



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

All around us, we see signs of God's love and goodness. A person who has stepped away from church for many years steps back into a congregation, feeling the call of the Holy Spirit. Young adults feeling isolated in a digital-first world start gathering in person in a small group, enjoying the warmth of a hug and a new friend asking about their week. A mother plants a garden, and it yields fruits and vegetables, giving her nutritious food for her kids and extra produce to sell at the local market. Everywhere we look, we see signs of Christ's love. In Psalm 93, we read: "More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore" (4-5).

God's love is a majestic thing, and it moves us to share it in word and deed. The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, across our country and around the world.

I am so grateful for you, dear church. Your generosity to each of these three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has bolstered the church's ability to share the message of God's love to people who are longing for it. Through your

“More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.”

—Psalm 93:4-5

financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices, you've helped carry this message of God's majestic love. Thank you, dear church. As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to stand steadfast in God's promises, sure of God's love and goodness.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

**AGENDA**  
**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**  
**HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**February 2, 2025**

Call to Order

Opening Devotion

Adoption of Agenda 3

Staff, Council and Committee or Team Chairs 4

Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting 5-10

Report of the Pastor/Pastoral Acts 11-13

Holy Cross Attendance Trends 2024 14

2024 Report of the Treasurer and 2025 Budget  
Recommendations 15

2024 Actual and 2025 Proposed Income and Expenses 16

Balance Sheet for 2024 17

Reports of the Staff, Council, Teams, and Committees 18-34

Elections (Nominating Committee Report) 35-36

- Council Members (2 to be elected)
- Mission Endowment Fund Team Members  
(2 to be elected)

Old Business

New Business

Closing Prayer and Adjournment

## HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

### *Staff, Officers, Council, and Chairs of Committees and Teams*

#### **STAFF**

Pastor	Janice Hawley (through July)
Interim Pastor	Gerhard Kraus (August – Dec.)
Office Project Manager	Carrie Curnutte
Social Media & AV Technical Director	Court Templeton
Traditional Worship Music Director	John J. Hamill III
Contemporary Worship Music Director	Dave Reinking

#### **OFFICERS**

President	David Winkler
Vice-President	Bob Morin
Financial Secretary	Clarence Jentes
Treasurer	Mary Bailey
Recording Secretary	Penny Rudolph

#### **EXECUTIVE TEAM**

David Winkler	Bob Morin	Kevin Aleshire
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#### **CHURCH COUNCIL**

Kevin Aleshire	Kari Brangan	Kelly Caligiuri
Donovan Lucas	Bob Morin	Philip Paul
David Winkler		

#### **COMMITTEES and TEAMS**

Care and Prayer	Bud Niebling
Church Property	Steve Kuhlman
Finance	David Ristau
Garden	Darlene Kuhlman
Social Activities	Kelly Caligiuri
Vision Team	Madde Hanson
Youth	Kevin McCracken



**Minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting  
Holy Cross Lutheran Church  
February 4, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER** – Council President David Winkler called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. Dave let us know that we would be acknowledging individuals for their notable contributions to Holy Cross throughout the meeting.

**OPENING DEVOTION** – Dave asked Pastor Janice to open the meeting in prayer. All present joined in reading the liturgy and prayer with a hymn from the ELW, accompanied by Jack Hamill.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Dave asked if any changes were needed to the agenda printed in the annual report. No changes were requested.

**STAFF, COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

The following Council members are completing their terms: Donna Jackson, John Hanson, and Kevin Aleshire. Kevin is running for re-election. Dave thanked Donna and John for their valuable service for the past six years. Dave also thanked Pat Goertzen for serving on the Mission Endowment Fund team.

Greg Miller was thanked for his faithful service as treasurer for the past 11 years. Dave thanked Clarence Jentes for his long-term service as our financial secretary. Greg will be handing over the reins to Mary Bailey who we welcome with great appreciation for her willingness to serve.

Dave thanked Penny Rudolph for serving as recording secretary for the past 6 years. Penny has agreed to serve for an additional year while we continue to search for her replacement.

Dave expressed appreciation to all heads of teams and committees and to all Council members.

Dave also thanked Pastor, Carrie, Court, Dave, and Jack for all they do for us at Holy Cross each week.

**MINUTES OF THE 2023 ANNUAL MEETING** – Dave asked that all present review the minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting (pp 5-12) and voice any corrections needed. A correction needed to be made to a sentence on page 5 that referred to a correction to the minutes from 2022. The sentence read: ...”the minutes were approved as printed.” The sentence needs to read: ...”the minutes were approved as corrected.” Penny committed to recording this correction in today’s minutes so that the correction appears in next year’s annual report.

Dave then asked for a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion was made and seconded. All present agreed by voice vote to approve the corrected minutes; no nays were heard.

**REPORT OF THE PASTOR/PASTORAL ACTS**

Pastor referred us to her annual report to review her top 5 priorities.

**Number 1: Outreach to families with special attention to younger adults/families:** We didn’t make much headway in this area, so it’s an important new order of business for 2024 (see new business, new position). It will require heavy lifting to get younger folks to church. We are aware that mainline churches are in decline. We believe that all want to hear the message without judgment or obligation; going forward, we cannot dwell on what we “used to do.” We need to consider seriously how open we at Holy Cross really are to engaging with people. Pastor is committed to trying new things but she can’t do it alone. She knows that we don’t want her to do it alone; she is sure we want to work together to create a church that has the vibe where people know we care about them and will act to help them. If we share the Kingdom of God one person at a time, they will share it with others, and so on; we will create a chain reaction. For starters toward this goal, we will market ourselves differently this year. Court will help in her publicity efforts, especially in social media outreach. Many of us will help as well.

Pastor shared her observation that campus ministry has completely changed since Covid. The model is one of chaplaincy now. Those involved in campus ministry hear: "I am having a rough spell, I am anxious," and so on. The campus pastor spends a lot of time in pastoral care. Our goal here will resemble those of campus ministers: How do we respond in a way that can make a difference in the lives of young people who have no church or supportive community beyond those of online or school? How do we transform ourselves to a community that supplies a safe, open, welcoming place? Few people just walk into a church now; they need to feel invited and welcomed. We have gained as many members as we have lost this year. We need to remember: It's not about size, it's about how we live out our faith in vibrancy.

**Number 2: Engaging in Strategic Identification and Training of Holy Cross Leaders:**

Our continuing quest is to develop strong leaders who do good work and who show us how to do that good work. Spiritual retreats will continue to be offered quarterly. Council members and any interested leaders in our congregation will come together to learn how to build and share our spirituality. Our leaders are involved in various ministries at Holy Cross and nurture one another through small groups such as those called out in Priority Number 4, below.

**Number 3: Establish the Vision Team and Provide Support for Building on the Vision Momentum:**

We accomplished this, thanks largely to the hard work of Madde Hanson, Sarah Miller, Philip Paul, and Helen Krull. We are grateful to this dedicated team for their creativity and commitment.

**Number 4: Bolster and Encourage Small Group Connections:**

We have made great progress in this area and continue to support small groups such as:

- Beer and Theology
- Wednesday Morning Bible Study
- Men's Bible Study

We need to open our groups to more new members and continue to promote our small groups to ensure all feel welcome.

**Number 5: Manage financial resources to shift to preventive maintenance for Building and Grounds:**

We are succeeding in this area, and will continue to make this a priority.

We have room to dream now that our mortgage is paid off; how can we use our resources most effectively? How can we reach out and accomplish new things for the greater good for God?

Greg Miller asked Pastor to address the position of Social Media and Audiovisual Technical Director and talk about the transition from Marcus to Court. What are the differences in their skills? Pastor shared: Marcus was very faithful and understood the Bible so well. He focused on Facebook, getting folks to engage. His strength was getting that going.

Court is an organizer. Right after she was hired Court created a weekly schedule of AV volunteers, making it easy for all AV workers to remain aware of colleagues' schedules. She also is faithful in posting engaging weekly messages for Holy Cross.

Court's background in filmography helps her create videos and short reels to attract folks, especially younger ones. She is a clever writer who uses her gift of language to create interest that motivates.

**HOLY CROSS ATTENDANCE TRENDS**

Next, Pastor referred to page 17 of the report to highlight several points on the attendance chart.

Our church membership is right at 200. Who is watching online? How do we get 298 online total?

We will continue to search for ways to get our "online" members engaged more actively in church life.

It was moved and seconded to accept Pastor's report. A voice vote was taken. All present said AYE; no nays were heard.

**RECOMMENDED 2024 BUDGET** – Referring to page 18 of the 2023 Annual Report, Greg began discussion of the 2024 budget. He also referenced page 20 for the Balance Sheet Summary. Currently, our money market earns 0.10% interest annually. Greg will move \$20,000 to the Mission Investment Fund, which will pay us 4.85% interest; this will be invested in a one-year CD.

Greg described the Mission Endowment Fund (MEF). Who are they? What do they do?

MEF meets quarterly and decides how to allocate funds they receive.

When MEF was created and initially funded, it was established that a percentage (90%) of funds received would be used inside Holy Cross with 10% used outside Holy Cross.

During the January 2017 annual meeting the congregation voted to approve changing the designation of fund distribution to our current ratio: 60% of MEF funds to be used inside Holy Cross and 40% of funds to be used outside Holy Cross.

Anyone who wishes to contribute to MEF is able to contribute funds marked “undesigned” too.

