



Holy Cross—St. Mark

Newsletter

December 2025



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Holy Cross & St. Mark Lutheran
Churches



Website:

holycrossandstmark.org

In this Issue:

Devotional Thoughts—p. 1, 3
Synod News—p. 2
Dual Parish Update —p. 2
St. Mark Council Update—p. 2
Holy Cross Council Update—p. 2
Who Can I Pray For? —p. 3
Calendar —p. 4

Upcoming Events

Dec. 1: HC Ladies' Aid - 1pm
Dec. 1: Little Lambs @HC - 6pm
Dec 2.: Compline Worship Service @HC - 6:30pm
Dec. 3: 20's & 30's Group @HC - 5:30pm
Dec. 6: Advent by Candlelight @SM - 2pm
Dec. 7: Christmas Lunch @HC - 11:30am
(Benefitting Local Children in Need)
Dec 8: Little Lambs @HC - 6pm
Dec. 8: SM Council Meeting - 6pm
Dec 13: Christmas Decorating @HC - 9am
Dec. 18: HC Council Meeting - 6:30pm
Dec 20: Caroling - 2pm
Dec. 24: Christmas Eve (4:30pm @SM, 6:30pm @HC)
Dec. 25: Christmas Day @SM - 9:30am

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(309)798-0610 - text or call
pastorcrass@gmail.com

Devotional Thoughts

By Pastor Crass

I want to tell you about Tony. Tony came to church with his wife every Sunday. She was a member. He wasn't. She urged him to take classes and join, but he knew doing so would be insincere. He did not believe all the things the pastor said about Jesus. How could one man dying on a cross two thousand years ago benefit us? It seemed more than a little far-fetched. But he came and sat next to her at church every Sunday for six years. He liked the music, enjoyed how the pastor's sermon explained in detail what the Bible account was about, and it also helped that it kept his wife from bugging him about becoming a member.

Then, one Monday morning, Tony walked into the pastor's office unannounced. "I'm ready to take one of those membership classes and start believing in Jesus," he said. The pastor smiled and agreed to start meeting once a week for classes. By the time the classes were over and Tony was ready to start believing in Jesus, the pastor said with that same smile, "Tony, I don't know when you came to faith, but it wasn't today. And it wasn't when you came into my office two months ago to schedule classes. For six years, now, you've been sitting in the pews and hearing God's word. And whether you recognize it or not, the Holy Spirit has been at work in your heart and convincing you that Jesus is exactly who he claims to be: your Savior." Tony became a member the next Sunday, but his faith had begun long ago.

Faith is a fickle thing. We can't see it. We can't measure it. But God knows it. And he knows it because he's the one who created that faith. He created it through his word, whether it was a person wandering into church because they were hurting and hearing the pastor's sermon or a friend at the bar sharing a drink and the hope in Christ that she has even when it feels like life is going awry. It's the child baptized at the *(continued on page 3)*

WELS News

Our synod has set a strategic plan for the next ten years of our shared ministry. This is the third installation of that four-part plan. You can read ahead and find more resources at christthroughus.net.

Calling

Our goals in producing workers for a growing harvest

Jesus declared the fields ripe for harvest yet lamented the scarcity of workers—a truth that remains prevalent today as we sustain and expand ministry efforts. Planting new churches, opening mission fields, and growing Lutheran schools amplify the call for pastors, teachers, and staff ministers to serve as Christ's ambassadors. We pray that God will guide us to be faithful stewards of his mission as we intensify recruitment and training efforts while also aligning plans for ministry growth with our current realities.

Expand pathways into gospel ministry

God calls his people to serve his kingdom in diverse ways. While we face a shortage of called workers and candidates for ministry, there are also new opportunities to ensure every willing heart can serve no matter their earthly circumstances. We will continue expanding pathways into gospel ministry so that every person who desires to serve in ministry has opportunities to do so.

Innovate recruitment efforts for future called workers

Though the percentage of WELS youth training for ministry holds steady, decades of membership decline yield fewer souls to answer Christ's calling. We must pursue bold, creative recruitment to reach the next generations of called workers. Through this plan, we pray the Holy Spirit works through our recruitment efforts to spark passion for gospel ministry in young adult and second-career candidates.

Ensure the long-term stability of ministerial education

Our ministerial education schools are essential to carrying out Christ's mission. Each school must remain steadfast, adaptable, and financially sound to equip future called workers for ministry. We will establish the long-term stability of our ministerial education schools through thoughtful strategy, praying God will bless the training of his workers.

Establish a sustainable strategy for called worker development

We are called to share Christ's love while also being faithful stewards of our resources. Our goal is to help WELS leaders—in the synod, congregations, and schools—consider their options for sustainable staffing and ministry opportunities. Trusting the Holy Spirit to bless these efforts, we will ensure the growing number of ministry opportunities matches the workforce God has called to serve.

Support the well-being of called workers

The Lord sends workers to a harvest that demands steadfast endurance. It is our duty as a synod and as congregations to support our workers' service. We will bolster the well-being of called workers by equipping them with resources for spiritual renewal, emotional fortitude, and physical vigor while empowering congregations with practical tools to meet their workers' needs.

Dual Parish Update

- Thanks to everyone who put work into making Welcome Home Sunday a blessing for our church family.
- In January, each church will hold an open forum to seek out the congregations opinions and guidance as we look to implement a structured program to pursue and encourage straying members. Look for those dates on next month's calendar.

St. Mark Council Update

- (Nothing to report this month)

Holy Cross Council Update

- We are still looking for a spiritually mature man to serve as church treasurer. Talk to Sean Troutt if you have any interest or questions.
- The council voted to switch our property insurance to for better coverage at about the same rate as before.

Who Can I Pray For?

