



2015 Annual Report of the Congregation

Annual Meeting Agenda

January 31, 2016

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ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Holy Cross Lutheran Church ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES January 25, 2015

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation of Holy Cross Lutheran Church was called to order by Council President, Marla Davenport, on January 25, 2015 at 11:34 am. There were 70 eligible voters in attendance. According to the constitution, a quorum of 30 voters was needed with a vote of 35 to approve motions.

A motion to approve the agenda as printed in the Annual Report was offered by Lavonne Luchsinger and seconded by Frank Max. The motion passed.

A correction to the minutes from last year's annual meeting consisted of changing the date of Pastor Stiles accepting a call to Brainerd from January 29, 2014, to January 29, 2013. Debbie Dellis made the motion to accept the minutes as corrected and Dorothy Frank seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The following people gave overviews of their reports that were printed in the 2014 Annual Report:

President's Report Marla Davenport

Pastor's Report – Pastor Anne Hokenstad

Children, Youth and Families – Gibson Stanton

Worship and Music - Jason Larson

Altar Guild - Jason Larson

Stewardship – Marla Davenport for Arlan Tietel

Property – John Johnson

Advisory Mission Council – Annette Langdon

Men's Group – Frank Max

Finance Committee – Judi Holstein

Financial Secretary – Charlotte Nun

Serving God's People – Debbie Dellis

WAPO Association – Gibson Stanton

Steve Hanson made the motion to accept the reports. Jim Dellis seconded the motion, which passed.

The proposed 2015 Budget was presented by the Finance Committee. Discussion items included the calling of a part time pastor and holding only one Sunday morning worship service both required to balance the budget. There were concerns about the changes needed to support a parttime pastor instead of full time and how to combine the traditional and contemporary services to meet the needs of all worshipers. At the conclusion of the discussion, Frank Max made the motion to accept the 2015 Budget. Tom Obrien seconded the motion and the motion carried with one no vote and one abstention.

The following Council members are retiring: Sheila Morrow - Vice President, Pam Klingsporn – Secretary, and Melanie Accola – Children, Youth and Families Ministry. Marla thanked them for their years of service to Holy Cross.

The following people were nominated for Council positions:

Pam Sorensen – Vice President (motion to close nominations by George Seim and seconded by Jerry Vehrs, motion carried)

Jim Ostrander – Secretary (motion to close nominations by Yvonne O’Brien and seconded by Frank Max, motion carried)

Paula Grau - Children, Youth and Families (motion to close nominations by Roxanne Choulock and seconded by Linda Molitor, motion carried)

Jason Larson – Worship and Music (motion to close nominations by Keith Jantz and seconded by Annette Langdon, motion carried)

Char Nun – Financial Secretary (motion to close nominations by Roxanne Choulock and seconded by John Johnson, motion carried.)

Steve Hanson moved to accept the ballot of candidates by a unanimous vote. Scott Sorensen seconded the motion, which passed.

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by George Seim and seconded by Jim Dellis. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 12:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Ann Hagestad
Acting secretary

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

Holy Cross Lutheran Church Special Congregational Meeting Minutes August 30, 2015

Meeting was called to order by President Marla Davenport at 10:34am. Seventy-Four (74) congregational members were present.

Keith Jantz had call committee come forward to present Horacio Castillo as the candidate to fill Holy Cross’ call for settled pastor.

Arlan Tietel moved to call Horacio Castillo as the settled pastor for Holy Cross. George Seim seconded the motion. Discussion: question asked by Virginia Tietel if he (Horacio) would be part of a two-point parish. Answer: No. The hope is that we grow to support a full time pastor. We (Holy Cross) will continue with one service on Sunday mornings.

A vote was called for a raise of hands to call Horacio Castillo. Motion passed unanimously.

Frank Max moved and Pam Klingsporn seconded to adjourn meeting at 10:41am. Motion passed.

Dear Partners in Ministry,

2015 was a year of new relationships and new ventures for us in the Saint Paul Area Synod. Much like the transitions and innovations in your own congregation, as a synod comprised of 112 congregations, mission starts, Lutheran agencies and institutions, we too said farewell and Godspeed to familiar leaders and welcomed the talent and leadership gifts of others.

In March, we gave thanks for the work of the Rev. Roger Hardy and the Rev. Dick Magnus, who completed six months of service in the shared role of Interim Director of Evangelical Mission. Two months later, we said farewell to Cyndi Berg, who had served as Office Manager for eight years. Like all who serve on the synod staff, these three colleagues helped us in our common work with efficiency and joy.

In May, we welcomed the Rev. Sharon Kelly to the synod staff in the brand-new role of Advisor to the Bishop on the Well Being of Children and Youth. Sharon connected school superintendents from the multiple districts in Chisago, Washington, Ramsey, and Dakota Counties to our conference deans and rostered leaders. Although she moved to Baltimore in late August to serve as the interim pastor of a city church, Sharon's work continues to influence the way we encourage congregations to interface with the needs of their neighborhood schools. Through tutoring partnerships, homework help, weekend food provision, after-school activities and more, we ELCA Lutherans are making a needed impact on the lives of all our children.

The Rev. Justin Grimm also joined the synod staff in May as the Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop for Next Generation Ministries. With ten years as a mission developer in Lake Ann, Michigan, Justin brings insight, courage, and supervisory skills to his work with our eight existing mission starts. In 2015, we also received approval to launch an outreach to the Oromo community in Saint Paul, an endeavor we pray will be well underway in 2016.

In August, Alicia Hillar assumed the role of Office Manager. With Spanish language skills honed during a year with the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission in Mexico, she shares her bilingual gifts when they are needed. She joins the Rev. Justin Grimm, Julie Keefe, Chloe Ahlf, Greg Triplett, the Rev. Peter Harrits, the Rev. Lamont Koerner, Sister Noreen Stevens and Anna Grunner, as the staff serving with me in the synod office. In the fall of 2015, we welcomed Julia Hubbard as a two-year volunteer serving on behalf of the synod and ELCA Global Mission in Iringa, Tanzania.

As a synod, we gathered three times this past year. Conference Assemblies were held at Christ the King in New Brighton on February 28th. We sang and prayed together, and elected persons to serve in conference-level roles and as voting members of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. We also worked on a communal art project, creating the artwork used at the Synod Assembly.

The Synod Assembly was held April 24-25th at Prince of Peace in Burnsville. There we deliberated on several memorials and elected additional persons to synod-wide offices and as voting members for the upcoming Churchwide Assembly. The theme – We Are Church: Here and Now – came alive as we worshipped and were inspired by our keynote presenter, the Rev. Heidi Neumark from Trinity Lutheran Church in Manhattan. Throughout the two days we were called in fresh ways to the important work God is doing in and through us.