The MEF monies are invested in a Chicago fund that earned 10 to 12 percent last year.

MEF money received this past year was used to help pay for the bathroom remodels, to help fund AV improvements in the sanctuary, and to support repairs in the chapel.

### **GENERAL FUND (our checking account)**

Greg transferred \$20,000 to the general fund in January. All other funds sit on the balance sheet. If we spend zero dollars in one category it stays zero on the balance sheet the next year.

Greg mentioned that we need help depleting our gift card inventory with the goal of disbanding that program. We need to sell \$6000 in remaining gift cards this year. Who can help out? Call the church office to order cards and Carrie will set them aside for you. One idea: Sell gift cards during chili bingo!!!

This year our income was \$380,473; our expenses were \$375,000. We lived within our budget.

\$14,616 more than pledged was received.

In 2023: 78% of our income was pledged and 22% was estimated. This is a very strong ratio for a congregation. We take our pledges seriously.

### **How are we going to ensure we meet our budget this year?**

We had \$11,375 in our checking account on December 31, 2023. We are still waiting to receive our money from the employee retention tax credit we filed for in 2023. Greg refreshed our memories by explaining what exactly the *Employee retention tax credit* is:

During Covid we never laid off employees so under the American Rescue Plan Act we were able to apply for and recoup money. *Paychex* told us we were eligible to apply for this benefit because Holy Cross went 55 weeks in a row without worshipping in person while having 8 to 10 people in the sanctuary each week, running the online worship services. We did not lay off any employees or reduce their pay.

If we hadn't applied for a loan for this, we would have missed out on this possibility. We are still waiting for our money – currently reimbursements for this credit are frozen and no new applications are being accepted; applications already being processed are being scrutinized more carefully.

### **Key Points in the Proposed 2024 Budget:**

Synod benevolence is being reduced from 20% to 18%.

Staff members and musicians will receive a 3% raise.

We are no longer paying the CSS area coordinator, saving \$500.

What went up in cost? *Utilities* for one (this increase in 2023 costs impacted our budget).

*For property:* We budgeted \$34,000 last year and spent \$39,238. This year we are budgeting \$34,000.

(*Note:* Property anticipates needing another \$215,000 in future property repairs and improvements.

Examples are replacement of our flat roof, significant landscape cleanup, and continuing upgrades to HVAC components, as needed.)

At the end of 2024, our balance sheet should read zero. It's not out of the ordinary to have zero dollars in our checking account at the end of the year.

Steve Kuhlman requested that we move money to his building fund; that hasn't happened yet.

Pastor has requested a new staff position; we aren't able to fund that yet.

Our AV upgrade last year cost \$50,000. We have raised all the money to pay ourselves back with the exception of \$60.00 that was pledged but not paid in full.

Greg remarked that we at Holy Cross step up as a congregation when the need is there. In the future, there may be a time we will need to contribute to a building fund. When the need arises, if the costs of a project are estimated to be greater than 2% of our annual budget the costs will have to be approved at a specially called congregational meeting.

**Greg said there are three keys to the treasurer job:**

- You are highly accountable for paying bills.
- You alone have knowledge of how much each person contributes to HC.
- Communication! If you run into problems you communicate!

**Greg opened the floor for any questions on the 3 financial pages.**

Dave Haas inquired about page 19: *2023 Actual and 2024 Proposed Income, Expenses, and Operating Fund Balances*

We anticipate receiving the outstanding employee retention tax credit of \$26,588. When the tax credit comes in we will move \$20,000 to the Building Fund and will add the rest to the general fund.

*So... why does the balance sheet make it appear that the employee tax credit is an expense?*

Greg confirmed that this line is not shown accurately. He asked Penny to have page 19 modified before finalizing the annual report and adding it to the shared drive.

**YEAR-END GENERAL FUND HISTORY**

*2023 Actual and 2024 Proposed Income, Expenses, and Operating Fund Balances*

Greg worked with the Finance Committee to create the 2024 budget. (See page 20 of the report.)

- Total budgeted expenses: \$373,044
- Total budgeted income: \$354,293
- Budget gap: \$ 18,751

Dave Winkler called for approval of the budget. It was moved and seconded to approve the budget as corrected. It was also moved, seconded and all approved the Treasurer's report as corrected. (Several motions were voiced simultaneously for the first motion and the second motion.)

**REPORTS OF THE STAFF, COUNCIL, TEAMS, AND COMMITTEES**

Dave asked for a motion to approve all committee reports and Pastor's report. It was moved, it was seconded, and all in attendance approved all reports as published.

**ELECTION OF CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS AND MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND TEAM**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Dave Winkler hit the highlights of his report. Most topics in his report had also been addressed by Pastor and by Greg Miller. Dave's emphasis was on the progress we made in key areas over the past year:

Approved two Eagle Scout projects (a picnic rest area outside the youth room and a fence around the dumpster area) as well as a Girl Scout Gold project to remodel our downstairs bathrooms.

He emphasized how we have opened our door to new groups: ESL, Russian student classes, and others.

**ROLL WAS TAKEN.** Penny verified all persons attending the meeting, recording those present.

56 persons were eligible to vote; 53 ballots were counted (some members left meeting before voting).



## ELECTIONS

Vice President Donna Jackson announced an *error on the ballot form* that had been distributed.

*Instructions should have read:*

Vote for 3, not 2, for Council.

**Nominating Committee Report:** Dave acknowledged the good work of Donna Jackson and John Hanson in assembling a strong slate of candidates for the open positions. Dave Haas added his appreciation to the nominating team.

### Church Council Members (3 to be elected)

Dave introduced the five candidates for Council whose bios are shown on pages 35-36: **Kevin Aleshire, Frank Barnhart, Donovan Lucas, Moira McCracken, and Philip Paul.** We were instructed to vote for *a maximum of three candidates.*

### Mission Endowment Fund Members (1 to be elected)

Dave introduced the two candidates for MEF whose bios are shown on page 37: Andrew Doud and Joan Paul. We were instructed to vote for *one candidate.*

Dave thanked all candidates for their willingness to run for office. He asked if there were any questions for any candidate; no questions were raised.

Dave requested nominations from the floor; no nominations were heard. Members were asked to vote. Ballots were counted and results were announced.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ELECTION RESULTS

### ELECTED MEMBERS

**Mission Endowment Fund:** Joan Paul, who will fill a 3-year term.

**Council:** Kevin Aleshire, Donovan Lucas, and Philip Paul, who will each fill a 3-year term.

## OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed.

## NEW BUSINESS

- **New Lenten format**

Pastor is creating a new format for this year's Lenten services. She calls it *WE time – Worship plus Engagement.* Following the Wednesday evening service we will go to the chapel and connect through Zoom with members and others who attend service online. Our goal is to engage as many people as possible. We want to explore: How do we claim Jesus? How does He show up in our lives?

- **New Strength and Conditioning Class**

John Hanson has agreed to offer a class for a few interested individuals. He will lead the class at a time to be determined. Anyone interested should contact the church office.

- **New Staff Position Request**

Pastor wants to create a new part-time staff position: A program director to focus on families and younger individuals. The projected salary is \$20 to \$25 per hour and she anticipates the position requiring 8 to 10 hours per week. We need to think about how to begin moving toward our goal of connecting with young families.

Currently, we have 8 to 9 kids on our rolls, but only 2 to 3 kids attend church or Sunday School weekly. We must be proactive while there are still kids in Sunday School.

We have asked parents at Holy Cross what Sunday School time would appeal most to them: A different weekday, a different time on Sunday? Most say they want to continue to have Sunday School offered on Sunday mornings, an older model. But still, attendance is low.

Our congregation members must work together to attract young people and families. We will exchange ideas. For starters, we need to get to know some neighborhood groups and figure out how to connect them to our church. We need to work with Council to come up with ideas for how to attract this group.

Doing *more* things doesn't necessarily mean success. We need to determine needs and how to meet those needs. Next year we shouldn't be asking, "Why don't we have young people at Holy Cross?" After this discussion, Kevin Aleshire made a motion to fund a line item in this year's budget that we had just approved for \$8,000 for the position to begin on April 1, 2024 and following. The motion was seconded.

Bud Niebling pointed out that the motion must specify the *title* of the position being requested. Kevin restated the motion to include the title, *Young Family Outreach Ministry Director*. Kevin's motion was seconded and discussion followed.

**Discussion:** Dave Haas didn't want to be negative, but is concerned with adding staff and how it could impact our future if we face a situation where we aren't able to fund all staff positions and need to let people go. He was head of the personnel committee in the past when we had to cut three part-time positions from staff. It was painful and caused disruption in the congregation.

Darlene suggested that if we formed a committee to investigate this possibility, the committee should include young people.

Susan Jentes offered the comment that each age group of kids requires a distinct set of skills in a leader. Pastor clarified that the position would not be that of teacher. It would not require the successful candidate to be ordained either. The successful employee would have an interest in children and would be skilled in planning outreach with others. He or she would be able to gather community support and attract young families, young adults, and children.

Pastor had crafted a job description and shared it with Council several months ago. Dave offered to make the job description available to the rest of the congregation. Copies were distributed.

Dave also pointed out that we had just finished approving a budget for 2024. Could we explore funding this proposed position later this year? Or if we approve funding the new position today could we amend the budget today? We were assured that was a possibility and a quorum was present, so Dave called the vote.

