine. But the effort requires everyone, young and old, and everyone in between. The future of our church doesn’t fall on the youth pastor, Deaconess Katie, or Pastor Chris. One of my favorite proverbs reads, ‘If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together.’ Let’s go together as a community, shall we?

As we are fundraising for the ELCA Youth Gathering 2024, I hear the Spirit saying, ‘It’s not just an event’. It is a time and space for young people to re-imagine our faith and what church can be, not just tomorrow but today. Our Lutheran tradition is a reforming one, not a reformed one. We are not supposed to be looking in the rearview mirror. I believe that our best days are ahead of us, not behind us. Our youth are not going to have the same experience as we did, instead, we need to listen so that they may have an encounter with God. Not just at the Gathering, but also in our community at Holy Cross Lutheran Church.

### JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

FIRST  
SATURDAY EVENING  
January 6 at 5:30 pm  
Sanctuary

SUNDAYS  
January 7, 14, 21, 28  
8 & 10 am  
Sanctuary & Livestream



**Annual  
Congregational Meeting**  
Sunday, January 28 at 10:45 am  
Sanctuary

All confirmed members of Holy Cross are encouraged to participate. The Annual Report will be distributed during worship on Sundays, January 21 and 28 or view online starting on Sunday, January 21 at [HolyCrossChurch.org/resources](http://HolyCrossChurch.org/resources)

**Attention all ministry members:**  
Kindly submit your reports for the 2023 Annual Report to [office@holycrosschurch.org](mailto:office@holycrosschurch.org) by Tuesday, January 2.

**HOLY CROSS  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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**PASTORS AND CHURCH STAFF**

Rev. Christopher P. Neptun, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Dr. Robert A. Davis, Pastor Emeritus  
Sarah Accettura, Administrative Coordinator  
Edwin Andrade, Director of Youth and Family Ministry  
Janet Carr, Congregational Activities  
Carmen & Abel Cervantes, Custodians  
Beth Fashimpaur, Handbell Choir Director  
Deaconess Katie Freund, Director of Early Faith Formation Ministries  
Beth Ann Koenemann, Financial Administrator  
Carrie Mack, Director of Youth Music Ministries  
Steve Oelschlager, Finance, Facilities, and IT  
Ellie Rautenbach, Congregational Communications  
Manny Rivera, Property  
Darrin Rose, Choir Director  
Dale Tippet Jr., Director of Contemporary Music and Worship Technical Arts  
Paul Vander Weele, Organist

**EARLY CHILDHOOD MINISTRY**

Samantha (Sam) Cooper-Tuttle, Director  
Roxanne (Rocky) Lamont, Assistant Director  
Tania Zombolo, Assistant Director

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Joe Taylor, John Villani  
*Secretary*, Kathy Pritts  
*Treasurer*, Lori Fedyk  
*Financial Secretary*, Ryan Young

**VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS**

Altar Care: Julie Luczkiw  
Worship Volunteers: Therese Delli Paoli

The Cross Connection, parish newsletter of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, is published monthly and is available online at [HolyCrossChurch.org/newsletters](http://HolyCrossChurch.org/newsletters). Articles should be submitted by the 1st of the month to Janet Carr at [janet@holycrosschurch.org](mailto:janet@holycrosschurch.org)

**Quilting News**

by Deb Sherrock

On November 12, 2023, ten twin-sized bed quilts were displayed in the sanctuary and dedicated at the worship services prior to their delivery to the COOL Ministries offices in Waukegan on December 6. The quilts were given to families residing in the Family/Transitional Housing program.

During the summer, two smaller quilts were made for the organization Quilts Beyond Borders, a charity providing quilts to children in underserved areas of the world. It's a nice break from making large quilts when we have the opportunity to make smaller quilts using kid-friendly prints.

The quilting group meets on most Wednesday mornings from 9 am to noon in the resource center in the basement of the west wing. New participants are welcome to join. Cutting fabric and pressing seams are some of the non-sewing tasks that contribute to the group effort.

If you have quilt tops that you no longer want or need, or have sewn a quilt top that you would like to be donated to a good cause, consider giving it to the quilting group. One of the quilts this year was made by a quilting friend who donated it to be given to COOL Ministries. Donations of 100% cotton quilting fabric, either pieces or yardage, are always welcome.

For more information, contact Deb Sherrock at [debs695@aol.com](mailto:debs695@aol.com) or (630) 267-7802.

Quilting group members are Melanie Houser, Nancy Joiner, Sharon Pierluissi, and Deb Sherrock.