On six evenings in July and August, 150 members of the synod came together to help discern where and how God is calling us to be more deeply present in our world. Trinity, Lindstrom; Redeemer, White Bear Lake; Augustana, West Saint Paul; St. James, Burnsville; Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Roseville; and Arlington Hills, Saint Paul served as the hosts for those times of prayer, scripture study, singing, and faithful conversations about God's intended future for our common work. The convictions lifted up in that visioning process are shaping our synodical work and budget in 2016 and 2017.

As a synod we welcomed seven new rostered leaders, who were ordained and welcomed into their first calls in the Saint Paul Area Synod in 2015. They included the Rev. Caroline Harthun, the Rev. Jill Rode, the Rev. Julie Wright, the Rev. Brandon Newton, the Rev. Jennifer Collins, and the Rev. Elizabeth Flomo. The Rev. Horacio Castillo was welcomed into the ELCA from the Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala.

Financial mission support from your congregation allows us to work with congregations in transition, support those in the candidacy process, and directly fund the work of Luther Seminary, Lutheran Campus Ministry, Lutheran Advocacy – Minnesota, the Minnesota Council of Churches, and Agora. By sharing 47.5% of that financial support with the ELCA, our congregations and synod are invested more broadly in our church's work in global mission, in starting new congregations and renewing existing congregations, and in disaster relief. Among those benefitting from that support are six members of our synod, serving with Young Adults in Global Mission. They include Ryan Berkas and Jessica Moes (Cambodia), Renee Labat (Argentina), Maridith Lewellyn (United Kingdom), Sarah Olson (South Africa), and Brynn Wiessner (Madagascar). Gloria Bengsten is also serving as a global mission volunteer in Bratislava.

During 2015, this synod contributed \$6,793 to the ELCA's Malaria Campaign (with total synod contributions to date of \$25,342), \$44,071 to ELCA World Hunger Appeal and another \$24,827 to Disaster Relief through the ELCA. Through special offerings for the current mission starts in this synod, \$31,505 was received in additional support for outreach efforts within the synod.

During our summer visioning conversations, we read the story in Luke 5:1-11 of Jesus calling Peter to go out into the deep water. The weary fisherman is reluctant to return to his nets after a night of fruitless labor but he says, "Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets."

Time after time in 2015, we have found ways to step forward with similar faith. Thank you for being a faithful part of this church – here and now.

Yours in God's service,

Patricia J. Lull, Bishop

The year 2015 began a new era for Holy Cross Lutheran Church. After more than two and a half years of prayer and preparation, we welcomed Pastor Horacio Castillo as our new settled pastor. Pastor Castillo was installed in November with his wife, Pastor Amanda, and children Abigail, 7 and Joaquin 4, as well as, Assistant to the Bishop, Lamont Koerner, in attendance.

Closure

The year was a time of closure for the congregation as we said good-bye to interim pastors Anne Hokenstad and Jim Weckwerth who led us through the process of preparing for a new pastor. The Call Committee worked diligently through the process of screening and interviewing candidates, finally recommending a call to Pastor Castillo. The recommendation was approved at a special meeting of the congregation on August 30th. We owe a debt of gratitude to the members of the committee for their work including: Keith Jantz, Chair, Michelle Gydesen, Ann Hagestad, Pam Hinton, Linda Ledman, Don Leholm, Frank Max, Andy Powers and Virginia Tietel.

Moving Forward

The year was also a time for strengthening the leadership of Holy Cross. In January Pam Sorensen, Jim Olander, Paula Grau, Jason Larson, and Char Nun were elected to the Council. With a focus on building strong ministry teams, monthly meetings were held by each team leader with monthly reports to the Council.

A Building Committee was formed to prioritize church improvements needed. Thirteen proposals were submitted to the committee. After careful scrutiny, seven projects were sent to the Finance Committee for inclusion in the 2016 Budget. Unfortunately most of the projects were cut due to the lower than anticipated level of giving from pledges. The goal of the committee was to determine a process for approval and funding of needed improvements to the church facility for worship and fellowship and that was achieved. Yearly maintenance is financed through the Property Ministry Team.

The Finance Committee continued to oversee the budget, reporting to the congregation through temple talks and mailings. New processes for requesting payments and paying bills were implemented through the CDM+ Church Management System. Although giving did not meet expectations, the committee and staff carefully managed spending. Another bare bones budget has been prepared for 2016 with the hope and prayer that giving will meet the fiscal needs of Holy Cross.

Life at Holy Cross

In serving our mission "Holy Cross welcomes everyone as we worship and grow in faith together, serving God's people in the name of Christ" the members of Holy Cross organized and carried out a variety of activities. Highlights include Spark Sunday School, Kids Rock, Vacation Bible School, Rite of Confirmation, Sr. High Youth Group, Graduation Sunday with the Holy Cross Scholarship awards, Stewardship program, building painting and maintenance, Minnesota Food Share, ELCA World Hunger, bagging at the North St. Paul Food Shelf, supplies and warm clothing to Oakdale Elementary School, Christmas gifts for children in need, Crop Walk, Winter Clothing Shelf, Loaves and Fishes, support of Head Start staff and children, Hershey candy bars for Vets, Twins Baseball game, cheese curd stand at Oakdale Summerfest and Woodbury Days, Rally Day Ministry Fair, craft sale, Lenten Suppers, Chancel Choir, Joyful Noise Bells, the Way Praise Band and new directory pictures! Whew another busy year!

In July we bid farewell to Kabba Williams, our special member from Sierra Leone who lived in Oakdale for two years with support from Holy Cross as he pursued legal immigration status after being forced to leave

his country for speaking out about the poor reintegration of former child soldiers in the country and asking for education and skills training. Kabba has relocated to a suburb of Des Moines, Iowa, to be closer to his special lady friend as he finishes his book, works on a Master's Degree and pursues speaking and advocacy opportunities. He credits his Holy Cross family for helping him both spiritually and financially as he came to America seeking a better life. He was especially thankful for the opportunity to work as he pursued his passion for making a difference in the world. We should be proud of this immigration story in the midst of national negative rhetoric about welcoming immigrants to America.

Volunteers

Every church depends heavily on the leadership and participation of members to fulfill the mission. With the reduction of staff hours to meet the church budget this year, volunteers were needed more than ever to help with the day to day running of the church as well as leading worship and planning and carrying out projects and activities. I am proud to say that many members stepped up to help. The fact that we were able to carry on through the interim and transition times is a credit to all of you as well as the staff.

Thank you!!

As your Church Council President, I have learned how valuable each and every one of you is to our church family and the achievement of the mission of Holy Cross. There are many people who deserve to be recognized for their leadership this year. Thank you, Pastor Anne and Pastor Jim for leading us through the process of healing and preparation to call a new pastor. Thank you, Pastor Horacio, for your dedication to Holy Cross and readiness to lead us through a time of renewal.

