

The Grapevine



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

No. 354

January 2022

Dear Mount Cross Community,

We are still in the Twelve Days of Christmas. Even if your decorations are already put away, I hope you continue to hum Christmas carols through January 5th. Thank you to all of you who helped with or attended our Advent/Christmas program on December 19, our Christmas Eve services on December 24, and our Carol Sing and Communion service on December 26. These were joyful and meaningful services that helped us receive the mystery of God's incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth, the Word made flesh.

The holiday season can be tiring, but energy for new and healthier habits and a fresh start often comes with the new year. As you set your goals and priorities for 2022, remember to set aside time each week for sabbath, time for letting go of busyness and being fully present to God, others, and your own true self. Wayne Muller, author of *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in our Busy Lives*, writes:

“Sabbath is more than the absence of work; it is not just a day off, when we catch up on television or errands. It is the presence of something that arises when we consecrate a period of time to listen to what is most deeply beautiful, nourishing, or true.”

The nourishment of Word and Sacrament, the beauty of children and music, and the companionship of others committed to learning and living the way of Christ awaits you every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. at Mount Cross when we gather for worship on our Sabbath day. I look forward to seeing you there!

God bless you with health, guidance, and joy as a new year begins.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Julie Morris +



Spiritual Growth at Mount Cross

Adult Education

There are several opportunities at Mount Cross to study the Bible along with your siblings in Christ. All are welcome.

Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study from 9:00-10:15 a.m.—Resumes January 11

- † Women's Bible study resumes **January 11**. We meet on Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. in the sanctuary. All Mount Cross women and their friends are welcome to attend. Women's Bible Study will follow the Winter study from *Gather* magazine, "The Kingdom of God: What does it mean for God to be in charge?" by New Testament Scholar, the Rev. Mark Allan Powell, editor of the *Harper-Collins Bible Dictionary*. Contact Pastor Julie for more information (pastorjulie@mountcross.com).

Bible Study for All: Wednesday Evenings from 5:00-6:00 p.m.—Resumes January 12

- † All are welcome to Wednesday Evening Bible study where we discuss the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday. The Rev. Susan Klein will lead the study this month.

1st and 3rd Thursdays Men's Bible Study and Breakfast—7:30-9:00 a.m.

- † We will meet **January 6** and **January 20** this month.
- † We will have a buffet breakfast at Marie Callender's (185 E. Daily Drive, Camarillo) to discuss the Gospel for the upcoming week. A \$15 donation covers breakfast and a tip, but don't let the cost prevent you from attending. What matters most is that you join us. No RSVP necessary, but reach out to Randy Churchill (hrchurchill@verizon.net) if you have questions.

Afternoon Chapel

Come celebrate Epiphany at Afternoon Chapel on **Thursday, January 20, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.** in the Mount Cross Sanctuary. This shortened service includes Communion, the singing of familiar hymns, a message, and fellowship with refreshments following the service. Please contact the church office at (805) 482-3847 by January 18 if you need a ride to the service.

We follow COVID protocols, so please wear a mask. Masks are provided, if needed. Looking forward to seeing you on January 20!

-The Senior Adult Ministry Team



No Pressure:

Exploring Membership at Mount Cross

Do you wonder what it means to be an official member of Mount Cross Lutheran Church? Do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to join Mount Cross? Are you energized by the worship, people, programs, and outreach at Mount Cross and want to be part of our Christian community? Do you feel welcome at Mount Cross and want to claim us as your church home? Are you ready to go deeper in your spiritual journey and walk with others along the way? Have you moved here from another ELCA congregation and want to transfer your membership to Mount Cross?

If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions or are simply curious, come explore membership at Mount Cross on **Sunday, January 9, at 11:00 a.m.** RSVP by calling or emailing the church office at 805-482-3847 or office@mountcross.com, and let us know if you need childcare.

