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# *The Glory Banner*

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*Cross of Glory Lutheran Church (ELCA), a Wildfire Congregation*

*January 2021*

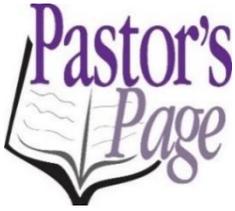
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**Arise, shine, for your light has come**

Isaiah 60:1

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“The Word became flesh and dwelled among us” (John 1:14). A few weeks ago, I shared in a recent sermon that the Greek word for “dwelled” in this well-known passage most literally means “to set up camp,” “to tent,” or “to tabernacle.” One biblical translation puts it like this: “The word became flesh and *moved into the neighborhood*” (*The Message*).

We’ve officially begun Epiphany, the season of light, the time in the church year when we look for the ways that God is made manifest in the world. It’s a time, in other words, when we look for the ways that God dwells among us not only in *the* neighborhood, but in *our* neighborhood—right here in Brooklyn Center! And it’s a time to reflect on the ways that our lives change in light of that.

The shepherds from the Christmas story serve as a beautiful example of this. I know it’s been a few weeks since Christmas, but do you remember what the shepherds did after hearing the news that Jesus moved into their neighborhood? What they did in light of this new neighbor? They didn’t go the synagogues to worship. They didn’t set off on a big evangelistic mission to spread the word. The shepherds “returned to their fields” (Luke 2:20).

The shepherds shared the good news of Jesus by? ...*going back to work*. Put differently, God moving into the neighborhood compelled them *back into* the neighborhood! Back to their fields, back to their sheep, back to the very same thing they were doing before.

But they didn’t return to those fields in the same way they left them. This baby who had taken up residence in their neighborhood changed things. It changed them. It changed the way they did their work. It called them back to where they already were, to do the *same work*, in a whole *new way*.

As we head into this season of Epiphany, I invite you to reflect on these questions: What are our fields? What kind of work is God is calling us to within them? How are we called to live in light of the fact that God lives among *us*?

I look forward to exploring these questions with you in the months to come, as we revisit our mission and vision, and discern together the work God is calling us to. For now, I want to share with you the first verse of the beloved hymn “Be Thou My Vision.” May these words be our prayer and our guide as we head back into the fields and begin this holy work together in this new year.

*Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art,  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night;  
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.*  
Pastor Ali



Cross of Glory is here to walk with you during these difficult days. To share a pastoral care concern or to add a prayer request to our church’s prayer list, please contact us (Pastor Ali: [atranvik@crossofglory.us](mailto:atranvik@crossofglory.us), Church Office: 763-533-8602). If you have thoughts or ideas about additional ways we can support you during this time, please don’t hesitate to let us know.

### **CHRISTMAS MUSIC RESOURCE**

Just because we’re in Epiphany doesn’t mean we need to stop listening to Christmas music! Local Lutheran singer and songwriter Rachel Kurtz, along with other musicians, have recorded Christmas songs and hymns that have been made available to Lutherans across the country. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/yameg7tm> to take a listen.

## HOPE IS A SONG IN A WEARY THROAT

By Pauli Murray

Hope is a crushed stalk  
Between clenched fingers  
Hope is a bird's wing  
Broken by a stone.  
Hope is a word in a tuneless ditty —  
A word whispered with the wind,  
A dream of forty acres and a mule,  
A cabin of one's own and a moment to rest,  
A name and place for one's children  
And children's children at last...  
**Hope is a song in a weary throat.**  
Give me a song of hope  
And a world where I can sing it.



Above is an excerpt from “Dark Testament Verse 8,” a poem written by Pauli Murray mentioned in Pastor Ali’s Christmas sermon. Murray was a teacher, poet, writer, lawyer, and Episcopal priest who was formative behind-the-scenes in both the Civil Rights movement and the women’s rights movement. If you’re interested in learning more about Murray’s story, visit: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/17/the-many-lives-of-pauli-murray>.



### Recap of December 2020 Council Meeting

Stewardship drive is going well. Thank you to all who have pledged so far.

Progeny Academy is back to distance learning and have paid \$50,000 of past due rent with \$19,000 due. They pay all current monthly rent on time. Tutoring and pan pals are underway.

Covid Task Force is keeping us up to date and due to current case rates, we are operating under Level 1 which is the highest level.

The Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, January 31, 2021 after church. The pre-meeting budget discussion will be held Sunday, January 24, 2021 after church and we will make every effort to have the Annual Report out to everyone before the meeting on the 24th. More information about how these virtual meetings will take place is forthcoming.