Pictured with Mindy Lindholm, COOL Executive Director, are Quilting Group members Nancy Joiner, Melanie Houser, and Deb Sherrock





Mark your calendars to save the dates for the following events in the Around the Cross Concert Series. Free admission. View all the concert offerings in the series at [HolyCrossChurch.org/atc](http://HolyCrossChurch.org/atc)

### Chicagoland Voices

**Date:** Saturday, January 27

**Time:** 7 pm

**Location:** Sanctuary



Chicagoland Voices was founded in 2011 by friends who have spent their lives teaching others to perform but rarely get the chance to sing for themselves. An auditioned choir based in Cary, Illinois, many of its singers are school music teachers and voice teachers in the area. They perform a wide variety of music from classical and Broadway to pop and vocal jazz. Their singers have performed with every major ensemble in Chicago, from the Chicago Symphony Chorus to the Lyric Opera Chorus, Cor Cantiamo, Chicago Master Singers and Lakeside Singers among many others. The choir is directed by Jason Krigas and includes Holy Cross members Mike and Carol Dikelsky.

### The Gustavus Choir

**Date:** Friday, February 2

**Time:** 7:30 pm

**Dinner with the Choir at 5:30 pm**

**Location:** Sanctuary



Established in 1932, the nationally renowned Gustavus Choir is the flagship choir in an active and highly integrated choral program that is comprised of nearly 300 students. Members of the choir are selected by audition and represent a broad spectrum of academic and life interests. The choir maintains an extensive annual touring schedule throughout the United States and travels abroad every four years.



### The Joy of Kids

by Deaconess Katie Freund

Last month we had the great blessing of watching our kids put on a Christmas pageant. Now, that might sound trivial, something to be taken for granted as “expected” for a church. But remember our recent years, this was nothing if not a Christmas miracle.

From kids still navigating emotional or developmental delays from 2020 to the nationwide decline of people who identify as religious, to the sheer feat of getting an event on everyone’s over scheduled calendar! There were a couple of reasons we could have been nervous going into this, but to be honest with you—we weren’t.

We have been so blessed to have had a number of people step up and help get our Sunday School ministry off to an amazing start this year. Our adult shepherds truly have the heartfelt gratitude of everyone on staff here at Holy Cross, because we know our program is nothing without them. To top that off, we have an amazing person leading our youth music ministry. Carrie Mack is a school music teacher, and it shows. Our kids were great for their Christmas pageant, and Carrie is the one who set them up for success. And in case you didn’t know, she’s accompanied (literally, I mean piano playing) by her husband Jamey, and they both make a habit of going above and beyond.

When we look at the adults we have volunteering behind the scenes and the amazing families we have the privilege of serving up front, you get a beautiful view of the heartfelt ministry this whole thing is built around. When we zoom the lens out, the future of what the church looks like in generations to come is uncertain. But how can we be nervous? The Holy Spirit is living and active, planting seeds in the next generation, and God is with us in the humblest of ways.

Want a chance to help water new growth? Remember those amazing adult shepherds who are responsible to bring all of this to life... we have the joy of celebrating two of them expecting new babies of their own this spring!

So I have two requests for our church family. The first, is to hold our young families in love. Offer help, encouragement, and affirmation wherever you can during this sacred and vulnerable time for families. Not just because they are raising up the future, but they are stewarding our present as well.

Secondly, we’re looking for some more shepherds to assist with our Sunday School ministry. It’s not just about making sure we “fill in holes” but that we’re recruiting a wide group of people so that no one gets burnt out. Join us on the journey, even if it’s just for a week, and see what the Holy Spirit can do. We have great kids, fun games, and clever crafts with all the supplies provided. The spring Sunday School season will be held from January 7 to April 28. Sign up at this link: [bit.ly/shepherdsF23](http://bit.ly/shepherdsF23)







## Cookie Walk Recap

The 15th Annual Cookie Walk held on Saturday, December 9, 2023, was once again a festive success! A special thank you to all of our bakers who baked their delicious and favorite cookies, to our valuable volunteers and those who came back to support the Cookie Walk.

From your overwhelming and generous donations, we raised over \$4,500 and we sold over 400 pounds of baked goods! We could not have accomplished this effort without YOU for providing your generous time in preparing and baking cookies for this special ministry! Most importantly, these funds will be donated to the Tree of Life, Boys and Girls Club of Rosebud, and the Panther's Clothes Closet of Rosebud Elementary School. These organizations provide many essential services for the Lakota people who face many obstacles on the reservation. More importantly, they work collaboratively with one another to help insure everyone's needs are met. We also support our missionary, Dorothy Peterson, who is active and instrumental in providing financial and spiritual support to the Lakota families.

Our raffle this year was very popular! Our raffle winners include: Darleen Sparacino who won the beautiful Gingerbread House created and donated by Kris DeGregor; Carol Dikelsky won the "Spread the Love" basket; Debbie Stokovich won the "Cheery Cherry" basket; Randy Kuceyski won the "Gold Jingles and Silver Bells" basket; and Heidi Erchinger won the "Baker's Thank You" basket.

