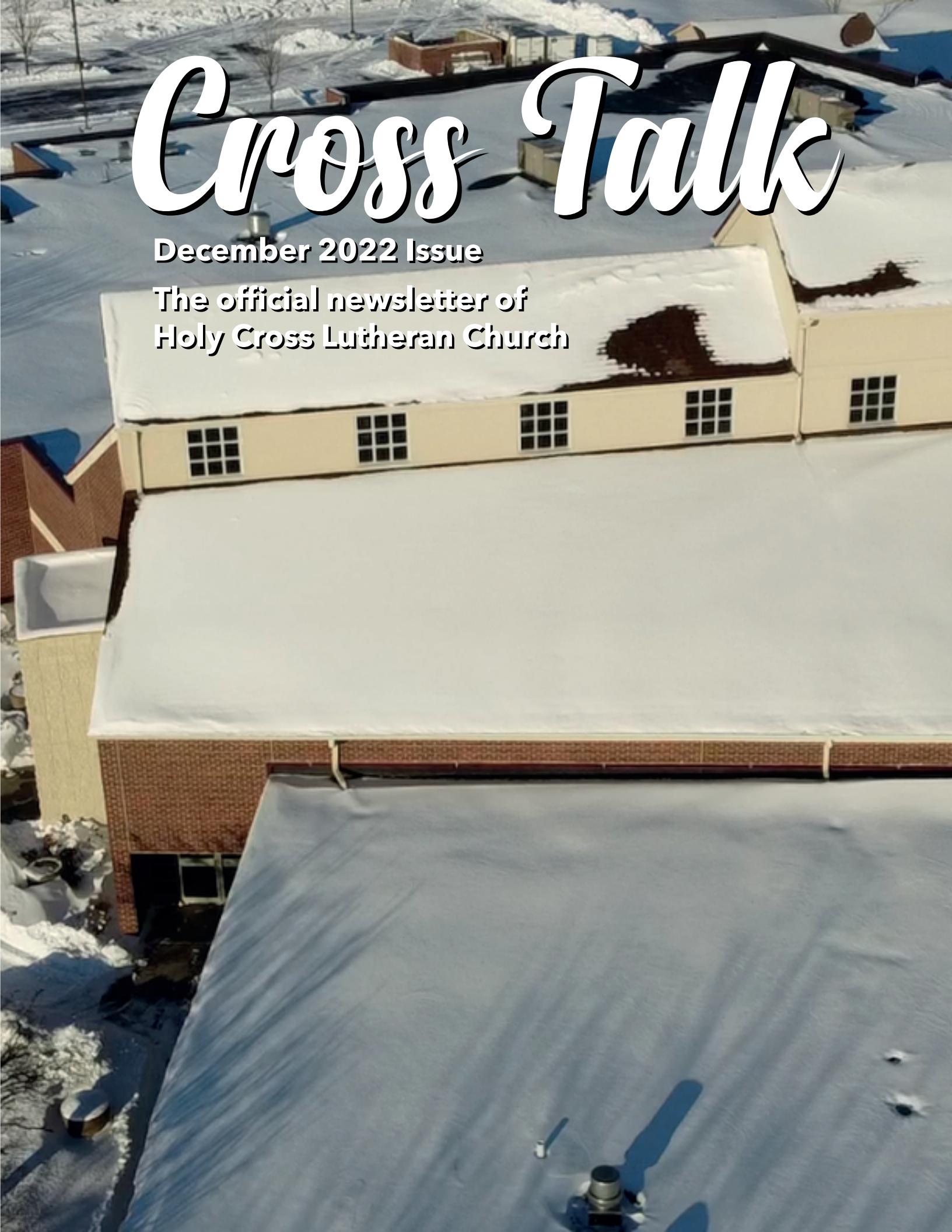


Cross Talk

December 2022 Issue

**The official newsletter of
Holy Cross Lutheran Church**



As you read this, we have begun the season of Advent—the wonderful, blue-paramented first season of the Church year intended to be filled with contemplation, preparation, and expectation. Yet, as is typical nowadays, outside of our worship spaces and the occasional Advent calendar or wreath that may be found within our homes, it feels like the season of Christmas is already upon us. If you were to walk into a store, flip through a catalog, turn on the radio, or go for a drive at night, it may seem like the season of Christmas has already arrived. For the most part, I welcome this, as I quite enjoy the decorations and music that remind us Christmas is on its way once the Thanksgiving dinner makes its transition to Tupperware containers in the fridge. Yet, at the same time, it doesn't take much investigation to notice how many of the widespread cultural views of Christmas that surround us have very little connection to the birth of Christ.