CareNote Pamphlets

The Mount Cross Care Team Health Ministry will have an assortment of CareNote pamphlets on display on the patio on **Sunday, January 9**, for anyone interested. Please feel free to make use of this resource at no cost. Topics regarding physical and mental health, caregiving, grieving, parenting, and others are available. A Health Ministry volunteer will be at the table to answer your questions. Other pamphlets can be ordered if we do not have the topic to match your interest.

20 + CMB + 22—Blessing Your Home on Epiphany, January 6

The days around Epiphany (January 6) are traditionally a time to bless your home, remembering that the wise men followed the star and were overwhelmed with joy as they entered the house and saw the Christ Child with his mother (Mt. 2:10-11).



This inscription may be made with chalk above the entrance to your house:

20 + CMB + 22

Write the characters while speaking the words:

C Caspar

M Melchior, and

B Balthasar,

followed the star of God's Son who came to dwell among us

20 two thousand

22 and twenty-two years ago.

+ Christ, bless this house,

+ and remain with us throughout the new year.

Prayer of Blessing

O God, you revealed your Son to all people by the shining light of a star. We pray that you bless this home and all who live here with your gracious presence. May your love be our inspiration, your wisdom our guide, your truth our light, and your peace our benediction; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Drive-through Communion: As of January 2, the time for our **Sunday Drive-through Communion** is changing—the new time will be from **11:00-11:30 a.m.** each Sunday.

Justice in Action

*And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"
Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." – Isaiah 6:8*

"There once was a village situated near a waterfall along a river. One day a villager saw a child caught up in the current, about to go over the waterfall. He swam out to the kid and pulled him to safety. In the ensuing days, several more children were spotted in the current. More villagers rushed out to try to save them. They saved a lot of kids, but they couldn't save all of them. One day, a man started to walk upstream. The others said to him, "Where are you going? We need you here!" He replied, "I'm going upstream to see if I can keep some kids from falling in the river in the first place."

With our most recent book study of Bryan Stephenson's *Just Mercy*, many in our Peace & Justice Team were led into conducting a forum of experts on incarcerated youth. This seems to be where we feel we are being called.

Last month, a dozen of us were given a tour of the Oxnard Boys & Girls Club teen center. This is a place that is "upstream"; trying to keep the youth from falling into the river. It is a place for Oxnard youth to go after school and on weekends. They provide an evening meal for many who might otherwise not get one. There are a wide variety of creative, educational, and physical activities for youth who may have no other place to find these opportunities. The youth they serve come from foster care and social services, court appointments who have had trouble with the law, as well as neighborhood kids looking for help. The center is in constant need of help of all kinds, and we are hopeful that we can be of service to them.

One event that we have already planned is a **work project day** on **Saturday, February 26**. We hope to be able to fulfill some of their wish list items and help them with some chores at their facility.

On **January 27**, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Oxnard and Port Hueneme will select their Youth of the Year. Come and hear from inspiring young people about their vision for their lives and the future of their community, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., at the Martin V. Smith Youth Center, 1900 W. Fifth Street, Oxnard, CA. If you would like to support these youth, contact Tracy Blois.

Our next meeting will be **Tuesday, January 4**, at **7:30** on **Zoom** (<http://bit.ly/MCPeaceandJustice>). Anyone wishing to learn more about this opportunity for outreach, contact Tracy Blois, Becky Gilbertson, Bill Stoll, or Pastor Julie.

Service & Missions

Give of Yourself This Month

Donate blood. Why? Your role in the world matters. When you give blood, you have the potential to *help hospital patients within your community* and, when the need arises, others across the country. When extreme weather and unforeseen tragedies occur, our experienced nationwide team members jump into action to quickly deliver blood where it's needed most. Many people believe that most blood is needed after major disasters. However, daily personal emergencies and ongoing medical needs of thousands of patients require a constant and ready blood supply. It's the blood already on hospital shelves that saves lives. Visit www.vitalant.org to schedule an appointment at a time and location convenient for you.