Also, thank you to our additional volunteers who graciously donated their time on the day of the Cookie Walk: Diane Duffy, Lia and Ana Boucek, Susan Beck, Beth Ann Koenemann, Greg Kveton, and Barb Sargent.

We are thankful that we can carry on this tradition at Holy Cross to support our Lakota friends. Special thank you's to Pastor Chris, Pastor Bob, Sarah, Ellie, and Janet who so graciously supported our effort.

We wish you God's blessings and peace throughout the New Year.

With sincere appreciation,

The Cookie Walk Team

*Karla Boucek, Therese Delli Paoli, Sue Dittman, Melanie Houser, Gail Kelly, Carole Kenney, Amanda Komashka, Patty Moyer, Joyce Kveton, Judy Fornero Soltermann, and Joyce Twardock*





PASTORAL ACTS

BAPTISMS

Sunday, December 17, 2023  
**Logan Michael Maurer**  
*son of Shane and Meghan Maurer*  
**Reagan Kay Maurer**  
*daughter of Shane and Meghan Maurer*

WE WELCOMED NEW MEMBERS

Sunday, December 17, 2023  
**Shane and Meghan Maurer**  
*Logan and Reagan*

WEDDING

Saturday, December 9, 2023  
**Morgan Zupkus and Kristopher Smith**



**Journey** faith, discipleship, generosity

**Finding God in the Faith of Others**

*by Steve Oelschlager*

An Excerpt from *Holy Envy* by Barbara Brown Taylor

“The supreme religious challenge,” says Jonathan Sacks, “is to see God’s image in one who is not in our image.” If he is right, then the stranger—the one who does not look, think, or act like the rest of us—may offer us our best chance at seeing past our own reflections in the mirror to the God we did not make up.

I think it is no mistake that the New Testament never offers a physical description of Jesus. Although most Christians imagine him as the perfect specimen of their own physiognomy, there is nothing in scripture to support that. He might have been short, balding, or bow-legged, more Danny DeVito than Denzel Washington. He almost certainly had bad teeth. Of course, there is nothing in scripture to support that either. All scripture says is that when he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, few of them recognized him at first. One thought he was the gardener. Others thought he was a fisherman. A couple thought he was a stranger on the road. Even when most of his disciples recognized him, a few still doubted.

That seems just right to me. How wonderful of him to come back undercover, so that even the people who knew him best had to look, then look again, before they got the crawly feeling that they had seen him somewhere before. It was the perfect setup for people who wanted to know what made him different from anyone else they had met: his ability to reflect their humanity back to them, both familiar and strange, so that they never got tired of searching each other’s faces for some sign of him. The Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour, he had told them earlier, so be ready. Little did they know how many hours there were in his day, or that he never rang the bell.

**Calling All Elves!**

*We need your help to un-decorate the sanctuary after Christmas*



**Thursday, January 4**

10 am to 2 pm: 4-5 helpers are needed; please bring along your lunch! Please contact the church office to let us know if you can assist at [office@holycrosschurch.org](mailto:office@holycrosschurch.org) or (847) 367-4060.

**Women’s Ministry News**

*by Beth Ann Koenemann*



**Reel & A Meal**



**Date:** Sunday, January 28

**Time:** 11 am

**Location:** Fellowship Area

**Cost:** Free, lunch included.

**RSVP:** [bit.ly/RSVPWT](https://bit.ly/RSVPWT)



On January 28, the LIFT group will continue the women’s retreat theme with the movie “Women Talking” and discuss how we can use our voice in our everyday relationships and the greater community. You didn’t have to go to the retreat to benefit from this event, as a recap of the retreat’s key points will be given.

Right after the 10 am worship service on January 28, we will meet for lunch, (which will be provided) at 11 am in the gathering space, and then we will watch the movie “Women Talking”, followed by a discussion led by Deaconess Katie. This movie is rated PG-13, but some scenes may be triggering for some. I encourage you to review the movie trailer at: [bit.ly/WTmovie](https://bit.ly/WTmovie) to get a better idea if it will be right for you.

**Please RSVP by Monday, January 22, so we can plan for food and drinks at [bit.ly/RSVPWT](https://bit.ly/RSVPWT)**

RSVP by the 22nd to be entered in the “Thanks for your RSVP” raffle. We hope that you will be able to join us as we tie the retreat and this movie together to conclude how we can use our voice to connect with others and be heard.