In response to this watered down, Santa-fied, Hallmark Channeled view of the holiday, a common rallying cry among some Christians is "Keep Christ in Christmas!" On social media, it's common to see the abbreviation Xmas taken up as a chief culprit and low hanging fruit in this ongoing cultural battle. In spite of this perspective (and, if I'm being honest, partly because of it), I choose to freely use Xmas (especially when texting or emailing from my phone where abbreviations are especially handy). In fact, the origins of Xmas are firmly found within the Christian tradition (rather than outside it, as some kind of attempt to cross out Christ in a so-called war on Christmas, as some modern Christians seem to believe).

If you were to open a Greek New Testament, you would see the word Christ written as Χριστός (pronounced kree-stoce). You may recognize the first two letters (the X or "kai" which makes a "K" sound and the P or "rho" which makes an "R" sound) as a common traditional Christian symbol () used since the early church as an abbreviation for Christ. It is from this tradition that Christmas gets abbreviated to Xmas. With this understanding, we can see that abbreviating Christmas doesn't necessarily take Christ out of the holiday any more than simply saying the word Christmas truly places Christ at its center.

In our hurting, broken, lonely world, appeals to "keep" Christ anywhere don't inspire me much. Instead, I believe our time and energy is best spent living out the good news proclaimed by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 2:20, when he says: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." With this gospel message as our guide through Advent, I invite you on the journey—the journey of actually being Christ for your neighbors, proclaiming Christ to your neighbors, and seeing Christ in your neighbors this Advent and Christmas.

God bless you this December!
-Pastor Lando

In This Issue:

**Meet
Tyler Egge
p. 3**

**Adult
Ministries
Team
p. 4**

**Mission
Team
p. 5**

**November
Photos
p. 6**

**Upcoming
Events
p. 7**

Get to Know Our New Ministry Associate

My name is Tyler Egge, and I'm thrilled to join you as Holy Cross's ministry associate! I grew up in Albert Lea, Minnesota and graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead. During college, I was on summer staff at Shetek Lutheran Ministries, which is where I really discovered my deep love for ministry, and I have also served at congregations in Fargo-Moorhead, the Twin Cities, and most recently, southern Minnesota. At Holy Cross, I look forward to imagining together with you about what youth ministry can look like, and I'm so excited to help create a space where kids--of all ages!--can show up just as they are to find community and be reminded of God's love for them. When I'm not at work, I love reading fiction, exploring new parks and trails, going to Twins games, taking walks, shopping at Target, and drinking caramel lattes. I can't wait to get to know you all!



Adult Ministries Team Upcoming Events

Please join us on Wednesday evenings this Advent season as we study the book of Philippians. Feel free to attend any one or all three sessions! All are welcome to join in the 30-45 minute conversation in the Fireside Room each Wednesday following the worship service.

Please join us this Advent season as we discuss ANGELS. Feel free to attend any one or all three sessions! All are welcome to join in the conversation in the Fireside Room each Sunday following the 9:45 worship service.

Be watching for info in the gathering area for "Stump the Pastor" event coming up on Sunday, January 8th! Following the 9:45 worship service that day, we will have the opportunity to ask those questions about our faith that we've always wondered about but didn't know how to ask. Following the service, grab a coffee and a cookie and meet us back in the Sanctuary for some fun and informative discussion with our Pastor Lando! There will be index cards and a box in the gathering area to submit questions, so let's get those questions coming - we hope to see you there!

Mission Team

The holidays are upon us once again and it is our hope that we all share some Peace and Joy. At this time of year, as we hunt for that perfect gift, we can all lose a little perspective on what it is all about. The birth of our Savior and what a wonderful gift He has given us! One gift He gave us was to teach the importance of helping others, giving to others, and from that comes a common refrain; God's Work Our Hands and striving to do good works and Be the Hands and Feet of Jesus.

This was on display during November as we hosted our last Blood Drive of 2022. We are thrilled to say that we had 29 donations which will help 87 local patients!!

