



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
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THE ILLUMINATOR

The Holy Cross Lutheran Church Newsletter

ARTICLE FROM PASTOR WRIGHT

*“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
(1 Peter 2:9, ESV).*

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you, the saints at Holy Cross, from God our Father, and from our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

Please forgive such a long letter as I begin my service to you as vacancy pastor this month, but I wish for you to begin to get to know a little about me. I’m Pastor Wright, and by the grace of God, I have been blessed to serve the saints at Zion, Hampton, for the past 24+ years, and now, blessed also to serve you, the saints at Holy Cross (very temporarily, Lord willing)!

I was born and grew up in Ohio (Go Buckeyes!), and I attended two of our fine synodical schools—Concordia College in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I was ordained into the office of the holy ministry almost 37 years ago (1987) and have served congregations in California (vicarage), Michigan (a dual parish), Iowa (Holy Cross in Davenport), and currently, Zion in Hampton.

In my personal life, I have been blessed in so many ways—chief among them is the gift of my wonderful wife of 30 years, Karen, and also our two adult children, Justin (28) and Katie (25).

I am also a bit of a “Car Guy” and am in the process of restoring a 1939 LaSalle sedan, so, next to talking to others about Jesus, I love talking about cars!

I have enjoyed being a part of the Rock Island Circuit for the past 24+ years and have enjoyed getting to know all three of your previous pastors—Haake, Laux (who was a seminary classmate of mine), and Karsten and their families.

While you must bid farewell to a beloved pastor and friend, I, too, feel a touch of sadness, for I have come to know Pastor Karsten not just as a colleague and brother in the ministry but as a friend and confidant!

By grace alone, Holy Cross has prospered under his capable hand, and indeed, your partnership has been mutually encouraging! You have nurtured both Pastor and Lynette with your friendship and love. A lasting bond has been forged by all that you have shared together. He has personally shared with me on several occasions that his ministry would not have been nearly as effective or rewarding without your help. But as all faithful shepherds do, Pastor Karsten is one to pray that God's will be done in all things.

God responded to that prayer, and Pastor listened and responded to God's guidance, as difficult as that decision must have been.

There is still much to be accomplished for the Kingdom at Holy Cross, and perhaps this is a good time to remind ourselves just what the Church of Christ truly is—by God's grace, we are his people receiving His gifts in Word and Sacrament and living out our lives in service to Christ, even as we serve one another with the gospel of grace. St. Peter said it well in the passage quoted above, when he wrote that we are a chosen people, called to share the excellencies of Christ. Ministry doesn't come to an end when a faithful shepherd retires or leaves for service in some other part of the Kingdom, and so perhaps this vacancy can be a time in which we each take more seriously what it means to be children of God by grace and put into greater practice the universal priesthood of all believers.

I have taken the opportunity to meet with Pastor Karsten and the leadership of Holy Cross to better understand the needs of your congregation and how I may best serve during this hopefully brief time before you secure the services of the shepherd who will lead you into the next chapter of life at Holy Cross.

As my duty is first to Zion—the congregation that the Lord of the Church has called me to shepherd—it will be necessary to prioritize the various needs of Holy Cross and concentrate on those that are of primary importance. The saints of Zion are gracious enough to share me with you! Unfortunately, due to having to balance the schedules of two congregations at once, as well as service to a non-church (secular) employer, I will not be able to participate in each and every facet of Holy Cross's ministry. Many other things will require my attention throughout the week, so expect that I will be unavailable at times. Other pastors may be called upon to serve from time to time when schedules conflict. Rev. Joel Brondos has agreed to assist wherever needed, so you will be seeing much of him during this vacancy. Count on me, however, to do all within my ability to help you through this time of transition.

Please understand that much of the burden of the vacancy will fall on your new office secretary, Hope, so please be understanding, patient, and supportive of her if she looks a bit wearied and overworked as she adjusts to her new role. Perhaps, too, you might be able to volunteer to do something to help lighten her load!