**Packing Event**



**Date:** Saturday, February 3

**Time:** 11:30 am

**Location:** Feed My Starving Children  
 742 E. Park Avenue, Libertyville

**Cost:** Free

**RSVP:** [bit.ly/LIFTFMSC24](https://bit.ly/LIFTFMSC24)



The women of LIFT, in conjunction with the Holy Cross Feed My Starving Children Group, will be packing meals. This event is not just for women as it is open to the whole congregation, so bring your friends and/or family—All ages (5+) are welcome and invited to participate in this worthy event. We hope you can join us! To register, please visit [bit.ly/LIFTFMSC24](https://bit.ly/LIFTFMSC24)



**MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP**

TUESDAYS, JANUARY 2, 9, 16, 23 &amp; 30 AT 7 - 8 AM

LOCATION: THE LIBERTY RESTAURANT, 419 S. MILWAUKEE AVE, LIBERTYVILLE

Begin the day with coffee, breakfast, fellowship, and thought-provoking and stimulating conversation. All men are welcome to join us.

Questions? Contact Pastor Chris at [pastorchris@holycrosschurch.org](mailto:pastorchris@holycrosschurch.org)

**SATURDAY MEN'S GROUP**

SATURDAYS, JANUARY 13 &amp; 27 AT 7 - 8:30 AM

LOCATION: IN-PERSON (ROOM 208) OR VIA ZOOM

[holycrosschurch.zoom.us/j/301891517](https://holycrosschurch.zoom.us/j/301891517)

We will be continuing discussion of *'A' is for Alabaster: A Preacher's Alphabet*, by Anna Carter Florence, the Peter Marshall Professor of Preaching at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and holds degrees from Yale University and Princeton Theological Seminary (M.Div. and Ph.D.). This new book brings winsome insight to an array of characters and stories in the Bible—some celebrated and some overlooked. Copies are available on the welcome center in the Fellowship Area. Please join us.

Questions? Contact Pastor Chris at [pastorchris@holycrosschurch.org](mailto:pastorchris@holycrosschurch.org)

**HELP TURN HUNGER INTO HOPE BY PACKING MEALS**

DATES: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17 FROM 4:30 - 6:15 PM

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3 FROM 11:30 AM - 1:15 PM

LOCATION: 742 E PARK AVE, LIBERTYVILLE



Holy Cross' partnership with Feed My Starving Children goes back many years, and the congregation was instrumental in helping the organization establish a permanent packing site in Libertyville, creating an enduring impact that continues to feed countless children worldwide. This partnership continues in 2023 with the establishment of a monthly pack for members of the Holy Cross community. Volunteers aged 5 and over and any ability levels can make a difference, as standing, heavy lifting, and seated jobs are all needed to pack and ship meals. You're invited to join Emily Young and other volunteers on one or more days ahead to serve together!

To sign up for one or more group packing sessions, please contact Emily Young at [emily.young@allstate.com](mailto:emily.young@allstate.com)

**BOOK CLUB**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25 AT 7 PM

VIA ZOOM

[holycrosschurch.zoom.us/j/94321824417](https://holycrosschurch.zoom.us/j/94321824417)

In January we will discuss *The First Ladies* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray, a novel about the extraordinary partnership between First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and civil rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune—an unlikely friendship that changed the world. Mary Bethune was an educator and a civil rights activist (founding the National Association of Colored Women and sitting on the board of the NAACP), she became an advisor to President Roosevelt. Our discussion host will be Jeri Powers.

If you have any questions, please email Felicia Brandt at [felicia.s.brandt@gmail.com](mailto:felicia.s.brandt@gmail.com)

**STRENGTH & CORE**

MONDAYS, JANUARY 8, 15, 22 &amp; 29 AT 6 PM

LOCATION: CELEBRATION! CHILDCARE ATRIUM

To join this exercise group, please contact Jodi Zombolo at (224) 595-8573.

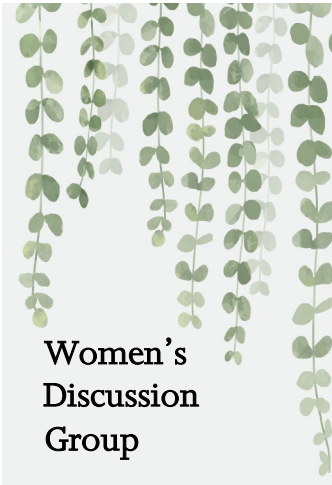
**HOLY CROSS CHOIR**

REHEARSALS: TUESDAYS, JANUARY 2, 9, 16, 23 &amp; 30 AT 7 PM

LOCATION: SANCTUARY

We welcome singers of all ages to join the choir. For more information about joining, and to be added to the choir email list, contact Choir Director, Darrin Rose at [darrin@holycrosschurch.org](mailto:darrin@holycrosschurch.org)





**WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP**  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 9 & 23 AT 9:30 AM  
LOCATION: ROOM 208

*The Women's Discussion Group at Holy Cross meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month.*

The ongoing discussion topics are being taken from 'A' is for Alabaster: A Preacher's Alphabet by Anna Carter Florence, the Peter Marshall Professor of Preaching at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and holds degrees from Yale University and Princeton Theological Seminary (M.Div. and Ph.D.). Before joining the Columbia faculty in 1998, Dr. Florence served as an associate pastor for youth and young adults at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis.

