

The Newsletter of

Holy
Cross
Lutheran

December 2025

*News for an Abundant Life in CHRIST**From the Pastor*

Those Who Walk In Darkness Have Seen a Great Light

This famous passage from the prophet Isaiah is quoted in the Gospel of Matthew and is a regular part of the cycle of readings for Advent.

And for good reason too; because of our sin and the sin of others, the world in which we live is often dark. People have surely felt this way in every age, but there are unique pressures facing us right now: What will Artificial Intelligence do the job market, warfare, and the economy more generally? Why are young men and women so far apart in so many ways? When did “the war of the sexes” go nuclear? What will happen with China and Russia? Why do so many young people seem so confused about their identities? What happened to civil discourse? How do we maintain the political loyalties fundamental to self-government when both sides feel that the other is an existential threat to our republic?

I could go on, but you get the point. These are tough questions, and ones without easy answers. The pastors I meet with on Wednesday mornings for prayer have all noticed an uptick in visitors over the last few months, as people struggling in the face of overwhelming begin to wonder if maybe the problem is not just “out there,” but “in here”—as they begin to wonder if maybe Alexandr Solzhenitsyn’s grandfather was right when he said, “the trouble with the world is that we have forgotten God.”

Here we have not forgotten God, and we will continue to hold his light aloft both for the world and for ourselves. To that end, I will be preaching a sermon series throughout Lent entitled “_____ in the Darkness.” Each week I will focus on the virtues of Advent, *hope, peace, joy, and love.*

I look forward to a renewal of all four with you.

P. Brett

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Saint of the Month: Saint Nicholas

Like St. Paul, Lutherans refer to all those in Christ as “saints,” and we look to the great ones as role models in the faith.

This month we are remembering Saint Nicholas on Saturday the 6th. He was from Lycia, Asia Minor, he was the Bishop of Myra, attended the Council of Nicaea (where the Nicene creed came from) and he was well-known. He condemned Arianism and paganism, and was imprisoned for his faith during the reign of emperor Diocletian. Saint Nicholas died around 350 A.D. There are many legends surrounding



Saint Nicholas, including a well-known one with three poverty-stricken girls. Since they were poor, their father could not afford a dowry for their marriages. On three different occasions, Saint Nicholas went to their house and threw a bag of gold for each girl as a dowry. This generosity forms the basis of our modern Santa Claus stories.

by Melissa Misiti

As we read, we should remember 1 Corinthians 13:13, which states, “So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”



Have you stopped in the church library lately? There are books on:

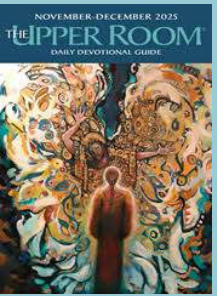
- Addiction
- Apologetics
- Bible Helps
- Church History & Leadership
- Children’s Books
- Christian Fiction
- Devotionals
- Discipleship
- Family life & Transitions
- Food
- Grief Recovery
- Lutheranism
- Small Group Curricula
- Spirituality
- Youth Ministry & Communication
- Faith & Family Movies

There is also a great children’s nook for kids to sit and read!
Come, check it out... and check out a book that will feed your soul!

December Lessons

- December 7, 2025 ~ 2nd Sunday of Advent
Revelation 7:[2-8]9-17; Psalm 149; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12
- December 14, 2025 ~ 3rd Sunday of Advent
Exodus 3:1-15; Psalm 148; 2 Thesalonians 2:1-8, 13-17; Luke 20:27-40
- December 21, 2025 ~ 4th Sunday of Advent
Malachi 4:1-6; Psalm 98; 2 Thesalonians 3:1-13; Luke 21:5-36
- December 24, 2025 ~ Christmas Eve
Malachi 3:13-18; Psalm 95 or 46; Colossians 1:13-20; Luke 23:27-43
- December 25, 2025 ~ Christmas Day
Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 24:36-44
- December 28, 2025 ~ 1st Sunday after Christmas
Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 24:36-44

Upper Room



- Copies of the Nov. - Dec. Upper Room daily devotional are available in the Narthex.

