



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
NEWSLETTER - November 2025
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Generosity at Holy Cross

We give thanks to God for His many gifts all the time, but this is a time of the year when we usually give special thanks and consideration to the gifts of God, His blessings upon us, and our financial and physical support of His Church. We reflect on God's blessings and pledge to respond in thankfulness and love.

In 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 we read how the Macedonian Christians were an amazing example of generosity to emulate. Their generosity was not caused by their affluence but rather flowed from faith. In fact, they were rather poor but they gave out of joy, thankfulness, and blessing.

God continues to keep His promise in Philippians 4:19 *"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."* And we continue to respond in thanks and with joy for God's great gifts. We rejoice and give thanks for these gifts and promises of God to us.

Our congregation gives thanks for the ongoing financial support from you, the members of Holy Cross. Quite frankly, the congregation needs the financial support of its people to exist. We also give thanks for the health of our members and pray for God's grace.

As you reflect upon God's gifts to you and especially as we approach Thanksgiving Day, I encourage you to give thought to your own personal stewardship of God's gifts. On the backside of this letter is a devotion with scripture passages and questions to help guide your reflection and I encourage you to spend some time over a few days thinking about it. View it more as something to ponder and less as a task to read and accomplish. Pray. This is meant for your personal spiritual benefit.

I encourage you to be generous with your time and service to Holy Cross and to each other. Our congregation is a blessing to you and others because you - God's people - come together to worship the LORD and love one another. God is praised as these things happen.

I also encourage you to be generous in your financial support of Holy Cross. God is praised when we give thanks and are generous in our giving. How can we be generous in our financial support? First of all, pray. Pray that God grant you generosity as you consider a possible increase in your giving. Second, commit to regularity. Make your giving regular and deliberate, not just when there's extra. Lastly, commit to proportional giving. This means acknowledging that God has blessed you and responding in kind. "Give thanks to the LORD for He is good, His love endures forever!"

God's peace to you!
Pastor Zucker

Thinking about generosity and my stewardship of God's gifts

1 Peter 4:10-11

¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in it various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

¹ We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴ begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵ and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

So how does one exactly go about considering their own stewardship of God's gifts including money?

How do we pray about this? How do we decide if we're honoring God in the giving of our time, talents, and money?

Here are some thoughts and tips to hopefully help you with this.

Resolve to think about this at least three different times over the next two weeks.

Pick a time, maybe during your morning coffee or maybe after supper, just some time to think about it more than once. This helps you give specific attention to an important part of your Christian faith.

Read the above two verses from 1 Peter 4:10-11 & 2 Corinthians 8:1-5. Ask yourself:
What gifts has God given me to serve others? This includes skills, passions, and money.
Am I serving God with the best of what He has given me or with the leftovers?

What sins am I holding on to that prevent me from honoring and being thankful for what He has first given me?

Hear once again, **Jesus died on the cross to forgive all your sins.**

How can and should I continue to serve and praise God?

Do I need to make a change in my financial stewardship of God's gifts and what would that be?

Pray: *Heavenly Father, I thank You for all that You have given me including my gifts and abilities, my financial resources, my family, and my faith in You. Forgive my sins of jealousy and selfishness. Strengthen in me a fervent love for you and a giving heart that I may please you in all things. In Jesus' holy name I pray, Amen.*

Commit yourself to giving to the work of the Lord, not from leftovers but according to how He has richly blessed you. If it helps, write your commitment down on a piece of paper to remind yourself and hold yourself accountable.

Where does All Saints Day and Halloween come from?

There is a lot of new mythology about Halloween that has been invented to claim that Halloween is a pagan holiday. It is not, and it never was a pagan holiday.

Where Did Halloween Start in the Christian Church?

In the first three centuries after Christ's resurrection, the lives of the martyrs of the Church were commemorated on the day and in the place where they were killed. There were so many who were killed because of their faith in Christ during those centuries. Throughout the Christian Church different days were set aside not only for each martyr, but a special day for all Saints.

The earliest reference to a day being dedicated to the commemoration of All the Martyrs and All Saints of the Christian Church comes from the 2nd century. The document is titled "The Martyrdom of Polycarp." Polycarp was a Christian killed because he would not deny Christ. The document says:

"Accordingly, we afterwards took up his bones, as being more precious than the most exquisite jewels, and more purified than gold, and deposited them in a fitting place, whither, being gathered together, as opportunity is allowed us, with joy and rejoicing, the Lord shall grant us to celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom, both in memory of those who have already finished their course, and for the exercising and preparation of those yet to walk in their steps." (Chapter 18)

Later, a Christian Bishop named Ephraim the Syrian mentions a common All Saints' Day in 373. In 379 St. Basil of Caesarea chose a day when the churches of his bishopric would honor the memories of all Saints known, and unknown, alive or in heaven. Later, John Chrysostom mentions a common day of memorial for the Saints in 407 AD.

In the year 609 or 610 Pope Boniface IV established a date for All Saints' Day on May 13th. And later, in the early 700s AD, Pope Gregory III changed the date to November 1st. Decrees like this took some time to propagate from Rome to the more remote areas where the Church was found. But the change in date had nothing to do with any pagan practices. Pope Gregory IV extended the celebration on this day to the entire Western Church in the early 800s. And again, the change took time as it spread from Rome.