Thank you:

- Holy Cross staff, Gibson, Tuka, Charlotte, Kevin and Zach for your daily support and service to the church.
- Church Council members for your leadership and support in keeping Holy Cross moving in a positive direction during the interim and transitions this year.
- Ministry Team leaders and team for your work in promoting our mission.
- Members of the Call Committee for your commitment to the process of calling a new Pastor.
- Building Committee members for the creation of a prioritization process for needed facility improvements.
- Judi Holstein, Char Nun, Arlan Tietel and the Finance Committee for your financial leadership.
- Men and Women's Group for your support of your church family and funding special projects.
- Ministry Teams and staff for your conservation of funds to meet the budget goals while maintaining and growing our mission activities.
- Members of Holy Cross who have faithfully supported their church through pledges and special gifts in support of our church mission in the community.

Thank you all volunteers! Without you there would be no church. We appreciate your leadership in worship, maintaining the facility, preparing for communion, decorating the sanctuary, serving meals, helping in the kitchen, teaching our children, helping in the office, counting the offering, ushering, singing, providing music, planning fellowship events, helping in the community and sharing the peace with each other. Thank you!!

This is my last report as church council president. The last four years have been a learning experience for me, as we moved through the interim, well as a reminder how valuable the relationships I have at church are in my daily life. You have enriched my life for which I am very thankful. Your support helped me

through times of tough decisions when I felt like Moses wondering why God chose me to be your leader! Thank you! It has been an honor to serve.

Moving Forward

We are moving forward in a new era in 2016 with Pastor Horacio as our spiritual leader. As we are often reminded, it takes a village to raise a child” and it takes a community to support a church family. We need to continue to work together to make Holy Cross the church home that we all desire and that meets the needs of our community. I am reminded of the words of a hymn that ring true today more than ever: “I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together!” Together we will move Holy Cross forward in a new era with renewed mission and commitment.

Marla Davenport
Council President

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:4-7

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, as there has been quite a bit of transition and change at Holy Cross for the last couple of years, we can also see that stability and continuity is on the horizon. As of this month, I have been at Holy Cross for 4 months, and this time has been a time of transition and change for me as well. This has also been a time of adjustment for you and me as we get to know each other, and I look forward to continuing to do so.

My report for this year includes reflections on what I have experienced at Holy Cross, my dreams and hopes for and with the congregation, and the challenges that await us in the near and far future. My first four months at Holy Cross have been of observation and learning about who Holy Cross is and is shaping to be. I know that at the beginning of 2015 there were changes in the different aspects of the life of Holy Cross, but especially in worship, going from two services to one. There have been disagreements, compromises, but most importantly adjustment and learning on the part of those who have remained at Holy Cross. I want to acknowledge that change is hard, however, when change comes, growth and opportunity come with it. We remember Jesus' words in the gospel of John the 15th chapter when he says: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.” For as painful and scary pruning, or change, can be for us as children of God, we have been promised Christ and we know he will continue to guide us into the future as he has done in the past, and now in the present. We can be assured that Christ's word is true and his promises do not come back empty.

My report is as follows:

Recent Happenings

We have celebrated a baptism, by the time we meet for the Annual Meeting, we have had a wedding, and received new “official” members into Holy Cross' family. I have been participating at different meetings such as Church Council, Finance Committee, Worship Committee, to mention some, and I look forward to participating in other meetings with the ministry teams and committees as we look forward into the future.

Worship Service

Worship is the place where we are fed, nourished, and strengthened in God's Word through Christ and the Holy Spirit so that we can care for our neighbors both inside and outside our walls.

After observing and learning who Holy Cross is and what the compromise of having only one worship service has been, I have decided to implement the liturgy “Now the Feast and Celebration” from Marty Haugen for the first and third services of the month. For the second and fourth Sundays of the month we will continue to work toward a blended service which includes both traditional and contemporary aspects. As we implement and experience these changes, there might be some adjustments we will need to make along the way so that we can arrive at a place where there will be continuity and constancy in the long term.

Along with this change in liturgy, there has been a change in the way we serve Communion. We have gone from intinction to communion cups. The Altar Guild has played a very important role in this change since they organize and set up every Sunday for Holy Communion. This is a more permanent change allowing exceptions in special cases.

Funerals and Weddings are also part of our life as a community and I am working on updating the policies and fees for these ministries of Holy Cross since they have not been reviewed for almost ten years. As you know, times change and with them we also need to adjust to those changes.

Baptisms will also be seeing a change in liturgy, there will be a separate booklet. This is a change that does not mean a change in the baptism of Christ's promise, but in form and how we hear those promises.

Children, Youth, and Family Ministries

It was one day before my first official starting date that I started teaching confirmation classes. It was a great way to jump right into my role as the pastor of Holy Cross. I have been teaching confirmation classes and participating in the different activities planned for the youth. I have been working with Gibson Stanton and look forward to being involved more in the life of the CYF Ministry as we look into the future and what might be the different ways we can change and grow.

Pastoral Care Ministry

I am looking forward to getting to know the families of Holy Cross. Pastoral visits are a key aspect for forming relationships and getting to know each other. It is an honor for me to be welcomed into home, hospital, and transitional care facilities for visits as it is a very intimate part of your lives and for this I am thankful. I have also been meeting with the Home Communion Ministry to learn the work they have been doing and to support them in this ministry. This is a great support for me as the pastor of Holy Cross as there are and/or can be many pastoral care needs that only one person can cover. I encourage you to also be part of this ministry if you are able to as we all are called to be part of the mutual consolation of saints. One of the main responsibilities of the Home Communion Ministry is to make home visits and bring Holy Communion to those members who, for one reason or another, cannot make it to church. I also encourage you to, as you get comfortable with me, to reach out to me and/or the Home Communion Ministry when you need a visit.

Staff

I have been getting to know the Staff of Holy Cross and working along them in this very important ministry we all have been called into and I look forward to continue to work with them and look into ways to support each other, and enhance – with the help of the congregation – the ministry of Holy Cross. As you know, we are small in numbers but great in talent, however we also need your support as members of this congregation. I thank you for the support you have provided and continue to provide for the life of this church, especially as you continue to adjust to the change in the position of office management and to one service.

As I mention above, having a limited staff, we need to be as prepared as we can be in an eventuality. Therefore, we have put together a contingency plan to respond in an effective way to any need that might arise when a staff member is not able to fulfill their responsibility due to an emergency or an unforeseen event that might prevent us from accomplishing our duties. In this way we are as prepared as we can possibly be.