Bagged Meals for Harbor House

Every day at 5:00 p.m., Harbor House hands out bagged meals to our homeless neighbors in Thousand Oaks. You can sign up here to bring 10 meals on any day that is convenient for you at www.harborhouseto.org (scroll down to the info about lunches and click the link). If you would like to sponsor this ministry, or if you would like to form a group to start making these meals once a month, please contact Mary Goodenough at mwgoodenough@gmail.com for more information.

Monthly Fair Trade Sale

We continue to offer fairly traded coffee, tea, olive oil, chocolate, and other foods for sale on the first Sunday of the month. Come visit the tables on the patio to check out the products we offer. Your Service & Missions Committee appreciates your support of this work. The next sale is **January 2, 2022**.

MAKE IT HAPPEN
CHOOSE FAIRTRADE



Help Needed with Fair Trade Sale

Seeking a new coordinator for the monthly Fair Trade food sale ministry. Duties include hosting the monthly sale, ordering and stocking products, and handling deposits and reimbursements. Training available. Contact Melissa Henry if you are interested in learning more.

If you have not often felt the joy of doing a kind act, you have neglected much, and most of all yourself. - A. Neilen

Volunteers Needed to Meet Weekday Driving Needs

Most of our volunteer driver requirements are to provide a ride to and from church for worship. We are now finding that we have some specific needs for rides that involve providing rides during the week. If you are a person who is CURRENTLY comfortable providing a ride to one or more persons on a weekday and would like to volunteer and/or have more information, please **contact Susan Prosser** by text/phone at 805-657-6222 or email prosser1@sbcglobal.net. Thank you for giving consideration to this request.

Save the Date

Souper Bowl of Caring is Coming

We will again celebrate the Super Bowl with a good-natured competition. Join us on Super Bowl Sunday (**February 6** for non-football fans) to celebrate **SOUPER Bowl Sunday**. Bring your food items or a monetary donation to church with you that day to "vote" for your favorite team (or the commercials). Who will win? Doesn't really matter which team—because the real winners will be the hungry neighbors in Ventura County who will be the recipients of your generosity.

CROP Hunger Walk

Many of us make resolutions for the new year—I will eat better, I will exercise more. If this is you, give yourself a fun goal of a 10K in March. **Sunday, March 13**, will be the CROP Hunger Walk for Camarillo. You don't have to run or walk 10 kilometers to participate; there are options like a 5K or a walk around the block, if that's what you can manage. The important part is to come out and raise up awareness of hunger issues in Ventura County and the world. Many of our neighbors struggle with putting food on the table for their families—and this event will help. Watch for more information in the next newsletter and on the church patio in February.

Care Team

Health Ministry

How Wellness Lifts You Up – Tips for a NEW YEAR

Choosing healthy habits can help us get through some of life's big challenges. COVID-19 has impacted the way we live. Many have found new ways to exercise and stay healthy. Perhaps some of these are new to you.

Try Foot Taps—you can do these quick, gentle exercises at home.

*Stand tall with your feet hip-width apart in front of a step (the bottom step of a staircase will work) or a low piece of furniture (about shin height).

*If needed, hold onto the wall or a sturdy piece of furniture for balance. As you get stronger, perform the move without holding onto anything.

*From here, use your core to slowly raise one foot and tap the step in front of you. Then, slowly return that foot to the floor. Perform 15 to 20 taps on one side, then repeat with the opposite leg. Keep a routine of doing this daily.

Camarillo Health Care District Beginners Walking Group

This group is for all ages, with minors being accompanied by an adult, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00-10:00 a.m. Wear weather-appropriate clothing and footwear and meet at the Camarillo Health Care District, 3639 Las Posas Rd., Building E, Suite 117, Camarillo. Call to sign up: 805-388-1952, ext. 100.

Mall Walking

Made popular in the 1980s, mall walking is making a comeback as we slowly emerge from the COVID pandemic. Home delivery services have severely cut into the foot traffic seen at malls around the country. The winter months can make outdoor walking more uncomfortable. Mall walking can be a casual, unofficial group, typically done as a morning activity to avoid crowds. This can be an enjoyable activity, especially having a friend or neighbor join you, and it may be fun to do some window shopping along the way! Don't have someone to accompany you? It is still a safe indoor setting to walk for those who are comfortable walking without a companion.