**The Vote was Called:** On the floor is a motion to add a budget line item for \$8,000 to fund the position of *Young Family Outreach Ministry Director*. We had a motion and a second; a voice vote was called. It was determined that the vote was too close to call, so ballots were handed out and those present were instructed to write in YES or NO to indicate their vote. Ballots were then collected and counted.

**YES votes were 14; NO notes were 19. The motion failed.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT AND CLOSING PRAYER**

Dave closed the meeting in prayer.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 1:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Penny Rudolph, Recording Secretary



David Winkler, Council President

## **Holy Cross Lutheran Church (ELCA) Creve Coeur, Missouri Interim Pastor's Report 2024**

Greetings and Peace in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It has been a joy and honor to serve as your Interim Pastor, beginning on August 1st. When the Bishop approached me about this opportunity I did what many people do, I Googled you. What I found was a very healthy and active community of believers. It made it easy to accept this role. I want to thank you for your welcome and support in getting settled in.

### **Worship**

The majority of my time has been working on our worship time. We are SO blessed to have Jack and Dave lead our traditional and contemporary worship services. The depth and variety of worship services is very impressive and so much work goes into the planning, rehearsing and leading. The variety of styles provide people with the opportunity to attend worship services of their choice. This diversity and quality of worship is rare in congregations that I have served.

### **Online Presence**

That brings us to another blessing that this congregation enjoys: your online presence. The number of people who watch services online is impressive. True, in-house worship attendance has gone down – as is the case for many churches in this Post-Pandemic reality. However, your presence online includes so many more people. All of this is possible thanks to the leadership of Court and so many volunteers who run the system.

### **Stewardship**

This year's Stewardship theme was "Because of God's Great Mercy." Information and teaching opportunities were shared via social media, emails, newsletters, and short videos. Pledges were available (and still are) in print form or through our website. The return of pledges was good; the exact numbers are available in this report.

### **Confirmation/Affirmation of Baptism**

Logan and Parker Hanson, Alex Mills and Morgan Andrews made their Affirmation of Baptism on Reformation Sunday. These are an exceptional group of young people who each shared with the congregation their faith journey and how much Holy Cross has supported them. A big word of thanks to Cindy Lacks for teaching and guiding them in their Sunday morning class.

### **Volunteers**

Every congregation needs good volunteers to help "run" the church. Holy Cross is blessed with so many people who serve faithfully, behind the scenes. I see in previous reports that members are listed specifically, acknowledging the work they do. My apologies that I was not able to include those special thanks in this report. But please know I'm very grateful for their excellent service.

**Transition Team**

I have been very impressed with the work of the Transition Team. They have done an exceptional and detailed job in gathering information for their report. They used different methods that allowed a wider circle for members to share their input. The report is available in this report and will be reviewed. Once you approve the report it will be sent to the Bishop's office for their assessment. This report will become a basis for Synod Staff to begin the process of matching Holy Cross with pastors who could be a good fit for your congregation. The Call Committee has been formed and they will begin their work soon, preparing to meet and get to know potential pastoral candidates. Once again, it is important to keep this entire process in your prayers. It can only be accomplished with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is still not known what the timing will be before your next pastor joins you, but we need patience and trust that the Lord will guide you in your search.

**Staff**

I'm very grateful for our staff members. As mentioned earlier, David and Jack are truly a blessing as they guide and lead our worship. Court does an exceptional job in managing our social media presence. She is especially gifted in assembling some excellent videos. I have given her a few projects in preparing videos and have been so pleased with the results. Her texts are spot-on and the visuals are great. Carrie serves as the glue that keeps us all together. She is an important source of information and is very willing. Her work on preparing newsletter, worship bulletins and Sunday morning slides guiding our worship is exceptional. She has been a great support to me in getting settled.



## PASTORAL ACTS OF MINISTRY IN 2024

### **Confirmations**

Eleanor (Ellie) Winkler 5/09/2024

Benjamin Heimsoth 5/19/2024

**Marriages**                      None

### **Funerals**

Patricia Schwan 3/01/2024

Harold Schwan 4/02/2024

Betty Jean Lutz 3/04/2024

Larry Dennison 4/22/2024

Janet Reihl 3/10/2024

Erik Hagen 12/28/2024

### **Baptisms**

James Vanholbeck 2/25/2024

Callie Gockel 5/19/2024

Jack Bauer 7/07/2024

Ben Rynerson 7/14/2024

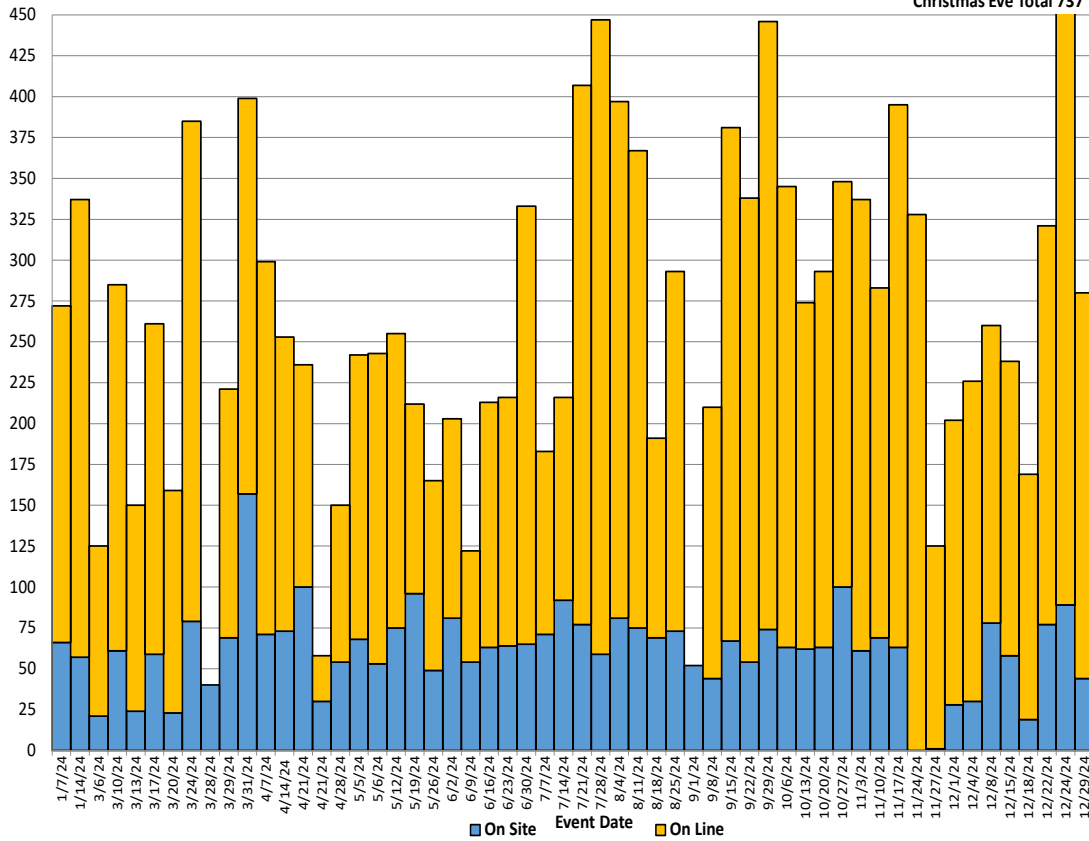
Avery Rynerson 7/14/2024

Ellie Rynerson 7/14/2024

Gunter Griffen 11/24/2024

### Holy Cross Lutheran Church Attendance 2024

Christmas Eve Total 737



**2024 Report of the Treasurer & 2025 Expenditures Recommended by the Council**

Description	2024			2025	Budget Increase
	Budget	Disbursed	Variance	Budget	(Decrease)
Congregational Benevolence	\$ 18,000	18,000	-	15,000	(3,000)
Staff Mileage Reimbursements	1,200	744	456	900	(300)
Staff Salaries & Benefits	204,740	197,895	6,845	194,740	(10,000)
Musicians	26,004	24,682	1,322	26,004	-
Pastor's Cont Ed & Prof Exp	1,200	17	1,183	500	(700)
Continuing Education for Staff & Council	600	178	422	300	(300)
Synod Assembly	1,500	1,790	(290)	2,000	500
Central States Area Coordinator	-	-	-	-	-
Church Supplies	4,500	3,916	584	4,000	(500)
Digital Marketing	500	500	-	500	-
Payroll Processing	4,000	4,283	(283)	4,300	300
Property	34,000	52,502	(18,502)	40,000	6,000
Copy	4,500	5,490	(990)	4,000	(500)
Utilities	35,000	38,079	(3,079)	37,500	2,500
Insurance	17,000	21,873	(4,873)	21,000	4,000
Garden	300	177	123	300	-
Christian Education	1,000	1,602	(602)	1,000	-
Vision Implementation	1,500	667	833	750	(750)
Worship & Music	5,000	5,132	(132)	4,000	(1,000)
Nursery	-	-	-	-	-
Sunday Youth Gatherings	400	160	240	150	(250)
Young Kids Events	100	50	50	100	-
Youth Trips	-	-	-	-	-
Benevolence Pass-Through	12,000	6,074	5,926	6,000	(6,000)
	<b>\$ 373,044</b>	<b>383,811</b>	<b>(10,767)</b>	<b>363,044</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>