For those who have Annual reports due for 2020, Sue would like to have those no later than Friday, January 8, 2021. For those of you who have nothing to report due to Covid, please send a note to that effect to Sue so she is aware of that and won't be expecting one from you.

## **WILDFIRE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Last year, Cross of Glory was asked by our fellow Wildfire churches—a group of eight ELCA churches in the northwest metro area who share in ministry—to take part in a new initiative. In order to engage more deeply in our surrounding neighborhood(s), six Wildfire churches hope to join together to hire a shared Community Engagement Organizer. This idea has long been in the works, but the hiring process was put on hold last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Wildfire churches hope to revisit it again this spring.

Informed by our Lutheran theology and utilizing the tools of faith-based community organizing, the Wildfire Community Engagement Organizer would work to strengthen relationships within Wildfire churches, identify key concerns and needs within our communities, equip us to build relationships with new neighbors, and empower us to work together on particular issues to bring about a more just community for us all.

As Cross of Glory considers taking part in this opportunity alongside our Wildfire partners, Council will provide more information at our upcoming Annual Congregational Meeting. We look forward to sharing more with you in the coming weeks!



Due to the pre-annual and annual meetings scheduled after Zoom worship at the end of the month, this month's Table Talks will take place on Tuesday evening, January 26 at 7 pm on Zoom. Table Talks is our new monthly Adult Ed series where we explore various ways that our faith informs our everyday lives. This month, we'll be discussing Faith + Imagination. To "set the table" for our conversation, please read the following article in advance: <https://hds.harvard.edu/news/2017/07/31/creativity-and-life-faith#>. Let Pastor Ali know if you have any questions. Looking forward to seeing you at the [virtual] table!

To take part in Table Talks, use the same Zoom information we use for worship on Sundays:

Visit [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) or call 312-626-6799  
Meeting ID: 8025025123, Password: 433131

### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!**

This year's stewardship theme was "Always Being Made New," reminding us that God is at work among us doing a new thing (Isaiah 43:19). Thank you for taking part in this campaign through your generous 2021 pledges. While pledges are still coming in, we are expecting between a 10-20% increase in pledged giving from last year's pledged giving. **Thank you!** We are humbled by your incredible generosity and excited to see the ways it will empower us to boldly live into God's call this next year. Giving envelopes will be available later this month – stay tuned for more information about how to get yours. Finally, if you have not yet had the chance to return your pledge card, it's not too late! Pledge cards can be mailed to

the church office, and questions can be directed to Sue. Thank you again for the many ways you so faithfully give of your time, talents, and treasure to the work of Cross of Glory!

### **NEW ONLINE GIVING PAGE**

Check out our new online giving page—a secure, easy-to-use site where you can make a one-time or recurring gift. In addition to donating toward our general budget, you can also make a contribution to our Raise the Roof Campaign as we work to pay off the new roof we recently completed (we still have \$40,000 left to raise!). The new giving site can be found by clicking the “Give” button at the bottom of the home page on our website: [www.crossofglory.us](http://www.crossofglory.us). Thank you!



### **FOOD DONATIONS SITES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD**

- CEAP continues to collect non-perishable food items for their food shelf and for grocery pick-up. Donations can be dropped off between 8:30-3:00 Mondays-Thursdays.
- CAPI, located across the street from Cross of Glory, also serves as a community food shelf. Donations for curbside pick-up are accepted Tuesdays from 1-4, and Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9-12 and 1-4.

# —STAYING— CONNECTED

The Cross of Glory community will continue to find ways to share life together during this time of physical distance. If you're having trouble getting connected to worship videos or recordings by computer, tablet, or phone, please let Erik Haugland know (909-800-9094). We're here to help!

**Zoom Worship + Virtual Coffee Hour**  
Sundays at 9:30 AM

**Zoom Bible Study**  
Tuesdays at 9:30 AM

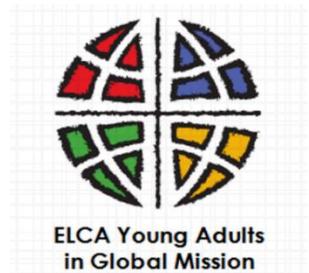
**Connect to Zoom**  
Visit [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) or call 312-626-6799  
Meeting ID: 8025025123, Password: 433131  
(just press # to ignore participant ID)

