

PARTNERS NEWSLETTER

“Equipping and sending God’s people to make a Christ-like difference in the world”

Holy Cross: Becoming a Healthy Congregation in Jesus

St. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12 that the body of Christ, the Church, is one body, but has many parts. He also reminds us that the Head of the Body is Christ Jesus. He must lead us. Just as in a human body, the head always takes the body where it wants to go. So with this in mind, let’s think about becoming a healthier body—in other words, a healthier congregation.

Healthy congregations have a lot of different qualities, but I’ll just focus here on the three that I believe are most important for us to focus on in the coming year.

1. Healthy congregations utilize sound financial management.

We can use some help here. As you know, we have quite a bit of debt. This will not lead us, in the long run, to congregational health. In fact, it will keep us in slavery to our lenders (Proverbs 22:7). Christ has paid the debt of our sin; let us not go back into bondage—spiritually or financially.

2. Healthy congregations have open and transparent communication.

We have work to do here as well. We are planning to improve our ongoing communication with all of you via email, video, and whatever other media can bring all of us into the conversation in real time. But that’s not all. Open and transparent communication also means we work at fostering relational trust with one another. That doesn’t mean perfect agreement. But it does mean because we love God, we love one another, and always work toward honest and open communication—not communication based on pretense and an unwillingness to listen (James 1; 1 John 4).

3. Healthy congregations have a spirit of unity.

That doesn’t mean we see everything from the same perspective. In fact, the blessing of Holy Cross is that there is a lot of different perspectives coming together to form a diverse, and yet unified mission and ministry for the Lord. Unity creates a real sense of freedom for all of us. For example, when we have unity we are free from the need to control others. Instead we individually practice *self control, not control of others* (Galatians 5). We are also free from the need to fix others, looking instead into the mirror of God’s holy law and strive for personal holiness (James 1). Finally, unified people are free from the need to understand WHY people do what they do. Instead we meditate on Psalm 19:12 “Who can understand his own sins...?” If we can’t understand *our own* sins, how can we possibly understand why people do the crazy things *they* do?

Finally, let’s keep in mind that because Jesus is our Head, we not only allow Him to lead us, but we rejoice in wherever He leads, because He loves us.

You are in my prayers,

Dr. Larry Merino

Chicken Dinner

Friday, March 12, 4:30 - 7:00

It's THAT time of the year, again . . . the 32nd annual Holy Cross Music Department Chicken Dinner! The menu hasn't changed. We'll have that *wonderful* Nelson's Port-a-Pit Chicken, fruit in jell-o, homemade rolls, potato salad or chips, three choices of drinks and numerous choices of deserts. All of this, plus entertainment, give-a-ways, and our fun-filled dessert auction for only \$7 per person. (Same price as last year!) Tickets are available, in advance, after worship services beginning on February 20.



Holy Cross women are encouraged to attend "Tapestry of Life"

3 Zone LWML Rally - April 17, 2010 at Emmanuel Lutheran School, 1123 Union St. Registration (\$6.00) and a light breakfast will begin at 8:30 a.m. The program will be from 9 to 11:30 a.m. featuring Heidi Floyd, a representative for the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer. The theme is "Tapestry of Life" based on Psalm 139:14. Please register with Brenda Walker (489-3225) or Carole Zilz (484-5735) by April 11th.



LWML is encouraging younger women to participate and enjoy the conventions and fellowship of LWML. Because of this, our LWML North Zone is looking for a young woman between the ages of 25-35 years to apply to go to the Indiana District Convention at the Sheraton Hotel in Indianapolis June 25 -27. An application may be found at www.lwmlindiana.org/ywr.asp. Give the completed application to Brenda or Carole by March 20.

HEALTH CORNERS

By Sue Seiman, Parish Nurse

Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years. The prevalence of obesity among children age 6-11 has increased from 6.5% in 1980 to 19.6% in 2008, and among adolescents aged 12-19 years from 5.0% to 18.1%. Many factors in combination have contributed to a child's risk of becoming overweight. Some of these factors are:

- Diet - Regular consumption of high calorie foods such as fast foods, baked goods and vending machine snacks.
- Genetics - A child who comes from a family of overweight people will genetically be predisposed to put on weight.
- Psychological factors - overeating to deal with stress and boredom.
- Socio-economic factors - children of low-income backgrounds are at greater risk of becoming obese, as the parents may lack the time and resources to make healthy eating and exercise a priority.

For those children with no other health concerns the goal is weight maintenance. This strategy allows the child to add inches but no pounds causing the BMI (Body Mass Index) for their age to drop over time into a healthy range. This includes healthy eating and activity following these guidelines:

- Choose fruits and vegetables over convenience foods high in sugar and fats.
- Limit sweetened beverages.
- Sit down together for family meals.
- Limit the number of times you eat out, especially at fast food restaurants.
- Limit recreational screen times to fewer than 2 hours a day.
- Emphasize activity, not exercise.
- Find activity your child likes to do.
- If you want an active child, be active yourself.
- Vary your activity.