Copies of the book are available on the welcome center in the Fellowship Area. All women welcome.  
Contact Pastor Chris at [pastorchris@holycrosschurch.org](mailto:pastorchris@holycrosschurch.org) with any questions.



**GROUNDING IN GRACE: FRIDAY NIGHT WOMEN'S GROUP**  
NO MEETING IN JANUARY

*Grounded in Grace is a social opportunity for women of faith to connect together in fellowship.*

Save the date! Grounded in Grace Game Night will be held on Friday, February 16 from 6:30 - 9:30 pm in the fellowship area. Look for more information in the February newsletter.

Contact Terry at [terryberger.08@gmail.com](mailto:terryberger.08@gmail.com) with questions or to be added to the Grounded in Grace Messenger group.



**PROJECT HEALING WATERS (PHW) FLY FISHING NORTH CHICAGO**

DAY SESSION: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10 AT 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM

LOCATION: HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVENING SESSION: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10 AT 7 - 9 PM

LOCATION: HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

We always welcome more volunteers to help with hospitality. If you would like to help in this way, please contact [office@holycrosschurch.org](mailto:office@holycrosschurch.org)



**QUILTING GROUP**

WEDNESDAYS, JANUARY 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31 AT 9 AM - 12 PM

LOCATION: ROOM 404

We gather on Wednesdays to sew as a group. Completed quilts are donated to COOL Ministries for families residing in the Family Housing program or to Project Linus, an organization that provides blankets to comfort children who are seriously injured, traumatized, or in need.

Questions? Contact Deb Sherrock at [debs695@aol.com](mailto:debs695@aol.com) or (630) 267-7802.



**COMMON THREADS**

MONDAY, JANUARY 8 AT 1 PM

LOCATION: FELLOWSHIP AREA

We meet on the second Monday of most months to knit, crochet and visit. No prior crafting experience necessary. Each blanket or shawl created is dedicated at a worship service and then presented to the prayer recipient. These pieces offer the healing power of prayer, crafted as an expression of God's love. Request a prayer blanket or shawl for a loved one by contacting the church office at [office@holycrosschurch.org](mailto:office@holycrosschurch.org) Questions? Contact Judy Luplow at (847) 367-0242.



**HANDBELL CHOIR**

REHEARSALS: THURSDAYS, JANUARY 11 & 18 AT 7 PM

LOCATION: BASEMENT

PERFORM DURING WORSHIP: MARCH DATE TBD

We welcome all to join the Holy Cross Handbell Choir. If you can read music, you are in! Rehearsals are in the church basement on the first three Thursdays of each month.

Questions? Contact Beth Fashimpaur at [elizabeth.malecha@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.malecha@gmail.com)



# Sunday School

by Deaconess Katie Freund

The new year is here and we're stepping into the New Testament.

Come with us on the next leg of our journey as we teach our kids about the life and ministry of Jesus!



## Spring Schedule

**January 7:** This Sunday we learn about the baptism of Jesus and his cousin John the Baptist, who ate... bugs!?! That can't be right...

**January 14:** MLK Day - No Sunday School

**January 21:** The Beatitudes might have a fancy name, but we're using fun games to learn about these central tenets of Jesus' teaching like "Blessing Blob" and "Achoo—Bless You!"

**January 28:** We'll take a wild ride as we reenact Jesus calming the storm.

**February 4:** There will be crafts and a game of charades to help us learn about four friends who cut a hole in a roof to help someone get to Jesus.

**February 11:** The symbol of a butterfly will help us understand the Transfiguration of Jesus up on the mountaintop.

**February 18:** Presidents Day - No Sunday School



## CONFIRMATION

by Deaconess Katie Freund

Thank you to all of our families for all the hard work in kicking off our new confirmation program! Our first fall session was full and went even better than we could have hoped for.

If your student didn't participate in the fall, no worries. Each session is a self-contained series of six classes from start to finish. Details below for our next session this spring.

### Spring 2024 Session Dates:

**Registration & Orientation:** Sunday, February 4, 5 - 6 pm.  
Parents and students attend.

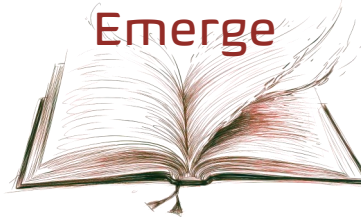
**Sessions 1 - 6:** Sundays, February 11, 18 & 25, March 3, 10 & 17 from 5 - 8 pm, dinner provided.