During my time of service to you, I pledge to you my faithfulness to God's Holy Word and to our Lutheran Confessions. I promise to carry out all duties that we have mutually agreed upon in conjunction with your congregational chairman and Board of Elders and in an evangelical (gospel-centered) manner, and above all, to seek the spiritual welfare of all the members of Holy Cross.

Rev. Timothy Nerud, our Rock Island Circuit Visitor, will continue to be available to guide you through the process of calling a faithful pastor! You will also continue to have the assistance of our Central Illinois District President, Rev. Michael Mohr, in this regard. Both will serve you well. I have great confidence in both of these men of God.

Also, I make this request: I would ask for your prayers for my work among you, so that all we accomplish together in this time of pastoral vacancy will be to the glory of our Lord alone and for the good of many.

Finally, please pray often on behalf of the pastor, who is known at this time to God alone but who will be your future shepherd, asking God to prepare him for fruitful service in your midst. Pray also, asking God to prepare your hearts to receive his ministry in your midst. And pray for Pastor Karsten and his family that he be blessed in his retirement.

Here are a few numbers for you to keep handy during the vacancy. I welcome your phone calls and am happy to hear from you about how I may be of service.

Zion Lutheran Church (309) 496-2186
Pastor's Cell Phone (309) 236-3882

Bless you for all you do for one another as the body of Christ! May we, by God's grace, be a blessing to one another, for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Under the completely sufficient imputed righteousness,

Rev. Gary Wright
Vacancy Pastor



From the Vicar: *“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:16-21*

The Christian faith is one which is transmitted by the repetition of the testimony of trustworthy witnesses. The apostles and the evangelists who shared the Gospel and recorded their words testify to us concerning what they heard and saw, concerning the person of Jesus, concerning God becoming a man and making Himself the sacrifice for our sins. Before them Moses and the prophets also wrote to testify of the great works of God and how He would save the world from the clutches of sin, to take away the power of the devil, and to turn death into everlasting life.

Their writings are not a reflection of their imaginations. They are not as Peter says, a collection of private interpretations or personal opinions about God. These writings are the Scriptures, the writings which are the true revelation of God and the true testimony of His power, love, and mercy. The men who wrote these books and scrolls and letters did not compose them by themselves or for themselves, “but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Critics of Christianity will say that our beliefs are the result of an evolution in philosophy, that our Scriptures demonstrate a growing and changing tradition. First, they say, that Moses (or whoever wrote Genesis) was inspired by older mythology and from this foundation was built up the writings of the Old and New Testaments, as men used their imaginations and experiences to apply the concept of their creator-god to their circumstances. This probably reveals more about the critics than it does about our Scriptures or our religion.

The truth of the matter is that the Scriptures are writings made by men which reveal the true God. More than this, Peter reminds us that the very words of Scripture are from God Himself, He is their source and it is the Holy Spirit who reveals God to mankind by these words. Jesus came as the Word of God in the flesh, to proclaim what was given to Him by the Father, and the Holy Spirit continues to declare the words of the Son. Jesus has proven Himself true by His words and deeds and the writers of the New Testament “were eyewitnesses of His majesty”.

In the Christian Church we teach nothing but what God has given us to say, the words which our Lord has given us to guide us in all matters of life and practice and belief, the words in which we place our full confidence.

I am very grateful for the time I have had with you, to learn to teach the Word of God in the study, the classroom, and in your pulpit. I am grateful for you dear brothers and sisters, who love the testimony of the prophets and saints and eagerly come to hear it. I give thanks to God for this, and pray that I may be counted worthy to begin the work of sharing Christ’s Word and Gifts only one short year from now. It has been a pleasure to be with all of you fine Christians, I am sure that God is at work on your behalf for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord. Together we wait eagerly to see what God will do next!

Vicar Corrigan

“Celebrate the Savior, shout and give Him praise! Celebrate the Savior, singing all our days!”

Vacation Bible School 2024 is complete. We enjoyed each other’s company, we worshiped, we sang, we prayed, we learned, we crafted, we snacked and we played together. There were memory verses, science experiments, and laughter. What a week!