Church Family News



- December 7** Church Council
- December 14** Potluck Sunday
- December 21** Social Ministry
- December 28** No Social Hour

We are always looking for Social Hour Hosts!
If YOU, your FAMILY or GROUP would like to host Social Hour, please contact the church office to schedule a date!

Many thanks for hosting!



Lyra Way; Nicole Gaugler; Peter Korpan; Ryan Auger; Tina Huth; Gary Kratzer; Virginia Soffera; Adam Grube; Carol Josephs; Joshua Misiti; Terry DeGroot; Judy Ortutay; Rusty Wallace; Constance Huth; Christian Rowohlt; Jacob Harris; Nicholas Nolder; Angelo Arfanella; Melissa Misiti; Nancy Jo Stevenson; Shawn Fernsler; Bob Beckowski; Karen Odenwelder; Mary Anne Vorholy; Diane Dickison; Jennifer Rissmiller; Dale Trach; Donald Jackson; Sean Brady; Michael Grube; Fernando Pinguelo; Thomas Amy; Mary J. Drosnock; Terry Koehler; Queenie Kratzer; Walter Rupp; Elizabeth Misiti; Ricky Hahn; Ronald Sibbach; Ryan Blosser; Carole Craig; Christiana Vandegrift!

Anniversaries

Jeremy & Tonya Trach; Randy & Deb Letterhouse; Dennis & Diana Diefenderfer; Caral Ann & Lou Coxie; Aida & Carlos Rios; Nancy Jo & Duane Stevenson Jr.!

Welcome to God’s Family!

Charlotte Marie Kluska, who was baptized on November 16, 2025

&

Asher Eliel Esquivia who was baptized on November 30, 2025

Congratulations!

THANK YOU!



Thank You to all who participated in the Annual Turkey Drive. A total of \$1225.00 was donated to the Bath Area Food Bank, representing funds donated from the Turkey Drive! As always, your generosity to our neighbors in need is greatly appreciated!



Thank You to everyone who sponsored poinsettias for our sick and shut-in members or who ordered flowers to adorn the altar on Christmas Eve. If you ordered poinsettias for yourself, please remember to take yours from the altar after the Christmas Eve service you attend.



Council Meeting Highlights

- New Member forms available in the Narthex
- Interfaith Christmas Concert - December 7 @ 6:00pm
- Christmas Eve Service: 3:00, 7:00, & 9:00pm. Christmas Day Service: 10:00am
- Nominations are needed for 3 Council members and 2 Elders.

How Do I Join In?

If you like what you are experiencing here and are sensing God calling you to be part of it, your next steps are simple:

1. **SHARE** your contact information
2. **MEET** with the pastor
3. **BAPTISM** if necessary
4. **COMPLETE** membership paperwork
5. **CONNECT** with a group or sponsor
6. **ATTEND** new member orientation
7. **BE WELCOMED** in worship
8. **COMMIT** to a first step in your spiritual growth



*Lift High the Cross...
The Love of Christ Proclaim!*

We hope you have seen the cards that look the graphic above. Christmas is the time of year that churches have more visitors than usual, and we want everyone to know how to become part of what God is doing at Holy Cross.

If a visitor asks you for information about the church, give them a smile, ask their name, and direct them to these cards and the visitor sign-in book in the narthex.



New Around the Altar

While I was traveling during the month of November, did you notice anything different? Some people did. Some were worried. Someone even asked if Michael was now pastor and our Council president had become a deacon!

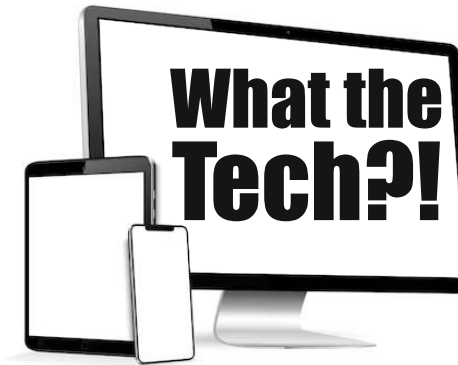
No, that is not what happened. Since President Lewis has served in this role at other congregations, he simply agreed to be the first of our trained lay assisting ministers... but we hope not the last! Having members of a congregation trained and comfortable as leaders at worship strengthens a congregation's life in ways that are hard to explain and is part of our Reformation heritage; Luther fought for more non-clergy involvement in worship, from using the common language rather than Latin to singing songs that everyone could sing because they were based on folk songs. Assisting the congregation and pastor in a non-Sacramental leadership role is just an extension of the franchise.