Whether your child is at risk for becoming overweight or currently at a healthy weight, you can take proactive measures to keep things on the right track. Remember to schedule yearly well child visits, set a good example, avoid food-related power struggles with your child, emphasize the positive and **Be Patient**.

Treasurer's Corner

February 2010

By Todd Seiman

In January, the downward slide in giving continued with "Envelope and Plate Giving" down \$9,132 from the 2010 Guide for Spending. January total receipts were unfavorable to budget by \$26,060. Offsetting the loss in revenue was a reduction in spending, expenditures were \$19,920 favorable against the 2010 budget. This aggressive reduction resulted in offsetting the unfavorable income, for a total net loss for the month of \$6,140. As Pastor Merino has outlined, there has been a 10% across-the-board reduction in salaries, elimination of discretionary spending, notification of Synod and District offices to let them know we will not be sending the \$25k, and "Skinny up" expenses: Don't pay it if you don't have to pay it.

The goal is to eliminate about \$200k of expenses. The debt accrual machine will be turned off – no more operational debt to be incurred as soon as feasibly possible.

January YTD, 2010

	Actual Results	Guide For Spending	Difference (Unfavorable)
Total Income	\$ 192,219	\$ 218,279	(\$ 26,060)
Total Expenses	\$ 207,409	\$ 227,329	\$ 19,920
Income Less Expenses	(\$ 15,190)	(\$ 9,050)	(\$ 6,140)

By February 16, 2010, the operating line of credit was \$209,559. By starting the year at this high level of debt, significant actions will be required to stop a projected shortfall of operating funds. The framework for managing the financial situation is based on the premise that we need to manage in a God-pleasing, God-honoring way, the resources God provides through His people. We need to live within our means, and we need to see this time as an opportunity to grow spiritually as God guides us in His truth, even if that truth is unpleasant to hear or obey.

Holy Hearts, Wholly His (HHWH) Comments: HHWH contributions for January '10 year-to-date were \$37,090. Actual contributions received for HHWH to date amount to \$2,433,000. Of these dollars, \$2,312,000 were pledged amounts and \$121,000 were non-pledged. All pledges made for the HHWH capital stewardship campaign total \$2,800,000. The current loan balance for HHWH is \$778,295; the loan was started in October, 2008 because the HHWH expenses exceeded the pledges received as of that date.

Justice Bread Program

All proceeds from the sale of *Justice Bread* are matched by The Lutheran Foundation and go to help the less fortunate in our community with emergency financial needs through *Lutheran Social Services of Indiana*.

Volunteers are always needed to help sell *Justice Bread* once a month before and after worship services. If you are interested or have questions about *Justice Bread*, please contact Jan Rison 483-5829.

Holy Cross Blood Drive



Saturday, March 13

7 am - 1 pm

Sign up after church services in the Welcome Center.



School News

WHO WILL SHOW AND TELL ?



We have several new preschool children and families who have joined us in February. The new children have caught on quickly to our preschool prayers and songs in praise to Jesus. One new little girl already is counting how many “Holy Crosses” that she sees in our classrooms, hallways and church. A new set of twins insist that their family must now pray before a meal at home. Some children show a defiant side to us as they adjust to a new school, while others willingly follow the other children in what we say and do. One boy, after displaying many problems in listening and misbehavior all in one morning, said in explanation... “I’m sorry, Mrs. Ladwig. I forgot that is important to you.”

On a Saturday night in mid-February, our new preschool parents brought their children to the worship service when we sang and participated in serving cookies after the service in the Welcome Center. The children are catching on to our procedures and schedules in our preschool. They are participating in our programs. We hope they stay with us at Holy Cross for many years to come and join us in worship.

It struck me that our worship is also new to many of our families. Perhaps our prayers, our songs, our liturgy and even our giving are new to them...Who will model a worshipping, sacrificial, respectful and mission-filled life of worship to these families? *It must be you and me.*

As I see member families leave before the end of the church service; when I see the same children and adults going in and out of our church many times during the service; and when I hear that many of our adult members are not giving their first-fruits as an offering to God; not praying or listening intently to the Word of God, I am asking... What is this showing to our new worshippers? What is this saying about the importance of our mode of worship at Holy Cross, and what are we professing through our words and actions in respect to God’s Word? Let us all be aware that many new faces and families are watching us. They are learning how we “do worship” to Jesus our Savior at Holy Cross. They are learning, as we are, about living a God-filled life full of His hope, joy and peace. So let us welcome these new families with our smiles, greetings and social times in the Welcome Center. Let us be a church family, guiding them by our example of respectful and joyful worship. Let us be a people of God to the many new faces at Holy Cross Church and School.

*Come let us worship the Lord, with the family of God...
Hear His Word, say our prayers, sing our songs of praise.*

Mary Widenhofer, Preschool Director

IMPORTANT EVENTS FOR MARCH

ISTEP Testing will be **March 2 – March 12**.

Please remember to not schedule student appointments during ISTEP week so students do not fall behind on testing.

National Lutheran Schools Week will be celebrated the **week of March 8**.

Mind Celebration—Come join us for an evening of Mind Boggling fun! **Tuesday, March 9 at 7:00 pm** we will be having our Mind Celebration. Get your teams together and come join us. There will also be a dinner hosted by the PTL beginning at **6:00 pm**.