Thank you so much for all of the help and support! Special thanks to Sheila, Barb, Anne, Vicar, Penny and Justina, and extra special thanks to the teens who spent their time assisting – Alex, Carter, Zoe, Cheyenne, Mikhael and Emma.

And extra EXTRA special thanks to the freshly retired (I can do this, deep breath) Wilfred Karsten for all of his time and support.

Looking forward to the month of July, the only upcoming activity on the books will be the Higher Things retreat in Arkansas for the YPS. Please make sure that you are coming to 9:30 Sunday School each week and don’t forget attending on July 14th to wish Godspeed to our Vicar and his family!

Celebrate the Savior!

In Christ,
Susan Serre



**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

We are still basking in the memory of a wonderful day on June 30. Thank you for joining in the joyous service where we gathered at the Lord's altar together one last time before our departure. Thank you also for your extreme generosity and your kind expressions of love and support. Our years at Holy Cross have been a great blessing. We are grateful to you and to our loving Lord. You will always remain an important part of our lives.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor and Lynette

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wilfredkarsten@gmail.com

309-716-2375 (Wilfred) 309-716-2376 (Lynette)

From the Congregational President:

*Thank you to everyone attending last Sunday's service. Your patience was appreciated as it did run long. Please know that you gave Pastor and Lynette the gift they wanted, a **Christ – Centered farewell**. Pastor and Lynette's unmistakable selflessness was reflected back to them by each of you.*

I apologize to Rick for not doing a better job following direction and being closer to the microphone. And I apologize to everyone in church that could not hear or understand what I was saying at Pastor's farewell service. A few copies of my comments are in the atrium for those that have asked to see them.
Don Freeman

Camp CILCA has been blessed with a new head cook! There is still a need, however, for assistant cooks to fill in gaps and be extra hands around the kitchen. If you or anyone you know would be interested in making some extra money and helping in the kitchen in the summer, fall, and spring, please contact Pastor Joshua Theilen at director@cilca.org or 217-487-7497.

Celebrate the close of the 2024 camp season at Homecoming on Saturday, July 27 from 10am-2pm at Camp CILCA. There will be craft and food vendors, live music performed by Lloyd Garrelts, games, balloons, face painting, and more. There is no cost for the event. Just pay for your food and drinks. Come and enjoy one more summer day at Camp CILCA.

Calling all men! Act Like Men Field Training takes place every Saturday morning in the Camp CILCA athletic fields at 6:30 sharp. There is 30 minutes of exercise, 10 minutes of status update from each man, and 5 minutes of prayer. There is no equipment to buy and no price to attend. Let iron sharpen iron as we push one another physically and spiritually. See you there



From the Congregational President:**Hark the Voice of Jesus Crying, “who will go and work today?”** (TLH #496, LW #318, LSB #826)

Lynette Karsten’s upcoming retirement following 19 glorious years as our organist naturally raises the hymn writer’s question concerning the ensuing void. It could be said the shortage of church organists within Synod equals the need for Pastors. Not to worry for once again **our Lord provides!** Amanda Hahn, Julia Koester, and Bruce Noah have agreed to serve on a rotating basis.

Bruce saw our need and stepped forward, increasing his service beyond being our substitute organist for many years. His willingness to serve took off some of the pressure and that is a blessing.

There is an unexpected blessing granted to Holy Cross. 54 Vicars have been nurtured here in their calling as Pastors. We now have the joy of doing the same for Amanda and Julia as organists. It is my privilege to introduce them to you.

Amanda Hahn became a member of Holy Cross in December 2023, but is a lifelong LCMS Member. “I am a Deaconess on Candidate status, who began taking Piano as a child, and resumed while on my first call 5 years ago with the goal (with God’s help) to transition to Organ to help fill in when the need arises as there aren’t as many organists as there once was. I am currently working full time as a Contingent Employee at John Deere in East Moline.”