Outreach and “In-Reach”

One of our challenges into the future of the ministry of Holy Cross is to identify what is our mission as a church in regards to being part of this church family, part of the community of Oakdale and beyond. There has been a lot of energy spent into looking inward in order to find ways to find balance, be healthy, and care for one another inside our walls. And as we continue to discern and work on our life together as Holy Cross, the time to start looking up and out of our walls is at our door step. I will also be encouraging you to know more about the already existing ministries of Holy Cross. I also believe that we have, as a church, been called to a ministry as a whole rather than as silos.

I have just started to present to the Church Council different options and opportunities in which we can be involved in Oakdale and in the greater city of St. Paul. You will be hearing and learning little by little what ministries could be a possibility to take on and live our life as a community of faith in the abundance of God rather than our scarcity.

I am aware that there are different ministries that are already happening for outreach, and my view is that we are not to dismiss them but enhance them with other potential partners and ministries. Most importantly, I would like to challenge you as the family of Holy Cross that you are, to be more aware and be part of the different ministries that are already happening so that we can all pray for one another and support the existing ministries and to discern what God is calling us into or out of in this new chapter of our life together.

Remember that you are part of the ministry of Holy Cross Lutheran Church and in order for this community of faith to grow, to be healthy, and to thrive in the present and into the future you are an essential part of the work. The staff and I as your pastor are committed to this community and its ministry.

Renewal and Vitality

In the last two years Holy Cross, with the help of the interim pastors, has been working to identify the gifts and strengths of Holy Cross in order to find ways in which Holy Cross can grow and move forward. The work is not done yet as the core mission of the church needs to be identified.

In the next few months we will be looking into a process of Renewal and Vitality. A commitment of effort and energy are key from the congregation to lead Holy Cross into a fruitful, effective and good use of our time. I want to reassure you and remind you that I am committed to this congregation, its work and its mission as I have been called by Holy Cross and God to serve this congregation. As committed I am, I need the help of all of you, the members of Holy Cross. You are the heart of this community. God has called you to be here and be nourished and strengthened to serve the people of this church and to serve the people who have not heard the good news of God or have distanced themselves from the church. In order to grow and to move into the future, this work need not be the work of one man or one woman rather it needs to be the effort, support, and wisdom of the whole community.

This renewal process will require also the guidance and help of the St. Paul Area Synod. The Synod is a source of support, connections, and resources that will be significant in a process such as this. Another important factor as we look into this renewal process, is the need to not only go through an assessment process of our gifts and talents, but most importantly the follow up is vital. This is why it will be important to have everyone in the congregation participate, give feedback, and stay tuned to what the next steps will be. Moreover, the leadership of the church needs to be shared so that we can be more effective and strong.

As we move forward we are not forgetting the past, rather we are honoring the past, learning from it, and looking towards the future in forgiveness, in experience gained, and trust in Christ as he has promised to be with you and with this church family always until the end of time. As we face the unknown this year, we are still in a pivotal moment for a renewal process as we are living into a new chapter in the life of Holy Cross.

In times of transition, faithful giving allows for discernment of where God is leading us as a congregation and you as a member. It also allows for stability. In times of transition, faithful giving allows for vision and talk of mission as we look to move from preparing and planning into implementation and going forward together. Thank you for your faithful giving and for your partnership in sustaining the ministry of Holy Cross as we share the gospel of Jesus Christ within our walls, in our community and around the world.

I continue to look forward to our work together, with and for one another, in the coming months and years.

As I close my first Annual Report, I want to remind you of God's calling to us as his church with the words of the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians in chapter 12 as he says that "there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." We are those people, God's people, who the Holy Spirit has called through the gospel, enlightened us with his gifts, and sanctified and kept us in true faith.

God has given us his promises to you, to us, as his children claimed and named by God with the words of the Prophet Isaiah chapter 43: "I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. Do not fear, for I am with you."

In Christ's service,
Pastor Horacio Castillo.

Happy New Year!

We indeed had another dynamic year in Children, Youth and Family Ministry! It's amazing to look back on the past two and half years, to realize how far we've come and how much work we still get to do together. 2015 brought us many God moments, let me tell you about a few:

- During our confirmation retreat and again at the confirmation banquet, the confirmands of 2015 inspired us with their authentic statements of faith, trusting us to join them in this new chapter of their life. God is at work with us.
- Our SPARK Sunday School program continued to share the Good News through interactive workshops led by a small team of volunteers. We had eleven visitors during 2015, we look forward to welcoming more! God is at work with us.
- The R.O.C.K. has welcomed two new volunteers who are dedicated, passionate, and energetically serving. Drew Accola and Andy Powers have been faithful mentors to our steady crew of R.O.C.K.ers on Wednesday nights. The R.O.C.K. kids sing with Tuka for the first half, then pray and play the second half.
- Vacation Bible School was a wonderful success. We challenged ourselves to provide a free week of outreach and DID IT! Being fiscally responsible and resourceful, EVEREST was enjoyed by over 70 children, youth and volunteers. A National Night Out event was hosted on Tuesday of that week, we welcomed over 150 people from Holy Cross, Beaver Lake Lutheran and the surrounding community. The Oakdale Police and Fire Departments made a special appearance too! God is at work with us.
- Our 7th graders embarked on a service immersion trip to Duluth in October where they worked at Agape House of Hope. Agape provides free weekend housing to women and children who are visiting loved ones at the Duluth prison camp. The 6th-9th grade youth volunteered at Feed My Starving Children and delivered plates of cookies for "Operation: Spreading Christmas Cheer" in December. And they did it with joy (just check out their picture on the Holy Cross website)! God is at work with us.
- Two senior high students and one brave adult journeyed to Detroit, Michigan with Memorial Lutheran of Afton, Minnesota. For one week in July, they joined 30,000 youth and adults at the 2015 ELCA National Youth Gathering. Ask Drew Accola, Nate Nason and Nina Nason about their experience. They are already saving the date for the 2018 Gathering in Houston, TX.
- Senior High Youth Group moved to Sundays this Fall. We enjoy coffee, conversation, fellowship, and support. We are a small and faithful group.

Thank you to the many people who work to share Christ's love with our children & youth. You are a gift and a blessing. Looking ahead in 2016, I am encouraged that God will continue to work in, through, and with us. Won't you join us on this journey?

Peace and Joy!

