

THE EPISTLE

April 2021

April 1st - Maundy Thursday Service at 6:30PM
(Reservations needed. RSVP to the church office: 610-867-6231.)

April 2nd - Good Friday Services
12 Noon - Last Words of Christ
7:00PM - Tenebrae

April 3rd - Easter Egg Hunt at 10:00AM

April 4th - Easter Celebration
6:30AM - Sunrise Service
9:00 & 10:30AM - Holy Communion

April 11th - 9AM-Praise Worship

April 18th - 9:00AM, Holy Communion

April 25th - 9AM-Praise Worship



Last Chance!

This is the last Epistle to me mailed bulk-rate to a large number of people. If you still want to receive Holy Cross's newsletter by mail, and haven't let us know, please call the church office (610) 867-6231 (leave a message), or email your preference to holycrossoffice@rcn.com. Thank you.

2 WORDS FROM PASTOR DAVID

2021 Vision

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18 KJV)

In the last few weeks of my Lenten sermon series on *"God's Everlasting Covenants,"* I have been talking about God's 3-step plan to enable us to do the impossible.

Step one is justification. It is impossible for us to pay the penalty for our sin, but we don't have to. Jesus has done it for us. God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son to become one of us and to go to the cross, taking upon himself the full penalty for our sin, so that all we need to do is believe in him, believe that he has done it all. It's as simple as that, impossibly simple. Believe in Jesus and receive the gift of eternal life. The barrier of sin that separates us from God has been removed completely. Our sins are forgiven and are no longer even remembered by God! God the Father welcomes us with open arms, eager to make us his children.

Step two is sanctification. Anyone who earnestly tries finds it impossible to keep God's law. It's not that God's expectations of us are unreasonable. The problem is with us. Every one of us has been corrupted by sin. The law represents God's best for us, but our old sinful nature always fights against God's law. Thankfully, when we believe in Christ and are baptized, the Holy Spirit gives us new life, a new nature, and dwells within us and is in the process of writing the law on our hearts and minds. It will no longer be an external thing that is foreign to our nature, we will be fully in line with God's law. It will become second nature to us to follow the law because we love Jesus.

Step three is glorification. Surely it is impossible for us to share in God's glory. We have no right to glorify ourselves. We often say, "to God alone be the glory." Amazingly it has been God's plan from the beginning to share His glory with us. We have been made in God's image to perfectly reflect God's glory. We are being remade in the image of Christ and will shine like the

stars. This step will not be fully implemented until Jesus returns to reign on the earth. But Jesus' reign is not entirely future. It has begun and we, the church, are to use the gifts given to us to expand Jesus' reign over the earth, as more and more people come to know Jesus and acknowledge Him as their King. Our focus needs to be bringing glory to Christ through our lives.

The Holy Spirit is essential to all three steps or stages in the New Covenant. Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot believe and become children of God. Without the Spirit we cannot obey God's law. Without the Spirit we cannot stand against the spiritual forces of darkness at work in the world. But with the Spirit we can do all these things.

Just as we need the Spirit in order to grow in holiness, we need the Spirit to be effective in ministry. That's why Jesus instructed the disciples to wait until the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church to begin the monumental task of making disciples of all nations. Over 2000 years the church has made tremendous progress. Between a quarter and a third of the earth's population acknowledges Jesus as Lord. There is still more work to be done and Holy Cross has a part to play in that work. But only if we are operating under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit.

That's where vision comes in. Without vision the church will fail and perish. Each person naturally has their own ideas about the direction our ministry should take. The ideas of some are sure to conflict with others. But it doesn't have to be that way. If we each adopt the mindset of Christ, "not my will, but thy will," the Holy Spirit will lead us to a common vision for the future of Holy Cross.

Here are three steps in developing a common vision that will guide us into the future:

1. Surrender your agenda to God's agenda. It is likely that much is in common between the two, but be open to new concerns and insights.
2. Pray for wisdom, for God to show you His vision for Holy Cross. If you're fasting and praying for Lent, this would be an excellent prayer focus for the final week of Lent.

3. Share your vision with others. If God has answered your prayers and given you insight, share what you have learned with me or a member of council.

