

THE CROSSWORD

February 2024

A PUBLICATION OF HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Vol. LXVII, No. 3

THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S PROMISE(S)

from Pastor Nathan Erb

“If you think God has promised this world will be a five-star hotel, you will be miserable as you live through the normal struggles of life. But if you remember that God promised we would be pilgrims and this world may feel more like a desert or even a prison, you might find your life surprisingly happy.” — Kevin DeYoung, *“Just Do Something: A Liberating Approach to Finding God’s Will”*

In the movie “Hook,” Robin Williams plays an aged Peter Pan who has forgotten the wonder and mystery of Neverland. We are reintroduced to this once fearless boy—now a grown man with a wife, two kids, and a job that he has prioritized over his family. This leads him to make promises that he doesn’t keep—in hopes of appeasing his family with strong but empty words. There is a scene in which he makes another promise to his son and bolsters it by saying, “Jack, my word is my bond.” To which his son, who knows better, says, “Yeah—Junk Bond.”

We know the power of promises and the heartache of a promise not kept. In order for relationships to thrive, trust has to be established. This happens when a promise is made and

kept over and over again. If not, future promises made are just words without meaning or merit. Junk Bonds.

God created us to have a relationship with us. He invites us to call him Father! A good father doesn’t over-promise and underdeliver. He keeps his word. God makes all sorts of promises to his people that we read about in the scriptures and invites us to trust that when He says he will do something, He will.

God’s first promise to mankind is that every tree in the garden is good for them, except for one. *“You may eat of every tree, except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Don’t eat that one, or you will die.”*

Satan will later twist God’s word in order to get Adam and Eve to doubt that God’s word to them is true. “Did God really say...”

Nothing has changed. One of Satan’s greatest weapons is to stir up doubt in our hearts toward God so that we don’t trust His promises. And where trust is broken, the relationship is destroyed.

But don’t believe Satan’s lies. Look at the evidence. Scripture is filled with God making and keeping promises. Even after Adam and Eve sinned, God made a promise to them—that through the offspring of the woman, one would come and deliver them from the sin that had now entered the world.

From there on out, every promise God makes and keeps is meant to assure man that he will make good on this great promise of deliverance. All one needs to do is look at Christ on the cross and His resurrection to be certain that God has indeed kept this promise.

Jesus said, *“For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on*

(Continued on page 4)

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

from Kerry Geffert

The Holy Cross congregation was founded for one purpose: “to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord.” (HCLC Constitution, Article II) Need a refresher on the Great Commission? See Matthew 28:18-20.

Sixty-five years later that purpose, our mission, remains as strong as ever. Much of that is due to our dedicated clergy, our staff and you, our members. As we have each January for more than 60 years, we recently came together to collectively chart the administrative path of Holy Cross – within the framework of our mission – through the election of leaders and the approval of our budgets. Technically that is all that needs to be accomplished at the Annual Meeting. However, as part of those actions, it is important for us to look at where we have been and then where we are headed.

So I thank the 50-plus members who were able, and who decided that the future of Holy Cross is important enough, to attend our Annual Voters’ Meeting. You made important decisions and shared valuable perspectives. Now begins – well, actually continues – our work.

Holy Cross has set an aggressive financial plan for itself in 2024. We will reduce our chances of succeeding in this plan if we approach it passively. The plan requires our active participation and determination. And when I say “our,” I do not mean the Board or even just those who attended the Annual Meeting. “Our” means *all* members of Holy Cross. As with any membership organization, be it sacred or secular, membership comes with both privileges and responsibilities. In the case of the Church, the privileges are a gift, but so are the responsibilities. Our challenge is to encourage all of our members to exercise their gift of responsibility.

Now I didn’t just emerge from under a rock. I know the old adage of “20 percent of the members do 80 percent of the work.” But do we give into this division of labor, or do we try to move the needle a few percentage points? Keep in mind that we are not doing this just to change the numbers. We are doing this to bring our members closer to God so that they, too, can help fulfill our church’s mission.

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I’m also aware that those who need to hear this message the most are likely not reading this article. Getting out the message of “exercising the gift of responsibility” requires multiple communication methods from multiple sources. And this is where you come in. Your gift of responsibility includes letting our fellow members know of their gifts and their responsibilities. Our dear member Myrtle Anderson drilled this home to me some 15-20 years ago at a progressive dinner. She challenged me by cutting through my reasons (really, they were probably excuses) to determine what was important; what was a priority. I still carry her lesson with me.

During this next year, let’s challenge ourselves and one another to exercise our gifts of responsibility to the fullest. It’s one way of demonstrating our understanding of our gifts of privileges. ☩

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 203-268-7555
office@holycrosstrumbull.com

Sunday Worship | 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School & Bible Class | 10:45 a.m.