There is nothing more honorable and humbling than assisting others to worship the Lord. I served as an assisting minister during my years before seminary, and it deepened my walk with Christ in a profound way. Would you join us in serving the Lord by helping to lead the people? Please pray about it and contact me, Deacon Michael, or a council member if you feel called to this ministry.

Ph. Deatt

Church News

December 7th



Yep, we all have trouble with our electronic devices, which is why the youth of Holy Cross (who seem to understand these things intuitively) are stepping up to help the rest of us!

Just bring in your devices on **December 7th**, and during the Sunday School hour, the youth will help you set up your device so you can stream our services, stay in touch with family, and whatever you need...



After both services, those wishing to join Holy Cross are invited to gather in the sanctuary for an orientation class. They will be given:

- A tour of the whole building (welcome them if they poke their head into your space!)
- An introduction to the opportunities for spiritual growth here at Holy Cross
- Ways to connect and contribute to our common life in Christ through prayer, worship, service and stewardship

Inter-Faith 6pm



Join us for our 7th annual inter-faith celebration and sharing of faith. We have significant differences in what we believe, but we want to share our faith with each other and get to know each other as neighbors and beloved of God.

Come join us for some amazing music and fantastic food and fellowship afterward.

December 14th

Rabbi Mark Shulman

On **December 14th**, Rabbi Mark Shulman of Beth El Gabor Messianic Jewish Synagogue will be joining us during our Sunday School hour to talk about the ways Jesus fulfills the prophecies of the Messiah to come in the TaNaK, the Jewish Scriptures that we commonly refer to as the Old Testament.

Join us in the social hall at 9:15AM on December 14th for a morning that will perfectly prepare you for the Christmas celebration to come!



Welcome Worship

At both services this Sunday, people who have completed our new member orientation will be welcomed into the life

of our congregation through affirmation of Baptism. Make sure to be here to reaffirm your own Christian commitment and welcome the newest members of our church family!

Christmas Tree Decorating & Potluck

Following the 10:30AM service, everyone is invited to stay help beautify our church for Christmas Eve! We



will decorate our tree and sanctuary, enjoy some cocoa and holiday music, then head on over to the social hall to do a little pre-holiday feasting!





Blue Christmas Service

For those experiencing loneliness, depression, or mourning, the unrelenting cheer of the holiday season can feel like a burden. But the good news of Immanuel, “God with us,” is that in Christ God came to rescue us from our isolation, giving us hope beyond the boundary of death and the narrow confines of our grief. If you need a time to remember this meaning of Christmas, please join us for a very special service on Wednesday, December 17 at 7:00pm.

Christmas Services

You and your family and friends are invited to join us as we welcome the long-awaited Savior—Christ the Lord.

December 24 ~ Christmas Eve

3:00, 7:00, & 9:00pm

December 25 ~ Christmas Day

10:00am

December 28 ~ Festival of Lessons & Carols

9:30am



Christmas Blessing Boxes

Pick up a box, wrap the lid and box separately with Christmas wrapping paper and fill it with the non-perishable food items listed below. Return the filled box to church by Sunday, December 7.

- Box of stuffing mix
 - Instant mashed potatoes
 - 2 pkgs of turkey gravy
 - Canned yams
 - Cranberry sauce
 - Green beans & canned corn
 - Carton of chicken broth
 - Mac & cheese in a box
- Canned meat (tuna, chicken)
 - Cake or brownie mix & can of frosting
 - Ramen noodles
 - Fruit and/or pudding cups
 - Instant oatmeal
 - Dried pasta & jar of sauce
 - Raisins and/or trail mix
 - Box of dry cereal

Any other non-perishable food items that you would like to add to your box is up to you!

Thank you!