What an awesome privilege to share in the building of Christ's kingdom! Let us embrace that responsibility and give ourselves wholeheartedly to the work of ministry. To God be the glory!

-- *Pastor David*

Council Actions:

- Delegates are needed for both the Bethlehem-Easton Mission District Assembly, to be held virtually May 1 (9am-12pm), and for the Northeastern PA Synod Assembly (also virtual) to be held June 4-5. Please speak to Pastor Dave if you feel God nudging you to be a delegate. We typically send one female and one male delegate, and you must be pre-registered.).
- Council approved the use of Memorial Funds towards the purchase of a new refrigerator for the kitchen. Our current one uses a type of chemical no longer cost-effective to replace.
- Each member has been asked to let the church office know how you'd like to receive the church newsletter. Options include 1) continuing to have it mailed to you, 2) picking up a copy at church, 3) having it emailed to you, or 4) simply checking or downloading it from the website. PLEASE contact the church office, if you have not done so already, and let Lyn know. If you don't call us, we'll call you!



Announcing
OUR ANNUAL COMMUNITY
EASTER EGG HUNT
SATURDAY, APRIL 3RD
10:00 AM

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
2700 JACKSONVILLE RD.,
BETHLEHEM, PA. 18017

CHILDREN AGES 0 THROUGH 12
WILL HUNT FOR EGGS AND PRIZES
FOLLOWING ENTERTAINMENT FOR
THE WHOLE FAMILY. INVITE FAMILY
AND FRIENDS!



PRE-SCHOOL NEWS & OPEN HOUSE

Enrollment is now underway for the 2021-2022 school year. Please pray that the Lord will bring His number of children to us. If you know of anyone that might be interested in our program, please

take a brochure from the *Gathering Place* and pass it along!

We are considering an Open House this spring to be announced at a later date,

Yours in Christian Love, Karen Steiner ☺

Member Changes and Updates

This new section will provide address changes and other updates of our church family in an effort to keep you connected and up to date. Feel free to make contributions by contacting the church office by phone (610 867-6237) or email holycrossoffice@rcn.com.

**Shirley Haug's new address is:
5418 Comfort Circle
Bethlehem, PA 18017**

Lutheran Denomination Task Force

Council has commissioned a task force to investigate and to make a recommendation for changing our affiliation to a Lutheran denomination whose teaching and mission are consistent with our congregation's core values and our historical and ongoing commitment to the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures.

At our first meeting on March 10, the task force identified the following steps to begin the process:

- 1) investigate the benefits and consequences of changing denominational affiliation;
- 2) become familiar with the process for making such a change, including consulting with congregations who have gone through it;
- 3) learn about alternative Lutheran denominations;
- 4) consult with representatives of denominations that appear to be a good fit for Holy Cross.

The members of the task force are Pastor David, Joan Rosenthal, Dawn Schaeffer, Bob Harwick, Ken Yoxheimer, and Lyn & Jan Styker. If you would like to be a part of this important mission, please contact one of us -- or attend our next meeting on Wednesday, April 14 at 6:30 PM in the Adult Sunday School classroom.



Adopt a Plot

The “Adopt a Plot” Team needs some new members to help keep the church grounds beautiful. We are continuing our “Adopt a Plot” program to share the sizeable task of caring for our church grounds. The plan is to have individuals or families “adopt” a small portion of the non-mowing areas (flower beds) around the church and provide maintenance for that plot. This would involve weeding, pruning, planting annuals and perennials, watering, fertilizing, mulching, edging, etc. Veteran or new gardeners are welcome. Won’t you help? Sign up on the bulletin board across from the office.

Benevolence News

The Benevolence Committee is continuing to support the Homeless Ministry by collecting the following items:

- men’s socks
- disposable razors
- toothpicks/flossers
- bandaids
- emory boards

We are functioning as a very small piece in a very large puzzle. These donations are collected and given to the St. Luke’s UCC Church in Ottsville. This group makes a monthly trip to Philadelphia to disperse their collections. They benefit the homeless men at Old First Church Ministries in Philadelphia. Look for the “house” sitting on the table in the Gathering Place for your donations. Thank you.