**Affirmation of Baptism:** Sunday, March 24 at 10 am worship

The spring session schedule and more details can be viewed online at [HolyCrossChurch.org/confirmation](https://HolyCrossChurch.org/confirmation)

Questions? Contact Deaconess Katie at [deaNESSkatie@holycrosschurch.org](mailto:deaNESSkatie@holycrosschurch.org)

## Emerge



Fueling Curiosity, Nurturing Faith

Middle School  
Youth Group

Here's what's coming up for our **weekly events** in January. Each week will be focused on one of the following types of events:

**INVITE:** Join us for a fun event or outing and **INVITE** a friend!

**NURTURE:** These are faith-formation events. We'll check in, explore a Bible story and pray.

**SERVE:** We'll roll up our sleeves for a service project.

Dates to mark on your calendar:

- Sunday, January 7, 10 - 10:45 am - **Nurture Event (Hot Cocoa & Winter Break Recap)**  
Faith Formation (Room 208)
- Sunday, January 14, Time TBD - **Invite Event**  
Whirlyball (285 Center Dr, Vernon Hills)
- Sunday, January 21, 10 - 10:45 am - **Nurture Event**  
Faith Formation (Room 208)
- Sunday, January 28, 10 - 10:45 am - **Nurture Event**  
Faith Formation (Room 208)

As always, we'll share some snacks, check in with each other and with God! Friends are always welcome at any event!

View more information at [HolyCrossChurch.org/emerge](https://HolyCrossChurch.org/emerge)



## HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

Update: Crossroads Nurture Events will be moving to a new time in 2024. We will be shifting from having the events in the evening to Sunday morning at 11 am, following worship. Each week will be focused on one of the following types of events:

**INVITE:** Join us for a fun event or outing and **INVITE** a friend!

**NURTURE:** These are faith formation events. We'll check in, explore a Bible story and pray.

**SERVE:** We'll roll up our sleeves for a service project.

Here are some dates to mark on your calendar:

- Sunday, January 7, 11 am - 12 pm - **Nurture Event (Hot Cocoa & Winter Break Recap)**  
Faith Formation (Room 208)
- Sunday, January 14, Time TBD - **Invite Event**  
Whirlyball (Vernon Hills)
- Sunday, January 21, 11 am - 12 pm - **Nurture Event**  
Faith Formation (285 Center Dr, Room 208)
- Sunday, January 28, 11 am - 12 pm - **Nurture Event**  
Faith Formation (Room 208)

As always, we'll share some snacks, check in with each other and with God! Friends are always welcome at any event!

For more information about the Crossroads High School Youth Group, visit [HolyCrossChurch.org/crossroads](https://HolyCrossChurch.org/crossroads)



## Emerge Middle School Youth Group and Crossroads High School Youth Group

by Edwin Andrade

During the 15th annual Cookie Walk in December, the Emerge and Crossroads Youth groups wrapped gifts to raise funds that will be used to support the youth traveling to the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans over the summer. I want to start by thanking Becky Sawle and Nikki Spencer. Can they wrap or can they wrap? And I would also like to thank the youth who got up bright and early and helped us wrap. Lastly, a big thank you to Therese Delli Paoli who helped make it happen, and to those that supported the cause. We were able to raise nearly \$300!

On Sunday evening, December 10, 2023, we had the opportunity to go Christmas Caroling with the youth from First Presbyterian Church of Libertyville. It was my first time doing such an activity so I had no idea what to expect, but we had a great time! We made stops at StoryPoint Senior Living in Libertyville, and Brookdale Senior Living in Vernon Hills. We were offered boxes of chocolate and even jars of homemade raspberry jam!

As we look forward to the Youth Gathering later in 2024, we will be having another fundraiser in February. We'll be making cookies and candy for a bake sale. Please look for more information including a pre-order form in next month's newsletter, and other communications. And of course, be on the lookout for a promotional video!

If you have any questions about the Emerge Middle School Youth Group, or the Crossroads High School Youth Group, please email Edwin at [edwin@holycrosschurch.org](mailto:edwin@holycrosschurch.org)





## New PADS Needs for a Happy 2024!

by Peg Chartier

The new PADS hotel model is wonderful for the clients because it removes housing insecurity. With this new model come new challenges, one of the largest being stocking PADS client rooms with shelf stable, high protein meals and snacks. First Presbyterian Church in Libertyville, has graciously offered their basement as a food pantry for all of us to use as stock storage. These items can then be distributed to the various hotels as necessary. Keeping food in the pantry has been a challenge as we all adjust to the new needs.