Julia Koester, “My name is Julia Koester, and I’m very excited to have the opportunity to serve as your organist on this rotation. I live in Rock Falls, IL, and I am a communicant member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Walnut, IL, and a student at Wittenberg Academy. Along with organ, I also play piano, clarinet, and assist in teaching elementary school music classes. I enjoy reading, drawing, and writing hymns in my free time as well. I look forward to meeting you all, and I hope to serve you well to the glory of God’s name!” **Fun fact:** the Koester surname from German origin means: *Custodian or Keeper of the church...Don!*

Bruce Noah, “I have served the Lord as an organist for fifty years. I began playing at my home congregation of St. Paul’s Lutheran in Moline. I attended Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota where I studied organ for four years and earned a bachelor’s degree in 1978. I accepted a Divine Call to Faith Lutheran, Tacoma, Washington to teach upper grades, serve as an organist, and direct the senior and junior choirs.



In 1981, I accepted a Call to teach middle grades, assist with organ, and direct the junior choir at Grace Lutheran, San Diego, California. I returned to Moline, in 1984 and served as organist and choir director at St. Paul’s until 2007. I have been a member of Holy Cross since 2008 and have helped as an organist here as needed. I earned a master’s degree from Western Illinois University in 2001. I taught high school in Davenport, Iowa from 1991 until I retired in 2019.”

Respectfully Submitted,

Don Freeman

You are always welcome at any of our weekly Bible classes, held in the fellowship hall. You do not need to start at the beginning of a unit or topic. Please come whenever you can. Vicar Corrigan's final class will be taught on Tuesday, July 9th at 9:30 a.m., they're studying the Book of Isaiah.



Beginning in July, Sunday Services with the Lord's Supper will be held at 10:45 a.m. preceded by Sunday School and Bible Class led by Pastor Brondos at 9:30 a.m. Starting July 17th Wednesday morning Bible classes will be led by Pastor Wright.

A DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS

The current Dollar for Missions project is for replacement of furnaces at Immanuel Lutheran Student Center, Macomb, which is expected to cost some \$25,000. The Student Center was built 55 years ago. Equipment replacement like this is important so the Gospel can continue to be proclaimed and students can go on being reached there for years into the future.



For more information visit:

<https://www.cidlcms.org/ministry-dfm-current-project.html>.

Thank you to

those at St. John's who consistently support the work of Missions on the District and Synodical level. You are a blessing

The Good Shepherds (Bible Class - July)

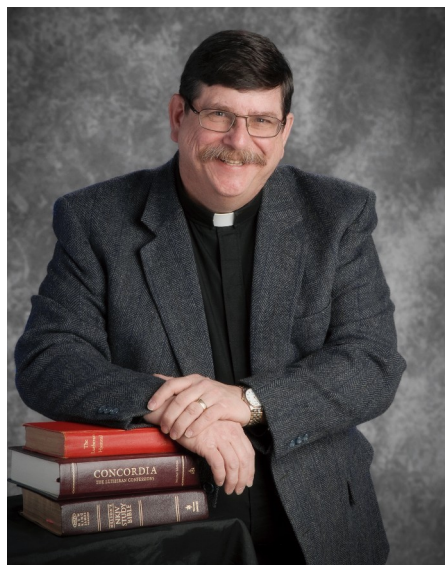
In Jeremiah 3:15, the Lord promised, "And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding." Jesus called His apostles to spread the Gospel from Jerusalem, through Judea and Samaria, and to all the world.

Through the month of July, we will study The Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus), considering how the Lord used the apostle Paul to prepare and appoint faithful shepherds for His people. In this light, we will also review the process in detail about how pastors in The LCMS are called to serve congregations today..

Surrounded by Witnesses (Bible Class - August)

For those who have been attending church for decades, it may seem that the historic liturgy is boring or vain repetition. In this Bible study, however, we will note how much of the liturgy is actually God's Word as it first appeared in the lives God's people. In a practical and vibrant way, these sessions will help enrich and deepen our worship life and appreciation for Word and Sacrament in a way that has proven tried-and-true over the centuries.