Our **PTL book fair** will take place **March 8-March 11**.

Open House - If you know of a family looking for quality Christian education for their child, please invite them to our Open House on **Sunday, March 21, from 12:00-3:00 pm**.

End of 3rd Quarter is on **Friday, March 26**.

There will be **no preschool classes** on **March 25 & 26** for Preschool Parent/Teacher conferences.

We would like to thank all the volunteers that helped us prepare for our February open house. Also, thank you to all the faculty, staff and school board that gave the extra hours of their time to be here for the open house. We appreciate the dedication of many to help Holy Cross Lutheran School grow.



Worship for Shut-Ins

Website:

worshipforshutins.org

Phone: 471-LOVE

“Worship for Shut-Ins”

March Viewing Schedule

Viewing times for the Fort Wayne Area:

Sundays:

6:30 AM WPTA-TV-21

8:00 AM FiOS Ch. 9 & Digital 33.2 & Sat. 252

11:30 AM DirecTV 377; DISH & WINM 12/38

4:00 PM Comcast Ch. 55 & FiOS Ch. 25

March 7, 2010 – Luke 13:1-9

“It's Not Fair!”

by Rev. Paul E. Shoemaker

Life is filled with tragedies. We are tempted to say to God, “That is not fair!” The truth is that we are deserving of none of the good we experience. The ultimate in lack of fairness is Jesus on Calvary’s cross. It was not fair, but it was merciful.

March 14, 2010 – Luke 15:11-32

“You Can Always Go Home!”

by Rev. Phil Quardokus

It is because of our heavenly Father's rescue mission in Christ that you can always go home to be with Him at His side now in time through faith and for all eternity.

March 21, 2010 – Luke 20:9-15

“Looking to Easter”

by Rev. James Elsner

Looking forward to Easter? Maybe it's the promise of nicer weather or new life. But those who follow Christ, look forward to Easter through the cross of Christ.

March 28, 2010 – John 12:32

“Wonderful Drawing Power”

By Dr. Walter A. Maier III

We see this is the most wonderful drawing power when we consider:

- I. Who does the drawing;
- II. How this drawing power is put forth;
- III. Whom this power draws, with what results.

PRAYER MINISTRY OF “WORSHIP FOR SHUT-INS”

Lutheran Ministries Media (LMM), the producers of “Worship for Shut-Ins”, is more than a television ministry. A little known fact of this organization is its prayer ministry. In LMM’s mailings, prayer requests are asked for. Not only does the staff pray for its viewers and its 150 volunteers, but it “listens” to viewer comments.

The requests come from the prayer slips being returned, letters, notes, E-mails, and phone calls. “Listen” to this viewer’s comments from Reelsville, Indiana. *“I requested prayers for us because I am 83 and my husband’s part-time job was ending. I received a phone call from ‘your minister’ and he said our request was being prayed for. God has answered all the prayers, both yours and ours. His part-time job has been extended.... This income will sustain us until summer.”*

This retired Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod pastor lives in San Diego and prays for and calls those who are in need prayer support. He is the Rev. W. Gail Rabe, who used the ministry, not only for shut-ins in his parish in suburban Chicago, but personally when his wife was confined to their home because of cancer. He stated, “In all my years of ministry (almost 50 years), it was the only time I could worship with her.” Subsequently, he has preached on “Worship for Shut-Ins” twice. Yes, he is one of our volunteers even though he lives over 2000 miles from Fort Wayne.

“Worship for Shut-Ins” is the only Lutheran worldwide weekly television program sharing the Gospel that we are saved by Faith through God’s Grace and not by our works! We are supported by viewers and their relatives, organizations, and foundations. Your tax deductible check should be made out to LMM and sent to 3225 Crescent Avenue; Ft. Wayne, IN 46805 or you may place it in the offering plate. For additional information, you can call at 471-5683 or go to the Web site.

Ken Schilf, Executive Director of Worship for Shut-ins

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
PARTNERS NEWSLETTER
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Come join us in worship

SERVICES IN MARCH

Saturday 5 PM - with Communion March 6, 20

Sunday 8:30 & 10:15 AM - with Communion March 7, 21

Monday 7 PM - with Communion March 29

Join us for our **Wednesday Lenten services** at 12:00 noon (chapel) and 7:00 pm (church) which will focus on Psalm 51:10-12

Palm Sunday services, on the March 28 weekend, will be at our regular worship times on Saturday at 5:00 pm, Sunday at 8:30 and 10:15 am, and Monday at 7:00 pm.

HOLY WEEK

On **Maundy Thursday**, April 1 at 12:00 noon and 7:00 pm, we will be celebrating the Lord's Supper. Our First Communion class will be joining us for the first time at 7:00 pm. On **Good Friday**, April 2 at 7:00 pm, we will be having a service of darkness (Tenebrae) to remember the sacrifice Christ made for each of us as He died on the cross.

EASTER SERVICES

Join us for Holy Communion on Easter Sunday, **April 4 at 7:00, 9:00, & 11:00 am**, to celebrate the miracle of the resurrection of Christ.