High protein, shelf stable, microwavable meals are requested including meals by Hormel such as Dinty Moore and Compleats. These are usually found in the same aisle as the boxed mac and cheese. Other items include macaroni and noodle cups (not the ramen packets) that can be microwaved, soup that is microwavable (not condensed), granola bars, fruit cups, canned meats, snack mixes, tuna, a variety of crackers, non-refrigerated yogurt, drink boxes, juice bags, baby food and cases of water. Canned vegetables do not go over well, but any other kid friendly items would be welcome. In my last meeting with PADS Lake County, they have 382 clients living in hotels. Half of this population is minors under the age of 18. If you could take a moment to add a couple items to your next shopping trip they would be greatly appreciated. The PADS donation bin is located near the church office and clearly marked for PADS, next to the bins for COOL Ministries.



We will be taking donated food items to First Presbyterian Church (219 W Maple Ave) as we fill the PADS donation bin. However, if you prefer to drop food items off yourself at First Presbyterian, they are taking donations Wednesday evenings from 4 - 7 pm. Simply drive thru by their narthex door (on Douglas Ave) and your car will be met by their volunteers.

All of that being said, the Holy Cross PADS Ministry team will continue to prepare, package and deliver 50 warm meals to the hotel in Mundelein every 2nd and 5th Mondays. We would love to include you! Thank you to the dedicated volunteers that have kept this important delivery going. The hotel only gets warm meals on Mondays and Thursdays.

As always, your monetary contributions are appreciated, enabling us to go buy food pantry items and other miscellaneous requests that we receive from PADS throughout the year. Please visit [donate.holycrosschurch.org](https://donate.holycrosschurch.org) or use the QR code to help out this important ministry.



**PADS**  
LAKE COUNTY

## COOL Ministries

by Jill McKeon



COOL Ministries was established in 1983 and has been feeding the hungry and housing the homeless for over four decades. Thank you for all the support to make the 40th anniversary of COOL Ministries' service a success!

COOL Ministries finished in the "black" for the 2023 fiscal year. It was such a challenging year with inflation, grocery and gas costs, and government changes with food stamps. Thank you for always showing support. The Christmas giving tree gift tags were all snatched up within two weeks, with most taken on week one. What a blessing you provided for all those living in the transitional housing program.

As always, food donations are always needed. Feel free to drop off any extra shelf stable pantry items such as pasta, mac-n-cheese, canned vegetables, canned meat, cereal, and peanut butter at the donation bins near the church office. Please check expiration dates.

You may donate online by visiting [donate.holycrosschurch.org](https://donate.holycrosschurch.org) or by scanning the code to the right. Thank you for your generous support.



If you have any questions on what is needed or how you can assist the COOL Ministries program, please feel free to reach out to me, Jill McKeon at [jill.mckeon@att.net](mailto:jill.mckeon@att.net) or (847) 331-7908.

## Willow House



Willow House provides free grief support groups to families who have lost a spouse/child and are actively parenting children ages 3 - 28. They also offer a Survivors of Suicide loss group (this group includes people with varying relationships to the person they lost to suicide). All family members are required to complete an intake process before attending a group. Willow House is available for consultation, as well as to offer additional resources depending on the individual/family's needs. For details on specific programming, meeting dates and more information about Willow House, visit [willowhouse.org](https://willowhouse.org) or email [info@willowhouse.org](mailto:info@willowhouse.org)

# CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS



### Volunteer Facilitator Training Opportunity

Willow House will be holding Volunteer Facilitator Training in January in preparation to help support the monthly family peer grief support groups from February through May.

This training includes an experiential and guiding framework for understanding the grief and loss experience of children and families, a review of educational information and research on children's grief, and instruction on how to be an effective peer support group facilitator. There is a specific need for facilitators to assist with the Libertyville group.

For more info or to apply, please visit: [willowhouse.org/volunteer](https://willowhouse.org/volunteer)





# January

## Monday, January 1

Church office closed

## Tuesday, January 2

7 am Men's Breakfast Group, The Liberty Restaurant  
4 pm Red Rose Choirs, 402  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

## Wednesday, January 3

9 am Quilting Group, 404  
4 pm Red Rose Choirs, 402

## Saturday, January 6

5:30 pm First Saturday Evening Worship with Holy Communion, Sanctuary

## Sunday, January 7

8 am Worship with Holy Communion, Sanctuary & livestream  
9:45 am Sunday School, Celebration! Childcare Atrium  
10 am Worship with Holy Communion, Sanctuary & livestream  
10 am Emerge Middle School Youth Group, 208  
11 am Crossroads High School Youth Group, 208

## Monday, January 8

1 pm Common Threads, Fellowship Area  
6 pm Strength & Core, Celebration! Childcare atrium  
6:30 pm Willow House, Fellowship Area

## Tuesday, January 9

7 am Men's Breakfast Group, The Liberty Restaurant  
9:30 am Women's Discussion Group, 208  
4 pm Red Rose Choirs, 402  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