Gibson Stanton
Children, Youth & Family Ministry Director

Worship Highlights of 2015

- Lenten Worship with Holden Evening Prayer
- Dramatic Reading on Palm Sunday
- Good Friday Tenebrae Worship
- Summer Outdoor Worship (only once due to bad weather)
- Changing from 2 services to one service and alternating
 - 1st and 3rd Traditional
 - 2nd and 4th Contemporary
 - 5th Blended
- The Rock singing and acting, “Up, Up, Up He Arose”, in costume.
- “A Thrill of Hope” Cantata

Instrumental and Vocal Music

Singers and Instrumentalists of all ages can share their talents in worship as:

1. A soloist
2. An ensemble
3. An accompanist
4. Cantor

The Chancel Choir leads worship at the 8:30 service every Sunday. The Choir sings a variety of music styles and is open to anyone who loves to sing. Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 – 8:00pm

Participants in the Chancel Choir this past year have included: Jim Ostrander, Andy Powers, Michael Nun, Jason Larson, Pam Sorenson, Jacob Powers, Sister Annette Langdon, Tammi Hirsch, Pat Ostrander, Char Nun, Abby Larson, Amy Powers, Marla Davenport, Yvonne O’Brien, Pam Klingsporn, Tuka Markgraf.

This past Christmas the Chancel Choir, Holy Cross Quartet, guest bell ringer and The Rock presented The Joel Raney Cantata, “A Thrill of Hope”. Gibson was a huge help in getting the Rock kids ready for this Cantata. This was a great experience. It was amazing what we were capable of doing when we pooled our musical resources.

The Handbell Choir will play the first Sunday of each month and on special holidays. We enhance worship by accompanying hymns and playing preludes or anthems. No experience necessary, handbell and music skills are learned at rehearsals. Handbell rehearsals will be on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month from 10:00 – 11am.

Participants in Joyful Noise this past year have included: Pam Sorenson, Peyton Sorenson, Pam Klingsporn, Marla Davenport, Andy Powers, Jacob Powers, Amy Powers, Sister Annette, Charlotte McLendon, Vicki Keith (guest artist), Jammie Klingsporn and Tuka Markgraf.

The Way leads worship on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. The Band is looking for vocalists, guitarists, percussionists and other instrumentalists. We play contemporary Christian and Gospel music. Rehearsals are on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays from 9:00-10:00am.

Participants in The Way this past year have included Karen Armada, Marla Davenport, Tuka Markgraf, Amy Powers, Andy Powers, Jacob Powers, Pam Sorenson, Peyton Sorenson, Marv Luchsinger, Yvonne O'Brien, Char Nun and Charlotte McLendon

Worship and Music Committee

Jason Larson served as Chairperson until fall when his work schedule prevented him from continuing. At that time Yvonne O'Brien stepped in to fulfill this duty.

The Worship and Worship Leadership Team makes decisions regarding all aspects of the worship experience from Sunday worship to Advent, Christmas and Lent, Easter. We also plan special services such as Outdoor worship. Opinions and ideas from members are always welcome since we offer both traditional and contemporary worship. The Worship and Music Team meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month.

In the past year we have worked to provide continuity in Worship and Pastoral support through the Interim changes (Pastor Anne to Pastor David to Pastor Jim and finally to Pastor Horacio).

Lector/Communion Server

Lectors read the Lessons and Psalm during church services on Sundays, Holidays and Wednesdays during Lent. Communion Servers assist the Pastor with Communion distribution. Choose the services of your choice on the sign-up sheets in the Narthex or talk to Pam Sorenson.

Pam Sorenson has worked diligently to provide scheduling for Lectors and Communion Servers.

Ushers and Greeters

Ushers will greet parishioners and visitors as they arrive for services on Sundays, holidays and Wednesdays during Lent. Collect the offering during the service, usher during communion and collect bulletins for recycling after the service. Usher at the services of your choice.

Tom O'Brien is working to coordinate the Ushers/Greeters Schedule.

Power Point and Sound Board Operators

Jim Ostrander and Mary Moline have served faithfully as technicians for this past year. Holy Cross is very blessed to have people with their experience and commitment.

A Power Point Operator sets up and runs the Power Point slides during the Contemporary services on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

A Sound Board Operator will run the sound equipment during services. You will need to arrive 30 minutes before the service to set up and do sound checks. You will also monitor sound levels at all times during the service.

Training for both of these positions provided as needed.

It is an honor to serve this congregation. May God continue to guide us in our ministry together.

Cheryl Tuka Markgraf, Director of Music Ministries

Charlotte McLendon, Organist/Accompanist

Women's group

Meetings are the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. In February 2015 we took charge of the Lenten Soup and Sandwich Supper. We also held a small Farewell Reception for Pastor Anne. We purchased aprons for the Women's Group to use when there is a funeral or other gathering. We are continuing with our Baptismal Baskets for children and adults. We donated \$75.00 to Oakdale Elementary School for their school supply drive. We donated \$180.00 for diapers to the St. Paul Area Synod. The Craft and Bake Sale was held November 7 & 8. Each year it has been more successful. This year it was \$1,619.40. We organized and served the installation for Pastor Horacio on November 15, 2015. Our future plans include doing activities designated for the renovation of our kitchen, and becoming active in the St. Paul area Synod. Balance at the end of the year is \$4,431.46 in the group fund and for the Kitchen Remodel \$1,706.25.

Funerals

There were two funerals this year Don Hackman and Helen Humphrey. We also did the Ordination for Caroline Harthun.

ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild works behind the scenes doing seasonal decorating of the sanctuary, including hanging banners and paramounts, setting up communion, baptisms, funerals, and weddings, and in October, the installation ceremony for Pastor Horacio.

The Altar Guild consists of Roxanne Choulock, Ann Hagestad, Sheryll Max, Gayle Nason, Yvonne O'Brien and Virginia Tietal. New to Altar Guild in 2015, are Rose Johnson and Ann Berres.

Upon Pastor Horacio's request, we no longer have communion by intinction. Therefore, the Altar Guild, along with memorial funds, donated new wood communion ware to be used, with plastic glasses, every Sunday. We will continue to use the glass/silver communion ware, around the Altar, on the 4th Sunday of the month.

We welcome anyone, who would like to be a part of Altar Guild, to do God's work with us.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gayle Nason

WORSHIP & MUSIC

The Worship and Music Leadership Team makes decisions regarding all aspects of the worship service experience from Sunday worship to Holy Week and Christmas. We also plan special services like lay worship and outdoor worship services. Current team members are Tuka Markgraf, Charlotte McLendon, Pam Sorenson, Jim Ostrander and Yvonne O'Brien. All members of Holy Cross are welcome to attend our meetings, and also we invite anyone interested in joining the Worship and Music Team to let us know. We would love to have more members.