<b>2024 Actual and 2025 Proposed Income, Expenses, and General Fund Balances</b>				
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		2024 Proposed	2024 Actual	2025 Proposed
<b>Income:</b>				
Pledged & estimated income	\$	327,293	351,125	324,275
Loose plate		2,300	2,502	2,300
Building use		12,000	13,155	8,000
Holiday income		700	600	700
Benevolence income		12,000	6,092	6,000
<b>Total income</b>		<b>354,293</b>	<b>373,474</b>	<b>341,275</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>				
Operating budget		361,044	377,737	357,044
Pass through benevolence		12,000	6,074	6,000
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>373,044</b>	<b>383,811</b>	<b>363,044</b>
<b>Net income (loss)</b>		<b>(18,751)</b>	<b>(10,337)</b>	<b>(21,769)</b>
<b>Other general fund receipts (disbursements):</b>				
Transfer to building fund		(20,000)	-	-
Employee retention tax credit		26,588	-	9,700
Transfers from (to) other funds, net		-	(3,398)	-
<b>Net other general fund receipts (disbursements)</b>		<b>6,588</b>	<b>(3,398)</b>	<b>9,700</b>
<b>Net increase (decrease) from all sources</b>		<b>(12,163)</b>	<b>(13,735)</b>	<b>(12,069)</b>
<b>General fund balance:</b>				
<b>Beginning of year</b>		11,375	11,375	(3,280)
<b>End of year</b>	\$	(788)	(2,360)	(15,349)

<b>Proposed 2025 Benevolence Summary</b>				
--	--	--	--	--

<b>Budgeted total benevolence</b>			\$	21,000
<b>Budgeted total income &amp; benevolence pass-through</b>			\$	341,275
<b>Benevolence giving as a % of total income</b>				6.2%



**Holy Cross Lutheran Church - Creve Coeur MO**  
**Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2024 (Balance Sheet Summary)**

Sunday, January 12, 2025

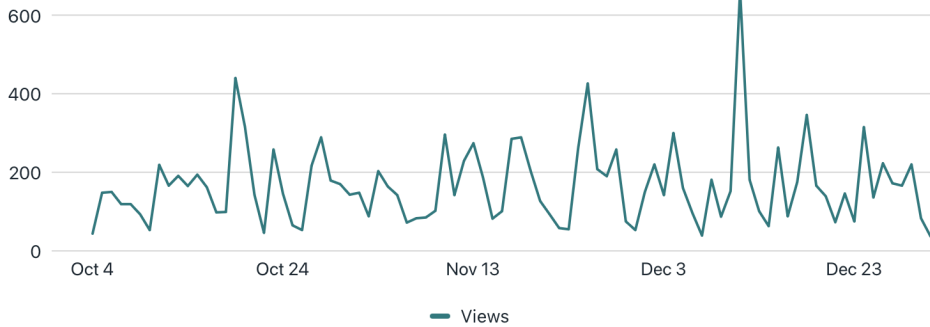
Page 1 of 1

Account Name	Beginning Balance	Previous Period Balance	Amount Diff Period	YTD Balance
<b>Assets</b>				
First Mid Bank & Trust Checking	40,436.33	14,131.67	29,797.27	43,928.94
First Mid Bank & Trust Money Market	48,676.90	13,704.25	1.20	13,705.45
Mission Investment Fund	0.00	20,477.92	0.00	20,477.92
<b>Bank Totals</b>	<b>\$89,113.23</b>	<b>\$48,313.84</b>	<b>\$29,798.47</b>	<b>\$78,112.31</b>
ELCA Endowment Fund	198,473.90	206,412.11	0.00	206,412.11
First Mid Bank & Trust Endowment Fund	6,865.82	2,689.95	2,050.57	4,740.52
<b>Mission Endowment Total</b>	<b>\$205,339.72</b>	<b>\$209,102.06</b>	<b>\$2,050.57</b>	<b>\$211,152.63</b>
Gift Card Inventory	6,165.00	1,120.67	0.00	1,120.67
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$300,617.95</b>	<b>\$258,536.57</b>	<b>\$31,849.04</b>	<b>\$290,385.61</b>
<b>Funds</b>				
General Fund	11,374.88	(21,575.61)	19,215.98	(2,359.63)
Prepaid Pledge Fund	20,000.00	8,000.00	2,900.00	10,900.00
<b>General Fund Total</b>	<b>\$31,374.88</b>	<b>(\$13,575.61)</b>	<b>\$22,115.98</b>	<b>\$8,540.37</b>
Afghanistan Family Fund	474.18	474.18	0.00	474.18
Altar Guild Fund	0.00	46.00	0.00	46.00
Audio Visual Fund	(60.00)	(114.25)	0.00	(114.25)
Banner Fund	1,454.06	1,454.06	0.00	1,454.06
Building Fund	1,335.32	369.00	4,960.38	5,329.38
Capital Campaign Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Council Discretionary Fund	369.46	358.00	0.00	358.00
Designated Estate Fund	54,611.30	52,485.70	(2,000.00)	50,485.70
Feed The Need STL Fund	0.00	(50.00)	0.00	(50.00)
Flower Fund	812.77	(521.20)	270.43	(250.77)
Food Drive Fund	51.36	1,237.18	0.00	1,237.18
Garden Fund	0.00	100.00	(425.00)	(325.00)
Greeting Card Fund	0.00	62.31	0.00	62.31
Holiday Fund Total	0.00	0.00	205.50	205.50
Kitchen/Bagels Fund	(20.92)	(146.96)	2.00	(144.96)
LFCS Fund	0.00	300.00	45.00	345.00
Memorial Fund	1,032.50	1,609.43	702.28	2,311.71
Mission Endowment Fund	205,339.72	209,102.06	2,050.57	211,152.63
Organ Concert Fund	36.16	389.00	0.00	389.00
Pastor Benevolence Fund	751.36	496.25	(348.62)	147.63
Seminarian Scholarship Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Shawl Ministry Fund	0.00	63.44	0.00	63.44
Social Activities Fund Balance	245.43	403.04	(134.72)	268.32
Special Donation Fund	(4,355.48)	(2,062.38)	3,633.49	1,571.11
Stephen Ministries Fund	2,074.46	2,074.46	0.00	2,074.46
Sunday School	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Thrivent Fund	270.00	1,525.00	284.00	1,809.00
Vision Implementation Team Fund	106.23	79.89	0.00	79.89
World Hunger Fund	0.00	401.38	102.75	504.13
Youth Activity Fund	(1,449.84)	855.92	385.00	1,240.92
Youth Gift Card Inventory Fund	6,165.00	1,120.67	0.00	1,120.67
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$300,617.95</b>	<b>\$258,536.57</b>	<b>\$31,849.04</b>	<b>\$290,385.61</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Funds</b>	<b>\$300,617.95</b>	<b>\$258,536.57</b>	<b>\$31,849.04</b>	<b>\$290,385.61</b>

# 2024 Holy Cross AV & Social Media Annual Report

Court L. Templeton

- Graphs on this page are from the past 90 days.



**Views breakdown**  
Oct 4, 2024 – Jan 1, 2025

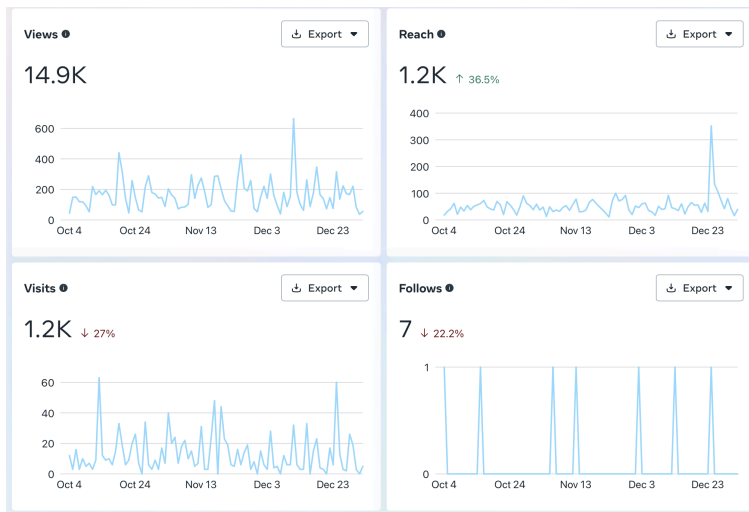
**Total**  
**14,879**

**From organic**  
**100%**








**From ads**  
**0%**

## Analytics

Social media analytics reveal that our largest audience demographic is women aged 65 and older. Women make up 65.4% of our demographics. Currently, we have 454 followers on Facebook and 25 on Instagram. We have gained 52 followers over the course of this year. Performance insights highlight a key trend: reels consistently drive significant organic engagement on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. These short, dynamic videos outperform interaction, making them a cornerstone of effective digital strategies.



Additionally, using a 2:1 photo-to-graphic ratio enhances visual appeal and maintains brand consistency, striking a balance that keeps the audience engaged. This blend of engaging reels and a well-considered content mix maximizes visibility and fosters deeper connections. Our top-performing posts in 2024 feature sermon sound bites paired with b-roll footage and captions summarizing the Pastor's message. These reels have achieved outstanding results, particularly on YouTube.