Hopefully, we can create a new normal that is both inspiring and helpful.



Evonne Kuchera, RN, and Jennifer Christensen, LCSW, our Health Ministry volunteers, provide support and information to individuals and/or families. **Contact Evonne Kuchera by phone or text 805-377-0808, or email at evonnemk@aol.com to initiate a request for support.**

Care Team New Year's Thank You

Thank you to the many Mount Cross members who have supported fellow members throughout the past year and continue into the new year. Support comes in the form of prayer, phone calls, cards and notes, visits, meals, rides, shopping and errands, and many ways we cannot even describe or know. The role of the Care Team is often just to highlight and organize, and other times, to do. We know that the caring and support is done throughout the congregation and, so often, one act of caring begets another and so on. That is exactly what makes our church such a place of CARING. We are all truly blessed to worship and serve in a community where God's will is lived in this way.

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. - Romans 15:13*

Notes 'n' News

See below for scheduled children and youth activities! Our programs resume the week of **January 9**. If you have any questions, please email Joe (joe@mountcross.com).

Sundays at 6:00 p.m: High School Youth Group (on site)

Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m: Fun with Faith (on site)

Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m: Confirmation Class (on site)



Music Ministry Notes

Joy to the world – wow, we had a lot of joy with our wonderful music ministry members' gifts of time and talent in December – from the music for our regular Sunday worship, for Deacon Cecelia's ordination, for our amazing Advent/Christmas program (with about 30 musicians!), and our Christmas Eve services, to our Carol Sing worship to end up the month! What a blessing you all are!! Thank you to everyone for all your dedication and extra time.

The Christmas season lasts through Epiphany so keep singing and playing those Christmas carols even though the world may have moved on. To start off our January worship, the bell choir will play a couple of Christmas selections for worship on January 2. In the words of one writer, "The sound of bells intrinsically brings a sense of awe and 'other-worldliness' to a culture that is so grounded in the 'here and now.' A finely crafted bell, well played, can produce a sound that is beautifully mysterious. And when a multigenerational group of people work cooperatively to produce it, they develop both individual skills and group musical sensitivity. Best of all, they experience fellowship and caring for each other as members of the body of Christ. In the sharing of a common task and goal the community of a bell choir represents the larger picture of Christ's body, the church."

For the past couple of months, we've been switching our **Wednesday rehearsal** schedules for bell choir and choir, back and forth. Because December has been so busy with extra things, I'm going to leave our **January** schedule the same as December. The **handbell choir** will rehearse from **6:15-7:15 p.m.** After a short break for those of us that are involved with both groups, the **choir** will **meet from 7:30-8:15 p.m.** We'll revisit switching again in February.

At the end of January, assuming that COVID doesn't change my plans, I'll be gone to St. Louis for a gathering of a national Liturgical Composers Forum. I've been part of this group for almost 25 years and on the steering committee for about ten years. The group was founded by Fr. John Foley, who wrote "One Bread, One Body," among many other pieces, and includes Marty Haugen, Bernadette Farrell ("Christ, Be Our Light"), Rory Cooney ("Canticle of the Turning"), Christopher Walker ("Celtic Alleluia"), and many other composers whose music we've sung. We weren't able to gather in person last year and I missed seeing these friends in person; it's been an annual retreat for me.

I pray that we all stay healthy and safe and that we have patience and grace in dealing with the restrictions that the pandemic has placed on all of us. Keep making music – in the words of our Christmas psalm: "Sing to the Lord a new song!"