- We went to one Sunday service at 9:30 am this year. The First and Third Sundays of the month will be Traditional worship and the Second and Fourth Sundays will be Contemporary Worship. Any months that have a Fifth Sunday will be either a special or blended service.
- We discussed moving the organ console to the other side of the Chancel, but decided to wait due to lack of funds.
- The Holden Evening Prayer Service will be used for Wednesday Evening Lenten Services. During Maundy Thursday Service we had First Communion for our Forth Graders. A Tenebrae service was held on Good Friday. Palms were purchased for our Palm Sunday worship. The Easter garden consisted of Easter plants which were purchased by members of the congregation.
- Outdoor services were scheduled for June 28, July 26 and August 23. The service for August 23 was canceled so that Pastor Horacio could be introduced to the congregation. Pastor Horacio was installed as Pastor of Holy Cross on November 15th. Followed by a luncheon after the service.
- On the First Sunday in Advent we had the "Greening of The Church". The Holy Cross Choir, Holy Cross Quartet and The Rock Choir plus a Bell Ringer presented "The Thrill of Hope" Christmas Cantata on December 20th. Christmas Eve services were held at 4 pm and 10 pm.

A big THANK YOU to all those who so generously give of their time to make our services run smoothly.

Yvonne O'Brien
Interim Worship and Music Ministry Leader

The CYF (Children Youth and Family) team meets once a month and its goal is to provide feedback, ideas and support for our CYF programs. The team is led by Gibson Stanton and Paula Grau; other members include Melanie Accola, Julie Larson, Jen Mallinger, Ann Howes, Jammie Klingsporn, Melissa Kohel, Michelle Gydesen, and Nina Nason.

We started the year off organizing a number of fundraising events to help our youth fund their trips to Camp WAPO and the National Youth Gathering in July. The youth sold Butter Braids, put on a Palm Sunday pancake breakfast, held a garage sale and a car wash, and also held a watermelon feast. Many different youth participated in the fundraising and enjoyed their time at camp and at the gathering.

A Confirmation banquet and Faith Statement Share was held in April the Wednesday before the Sunday of Confirmation.

Vacation Bible school was held the first week in August with the theme of Everest. We once again had help and some kids attend from Beaver Lake Lutheran, we were able to offer the week to families for no charge. Since our program was held during the week of National Night out we invited the community to join us for the night. We had dinner outside with many activities for the kids and their families. The Police and Fire Fighters came out and visited as well. It was a great night and a wonderful way to reach out to the neighbors in our community.

Spark Sunday school along with the ROCK and Confirmation classes all started up again in September. We are continuing to use the Spark Sunday School curriculum. Our kids begin in worship with their families and then are excused after a short children's sermon for the Spark Sunday school time. They are then brought back to worship in time for communion with their families. The ROCK students meet on Wednesday nights along with the confirmation students. They start with a time for dinner and socializing and then sing and participate in activities led by some of our older youth. The confirmation students had an opportunity to go on a Service Immersion trip to Duluth in October over the MEA break. They have also volunteered at Feed My Starving Children. In December the ROCK students along with the church choir shared their musical talents and performed a special Christmas program for the congregation.

It has been a good year for our CYF programs and we thank you for supporting us and ask that you continue to support our programs so that we can continue to grow both in numbers and in faith together.

Paula Grau

STEWARDSHIP

In the 2014 Annual Report, Cindy Lindsay wrote, “Holy Cross continues to face the same challenges that other congregations struggle with: how do we strengthen our relationship with God, and at the same time, ensure that we have the funds available to keep the church running.” Today that dilemma continues.

The stewardship focus for 2015 was “A New Beginning”, building energy around a new pastor and a new direction for Holy Cross. A common theme for many churches is to do outreach work, working in the community. Some churches adopt a school. Others provide space for a community garden. One creates a food pack to send home with children who are not fed at home on the weekend.

At Holy Cross we have been stewards of outreach work through these and other initiatives: Women’s Craft and Bake Sale, VBS, North St. Paul Food Shelf, Loaves and Fishes, Tubman April Showers Baby Supplies Drive, School Supply Drive, Warm Winter Clothing, and the Giving Tree. (I probably missed some, so please mentally add yours to the list.)

So, as we continue on our New Beginning, and build connection with our community, how do we strengthen our relationship with God, and at the same time, ensure that we have the funds available to keep the church running.

This is giving data for last year and next year:

2015 82 families pledged \$156,620.

2016 70 families pledged \$134,750.

Financial giving needs to be stronger.

Respectfully submitted

Arlan Tietel

Stewardship Ministry

PROPERTY

2015 was a busy year for the Property Ministry at Holy Cross.

This year:

- We purchased a new vacuum and carpet cleaner.
- Gary Nason and I shampooed the Fellowship Hall carpet
- Spring Cleaning was held April 26th with 30 volunteers including the Boy Scouts helping. Lunch was served.
- Tom O'Brien helped with the lawn upkeep including fertilizing and weed spraying.
- The deck was replaced with help of Tom Nun, Gary Nason and Ted Carlson.
- We replaced the fence around the play area.
- The Men's Club donated funds to pay for the paint and labor to paint the outside of the church. Marv Seablom did repair work on the church at no cost.
- We repaired the threshold on the outside door of the sanctuary with help from Frank Max and Marv Luchsinger.
- We power-washed and sealed the benches and table in front of the church.
- We painted the kitchen with help from Gary Nason and Jim Katzmark. Kitchen cupboards will be redone in the spring.
- A diseased oak tree was removed from the front of the church.
- Snow is being plowed from the parking lot by Don Bateman this winter.

It was a great experience for me!

Blessings,

John Johnson

HOME COMMUNION MINISTRY

The Home Communion Ministry (HCM) team meets once a month usually with the pastor, if he is available. We discuss who we know or have heard of that may need us to do a home or hospital visit that includes administering communion. We currently have several home bound folks that we visit and one or two in nursing homes. Also we have some that are able to come to church for communion but enjoy a short visit from one of us or even a phone call to reach out to them and provide a listening presence.

Currently there are five Holy Cross members on the team: Melanie Accola, George and Miriam Seim, Dorothy Frank and Glenna Kubat.

If you would like home communion or a visit, please contact anyone on the team.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenna Kubat

HCM Coordinator

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Members: Debby Dellis, Judi Holstein, Frank Max, Charlene Nun, Arlan Tietel

Ex-Officio Members: Pastor Horacio, Marla Davenport

Mission: The mission of the Holy Cross Finance Committee is to oversee the finances and stewardship of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in accordance with the mission of the church.

The Finance Committee meets monthly. We review and approve bank statements and ledger reports. We assisted the Stewardship committee in composing letters to congregation members to increase pledged amounts.

We gathered financial requests for 2016 from Mission Champions to compile the annual budget. Budget was reviewed using pledge amounts given to the Stewardship Committee. Budget was presented to and approved by the Church Council at the December 5th meeting.

Plans for 2016 include:

1. Finance Team will report to the congregation the current financial status of the church monthly.
2. We will review finances as opposed to budget in July 2016.
3. If needed Finance Committee will propose either a capital Financial Appeal or further budget reductions at this time to the church council for approval.
4. We will continue to work on fund raising guidelines to be approved by the church council.