<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Embracing the Gift of Grace This Christmas</b> As Christmas draws near, let us reflect on the gift of repentance and the boundless grace o...	Public	None	Dec 18, 2024 Published	570	0	100.0%	53 likes
<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Advent: The Word Made Flesh</b> Join us next Wednesday night for our weekly Advent service! Learn more about Holy Cros...	Public	None	Dec 5, 2024 Published	42	1	100.0%	1 like
<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Jesus comes into our lives every day!</b> Jesus comes into our lives every day! Follow us on Facebook!	Public	None	Dec 2, 2024 Published	890	5	100.0%	145 likes
<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Remembering Our Baptism</b> Remembering our baptism and the overwhelming love of Christ that reached out...	Public	None	Nov 25, 2024 Published	32	0	100.0%	3 likes
<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Happy Thanksgiving!</b> Happy Thanksgiving from Holy Cross! #dailydevotional #fellowship #thanksgiving...	Public	None Shorts policy	Nov 25, 2024 Published	217	0	100.0%	27 likes
<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>God Will Never Let Us Go</b> No matter where we are in life, with God there's nothing to fear. #lutheranchurch...	Public	None	Nov 25, 2024 Published	521	0	100.0%	31 likes
<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Woodwind Trio: 8:28am November 17th 2...</b> Come see our Woodwind Trio perform before Traditional Service this Sunday! Before...	Public	None	Nov 12, 2024 Published	105	0	100.0%	1 like

— VIEWS

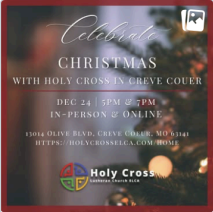
### Top content by views

Boost content

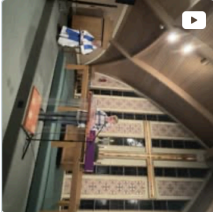
See all content




**Celebrating Gunther's baptism!** ...  
Wed Dec 11, 2:35pm  
237 views, 10 hearts, 0 shares




**Join us for our Christmas Eve...**  
Tue Dec 10, 5:00pm  
216 views, 3 hearts, 1 share



**Our first Advent service** ...  
Wed Dec 4, 4:55pm  
202 views, 3 hearts, 0 shares



**Join our praise band this Sunday for our...**  
Fri Dec 13, 3:23pm  
194 views, 5 hearts, 0 shares

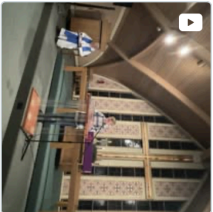


**Thank you to everyone who joined...**  
Thu Dec 26, 4:00pm  
168 views, 4 hearts, 0 shares


### Top reels by views

Boost content

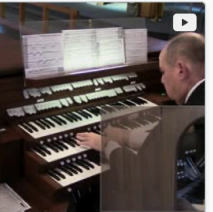
See all content




**Our first Advent service** ...  
Wed Dec 4, 4:55pm  
202 views, 3 hearts, 0 shares



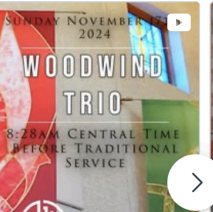
**Join our praise band this Sunday for our...**  
Fri Dec 13, 3:23pm  
194 views, 5 hearts, 0 shares



**Organ Concert**  
Sun Oct 20, 12:31pm  
158 views, 3 hearts, 0 shares



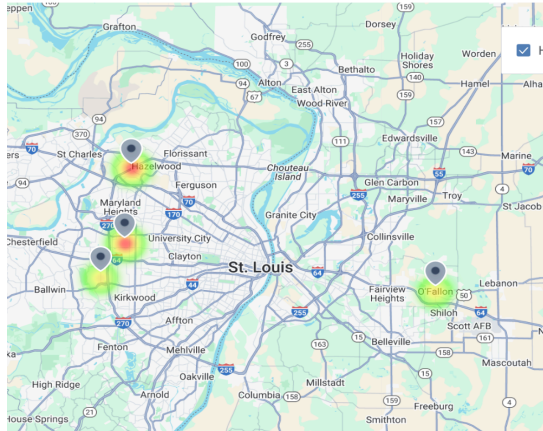
**Christmas Eve Traditional Service**  
Tue Dec 24, 4:59pm  
139 views, 3 hearts, 1 share



**Come see our Woodwind Trio...**  
Fri Nov 15, 4:55pm  
139 views, 2 hearts, 0 shares

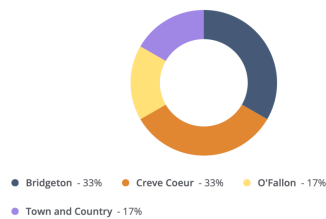
## AV Improvements

The AV team has seen remarkable growth with the addition of three skilled members. This expansion enhances the team’s ability to deliver high-quality audio-visual experiences, enabling improved production capabilities and seamless event execution.



Resi provides helpful insights that can be utilized to further optimize AV operations and elevate performance across all projects. Resi provides valuable audience data, revealing that most viewers are located in Bridgeton or Creve Coeur. Additionally, the majority of the audience accesses the service either on their desktop computers or mobile phones.

Viewer breakdown by



CITY	VIEWERS
Bridgeton, Missouri	2
Creve Coeur, Missouri	2
O'Fallon, Illinois	1
Town and Country, Missouri	1

## Implementation Text-In-Church

The Connect Cards stationed in the Narthex have been effective in gathering information and signing people up for the Text in Church program. I have used this program to send out information about upcoming events, communicate schedules with the AV team, and collect photos from our members to create engaging social media content.

## Plans for 2025

To further enhance our digital presence, I want to update the “What’s Your Vision” initiative with a professional welcome video for the Holy Cross YouTube page. This will create a polished and inviting introduction to our community. In addition, I want to optimize the screens in the Narthex to display engaging videos and slides before service, enriching the experience for attendees and setting a welcoming tone. These efforts are designed to strengthen both our digital and in-person engagement, fostering growth and deeper connections in the year ahead.

## **OFFICE PROJECT MANAGER CARRIE CURNUTTE**

As the Church Office Manager, it has been a privilege to serve in this role throughout 2024. My role involved overseeing the day-to-day administrative tasks of the church office, supporting staff and ministries, maintaining church records, and ensuring effective communication within the congregation. This year has been a time of growth, challenge, and adaptation. Throughout 2024, I have continued to provide administrative support to the church staff, pastor, and ministry leaders.

### ***Key responsibilities:***

- Ensured timely communication with church members, guests, and the wider community via phone, email, and social media channels
- Managed the church calendar, scheduling services, events, meetings, and ensured there were no conflicts in the church's usage
- Worked on finalizing and distributing weekly bulletins, newsletters, and announcements. This involved gathering content from various ministries, designing, and ensuring timely publication of promotional materials for upcoming events and special services
- Managed and maintained the church's CMS system, keeping all member data up to date and accurate
- Maintained the Deacon Folder/attendance records to give to the counters, Tim & Patrick
- Worked with Clarence to create the means of collecting special online donations and created QR codes to include in newsletters for members' ease of donating
- Worked to keep the church website current and worked with Court to ensure updates on the church's social media platforms are posted
- Maintained office supplies and ordered materials as needed to ensure smooth operations
- Created and distributed special event invitations and flyers, such as holiday services programs, baptisms, and other churchwide initiatives
- Continued to create Sunday screens for the Sunday worship services
- Cleaned and organized the youth room in the old fellowship hall (still needs a lot of TLC!)
- Cleaned and organized the chapel to remove miscellaneous clutter
- Turned the small office outside the chapel into a food pantry for those needing assistance

This year has been one of continued growth and adjustment for both the church and the office team. The progress made in 2024 is a testament to the hard work and collaboration of the church staff, volunteers, and the entire congregation.

As we move into 2025, I look forward to continuing to serve the church community, addressing challenges, enhancing church operations, and supporting the overall mission and ministry of the church in the year ahead.

## **TRADITIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR**

Jack Hamill continued to provide music for the 8:30 am Sunday services and others, including: Ash Wednesday, some midweek Lenten services, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Thanksgiving Eve/Pie Fest, some midweek Advent services, and Christmas Eve. The music included Prelude, Offertory, Communion Meditations, and Postludes as well as accompanying hymns and service music. In coordination with both Pastor Janice and Pastor Gerhard, Jack has planned music based on Pastor's themes and seasons of the church year. Linda Tyahla helped select hymns. Jack continued to report music with the copyright organization, *One License*. Holy Cross holds licenses for a podcast, streaming and rehearsal tracks.

With the retirement of Pastor Janice and the hiring of interim Pastor Gerhard Kraus, Jack has worked with Carrie to effect a smooth transition for Pastor Gerhard in worship planning.

Thanks to Moira McCracken, Linda Tyahla and Megan Tyahla for continuing to lead the singing at our 8:30 am service. Thanks also to Linda for managing the singers' schedules.

The choir continued to provide music during our traditional service for feast days and special events of the church year. They sang anthems and led singing on Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Easter Sunday, Pentecost, Trinity, Reformation Sunday, All Saints Sunday, Thanksgiving Eve/Pie Fest Service, and Christmas Eve traditional service. Joining the choir this year were Cindy Lacks and Morgan Andrews. The choir sang the Cantata, "A Song is Born" by Douglas Nolan on Sunday December 8th.

Jack continues to select appropriate music for the choir, continuing to update the church's choral anthem library and purchase new choir music. The new microphones for the choir are working out well. Appreciation goes to the sound booth crew, especially David Ristau. Dave leads his fellow AV team members Philip Paul and Mark Rudolph in their efforts to bring out the best possible amplification of the choir.