The point is this: a common day for commemorating the Saints has been around throughout the Christian Church from very early times. And the fact that it falls on November 1st today has nothing to do with paganism.

OK, so what does this have to do with Halloween? In the Bible the day begins at sundown or evening. This is why we have Christmas Eve. Halloween is All Hallows' Eve', that is All Saints' Evening. Halloween is the beginning of All Saints' Day starting at sundown on October 31st.

These days we have "Trick or Treat," costumes sometimes too gruesome to describe: witches, goblins, werewolves, vampires, zombies, Jack-O-Lanterns, skeletons, spooky sounds, grave stones, candy and a celebration of gore and all that is un-Holy. Many of the Christian Churches in the Reformed traditions claim that Halloween is a pagan celebration. Very often they do this by referring to Neopagan and Wiccan writings. And there are many in the Neopagan and Wiccan communities who have tried hard to claim Halloween as an ancient pagan holiday that had been stolen by the Christian Church. Don't ever expect truth from Neopagans and Wiccans. They already live in a fantasy world created by their own fakelore.

The typical claims in current sources are that Halloween comes from "ancient Celtic practices, Catholic and Roman religious rituals and European folk traditions." With respect to the origins of All Saints' Day these claims are false. With respect to the modern re-paganizing of Halloween, the Neopagan version of Halloween doesn't really come from ancient pagan sources. It comes from modern sources that pretend to be old but are not. These modern sources are simply fiction and an attempt to hijack an historic Christian celebration.

So Pastor, what should we do in regards to Halloween and All Saints Day? First, know that Halloween is not some ancient festival but a modern (last 100 years) phenomenon. Second, know that All Saints Day is for thanking God for the Christian witness of those believers who have lived before us. Third, remember that the Bible tells us to not associate with witchcraft or the things of Satan. Fourth, if you or your kids want to dress up as your favorite Green Bay Packer for fun, have at it. Fifth, remember and know that Jesus is your Savior from sin, death, and the devil. See you in church on Sunday!



Pray the Psalms - November

All year long at Holy Cross we're praying the Psalms, once a day everyday a different Psalm each month. In September it was Psalm 46. In **November** it is **Psalm 119:105-112**.

Psalm 119 is different from most other Psalms but it's hard to tell from reading it in your English Bible. Psalm 119 is an acrostic Psalm. An acrostic Psalm is one where each new line of the Psalm begins with a new letter of the Hebrew alphabet in succession. The English version of this would be the first line starting with a word beginning with the letter 'a', the second line beginning with a word beginning with the letter 'b', the third 'c', and so forth.

Psalm 119 does the same thing but in its original Hebrew. One added feature is that it does this groups of eight. Thus, the first eight verses of Psalm 119 each begin with a word that starts with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. א(aleph) is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, so the first eight verses begin with words whose first letter is א. The second eight verses of Psalm 119, verses 9-16 begin with words whose first letter is ב(bet). The Hebrew alphabet contains 22 letters. Psalm 119 is 176 verses long (22x8). In your English Bible, every eight verses it might say the letter of the alphabet those verses correspond to. By using this acrostic pattern, Psalm 119 shows God's Word commands every part of language and life.

In November, we're praying Psalm 119:105-112 which corresponds to the Hebrew letter נ(nun). Verse 105 is somewhat well known, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Martin Luther writes that the Word's light is not for our eyes but for our feet and path and that the verse describes the Word's work of faith. In verse 107 the Psalmist prays that God's Word would give life "according to your word." The summation of verses 105-112 is that God's Word gives life and joy.

Keep praying the Psalms!

EVENTS

**Contribute to the Canned Fruit Drive
For Flushing Thanksgiving Food Baskets.**

**We are collecting 600 cans of fruit
(No Cranberries)**

Help needed on 23rd to deliver fruit



**Happy Hearts
November 10 @noon
Franklin Avenue Mission
Presentation &
Potluck at Holy Cross**



"No One Alone" Thanksgiving Dinner"

Holy Cross Lutheran Church is hosting our 4th annual dinner on Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, Nov. 27th at 1:00pm for singles and couples who would otherwise be alone for Thanksgiving.

Reserve your places.

**Call Holy Cross at 810-659-5926
e-mail Secretary@holycrosslutheran.com**

**Or Sign up in the Narthex
Limited to the first 60 reservations**

Sign up to help on Wed. the 26 and/or 27th

Also Side dishes and desserts are needed

**Come Celebrate Christmas With Us
Wed. December 24th @ 4pm & 6pm**

**Christmas Day Service
December 25th @ 10:30am**



**Please Help Decorate
for
Christmas on
December 6th
From 10am-noon**



Family Fun Night

**Put it on your calendar!
November 19, 2025 6pm-8pm
Come play games & cards
Bring your friends.**



**Pizza & Refreshments supplied
Signup sheet in the Narthex**



**Ladies Lunchly -
November 12**

**Liberty Restaurant @ noon
All Ladies are invited**

Join the fun in Plarn Mat production!

**The next meetings are
November 4 @7pm
& November 18 @ 2pm
Everyone welcome!!!**