Pr. Joel A. Brondos:has served as a parish pastor and as a parochial headmaster of classical Lutheran schools for over 30 years in urban, suburban, and rural settings (retiring in 2019). He has lectured around the country and has published numerous devotions and Bible studies for CPH and other synodical publications. In 2008, he received the middle school teacher of the year award in the Northern Illinois District. He currently serves on the Board of Regents for Concordia Seminary - St. Louis. His wife of 43 years, Marilyn, has served as a teacher in the primary grades, and they currently live in Geneseo. Benjamin and Melissa Brondos, son and daughter-in-law, are members of Holy Cross.



Please join your fellow Holy Cross members in bidding Vicar Corrigan and family a fond farewell at an old-fashioned church picnic in Haake Hall following services on Sunday, July 14. Brats, burgers, hot dogs, baked beans and a delicious ice cream dessert will be provided. We ask that you sign the RSVP sheet in the foyer so the committee can plan accordingly. In addition, if you would like to provide a salad or chips to share, please sign that sheet as well. We thank you in advance for your kind cooperation and look forward to spending this last event with you and the Corrigan family.

The Mutual Encouragement Committee



St. John's Food Pantry: We are in need of volunteers that would be willing to drive around Moline and pick up food donations that we receive from restaurants and bring it to St. John's for distribution. The places we pick up food are: Olive Garden, Little Caesars, and the Starbucks locations: 7th St. by the Hospital, John Deere Rd. by Walmart, 19th St. across from Citi Line Jewel area, and the Ave. of the Cities across from Kings Plaza. We also pick up bakery items from the Silvis Hy-Vee on Monday mornings.

If anyone would like more information, please contact Debbie Girard at 309-235-8822.

Volunteers are needed to watch the Security monitor during our services. If you can help in this way, please sign the sheet in the church entryway. If you have any questions, please talk to a member of the Board of Elders.



Exercise Class and Fellowship Hour: New Time! Starting July 10th Exercise class will begin at 10:15 a.m. immediately following the 9-10 a.m. Bible class led by Pastor Wright. Come and join us for Fellowship hour following Exercise class!

Our Pantry Sunday recipient will be Cristo Rey for the month of July. Please remember them in your prayers and while you're grocery shopping.

The July – September editions of **Portals of Prayer** have arrived. Three sizes are available. Please help yourself to this devotional resource and share with others. In retirement Pastor Karsten will be writing again for the publication's November 2025 edition.



PRAYER LIST

Please help to keep this list current by calling the church office when a name can be added or removed. This list is also printed in the Sunday bulletin.

Members in Facilities: **Mercer Manor, Aledo** – Bob Koehler; **Cedarhurst** – Susan Wyant, Jan Phillips; **Friendship Manor** - Dick Hochstetler, Phyllis Thorngren; **Woodridge Supportive Living, Galesburg** - Dick Ristau; **Illini Restorative Care** – Henry Setton; **Park Vista:** Ron & Carolyn Luecke; **Hope Creek Nursing and Rehab, East Moline** – Carolyn Reese.

Serving in the Military: Jakob Ryckeghem, Alexa Ellis, Brett Kramer (Grandson of Terry Kramer), Logan Noard (Son of Kyle and Marilyn Noard), Leith Masri (son of Peggy Jones), Stephen Waugaman (grandsons of Donna Knudtson), Cameron Moore (grandson of Lew and Maria Steinbrecher), Andrew Tolley (son of Carole Tolley), David Revel (son of Craig & Laurie Revel), Jeffrey Teuscher (nephew of Willie Swain), Matthew Glider (grandson of Doris Glider), Austin Cox (grandson-in-law of Sieg Paulsen), Matthew Patterson (son-in-law of Mike Waters, serving in Kuwait).