The choir joined forces with the Praise Band on Easter Sunday to sing "I will Rise" by Chris Tomlin and "How Beautiful" by Twila Paris. Jack planned the services with Dave Reinking and Pastor Janice. Teagan McCracken played flute and Dave sang the Baritone Part with the choir. Jack directed all.

Jack performed organ concerts in April and October which were broadcast over Facebook Live; in-person attendance was encouraged. Freewill offerings taken at the concerts netted \$330 in April and \$389 in October, with proceeds going to support the Holy Cross music program. Thanks to Donovan Lucas for making the concert live streaming possible, and to the sound booth personnel for volunteering to work the concert. Thanks to Carrie Curnutte for help with the program and promotion and to Pastor Janice and Pastor Gerhard for introducing Jack. Thanks to Darlene Kuhlman and Christine Doud as well as other members of Holy Cross for providing receptions afterward.

A special thanks to Carrie Curnutte for all her work in making fliers for the various music events here at Holy Cross and to Darlene Kuhlman for photographing our musical events and then publicizing them online and on the bulletin board in the church lobby.

On June 14, Jack was invited to play the organ for a hymn sing honoring the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the founding of Seminex. The hymn sing was held at The Lutheran Church of Atonement in Florissant. Jack was one of three local organists who played.

The Young Artists Series continued this year. Deirdre Jost graduated college and is now back in St. Louis, so she is available to play the flute more often in church. This year she joined Teagan McCracken and Jack in a Woodwind trio, providing music for the early service. New this year was the addition of flutes to accompany congregational hymns; in years past the flutes played only Pre-service, Preludes, Offertories, Communion, and Postlude music.

The Music Endowment Fund Artists continued this year. The Landolfi String Quartet played special music for Mother's Day; Devon Carpenter, Harpist, played on Sundays March 10 and December 1; and the Clarion Brass played their usual concert on Christmas Eve, accompanying the congregation on the hymns and providing Offertory Communion and Postlude for the service.

Jack has tried to offer a musical event once a month; a list follows. Most events occurred during our traditional worship service at 8:30 a.m. The June event was at The Lutheran Church of the Atonement at 7:00 pm and the Clarion Brass played during our Christmas Eve late service.

January:	Woodwind Trio: Teagan McCracken, Deirdre Jost and Jack Hamill
February:	Teagan McCracken, Flute soloist
March:	Devon Carpenter, Harp
April:	Organ Concert by Jack Hamill
May:	Landolfi String Quartet
June:	Jack Hamill Organist, 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of Seminex
July:	Woodwind Trio
August:	Flutes Duets, Flute x's Two, Deirdre Jost, Teagan McCracken
September:	Teagan McCracken, Flute
October:	Organ Concert by Jack Hamill
November:	Woodwind Trio, Contemporary Retro
December:	Devon Carpenter, Harp Christmas Cantata Woodwind Trio: Advent x's Three Clarion Brass (Christmas Eve)

*Respectfully submitted, Jack Hamill*

## **CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP MUSIC DIRECTOR**

2024 was a meaningful year for our contemporary worship service! Introducing 24 new songs was an impressive accomplishment and a testament to our commitment to keeping worship fresh and engaging.

It's always challenging to say goodbye to valued members of the community, like Pastor Janice and Jason Cooper. They both made significant contributions during their time with us, and it's heartwarming to know that Jason continues to stay connected by filling in when needed.

Welcome to Brendan Falsetto—his experience and talent are sure to bring new energy to the Praise Band! I must mention the incredible talents of the other members of the praise band, Brandon Clay, Marty Little, and Matt Davis. Holy Cross is so fortunate to have such incredible musicians who are and continue to be a true blessing to the church.

Kudos to all the talented musicians and committed individuals like Megan, Linda, Moira, and Cindy. Their dedication truly makes a difference and enriches the worship experience for everyone at Holy Cross.

The Praise Band concert in July was a fantastic success! We are planning another summer concert for 2025. I will also prepare a survey to gather feedback from the congregation—understanding their thoughts and suggestions will help enhance the service even further.

Here's to an inspiring and uplifting 2025!

Thank you,  
*David M. Reinking*



## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL REPORT**

The biggest news of the past year was the retirement of Pastor Janice. As a result, the Council needed to prepare for a transition process. With the assistance of the Synod, we were able to find our current interim pastor, Pastor Gerhard Kraus, as well as name members to a Transition Team. This team has spent the second half of 2024 preparing our Ministry Site Profile (MSP) which will be used during our search for a new full-time pastor. The next step for the council is to assemble a Call Committee composed of willing and discerning Holy Cross members. Once Council votes on which members will serve on the Call Committee, that group will launch their efforts to search for and recommend a new pastor to our Council and congregation.

As part of the commitment Holy Cross has made to the local Boy Scout troop affiliated with our church, Council met with them and agreed on some projects the scouts can do for our facility to help them acquire their Eagle Scout badges. This alliance benefits the Scouts and all of us.

At last year's congregational meeting, we were able to vote on and approve several amendments to our constitution. The Synod received and accepted our updated constitution.

The council granted approval for Morgan Andrews to conduct a fundraiser to assist children in need at one of our local children's hospitals. Her willingness to ask for help to provide for those less fortunate, and the generous donations given by our church, show that we are dutifully reaching out more and more to help our community and neighbors.

Finally, we were made aware of several maintenance issues that needed immediate attention throughout our building. These are in addition to several projects that are planned for the near future. The property committee has made the Council aware of building maintenance challenges we need to address – much needed updates and repairs to maintain our church. The council is committed to keeping the congregation informed of the extent of these needed projects and their estimated costs. At the end of the year members were asked to make special holiday donations to the building fund. In the coming year we will be seeking additional help to cover the costs of maintenance. Look for announcements of special meetings with Council and the Property Committee to learn more about project plans and costs in detail.

I would like to thank the entire council and the Executive team for their guidance and open discussion throughout the past year. We welcomed Philip Paul and Donovan Lucas as members and we began working with Mary Bailey, our new Treasurer, replacing Greg Miller who had served in this role for many years. The group did a wonderful job of sharing their thoughts and opinions, helping to ensure we made the best decisions together.

I would also like to give a special thanks to our two members completing their 3-year terms, Kari Brangan and Kelly Caligiuri. Thank you both for your willingness to serve!

Together in Christ,

*Dave Winkler, Council President*

## **TRANSITION TEAM**

The Transition Team is pleased to share an update on our role in the process of calling a new pastor. Our charge was to prepare the Ministry Site Profile (MSP), which describes our congregation. Potential pastoral candidates will access this document to determine if Holy Cross could be a good fit for them. Our update highlights the key steps we have taken to ensure the search process reflects the hopes and needs of our congregation.

Our first meeting took place on September 4<sup>th</sup> via Zoom with Bishop Susan Candea, who guided us on our task and the steps needed to create an effective MSP. We then talked with Court Templeton, providing her with our thoughts on how she could best showcase our church's recent history. Court created a video that effectively conveyed our vision for the future of Holy Cross. Next, we conducted an online survey to gather information from the congregation on how we see ourselves as a church and community, and what we hope for in our next pastor.

To continue gathering information and reaching as many church members as possible, we held six Cottage Meetings in October at various times. We met with members between services, after late service, on a Saturday morning, one evening via Zoom, and dedicated one session specifically for youth and families. We also sought input from the Praise Band and church staff to gain their unique perspectives.

We compiled all of this information and used it to complete the MSP. We went one step further and answered the optional document, *Seven Reflections on Ministry*. Answering these supplemental questions will grant prospective pastors a more complete view of who we are as a church.

By the end of the year, we had completed our MSP and submitted it for review by Rev. Dave Whetter from the Central States Synod. The Transition Team, after having considered his feedback, submitted our final document to the Council for review and adoption. Once Council approves our MSP and votes to approve members of a Call Committee, our team will then meet with the newly appointed Call Committee. The two teams will go over the MSP, which the Call Committee will use as it calls and interviews pastoral candidates.

The Transition Team, Call Committee and Council will all work together to ensure members of our congregation are kept informed as we move forward with our search for a new pastor.

Thanks to the congregation for your participation, feedback, and support. We trust that God is guiding us as we prepare for this next chapter of life at Holy Cross.

## VISION TEAM

The Vision Team's charter is to guide Holy Cross in our long-term vision to "Be the Light" of our community, the beacon on the hill, serving our neighbors' needs as disciples of God. With the support of the Holy Cross Congregation, we have made a great impact on our local and global community to fulfill the Holy Cross vision.

We meet monthly to advise, guide and monitor Holy Cross' activities for consistency with the Vision, coordinating with the Standing Teams: The Village Team, the Care & Prayer Team, and the Safe Church Team. The responsibilities of the Discipleship and the Promotion/Calendar teams now reside within the Vision Team.

The Holy Cross Partnership Teams have done an excellent job of helping us fulfill our Vision, demonstrating the impact Holy Cross is having in our community. Many in our congregation have taken part in these activities. We offer a special 'shout-out' of thanks for our ever-helpful church staff who help us showcase these ministries in videos and emails sent to your homes.