Christmas Giving Tree

Help us help our neighbors in Northampton County. We are accepting donations of gift cards and cash to help children and their families in need this holiday season. Gift cards for **Giant, Weis, Walmart**, or **Target** would be appreciated as they all sell food and are on bus routes. If you are able to purchase a gift card, please take an ornament from the tree in the Narthex. Include the gift receipt or mark the amount on the card and place it in the Christmas box by the tree in the Narthex by **December 14, 2025**.



News to Use

Sunday Life

Giving Service to the Lord



December 7, 2025

Musician
Usher/Greeters (2)

Lay Reader
Tech Ministry
Communion Assistants
(Around the Altar - 3 people)

Social Hour Host
Flowers Donated by

December 14, 2025

Musician
Usher/Greeters (2)

Lay Reader
Tech Ministry
Communion Assistants
(Intinction - 2 people)
Social Hour Host
Flowers Donated by

December 21, 2025

Musician
Usher/Greeters (2)

Lay Reader
Tech Ministry
Communion Assistants
(Intinction - 2 people)
Social Hour Host
Flowers Donated by

December 28, 2025

Musician
Usher/Greeters (2)

Lay Reader
Tech Ministry
Social Hour Host
Flowers Donated by

8am Service

Karl
John Abbott
Megan Abbott
Terry Ellis
Andy Zaso
Lynne Auger
Anita Zaso

10:30am Service

Second Sunday of Advent

Karl
Michael Mohn
Roseann Mohn
Diane Dickison
Mathew Pinguelo
Diane Dickison
Alyssa Young
Jesse Way

Church Council

Taby Family & Odenwelder Family

Sponsorship Available

Third Sunday of Advent

Ben
Vicky Gaugler
Alice Sterner
Barbara Lynn-Sarley
Cindy Denker
Barbara Lynn-Sarley
Colleen Greene

Ben
Heidi Sweetser-Cohen
Karen Odenwelder
Heidi Sweetser-Cohen
Delilah Cohen
Timothy Misiti
Rich Siegfried

No Regular Social Hour - POTLUCK SUNDAY

Gloria Longley

Debbie & Randy Letterhouse

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Karl
DJ Drosnock
Mary Ann Drosnock
Mary Ann Drosnock
Emily Drosnock
Lois Iasiello
Pam Berlew

Karl
Annalisa Misiti
Melissa Misiti
Jamie Hahn
Katelyn Hahn
Jamie Hahn
Jerry Lewis

Social Ministry

Tina Huth

Carol Ann & Lou Cox

Festival of Lessons & Carols 9:30AM

Ben
Timothy & Melissa Misiti
Jerry Lewis
Annalisa Misiti

No Social Hour Today

Julie Millheim, DJ, Mary Ann, Bobby & Emily Drosnock

Thank You to All Who Serve!

To our Flower Sponsors: Two sponsors are sought for each Sunday of the year at a cost of \$25 per sponsorship. Please consider sponsoring Altar Flowers in memory of someone or in honor of a special occasion. See the binder in the Narthex, or contact the Church Office to sponsor fresh flowers. Payment can be submitted in a Designated Gift Envelope and checks can be made out to: Holy Cross Lutheran Church.

Sponsors can pick up their flowers by the Monday after their sponsorship date.

Any flowers left after Monday will be used for sick & shut-in visits.

Church Council Minutes

COMPLETE Church Council Minutes are posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Attachments are filed in the church office with the originals.

The meeting minutes summarized here are pending Council approval at next month's meeting.

Meeting HIGHLIGHTS for November 12, 2025

Seven members present.
Absent: AJ Arfanella, Rob Ingenito & Tim Kryman
GUESTS: N/A

Review of Reports:

Secretary's Report - The Annual Turkey Drive brought in \$1,255.00 in donations for the Bath Area Food Bank. Long's Ecowater Systems Service Maintenance appointment is scheduled for Monday, November 17th, 2025 between the window of 9:00-11:00am. The December and January newsletter will be combined, so information to be included in the newsletter for both December and January will need to be provided to me by November 16. (i.e. Annual Meeting details, Council nominees, etc.).

Treasurer's Report - Category Overview provided, income Statement Provided, General Operating Report provided, Detail Report provided.