Members of the Congregation receiving cancer treatment: Kathrine Hopkins, Pastor Murdock
Friends of the congregation receiving treatment for cancer: Ryan Ramshaw (brother-in-law of Melissa and Benjamin Brondos), Gail Stuenkel (sister-in-law of Tom & Donna Stuenkel), Lisa Dingeldein (cousin of Justina), Lisa Crawford (friend of Melissa Thorngren), Tristan Blume (friend of Teresa Brown), Joanne Lyons (friend of Joyce Spidle), Dave Patterson (brother of Bev Wagner), Harold Foster (brother-in-law of Bob Hellstrom), Judy Knudsen (sister of Allen Stegemann), Hannah Clark (relative of Marilyn Noard) Joy Garrison (sister of Kim Trask).

Serious Health Concerns: Tony Loritz (son of friends of Jennifer Swanberg), Phyllis Murdock, Pam & Bill (friends of Gwen Shrake), Scarlet Durbin (granddaughter of Beverly Carlise; great-granddaughter of Martha Kroll), Susan Raber (sister of Terry Kramer), Emily Scott (granddaughter of Geri Stolze), Brittany (great-niece of Claude & Sandy Lohse), Gwen Shrake, Hazel White (mother of Robbie Garrison), Ken Lackey (brother of Gwen Shrake), Heidi Sias, Maureen DeLassus, Kelly Teuscher (niece of Willie Swain).

Recovering/Ongoing Health Concerns: Bethany Albrecht (granddaughter of Pastor & Lynette), Sherry Lohse, David Kramer, Donald Dawson, Kristine Westmoreland, Gary Johnson, Alyssa Jones (granddaughter of Marian Jones), Fred Poe (grandson of Virginia Koontz), Carol Ferrell, Susan Jamieson, Joshua Duburg (cousin of Jill Safe), Sieg Paulsen, Cindy Davenport.



July Bible Reading Guide

07/01 Deut. 32:1-4/1 Samuel 28-31	07/18 Psalm 44/2 Kings 1-3
07/02 Psalm 28/2 Samuel 1-3	07/19 Psalm 45/2 Kings 4-6
07/03 Psalm 29/2 Samuel 4-6	07/20 Psalm 46/2 Kings 7-9
07/04 Psalm 30/2 Samuel 7-9	07/21 Psalm 47/2 Kings 10-12
07/05 Psalm 31/2 Samuel 10-12	07/22 Psalm 48/2 Kings 13-15
07/06 Psalm 32/2 Samuel 13-15	07/23 Psalm 49/2 Kings 16-18
07/07 Psalm 33/2 Samuel 16-18	07/24 Psalm 50/2 Kings 19-22
07/08 Psalm 34/2 Samuel 19-21	07/25 Psalm 51/2 Kings 23-25
07/09 Psalm 35/2 Samuel 22-24	07/26 Psalm 52/1 Chronicles 1-5
07/10 Psalm 36/1 Kings 1-2	07/27 Psalm 53/1 Chronicles 6-10
07/11 Psalm 37/1 Kings 3-6	07/28 Psalm 54/1 Chronicles 11-15
07/12 Psalm 38/1 Kings 7-8	07/29 Psalm 55/1 Chronicles 16-20
07/13 Psalm 39/1 Kings 9-11	07/30 Psalm 56/1 Chronicles 21-25
07/14 Psalm 40/1 Kings 12-14	07/31 Deut. 32:1-4/1 Chronicles 26-29
07/15 Psalm 41/1 Kings 15-17	
07/16 Psalm 42/1 Kings 18-20	
07/17 Psalm 43/1 Kings 21-22	