Upcoming Events

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Sunday, July 18th through Friday the 23th
Mark your calendars now for a fun filled week ☺

Wednesday, May 26th
VBS Kickoff Dinner & Planning Session

GREETING CARD MINISTRY

The OUTREACH COMMITTEE is beginning a new card ministry (using “snail mail”) and we would like your assistance, please. We will be sending cards to shut ins/nursing homes, hospitalizations/surgeries, military, college students, widows, new babies, visitors, etc. IF you have any cards, stationery, stickers, envelopes, inserts (like tracts, bookmarks, puzzle sheets, coloring pages, etc), would you kindly put them in the “mailbox” in the Gathering Place. Postage stamps would be appreciated as well.

Many thanks to those who have given us a “jump start” with your donations. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Thank you!

Nancy Porambo

P.S. We are also interested in “used” greeting cards—we recycle those!!!!



APRIL BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

BIRTHDAYS

- 7 - Taylor Oscavich
- 9 - Eric Gaal
- 10 - Robert McLaughlin
- 13 - Sally Stein/Kathryn Steiner
- 16 - Sam Glasmire, Jr.
- 17 - Gayle McLaughlin
- 18 - Emma Yeakel
- 19 - Jennifer Baran/Alyce Stein
- 20 - Joshua Miller
- 22 - Rachel Steiner
- 23 - McKenna Baran
- 25 - Hope Reppert/Carolyn Buzzard
- 27 - Brian Yeakel
- 29 - Karen Brown
- 30 - Jennifer Gross/Cindy Hercik

ANNIVERSARIES

- John & Sophia Fuesler - 4/9/16
- George & Darlene Treisner - 4/20/74

Calendar Update!

Are you filling in your 2021 calendar? Let us help. Here are some dates we hope you will save for Holy Cross:

Next Month:

Wed, May 5 - Teacher Appreciation Day

Sun, May 9 - Mother's Day

Thur, May 13 - Ascension Day

Sun, May 23 - Pentecost

Wed, May 26 - VBS Kickoff

Sun, May 30 - Trinity/Memorial Day/5th Sunday Praise

Next Eight Months:

Sun, June 20 - "Dads and Grads"

Sun, July 19 thru Fri, July 18 - 23, VBS

Tue, August 3 - National Night Out

Tue, August 10 - Sight and Sound Bus Trip, "Queen Esther"

Fri, August 6 - Game Night

Sun, August 22 - Backpack Blessing Sunday

Sun, August - 5th Sunday Praise

Sun, Sept 12 - Rally Day/VBS Reunion/Grandparent Day

Sun, September 19 - Church Picnic

Sun, October 10 - Shoe Box Sunday

Sat, October 30 - Trunk or Treat/Family Fall Fest

Sun, October 31—Reformation/Confirmation/Brunch

Wed, November 24--Community Thanksgiving Eve

Sun, November 28—Advent Workshop

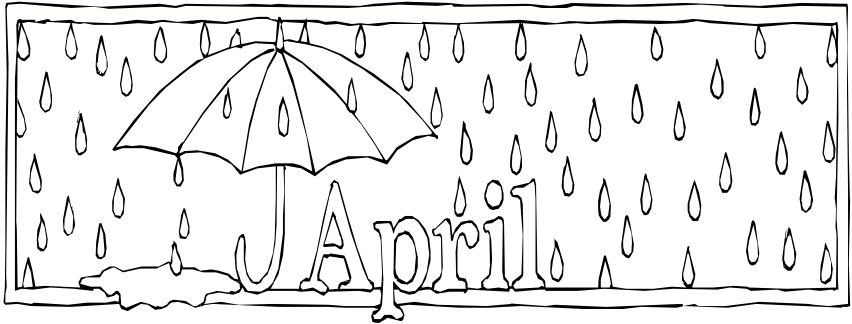
Sat, December 11—Luminaria Night & Caroling

December 19—Birthday Party for Jesus

December 24--Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

More events and details to come. Let's make 2021 great!!

THE EPISTLE



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