### ***Here are a few success stories from 2024:***

**Parkway Partners** – This team collected money to help pay for Parkway Students who could not afford their graduation fees. Twenty Parkway high school students were able to participate in graduation thanks to this support. Parkway Partners also coordinated the collection of cornbread and stuffing mix to help the Parkway School District Food Pantry provide holiday meals to almost 200 families of students and staff. They also distributed mittens and hats to our local schools that were donated by our members and some groups that use Holy Cross facilities.

**Lutheran Family and Children's Services** – A "diaper shower" was held to donate greatly needed diapers to LFCS. Additionally, Holy Cross provided 25 children with Christmas presents.

**Feed Our Neighbors Team** – This group volunteered about 25 individuals to pack food for the needy in the world. Most of these packs were sent to Haiti. This team also provided 12 families with a box of ingredients needed to prepare their own Holiday meal.

**Welcome our Neighbors/ESL Team** – This team meets monthly with an English as Second Language (ESL) class that convenes at Holy Cross. They enjoy a cup of coffee and sparkling conversation with class members who look to acclimate to life in the St. Louis region.

In addition to community support, the Vision and Partnership Teams spearheaded efforts to facilitate congregation engagement:

**Safe Church** – This team conducted an audit and updated safety information for Holy Cross. Updates were communicated to our congregation and other groups that use our facility.

**Text in Church** – Through collaboration with the Care and Prayer team and support from Court Templeton we succeeded in gaining participation of congregation members in *Text in Church*. We have been using this service routinely to communicate across our congregation.

**Welcome Statement** - A Welcome Statement was developed for Holy Cross to affirm that “All Are Welcome” to Holy Cross and to be part of our Church. We look to roll that statement out early in 2025.

We welcome and encourage your participation in building the Holy Cross Vision. Perhaps you want to collaborate with a Standing Team, a Partnership Team, or the Vision team itself. Fresh ideas and helpful hands are always welcome as we bring God’s acts of mercy to our community.

In Christ,

The Vision Team

*Madde Hanson, Helen Krull, Sarah Miller, and Philip Paul*

### **PRAYER AND CARE TEAM**

This team was formed in 2022 with members: Becky and Jeff Benson, Cathy Mosher, Susan Jentes, Renate Cruther, Darlene Kuhlman, Sandy Kalin, and Bud Niebling.

Our team meets quarterly. We stay connected with our members who cannot attend church regularly through visits, phone calls and other means of contact. The altar flowers are regularly delivered to our members’ homes, upon request, when they are shut in.

Special booklets are sent out every few months to members who have lost a loved one; this means of communication strives to help those we care about work through the grief process.

We believe that as a congregation we have a responsibility to take care of our members. This means everyone – including mothers, children, people in prison, and people under oppression. We see this statement many times in the Bible and our mission is to follow it.

For the Prayer and Care Team,

*Bud Niebling*

## MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND

The Mission Endowment Fund was created to provide a way for people to make enduring contributions that will keep working for years to come. These perpetual gifts from estates, memorials or other sources will provide a legacy of support for missions at Holy Cross as well as missions outside the church.

We encourage people to consider the Mission Endowment Fund in their estate planning. Gifts can be designated to be split in any proportion between Option A for Holy Cross and Option B for outside missions. We also encourage suggestions for possible grants that we at Holy Cross might consider.

In 2024 the Mission Endowment received no additional gifts.

Income as of 12/31/2024:

- Interest income was \$3.59
- ELCA Trust Income was \$8,203.63

Distributions Under Option A (Holy Cross)

- \$9,530.98

Distributions Under Option B (Outside Missions)

- \$800.00 Distributed in December 2024

Total Distributions in 2024: \$10,330.98

Waiting to be distributed:

Option A: \$3,699.25

Option B: \$217.98

### **Balances as of 12/31/2024**

ELCA Pooled Trust: \$220,827.21

First Mid Bank & Trust Money Market: \$4,740.03

Total Balances: \$225,567.24

Respectfully Submitted,

*Julie Aleshire, Pat Goertzen, Diana Jost, Joan Paul, Rocky Stone*

## **PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

The mission of the Property Committee is to provide oversight, guidance and actual labor for the upkeep and maintenance of the church property.

We ask anyone who uses the church to make sure they clean up after themselves, reset thermostats (to 65 degrees for unoccupied and as desired for occupied), turn out all lights and lock all doors. We need to leave our facility cleaner/better than we found it.

**Some** of the areas worked this year were:

- Lost power at church, Ameren repaired
- Implemented maintenance contracts/repairs for many HVAC units and elevator
- Repaired sanctuary roof/office wing roof
- Back property work performed included mowing, erosion and mosquito control
- Cleaned carpets
- Replaced the New Fellowship Hall kitchen water heater
- Repaired front sign facing Olive Boulevard
- Repaired driveway potholes
- Continued replacement of interior lighting with efficient LED lights
- Replaced Master Fire Warning panel
- Signed contracts for snow/ice removal and lawn care
- Landscaping (tree removal)
- Plumbing repair
- Dumpster enclosure replaced as part of Eagle Scouts project

We have assessed necessary major property capital improvements that will be needed in the next 10 years, as directed by Council. We have submitted to the Finance Committee and Council a detailed list of needs, including cost estimates for major projects. This is a **LARGE** expense item. We have requested \$30,000 for capital improvements in 2025 alone. More expenditures will be needed in subsequent years.

**Finally, thank you to all committee members for their dedication and hard work. This committee is always active, using our hands and ingenuity to beautify Holy Cross to the glory of God.** We welcome anyone who would like to join us! In fact, we *earnestly* request additional help from the people of Holy Cross. The Property Committee needs an infusion of strong/willing people to assist in the work needed to maintain our church.

If interested, please contact any of the committee members below.

Respectfully submitted,

*Steve Kuhlman, Chairperson* for: Pat Goertzen, Clarence Jentes, Clint Kasten, Keith Krull, Steve Kuhlman, Al Leimbach, Donovan Lucas, Bryce Mosher, Phillip Paul, Gerry Rehek

## **GARDEN COMMITTEE (Sub-Committee of Property)**

It is a blessing to tend God's house, and we hope several of you will join us as new members of the Garden Committee in 2025!!!

### **This year the Committee:**

- Held a number of outdoor workdays to plant, trim and weed
- Purchased and planted flowers including "Zillions of Zinnias" which adorned the church grounds. Special thanks to **Mike Prange** for acquiring them
- Decorated the interior of the church with flowers given by members for the Easter and Christmas services in honor and/or memory of others
- Reveled in the beautiful altar flowers provided weekly by **Mary Bailey**
- Maintained the interior church plants through the hard work of **Sandy Hagen and Susan Rockwell**
- Decorated the altar area, narthex and entry for the various church holidays and events with the inspirational help of **Helen and Keith Krull, Christine Doud, Janet Haas, Susan Rockwell, Sandy Hagen, Darlene Kuhlman, Pastor Janice, Becky Benson, and Sandy Kalin**
- Maintained the exterior of the church with the hard work of **Dee Morin, Penny Rudolph, Susan Rockwell, Sandy Hagen, Darlene Kuhlman, Keith Krull, and the Property Committee**
- Joined the Prayer Shawl Ministry and Helping Hands Committees for Easter and Christmas lunches

Please join me in extending heartfelt thanks to **all the committee members** for their hard work and faithfulness and to the congregation for your generous support of the committee's projects.

Respectfully submitted, *Darlene Kuhlman, Chairperson*

## S.O.C.Ks. THANKSGIVING EVENT 2024

Holy Cross and Serving Our Community Kids, Corp. (S.O.C.Ks.) have worked together for 37 years providing new socks and underwear to local at-risk children. This year we were able to help 21 local charities totaling 1,314 children in need. We would like to thank Holy Cross officers and the Congregation for their generous support. Thanks to Sarah Miller for her help in contacting the charities to remind them to send back their request forms for socks and underwear needed for their children. Thanks to Penny Rudolph for providing a Holy Cross S.O.C.Ks. note to the charities:

**This gift is shared with love from  
Holy Cross Lutheran Church ELCA and  
Serving Our Community Kids, (S.O.C.Ks,)**

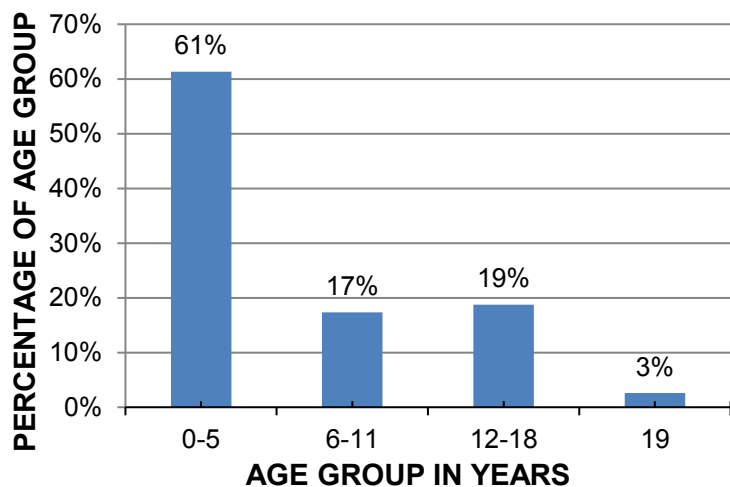
**With our warm wishes for a**



We are very grateful and sincerely appreciate all the support that Holy Cross and the congregation provided. Your generosity allowed us to help more at-risk children.