Arlan Tietel will not be a member of this committee in 2016. We thank him for his assistance in setting up this committee and his time of service.

Respectfully submitted,
Judi Holstein

TREASURER'S REPORT

The following are 2015 Year End Financial Report highlights:

- In 2015, 137 households contributed vs 148 households in 2014
- Total funds received for 2015 were \$229,918.39 compared to \$263,032.69 in 2014. These funds consist of Sunday worship offering (including Simply Giving/Thrivent) of \$175,501.89, loose offering of \$3,965.61, holiday offering of \$5,872.50, facilities rental of \$16,450.00, miscellaneous income of \$748.55 and designated /restricted funds of \$27,379.84.

- 2015 breakdown of annual giving
 - 6 families contributed \$5,000.00 or more
 - 14 families contributed \$2,500.00 or more
 - 40 families contributed \$1,000.00 or more
 - 17 families contributed \$500.00 or more
 - 19 families contributed \$250.00 or more
 - 12 families contributed \$100.00 or more
 - 12 families contributed \$50.00 or more
 - 17 families contributed \$49.99 or less

- 2015 breakdown of average weekly giving
 - 6 families gave more than \$100.00 per week
 - 3 families gave \$75.00-99.99 per week
 - 11 families gave \$50.00-\$74.99 per week
 - 25 families gave \$25.00-\$49.99 per week
 - 32 families gave \$10.00-24.99 per week
 - 18 families gave \$5.00-\$9.99 per week
 - 11 families gave \$2.50-\$4.99 per week
 - 31 families gave less than \$2.49 per week

- In 2015, 82 households pledged a total of \$156,620 or \$3,012.00 per week. This is an increase from 2014 of \$10,177 or 6.50%
- 2016 pledges as of year-end are \$134,766 annually or \$2,592.00 per week, with 70 households pledging. This is a decrease from 2015 of \$11,982.00 or 8.89%.

A huge thanks to all the volunteers that counted this past year.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlene Nun, Financial Secretary

	2015 BUDGET	EXPENSES	ENDING BALANCE
General	136,335.00	148,919.36	12,584.36
Payroll (salary & FICA)	114,061.00	127,105.76	13,044.76
Travel	750.00	56.00	694.00
Continuing Education	500.00	450.00	50.00
Health Ins. Pensions	19,074.00	15,828.28	3,245.72
Official Meetings	500.00	194.52	305.48
Professional & Ministerial	250.00	697.91	-447.91
Misc. Salaries	1,200.00	4,586.89	-3,386.89
Administrative	18,575.00	19,636.41	-1,061.41
Office Building Supplies	3,000.00	3,808.78	-808.78
Office Equipment	3,000.00	3,013.06	-13.06
Telephone	1,500.00	1,172.97	327.03
Internet	1,300.00	787.62	512.38
Postage	700.00	1,189.89	-489.89
Payroll Process	2,200.00	2,699.14	-499.14
Technology	1,000.00	1,339.95	-339.95
Advertisement	250.00	0.00	250.00
St Paul Synod Benevolence	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
Camp WAPO Assoc.	625.00	625.00	0.00
Property	42,200.00	29,786.73	12,413.27
General Maintenance	10,000.00	3,002.50	6,997.50
Insurance	7,000.00	8,180.52	-1,180.52
Seasonal Cleaning	1,500.00	771.69	728.31
Gas-Electricity	16,600.00	11,987.69	4,612.31
Water & Sewer	1,800.00	1,914.69	-114.69
Garbage Removal	1,350.00	1,479.00	-129.00
Security System	1,400.00	1,450.40	-50.40
Snowplowing	2,000.00	525.00	1,475.00
Lawn Care	550.00	475.24	74.76
Welcome Ministries	2,367.80	2,116.44	251.36
Rally day/Block Party	200.00	0.00	200.00
Connect	1,217.80	1,217.80	0.00
Hospitality	700.00	898.64	-198.64
New Member	250.00	0.00	250.00
Worship & Music	4,650.00	3,517.45	1,132.55
Music Drama	1,500.00	420.40	1,079.60
Worship Supplies	2,600.00	3,097.05	-497.05
Instrument Maint	550.00	0.00	550.00
Growing In Faith	3,950.00	3,953.89	-3.89
Children,s Ministry	925.00	925.00	0.00
Birth - Three Ministry	300.00	300.00	0.00
Ministry Milestones	500.00	500.00	0.00
VBS Materials	1,025.00	949.60	75.40
Youth Ministries	1,200.00	1,175.09	24.91
Adult Education	0.00	104.20	-104.20
Stewardship Ministies	1,000.00	452.80	547.2
Stewardship Materials	300.00	-65.00	365.00
Offering Envelopes	700.00	517.80	182.20
Serving God's People	1,700.00	598.00	1,102.00
Loaves & Fishes	1,200.00	400.00	800.00
Outreach	500.00	198.00	302.00
TOTAL	210,777.80	208,981.08	1,796.72

DESIGNATED FUNDS

	OPENING	INCOME	EXPENSES	BALANCE	
General	4,731.79	570.00	1,000.00	4,301.79	
Pastor's Discretion	426.79	0.00	0.00	426.79	
Post HS Scholarship	4,305.00	570.00	\$1,000.00	3875.00	
				0	
Growing In Youth	\$5,060.84	1,311.18	3,375.60	575.39	
Confirmation	2,088.48	1,311.18	2,830.17	569.49	
The Rock	5.90	0.00	0	5.90	
WAPO Bible Camp	545.43	0.00	545.43	0.00	Bible Camp &
Service Trip	2,421.03	0.00	2421.03	0.00	Service Learning
				0	Were Combined
Property Funds	586.23	0.00	550.00	36.23	
Energy Fund	86.23	0.00	86.23	0.00	
Maintenance Funds	500.00	0.00	463.77	36.23	
Serving God's People					
ELCA Disaster Relief	30.00	100.00	130.00	0.00	pd. To Synod
ELCA Refugee Relief	0.00	441.00	441.00	0.00	pd. To Synod
Food Shelf	32.87	106.13	139.00	0.00	
Tanzania Student	1,298.01	355.00	1,653.01	0.00	pd. To Synod
Tanzania Parish	2,277.43	0.00	2,277.43	0.00	pd to Synod
Worship Ministries	329.83	5,688.71	0.00	6,018.54	
Music Ministry	329.83	688.71	0.00	1,018.54	
Audio/Visual Fund	0.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	
Welcome Ministries	4,894.13	3,998.44	2,871.02	6,021.55	
Hospitality	65.22	594.38	659.60	0	
Women's Group	4,634.11	880.40	1,083.05	4,431.46	
Kitchen Remodel	0.00	1,706.25	0.00	1,706.25	
Barb Schuette Funeral	194.80	817.41	1,128.37	-116.16	
Memorial Fund	5,950.00	137.54	5,000.00	1,087.54	\$5,00.00 to Audio/Visual
RESTRICTED FUNDS					
Elevator Fund	30,900.00	2,000.00	0.00	32,900.00	
Headstart	22,600.49	0.00	3,792.79	18,807.70	
TOTAL RESTRICTED	53,500.49	2,000.00	3,792.79	51,707.70	
Holy Cross Endowment	4,677.34	0.66	0.00	4,678.00	
FUNDS AVAILABLE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2015					
Lake Elmo Bank		27,241.87	Total Funds	88,399.53	
Money Market		56,479.66	Total restricted Fund	51,707.70	
Endowment Fund		4,678.00	Endowment	4,673.29	
			Total designated	18,041.04	
TOTAL		88,399.53	Avaiable Funds	13,977.50	