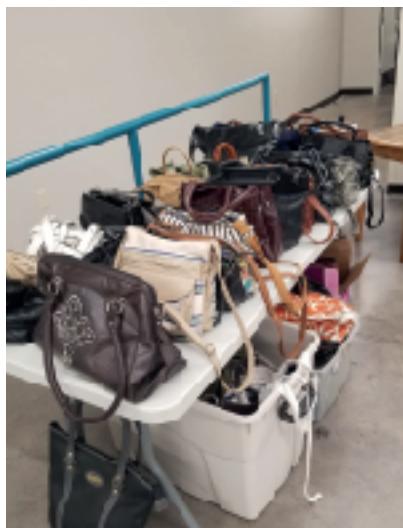
Another beautiful example of God's Work, Our Hands was your generosity to Purse Project. Your donations allowed Holy Cross to combine Purse Project with Banquet West on November 16th. We were also extremely happy to have our youth join us for this event. It was a great night with the youth, engaging in service and fellowship, and in addition to serving at Banquet West, we were able to offer the guests their choice of 45 purses. A huge thank you to the parents and teachers that made it possible for the youth to be there!

This year we are again asking you to help embody the words; God's Work Our Hands through the ELCA Good Gifts tree and the Giving Tree. This year's Giving Tree will be benefiting Bishop Dudley Hospitality House. We are asking for donations of cold weather items for adults and children. We would be grateful for donations of socks, hats, gloves, scarves, boots and coats, both new and gently used.

The ELCA Good Gifts tree is something you are probably familiar with at this time of year, but may not fully understand what it is and how it works. Decorating the tree, you will find a variety of ornaments with pictures, what the gift is, and a dollar amount. It is as simple as choosing the ornament(s) you would like to purchase, going to ELCA.org/goodgifts, click Shop Now, and from there you are able to browse and choose any gift you would like to purchase. Also, on the ELCA.org/goodgifts page, you will find more information about the program and who your purchases help. Choose to make a purchase in your own name, or as a gift for (from) that person in your life who has everything and will appreciate the generous and unique nature of an ELCA Good Gift. So, maybe finding that perfect gift is easier than we think. If you prefer not to make this purchase online, please contact Penney, Jackie or Julie for assistance.

The Mission Team would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for all of your support and participation this past year and as we proceed, Together in Mission.

Happy Holidays to All,
Penney Hovatter
Jackie Cerkowniak
Julie Graber



Holy Cross at Banquet West



Holy Cross Tree Trimming Crew



Upcoming Events

Join us for a warm meal and wonderful worship this Advent season! Each Wednesday in Advent (Nov. 30, Dec. 7, 14, 21), you are invited to share in a meal (5:00-5:45) and join together in an Advent-themed worship service (6:00-6:45). Hope to see you there! Please go to the signupgenius link below to signup to donate meal items for the Advent worship. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904094CA9A92FA1FA7-advent>

CrossKids is looking for some COOKIES! Are you making some Christmas goodies? Would you be willing to make a couple extra dozen for our celebration after our Christmas program on December 11th? OR Make some PLAIN cutout cookies for our kids to decorate for our Christmas Celebration on December 18th? Signup available on Virtual Community page

We are in need of readers and candle lighters as we light our Advent Wreath in worship during the season of Advent. This is a great way for all ages to serve together! A sign-up sheet is located in the Gathering Area.

Book Club will be discussing their latest book The Santa Suit by Mary Kay Andrews on Monday, December 12th. Tricia Fjerestad has agreed to host at her home for the Christmas season and we will have a potluck prior to discussion. The potluck will begin at 6:30 with the discussion to follow around 7:00. There will be Sloppy Joe's and buns provided so feel free to bring something you would like to share.

Holy Cross is going Caroling, on Sunday, December 18th from 3pm – 4:30pm. That means Families; Children, Moms, Dads, Grandma's, Grandpa's, etc. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend to enjoy this Holiday Season. We could be stopping at a couple outside side locations and then stop inside to share our voices of "Good Cheer". We will be returning to the church for Hors D'oeuvres, treats, and warm beverages. If you want to assist with the food as well, please click the link below.
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904094ca9a92fa1fa7-caroling>

Anyone wishing to donate a poinsettia, please bring it to the church by Wed, Dec 21 with your name and the person you wish to honor/memorialize.

Holy Cross is seeking a part-time custodian with an expected workload of 20-25 hours per week. If you or someone you know may be interested in this position and being a part of our team, please reach out to Pastor Lando (landoa@holycrosslutheranchurch.org).

Remember to update your giving to Breeze. See Holy Cross website for tips and how to videos on creating an account and update your giving.