**Online Worship Recordings**  
[www.vimeo.com/cogtv](http://www.vimeo.com/cogtv)

**Worship Bulletins**  
[www.crossofglory.us](http://www.crossofglory.us)

## **YOUNG ADULTS IN GLOBAL MISSION**

Applications are now being accepted for the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program for the 2021-2022 program year. If you're a young adult ages 21 to 29, you can apply for an international service year. Through YAGM, you'll learn what it means to serve in a spirit of accompaniment as you walk alongside global church companions, immerse yourself in new community and form deep relationships with the people you meet, and confront issues of wealth and poverty, race and gender, economic disparity and globalization--all through the lens of faith. Learn more and apply at [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org). Application deadline: Jan. 15, 2021.



# Newsletter DEADLINE

## FEBRUARY GLORY BANNER DEADLINE

Want to include an article in next month's Glory Banner? Email Sue ([svukelich@crossofglory.us](mailto:svukelich@crossofglory.us)) by January 20.



## ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

Attention all committee chairs, circle leaders, and staff: 2020 annual reports are due to the church office by January 8. Please send reports to [svukelich@crossofglory.us](mailto:svukelich@crossofglory.us), and call Sue (763-533-8602) if you have any questions.

## WOMEN of the ELCA

The Winter 2021, four-part Bible Study is titled "Journeys with Angels" by Christa von Zychlin. The Rev Christa von Zychlin has served Lutheran churches around the world through ELCA Global partnerships. She co-pastors St. Luke Lutheran Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

### January - Looking Up Focus Verse (Job 38:4a, 7)

The first session introduces us to some initial glimpses of angels in the Old and New Testaments and the meaning of various words used in the Bible to describe angels.

**Remember...**

**You can go online and watch the Bible study by entering [gathermagazine.org](http://gathermagazine.org) and click on resources the upper right-hand corner.**

**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT. . .**

Watch your thought; they become words.  
Watch your words, they become actions  
Watch your actions, they become habits  
Watch your habits, they become character  
Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.      **JACKIE**



We would like to thank our Cross of Glory family for the many cards and prayers during our Covid-19 sickness. We believe your prayers kept John strong enough to be able to stay home. John is still healing but getting stronger every day. Thank you all.

John & Barb Thomson



Dear Cross of Glory Friends,

We are thankful that COVID-19 case rates in Hennepin, Anoka, and surrounding counties have been dropping since the amazing highs in November. Rates are still high enough that, following the guidelines as laid out in our

Preparedness and Response Plan, the church building remains closed to all but essential personnel and building maintenance.

While our church building is closed for the time being, our church community is not! We continue to gather virtually for worship, fellowship, Bible Study, and committee meetings using "Zoom". You do not need advanced computer skills--or even a computer itself--to participate in these virtual gatherings. It can be as easy as calling a phone number and entering a meeting ID number and a passcode. Further instructions can be found in the "Staying Connected" section of this newsletter.

The wonderful news is that COVID-19 vaccines have been developed and are beginning to be given to the first groups of Minnesotans. Case rates have also been declining. As of this writing, a newly discovered, more infectious strain of COVID-19 has just begun to arrive in the United States. Fortunately, this strain does not seem to be more severe in its effects and the vaccine is believed to be effective against this new strain. We will be closely monitoring case rates and vaccination information in the coming weeks and months, and will continue to keep you updated.

Ahead of the annual congregational meeting later this month, you will receive a copy of Cross of Glory's COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. We are working hard to adapt and respond to ever-changing circumstances, and we welcome any questions as together we navigate what it means to be the church in a pandemic.

Like you, we are greatly missing gathering together in person. What a gift it will be when that can happen again. In the meantime, we continue to place our hope in Jesus Christ, whose incarnate love meets us where we are. Thanks for your continued understanding as we pray for one another and care for our shared community,

The COG COVID Task Force

Cross of Glory Lutheran Church  
5929 Brooklyn Boulevard  
Brooklyn Center, MN 55429-2583  
Change Service Requested

**Take Part in Cross of Glory's Life Together**  
Worship with us on Zoom on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am  
(Meeting ID: 8025025123, Password: 433131)  
Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/crossofglorymn](https://facebook.com/crossofglorymn)  
Visit us at [www.crossofglory.us](http://www.crossofglory.us)

**Cross of Glory Office Hours:**  
**Monday through Wednesday, 9:00am ~ 3:00pm**  
Contact us at: Phone: (763) 533-8602

**Cross of Glory Staff:**

**Lead Pastor:**

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