## Wednesday, January 10

9 am Quilting Group, 404  
4 pm Red Rose Choirs, 402  
7 pm Church Council, 208

## Thursday, January 11

7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal, 402

## Saturday, January 13

7 am Saturday Morning Men's Group, 208

## Sunday, January 14

8 am Worship with Holy Communion, Sanctuary & livestream  
9 am Fellowship Coffee Hour, Fellowship Area  
9:45 am Sunday School, Celebration! Childcare Atrium  
10 am Worship with Holy Communion, Sanctuary & livestream  
Time TBD Emerge and Crossroads Youth Groups, Whirleyball (Vernon Hills)

## Monday, January 15

6 pm Strength & Core, Celebration! Childcare atrium  
7 pm BSA Troop 194 Meeting, 402

## Tuesday, January 16

7 am Men's Breakfast Group, The Liberty Restaurant

4 pm Red Rose Choirs, 402  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

## Wednesday, January 17

9 am Quilting Group, 404  
9 am Young Life Capernaum Meeting, 403  
4 pm Red Rose Choirs, 402  
4:30 pm Meal Pack, Feed My Starving Children, Libertyville

## Thursday, January 18

7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal, 402

## Sunday, January 21

8 am Worship with Holy Communion, Sanctuary & livestream  
9:45 am Sunday School, Celebration! Childcare Atrium  
10 am Worship with Holy Communion, Sanctuary & livestream  
10 am Emerge Middle School Youth Group, 208  
11 am Crossroads High School Youth Group, 208

## Monday, January 22

6 pm Strength & Core, Celebration! Childcare atrium  
7 pm BSA Troop 194 Meeting, 402

## Tuesday, January 23

7 am Men's Breakfast Group, The Liberty Restaurant  
9:30 am Women's Discussion Group, 208  
4 pm Red Rose Choirs, 402  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

## Wednesday, January 24

9 am Quilting Group, 404  
4 pm Red Rose Choirs, 402

## Thursday, January 25

7 pm Book Club, Zoom

## Saturday, January 27

7 am Saturday Morning Men's Group, 208  
7 pm Around the Cross Concert Series: Chicagoland Voices, Sanctuary

## Sunday, January 28

8 am Worship with Holy Communion, Sanctuary & livestream  
9:45 am Sunday School, Celebration! Childcare Atrium  
10 am Worship with Holy Communion, Sanctuary & livestream  
10 am Emerge Middle School Youth Group, 208  
10:45 am Annual Congregational Meeting, Sanctuary  
11 am Crossroads High School Youth Group, 208

## Monday, January 29

6 pm Strength & Core, Celebration! Childcare atrium  
7 pm BSA Troop 194 Meeting, 402

## Tuesday, January 30

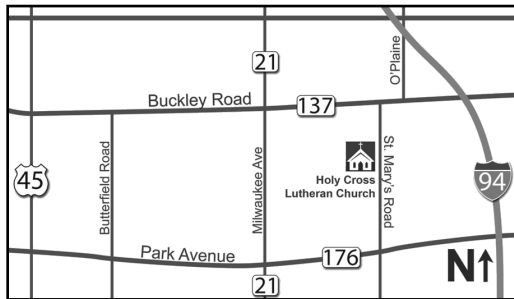
7 am Men's Breakfast Group, The Liberty Restaurant  
4 pm Red Rose Choirs, 402  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary



**HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
 1151 N SAINT MARY'S RD  
 LIBERTYVILLE, IL 60048 -1575

Postmaster: Request in home by **January 1**

Non-Profit Org.  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
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 Libertyville, IL  
 Permit No. 14



**Chicagoland Voices**

Date: Saturday, January 27  
 Time: 7 pm

Location: Fellowship Area

Join us for a choir concert by Chicagoland Voices. They perform a wide variety of music from classical and Broadway to pop and vocal jazz.



**The Gustavus Choir**


Date: Friday, February 2  
 Time: 7:30 pm  
 Dinner with the Choir at 5:30 pm  
 Location: Sanctuary

Holy Cross will welcome the nationally renowned Gustavus Choir for dinner and a performance.

*See page 3 for additional details.*

**Annual Congregational Meeting**  
 Sunday, January 28 at 10:45 am

All confirmed members of Holy Cross are encouraged to participate. *See page 2.*

 We can help make a difference

**Turn Hunger Into Hope**

Wednesday, January 17 from 4:30 - 6:15 pm  
 Location: 742 E Park Ave, Libertyville



Volunteers aged 5 and over and any ability levels can help, as standing, heavy lifting, and seated jobs are all needed to pack and ship meals. *Details on page 6.*

**Stock the Food Pantry Shelves**

Shelf-stable pantry items are needed such as pasta, mac-n-cheese, canned vegetables, cereal, and peanut butter. *See page 10.*



**Provide Warm Meals**

Support individuals, and families in Lake County experiencing a housing insecurity with nourishing meals. *See page 10.*