Pastor's Report - On December 14th, Rabbi Mark Shulman of Beth El Gabor Messianic Jewish Synagogue will be joining us during the Sunday School hour for a special session on how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah. I would like to suggest that all three adult Bible studies and confirmation be suspended for that week and regular participants encouraged to attend Rabbi Shulman's presentation. The new PC purchased for the sanctuary is having trouble interacting with our sound board. ESG has been called, and we are queued for a service call that will address this issue. The new design for the bulletins is not yet complete. The target for introducing these is Advent 1, so a notice can be included in the newsletter. Our old website URL holycrossnazareth.org is now fully ported to our new local provider.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education: See hard copy of minutes.
Fellowship Committee: See hard copy of report.
Finance Committee: Rich S. presented the Proposed Spending Plan. Looks good. Salary increases of 3% starting 1/1/26 for all church employees was discussed.
Prayer Team: Three requests for October.
Property: Jerry and Andy performed clean-up of branches and debris on church property. Both groundhog and mice deterrents were installed.

Social Ministry: See hard copy of report.
Women of Abundance - See hard copy of minutes.
Old Business:
Council nominees: two people have shown interest. Still looking for elder nominees.
New Business:
Discussed church security concerns and solutions.

Ending Business/Correspondence:
New Member forms are available in the Narthex. The Interfaith Concert will be December 7 at 6pm at Holy Cross. Rabbi Shulman presents "How Jesus Fulfills the Old Testament" on December 14 at 9:15am. Nominations are needed for three Council members and 2 Elders. Congregational Meeting will be held on January 25, 2026.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 10, at 7:00 p.m.

Financial Stewardship

Offerings received during the month of NOVEMBER as of 11/24/2025 totaled **\$23,270.93**

Thank you for your generous support of Holy Cross!

Capital Campaign Update

As of November 24th, we have received donations totaling **\$115,859.45** toward our goal of \$500,000.00. Thank you for your generosity!

REMINDER: When making donations to the church, a **separate check is needed for the Capital Campaign**, made out to: Holy Cross Lutheran Church. **Thank you!**



Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church (NALC)

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church (NALC) is to respond to the Love of God shown most fully to us in the great gift of his Son Jesus Christ. We engage in five ministry areas – **WORSHIP, WITNESS, LEARNING, SERVICE,** and **SUPPORT** – to boldly confess Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Our Staff

Pastor: Rev. Brett Jenkins, STS
Pastor@holycrossnazareth.org
Office Hours by appointment

Deacon: Michael Grube

Director of Worship Arts: Karl DeBoeser

Traditional Music Worship Leader: Ben Watson

Sexton: Kerry Livermore

Treasurer: Lois Iasiello

Church Secretary: Laura Longley
Secretary@holycrossnazareth.org

Office Hours: M/T/F ~ 9 a.m.-1 p.m; Th ~ 1-6 p.m.
OFFICE IS CLOSED ON WEDNESDAYS

Our Church

Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church
696 Johnson Road
Nazareth, PA 18064-8828
Phone ~ 610-759-7363
Fax ~ 610-759-3431
Website ~ holycrossnazarethchurch.org



NALC website ~ the nalc.org

2025 Church Council

A.J. Arfanella	717-903-0521
Lynne Auger	484-634-1347
Lois Iasiello	484-761-4589
Robert Ingenito	908-652-1828
Tom Kneisly	570-840-7481
Tim Kryman	908-727-3932
Gerald Lewis	610-657-3961
Manuel Pinguelo	610-818-7415
Richard Siegfried	610-360-5949
Andrew Zaso	570-424-5651

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## 2025 Congregational Officers

President ~ Jerry Lewis  
Vice President ~ Andy Zaso  
Secretary ~ AJ Arfanella  
Treasurer ~ Lois Iasiello

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**Sundays with Holy Communion:**  
**8:00 am** Traditional Liturgy  
**10:30 am** ~ Relaxed Worship  
**9:15-10:15am** ~ Sunday School all ages

**Tuesdays at 12:15pm**  
Lunchtime Prayer with Holy Communion

**Wednesdays at 7:00 pm**  
Prayer Service with Holy Communion