July Birthdays

Tina Thompson	7/1	Laurie Revel	7/7	Carole Kusterman	7/21
Cole Fender	7/2	Craig Revel	7/9	Terry Shrake	7/22
Mallory Noblet	7/2	Alma Sigler	7/9	Karen Broberg	7/23
Connie McKean	7/4	Vicki Welvaert	7/9	Duncan Mahlborg	7/24
Richard Kraft	7/4	Claude Lohse	7/10	Sieglinde Paulsen	7/25
Geraldine Stolze	7/4	Melissa Brondos	7/11	Donna Knudtson	7/26
Beryl Edwards	7/5	Ryan Noard	7/11	Mary Pement	7/27
Ryan Larrison	7/5	Lily Eastman	7/12	Judith Becker	7/27
Gage O'Neal	7/5	August Kretschmar	7/14	Priscilla Bremer	7/28
Lucia Martin	7/5	Liberty Mahlborg	7/15	Alexandria Elliott	7/30
Emily Finley	7/6	Mary Freeman	7/16	Kathrine Hopkins	7/31
Kris Finley	7/7	David Mangelsdorf	7/17	Jacob Kroll	7/31

According to our records, God has blessed you with the privilege of celebrating a birthday this month.

Please inform the Holy Cross office if this information is incorrect.

Have you remembered the Lord's

work in your will and estate planning?





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Rev. Pablo G. Domínguez



Newsletter JULY 2024

Liberty in Christ.



July 4th is Independence Day for the United States of America, and I am sure you celebrate it. Mexico has an Independence Day, also.

The citizens of Mexico all over the world relive the night of September 15th, 1810 when the parish priest, Miguel Hidalgo, called on his townspeople to take arms against the Spaniards who had been ruling Mexico since the days of the Conquest in 1521.

El Grito (The Shout), every 16th of September is the Mexican Fiesta par excellence! Streets, houses, buildings and cars are decorated everywhere in the country. On every street corner there are vendors selling flags, balloons,

and hats, all with green, white and red, the national colors. Flags wave from practically every house and building.

It is customary for the current President to deliver The Grito at the National Palace in Mexico City. The original bell rung by Hidalgo is the bell that is rung every 16th of September. The ceremony reaches the high point when the crowd joins in proudly shouting out the names of the heroes of Independence and ends with the exciting: Viva Mexico!

When The Grito ceremony ends, the sky lights up with multicolored fireworks that shower hearts with the pride of knowing that Mexico is a free and independent nation.

Why I am talking about liberty? Just read Galatians 5:1 "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

We have the true liberty in Christ for these reasons:

Because of His love for us, He suffered and died on the cross. Because of this we are now His children. His suffering, death and resurrection have reconciled us with God, our sins having been forgiven; and we now are filled with His peace. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us thus securing forgiveness for our sins and eternal salvation. It is by grace through faith in Christ's redeeming work that we obtain this salvation. Nations may celebrate their Independence Day on a determined day, but for the children of God, liberty is constant! Every day in Christ we have real liberty from our sins, eternal death and hell. This liberty is ours because of Jesus. When we believe His promises, we do not proclaim liberty for just one special day, but for all eternity.

Prison Ministry. During the study of the book, 100 Bible stories, the gentlemen are very attentive and filled with joy. Sometimes they even ask questions about infant baptism, sin, salvation by works, keeping the Sabbath, etc. I have seen the need to answer them as clearly as possible and in a way that they can assimilate. Let us remember that many of them grew up in the Roman Catholic Church where they learned very little about the Bible and even less about the true teachings of God's Word.

It should be added that there are also gentlemen in the group who have Pentecostal beliefs and so it is with them that I spend more time showing the correct interpretation of Scripture, always showing Christian love without falling into doctrinal controversy.

The LWML CID has provided additional 100 Bible Stories books which will be given to a gentleman when he is released from the correctional center. Chaplain Weber will do this. With the donated book comes information about LCMS Hispanic ministries in the Chicago area and surrounding communities. Some of the gentlemen have the option of purchasing a radio and listening to the program on KALA, which I do on Saturdays from 7-8 am.

After different estimates, which are very expensive, CR church members have decided to cancel the asphalt project in the garage and rear parking lot areas. During the summer season members plan to do the work themselves doing it the same way they did on the front parking lot two years ago. This involves using buckets of sealers.

***Be assured that our Almighty God is at work at Cristo Rey!
He is saving souls and building His church!
All praise be to Him!***