Below are some of our shut-ins that you can pray for, call, and even visit (please call ahead before any visits).

- Carol Heydn - (906)788-4445 - W5744 14 Lane, Wallace, MI 49893
- Kristin Bates - (906)280-8276 - W6450 Cty. Rd. 358, Daggett, MI 49821
- Harold and Virginia Schlenvogt - (906)753-4326 - W5209 Cty Rd 348, Stephenson, MI 49887
- Evelyn Smith - (920)370-2361 - 1191 Pawn Dr, Green Bay WI 54313 (currently living at Menominee Health Services in Menominee)
- Elizabeth Grille - (906)792-6060 - W4728 County Rd. 338, Wallace, MI 49893 (currently living at Menominee Health Services in Menominee)
- Cheryl Bussler - (906)290-0881 - N222 Willow St, Stephenson, MI 49887
- Jim and Carlyn Lynch - (906)241-1488 - N10438 M-35, Cedar River, MI 49887
- Judy Hamblen - (715)923-5661 - 2006 Lake Park Dr, Room 203, Marinette, WI 54143 (The Cottages in Marinette)
- Shirley Wetthuhn - (906)639-2236 - 2006 Lake Park Dr, Room 114, Marinette, WI 54143 (The Cottages)

Would you like to be included on this list? Please reach out to Pastor Crass.

(continued from page 1)

font, as plain water is poured over the his or her head and the promises of God are spoken to that child. Again, you can't see it or measure it. Some would even claim faith can't be there. But God knows it's there because he created it.

This brings me great comfort when I think about the people in my life whose faith I'm unsure about. I think especially about my dad's cousin. His father and my grandpa were really close brothers who made sure the family stayed connected, so two or three times a year, even as everyone was spread throughout the Midwest, we'd meet in Tomahawk, WI to fix up the hunting cabin, fish on Great Grandma's lake, and every November freeze our tails off in our hand-made stands for deer season. Even after my grandpa and great uncle passed, as we've gotten together less at the cabin, my dad's cousin still gets the invite to family weddings and shows up for family funerals. He's never been a church-going man, but these events give him opportunities to hear the promises of the one who paid for his sins at the cross. Does he have faith? I don't know, but God does, and as we hear in scripture, the word never returns empty (Isaiah 55:11).

I've heard the best stories from our members. A husband who started attending church the week before his passing. A father who finally welcomed the preaching of the gospel on his deathbed. I'm comforted to know that there will be many faces in heaven we do not expect to be there right now. And there are people in your life who may be apathetic to the gospel or completely against it right now, but will one day stand beside you and confess Jesus as Lord. When and who? Well, only God knows.

So, don't try to test for faith, friends. When you share God's promises with others, the accomplishment is not in winning them to express what faith they have to you. The accomplishment is sharing the good news. God will work. He promises to work, in his time and for his purposes. And if, in six years, your Tony walks into the pastor's office for classes, we will rejoice. But we won't be surprised that the Holy Spirit did what the Holy Spirit promises to do. Amen.

Member Announcements

If you would like a note or announcement added to next month's newsletter, please let Pastor Crass know.

December 2025

Unless otherwise noted, the Lord's Supper will be celebrated on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday												
30 8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross 11:45am Bible Class at Holy Cross	1 1pm Holy Cross Ladies' Aid 6pm Little Lambs	2 6:30pm Compline Worship Service at Holy Cross	3 3:30pm Catechism Class 5:30pm 20's & 30's Group	4	5 9am Puzzle Exchange 2pm Advent by Candlelight at St. Mark	6 9am Puzzle Exchange 2pm Advent by Candlelight at St. Mark												
7 8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross 11:30am Christmas Lunch at Holy Cross (Benefiting Local Children)	8 6pm Little Lambs 6pm St. Mark Council Meeting	9 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross	10 3:30pm Catechism Class	11	12 9am Christmas Decorating at Holy Cross	13 9am Christmas Decorating at Holy Cross												
14 8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark 9:30am Sunday School at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross 11:45am Bible Class at Holy Cross	15	16 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross	17 3:30pm Catechism Class	18 6:30pm Holy Cross Council Meeting	19	20 2pm Christmas Caroling												
21 8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark 9:30am Sunday School at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross 11:45am Bible Class at Holy Cross	22	23 4pm Christmas Caroling (Backup Date)	24 4:30pm Christmas Eve Worship at St. Mark 6:30pm Christmas Eve Worship at Holy Cross	25 9:30am Christmas Day Worship at Holy Cross	26	27												
28 8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark 9:45am Fellowship at St. Mark 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross 11:45am Bible Class at Holy Cross	29	30	31	1	2	3												
<div>St. Mark</div> <div>Altar: 12/7: Sally Theuerkauf, 12/14: Lois Pfitzer, 12/21: Peggy Grille, 12/28: Kay Keefter Hostess: (None)</div>																		
<div>Holy Cross</div> <table><thead><tr><th>Date</th><th>Ushers</th><th>Counters</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>12/7</td><td>Team 5: Anderson, Walcher, Lynch</td><td>Team 4: Marie Anderson & Mary Sivula</td></tr><tr><td>12/14</td><td>Team 1: Trout/Karry</td><td>Team 1: Jerry Karry & Kristin Sivula</td></tr><tr><td>12/21</td><td>Team 2: Kuntze</td><td>Team 2: Ken Hacker & Terri Sivula</td></tr></tbody></table>							Date	Ushers	Counters	12/7	Team 5: Anderson, Walcher, Lynch	Team 4: Marie Anderson & Mary Sivula	12/14	Team 1: Trout/Karry	Team 1: Jerry Karry & Kristin Sivula	12/21	Team 2: Kuntze	Team 2: Ken Hacker & Terri Sivula
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