Holy Cross Men's Group 2015

Beginning Balance 1/1/2015	\$23,102.02
Woodbury Days Profits	3,063.06
Woodbury July 4th & Taste of Woodbury Profits	10,881.11
Account Balance	37,046.19
Less	
Kabba Williams Relief	\$3,000.00
Stain for Siding	1,577.02
Labor and Material to repair and stain siding	8,295.32
Oakdale Elementary School	100.00
Family in need Xcel Energy	667.00
Family in Need Housing Expenses	1,800.00
Total Expenditures	15,439.34
Ending Balance 12/31/2015	21,606.85

SERVING GOD'S PEOPLE

The Serving God's People team members are Karen Walsh, Joyce Holes, Debby Dellis, Jim Dellis, Rose Johnson, Glenna Kubat and Dorothy Frank. The focus of this ministry is to reach out and serve others as a reflection of God's love for all of us.

Two new programs started in 2015. Coffee and Conversation each Wednesday morning provides an opportunity to gather with old and new friends to enjoy discussions about our lives and the life of Holy Cross. Also, our Oakdale Cub store began offering bakery goods to us each Sunday morning.

Many other programs have been happening at Holy Cross for years, including the Giving Tree program at Christmas. This year, almost \$1000 in gift cards were donated and given to students at Oakdale Elementary and BridgeView Schools. In addition, bags of toys, sports equipment and clothing were donated to children and youth residing at the Tubman Family Shelter in Maplewood. In April, Tubman also received diapers and baby supplies from us, as part of their April Showers Drive.

Oakdale Elementary School, one of the schools in our community, received school supplies and bags of warm winter clothing from generous members of the congregation.

Holy Cross helps hungry families in our area by donating food and money to the North St Paul Food Shelf. Volunteers bag food two days a week every 8 weeks. In 2015, we donated 215 pounds of food and \$980 to the food shelf. The Director participated in our Ministry Fair and spoke during a church service.

Holy Cross has served Loaves and Fishes meals for over 20 years at Faith Lutheran Church in St Paul. That site closed in 2015. We have begun serving at another site in Inver Grove Heights and will consider serving at other sites as well in 2016.

We honored Veterans and members of the military on November 8 in coordination with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

Twin Cities Local Food (TCLF) continues to distribute their locally grown produce from our church every Tuesday to members of the community who purchase it on-line. TCLF donated fresh produce to the food shelf.

In special offerings, Holy Cross submitted to the synod, \$130 for ELCA Disaster Relief, \$441 for Middle East and European Disaster Relief and \$355 for Bega Kwa Bega scholarships for Tanzania students.

The Prayer Chain led by Sheryll Max is a group of prayer warriors praying for people requesting prayers.

The Home Communion Ministry Team led by Glenna Kubat is available for people wanting home visits and communion.

Huge thanks go to all the volunteers who faithfully serve by donating time, money, energy and ideas for all of these programs at Holy Cross Church!

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Hagestad
Serving God's People Ministry Champion



Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp, Inc.

Wapo • Ox Lake • Luther Dell • Wilderness Canoe Base
738 Hickory Point Lane Amery WI 54001 715.268.8434 campwapo.org

Congregational Report 2015

Thank you for being an Association Member Church! We cherish our role as an extension of the ministry that happens in your congregation. We are thankful for your support in 2015 and look forward to our ministry opportunities together in 2016.

In February 2015 we welcomed a new executive director, Dr. Paul Hill. Paul has a long history in outdoor ministries as a director, high adventure facilitator, speaker and teacher. He is currently leading a research team on effective camp practices. Connect with Paul at paulhill@campwapo.org.

Early in his leadership transition, Paul completed a six month Major Assessment of LWLBC. You can read the document on our website (campwapo.org/news). The assessment is a critical starting point in helping the board and staff evaluate current programs, plan new ministry experiences, and create strategies to better serve our constituents and congregational partners.

The theme this past summer was AMAZINGGRACE, emphasizing both the unconditional grace of God in Christ, and the call to run the amazing "race" of serving others as Christ's disciples. We hired 201 college-aged summer staff to work with campers. We were inspired by their courage to answer this call to ministry, their dedication to kids, and their unwavering willingness to serve.

Certainly a highlight of the year was the completion of the purchase of Wilderness Canoe Base, the camp we have been managing since 2001. In 2014, we were presented with the unique opportunity to assume ownership of the camp. With the help of many amazing friends of Wilderness we are on track to raise the last \$287,000 to complete our \$1.3 million Renewal campaign for the purchase of Wilderness.



Luther Dell saw some physical improvements this year, including a new beach, a reinforced deck on Sunwall, and continued work on bathrooms. Luther Dell continues to be a favorite get-away for families and youth groups. We treasure our relationship with YouthWays Ministries and are grateful for the Luther Dell summer camp experience we can provide for these kids.



The summer programs at Wapo consistently draw large numbers of youth campers. We are so grateful for the opportunity to walk alongside these young people. In 2015, almost 200 campers attended one of several Wapo One Day programs and the waterfront boasted a new water trampoline. Our retreat ministry continues to fill the year round calendar. We are thankful for these guests who come away to quilt, scrapbook, sing, worship, meditate, pray and play.



Ox Lake hosted a variety of programs last summer. One highlight for staff was a new Day Camp for local youth. We were thankful for a faith-filled, flexible and hardworking staff. They welcomed their campers with gusto and grace.



We are profoundly grateful for the friends who pray for this ministry on a regular basis and for those who support us with financial gifts, and for the hundreds of volunteers who give the gift of time and talent. Thank you for helping make a difference in the faith lives of thousands of kids each year.

2015 by
The numbers



5395 Summer campers at all 4 sites
201 Summer Staff hired
5000+ Year round retreaters at all 4 sites
Over \$120,000 in Camper Scholarships
94 Association Member Churches