### **Some FY2024 Socks & Underwear Statistics**

- 21 local charities in the St. Louis and East St. Louis areas received socks and underwear, for a total of 1,314 at-risk children.
- There are no administrative costs for donations; those are absorbed by S.O.C.Ks. staff.



God Bless You Holy Cross!

**Serving Our Community Kids, Corp. (S.O.C.Ks.)**



## **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**

Our mission for the Social Activities Committee is to bring unity and fellowship within the congregation and community. We work to provide various activities for all age groups and activity levels, sharing the love of Christ and faith through His word, kindness and acceptance. We hold meetings the first Sunday of each month, either in person or via emails. *Come join us!*

### **2024 EVENTS**

#### ***March 16, Chili Bingo with 68 people in attendance***

Kevin Aleshire and Rocky Stone did the honors this year of spinning the cage, calling numbers and passing out prizes. As always, Helen and Keith Krull made the delicious chili we all enjoyed.

#### ***May 21, Cedar Lakes Winery Outing***

Twelve people enjoyed a beautiful day of music, wine and fellowship.

#### ***July 14, Farewell luncheon for Pastor Janice and Dennis***

Members turned out in full force as we shared our love and appreciation with Pastor Janice and wished her and Dennis godspeed as they headed west to enjoy their new retired life in Kansas.

#### ***September 8, Splash Sunday***

A fun group of 13 people enjoyed a giant slip 'n slide, games, and BBQ lunch. We all had a blast!

#### ***October 27, Reformation Sunday***

Following a beautiful worship service, 84 people feasted on pancakes and sausage prepared by the talented chefs of SAC and delighted in various brunch dishes provided by members. We gave thanks to God for our many blessings.

#### ***November 27, Pie Fest following Thanksgiving Eve Worship***

Our annual Thanksgiving Eve festivities were enjoyed by 58 members and guests. We all brought our appetites and enjoyed a wide variety of pies -- a perfect evening of sharing and fellowship.

#### ***December 10, Christmas Dinner with SAC committee volunteers***

Twelve SAC members enjoyed a delicious dinner at Spiro's. We had a wonderful time of fellowship as we looked back on a rewarding year and anticipated a fun year ahead.

Thank you to everyone for your support and a special thank you to our valuable volunteers.

*Kelly Caligiuri, Chairperson* for members: John & Kelly Caligiuri, Steve & Darlene Kuhlman, Mark & Penny Rudolph, Keith & Helen Krull, Kevin & Julie Aleshire, Rick & Pam Jokerst, Philip & Joan Paul, Dan & Judi Gockel, Jill Gehner, Karen Sparks

## YOUTH GROUP

The Youth Group began 2024 with a continued focus on strengthening relationships based on faith. Our discussions centered on the Old Testament, exploring its relevance to daily life and current world events.

The group took a summer hiatus, allowing youth and their families to enjoy a well-deserved break. While meetings have been less frequent post-summer because of personal reasons, we successfully hosted a pre-Thanksgiving meal and game night, welcoming both the youth and their families for fellowship and fun. We also gathered at Hebrew United for a multi-faith youth gathering I helped coordinate with West County Interfaith Alliance (WCIFA).

Our faith curriculum, which we introduced in 2022, continues to go beyond traditional Sunday School or Confirmation classes. Youth Gatherings begin with an opening prayer, followed by faith education supported by *The BibleProject* videos. Topics like *"Spiritual Beings," "Old Testament,"* and *"Word Studies"* have sparked remarkable enthusiasm, engagement and retention among the youth. I also incorporate *"God Sightings,"* a dedicated time for quieter participants to share positive experiences in their lives at home and school.

Looking ahead to 2025, we plan to focus on a series called *"Sermon on the Mount,"* diving deeper into its teachings and relevance to everyday life. Additionally, I am coordinating with the West County Interfaith Alliance (WCIFA) to develop collaborative, faith-based events beyond the walls of Holy Cross to take place in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kevin McCracken*

## REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

### CANDIDATES FOR COUNCIL

The Nominating Committee presents the following candidates for election to a three-year term on Council.

	<p><b>COURTNEY ANDREWS</b></p> <p>Courtney has been attending Holy Cross for 21 years. She has three kids: Mason 21, Matthew 17, and Morgan 13. Mason is finishing his degrees at Mizzou and is currently a visiting student at Oxford; Matt is looking forward to attending college in the fall; Morgan attends Parkway Northeast.</p> <p>Courtney holds a PhD in Political Science and a Master's Degree in Public Policy Administration. She works as a part-time faculty member for multiple universities, as well as conducting and analyzing research for a small company.</p> <p>Courtney enjoys serving the community, both at Holy Cross on the Green Team and as a new worship assistant, and serving in past years as PTO Vice-President and President for her kids' school PTO.</p>
	<p><b>KELLY TIPTON CALIGIURI</b></p> <p>Kelly Caligiuri has been a member of Holy Cross since 2019. She is a choir member, chairperson of the Social Activities committee, and has served on Council the past 3 years.</p> <p>Kelly married John, a longtime member of Holy Cross, in March of 2020. They each have two children of whom they are very proud. Kelly attended Hannibal Lagrange University where she studied music. In 2003 she retired from her job as Driver Examiner for the Missouri State Highway Patrol for 20 years. The very next day after retirement, she went to work at a popular Mexican restaurant where she quickly became manager and eventually opened her own restaurant. Kelly retired again in 2019. Now she takes care of John and spends as much time as possible with her kids and eight grandchildren. She would welcome the chance to serve another term on Council.</p>
	<p><b>MOIRA McCracken</b></p> <p>Moira has been a member of Holy Cross since 2010. She has served on Council in the past, holding positions as member at large and vice president on the executive team.</p> <p>It is our good fortune that Moira especially enjoys singing in the church choir and with the praise band.</p> <p>Moira and her husband, Kevin, have three kids: Max (18), Teagan (16), and Margaret (9).</p> <p>Having served as a theater teacher for 20 years in both Ritenour and Parkway school districts, Moira currently works as the full-time released president of the Parkway National Education Association, the union representing all teachers, librarians, and counselors in Parkway.</p>

## CANDIDATES FOR MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND TEAM

The Nominating Committee presents the following candidates for election to a three-year term on the Mission Endowment Fund Team:



### **JULIE ALESHIRE**

Julie has been a member of Holy Cross for more than 38 years. She has served on the Mission Endowment Fund team for the past three years (as chairperson for the past two). She has taught Sunday school, served as an usher, a deacon, a church council member, a member of the council executive team, and on the social activities committee.

Julie currently works as the Manager of Benefits at ESCO Technologies Inc.; her career in human resources has spanned more than 40 years. Julie and her husband Kevin have two married children and four grandchildren.

Julie would welcome serving another term on MEF to help the team to continue fulfilling its mission.



### **JILL GEHNER**

Jill joined Holy Cross 2 years ago after she moved to Maryland Heights from Hazelwood. While a member of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd she worked with other members to establish an endowment fund. Jill would like to transfer the experience she gained there to help manage our Holy Cross mission endowment fund.

Jill has been part of our Green Team and is happily involved with our Social Activities Committee. You might even know her as the snow cone lady at the annual Slip 'n Slide event!



### **RICHARD (ROCKY) STONE**

Rocky and his wife, Donna, have been Holy Cross members since 1998. They have a grown family of 8 children and 17 grandchildren. He has worked in sales management for two chemical companies and retired in 2009 from his job as Engineering Consultant for UMSL. Rocky has served on Council for several terms, including some as VP. He chaired Social Activities for 8 years, has served on the stewardship team and has been an usher, lay assistant and deacon. Rocky is completing three years of service on MEF and would welcome the chance to serve another term.

In his spare time, Rocky is an avid golfer and enjoys traveling and home projects.

# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

## OPENING LITURGY

Confident in God's generosity and gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us praise God and give thanks ...

God, we praise you and give you thanks.

**You are good, and your mercy endures forever.**

You gave us a garden with good food to eat.

**We praise you for food that nourishes us.**

You rescued your people from slavery.

**We praise you for freedom.**

You gave us prophets to correct, rebuke and encourage us.

**We bless you for your justice and mercy.**

You gave us your Son, Jesus, to love, redeem and save us.

**We praise you for his death and resurrection.**

You gave us your Holy Spirit to be our Advocate and Comforter.

**We bless you for the gifts of every tribe and nation.**

Strengthen your church with every spiritual gift

**and commission us again to be your servant people.**

Multiply in us the fruit of the spirit:

**love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.**

Send us in your love and mercy,

**that the world may know you and praise you.**

### Now Thank We All Our God



1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices,  
2 Oh, may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,  
3 All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,



who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;  
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,  
the Son, and Spirit blest, who reign in highest heaven,



who, from our mothers' arms, has blest us on our way  
and keep us all in grace, and guide us when perplexed,  
the one eternal God, whom earth and heav'n adore;



with count-less gifts of love, and still is ours to-day,  
and free us from all harm in this world and the next.  
for thus it was, is now, and shall be ever - more.

*Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 840*

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586-1649; tr. Cathering Winkworth, 1827-1878

Music: NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT, Johann Crüger, 1598-1662

Let us pray.

Gracious God, you are the giver of every good gift. Bless us with all that we need for ministry in your name, that we might be a blessing to others. In the name of the one who broke bread and fed the multitudes, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at **[LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA](https://LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA)**.



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America