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THE
CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR/LAYOUT & DESIGN
 Nathan Erb

PRODUCTION
 Mary Schrock

THE PASTOR & THE TITHER

FOLLOWING UP ON DECEMBER'S NEWSLETTER ARTICLE ON TITHING (this time with a humorous twist)



There's a story about a man who, as a church member, made a promise to his pastor to tithe ten percent of his income every year. He was young and didn't have much money, but things changed. The member tithed one thousand dollars the year he earned ten thousand dollars, ten thousand dollars the year he earned one-hundred thousand, and one-hundred thousand dollars the year he earned one million. But the year he earned six million dollars he just couldn't bring himself to write out that check for six-hundred thousand dollars to his church. He phoned his pastor and said, "This tithing

business has to stop. It was fine when my tithe was one thousand dollars, but I just cannot afford six-hundred thousand dollars. You've got to do something, Pastor!" The pastor prayed silently for a long while. Eventually the man asked, "What are you doing? Are you praying that I can be released from my promise?" "No," said the pastor. "I'm praying for God to reduce your income back to the affordable level where one thousand dollars will be your tithe!" ☩

From Bill Flammann, a fellow member/steward of Holy Cross



BUILDING BLOCKS

from Holy Cross Christian Preschool

In February the children will explore good nutrition and healthy habits. They will learn what is needed to take good care of the bodies that God has given to us. The children will also be busy making Valentines for all their friends and families.

Our Language and Literacy activities will focus on Nursery Rhymes, rhyming activities and ending sounds. We will sing silly songs that help us learn what it means to rhyme. The four-year-old class will also begin a special writing program that mirrors what is taught in the Trumbull Public School system.

The four-year-old class is exploring the concept of addition and subtraction. This is done through hands-on experiences with manipulatives, felt boards, songs and poems. They will also practice graphing skills using candy conversation hearts.

Our Bible stories will focus on how Jesus is our good friend. The stories include Jesus Blesses the Children, Mary and Martha, Jesus Forgives Zacchaeus and The Ten Lepers. Thursday is our favorite day of the week because it begins with our Chapel Time with Pastor Erb! He always gives us a chance to participate in reading the Bible stories with fun actions! He also teaches us a new song every week!

We are now accepting registration for the 2024-2025 school year. We have both full-time and part-time options. Class sizes are limited so register early! To set up a tour and/or obtain a registration form, please contact Michele Glennon at 203-268-6471 or preschool@holycrosstrumbull.com.

THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S PROMISES [continued from page 1](#)

the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

If we can be certain that God kept this promise, then we can also be certain that God will keep every promise to us in Christ.

Throughout Lent, I invite you to read through the Book of Luke with me and discover the certainty of all of God's promises and how they are fulfilled entirely in Christ. We'll also learn more about this in our Lenten series called "The Wills of God." No doubt, there

is a singular, overarching will God has for our salvation, but this is made certain by the many other promises God makes to us regarding this life and our eternal one—things God says will happen.

Visit holycross.life/lent to learn more about this Lenten series. You'll find a reading guide, a calendar, and more to help you be certain of God's love for you when the journey ends with Christ on the cross and risen from the grave. ☩

Pastor Nathan Erb

Celebrating this Month

FEBRUARY

It's fun to be recognized on your special day! Even more so, it's special to know others are praying for you. It is our hope that as you spend time in daily prayer, you will remember your fellow Holy Cross members on their special day.

BIRTHDAYS

Date Name

- 2 Joe Ciccia
- 3 David Skoog
- 4 Thomasina Petrahai
- 5 Jennifer Deloge
- 9 Alexander Carola
- 11 Peter Antoniou
- 11 Kevin Halls
- 12 Ethan Gagliardi
- 13 Alyssa (Cerone) Jenkins
- 13 Mary Ann Schiller
- 14 Julianne Nyitrai
- 15 Tom Ferik
- 22 Ann Bruggemann
- 24 Luke Riccio
- 27 Jack Messerschmitt
- 28 Chad Helminger
- 28 Emily Rentz
- 29 Jesse Kravecs

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Date Name

- 18 Greg and Laura Dowling
- 18 Jim and Deb Leslie

BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

- Dee Bruggemann
- Alexander Carola
- Kyle Helminger
- William Malmstedt
- Jordan Matthews
- Thomasina Petrahai
- Alex Riccio
- Andrew Struzik
- Paul Vaitkus
- Marcia Wilson

If there is someone that should be on one of these lists, but isn't...please alert the office so we can update our records!

FEBRUARY 2024

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY																																																																																																									
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4 5th Sunday after Epiphany 9:30 – Worship Service 10:45 – Sunday School & Adult Bible Class	5 7:00 a.m. – Preschool	6 7:00 a.m. – Preschool	7 7:00 a.m. – Preschool	8 7:00 a.m. – Preschool 6:30 – Board of Direct. Meeting	9 7:00 a.m. – Preschool	10																																																																																																									
11 Transfiguration of Our Lord 9:30 – Worship Service 11:00 – Pancake Day	12 7:00 a.m. – Preschool	13 7:00 a.m. – Preschool	14 Ash Wednesday Valentine's Day 7:00 a.m. – Preschool 7:00 – Worship with distribution of ashes	15 7:00 a.m. – Preschool	16 <i>NO PRESCHOOL</i>	17																																																																																																									
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