In Christ,
Carol Browning, Interim Music Director

Upcoming Meetings

Service & Missions Committee:

Mon., January 3, 6:00 p.m. Zoom

Peace & Justice Team:

Tues., January 4, 7:00 p.m. Zoom

Justice in Action/Anti-Racism Check-In:

Tues., January 4, 7:30 p.m. Zoom

Re-Opening Committee:

Thurs., January 6, 7:00 p.m. Zoom

Executive Committee:

Thurs., January 6, 7:30 p.m. Zoom

Learning Committee:

Planning Meeting on February 6

Care Team:

Tues., January 11, 2:00 p.m.

Quilters:

Thurs., January 13 and 27, 2:00 p.m.

Church Council:

Tues., January 18, 7:00 p.m. Zoom

Fellowship Committee:

Tues., January 25, 7:00 p.m.

Property Committee:

Tues., January 25, 7:00 p.m.



Our Prayer List

PRAYER CONCERNS

We pray for an end to the coronavirus, for doctors, nurses, and caretakers, for researchers, all involved in the vaccine efforts, and for the families grieving the loss of each victim. We pray for peace, unity, and understanding in our country, and an end to gun violence.

We pray for **Bob Anderson, Tom Andino** (friend of Carol Browning), **Alice** (friend of Barbara Burke), **Jenny** (daughter of friend of Barbara Burke), **Linda** (friend of Barbara Burke), **Mike Caceres** (nephew of Becky Gilbertson), **Lorraine & Mike Carpenter, David Diehl** (son of Joe & Karen Diehl), **Steve Doshier** (brother-in-law of Paul Crockett), **Paul Edwards and Nancy Edwards** (friends of Denise Sobolik), **Natalie Faltin, Bill Greason, Charlene** (sister of Glenda Greason), **the family of Betty Hahn** (aunt of Joan Brundage), **Charles Hilley, Jo Holler, Paul Marigonda** (friend of Becky Riley), **Rick Mahlke** (son of friend of Barbara Burke), **Marie DeVere McClain** (daughter of Jody DeVere), **Lucille Miley, David Nadon** (friend of Miriam Hoffmann), **Karen Nelson, Lynn Nelson** (mother of Julie Fernandez), **Michael and Mercedes Olivera** (brother of Courtney Burke), **Frances Rini** (grandmother of Carina McVeigh), **Samantha Roberts** (friend of Judy and Bob Winters), **Gloria Saldano** (mother of Lisa Saner) **and the Saner family, the family of Bonnie Smith** (sister of Karen Cherry), **Donald Stevenson** (father of Luanne Crockett, Louise Stevenson, and Bruce Stevenson), **Maria Swartz** (sister of Jo Holler), **Chris, Wayne & Maria Truchan** (friends of the Burke family), **the family of Lois Watts, the people of Waukesha Wisconsin, Howard Wullschleger.**

Unless otherwise specified, prayer requests remain in the bulletin for four weeks. If you would like to add or remove someone to or from the prayer list, please e-mail the church office at office@mountcross.com or call (805) 482-3847.

*The English language does not have the words for me to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to you, the Mount Cross Congregation. You made my ordination very, very special. I was honored by your presence, your good wishes, your prayers, your dedication, your hard work, and the many gifts and cards that I have received. I am eternally grateful and blessed to be your Deacon. May we continue to walk together in Christian love and service to one another. Peace and Blessings,
Deacon Cecelia
(New email: Deacon@mountcross.com)*

2022 Annual Congregational Meeting

Our Annual Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, **January 30, at 4:00 p.m. on Zoom.** Access to the Zoom meeting will also be available in the sanctuary for those who need it. Please notify the church office by phone (805-482-3847) or email (office@mountcross.com) if you plan to attend the meeting in the sanctuary. The Zoom link is: <https://bit.ly/2022MountCross>
Meeting ID: 879 4910 4805
Passcode: MountCross

Labyrinth Prayer Walk

This month's Labyrinth Prayer Walk will be on **January 29 at 10:00 a.m.** Keep an eye on our weekly emails for the location, and we'll hope to see you there!

Annual Reports

In preparation for the 2022 Congregational Meeting, **please submit your end-of-year reports** to the office (office@mountcross.com) by January 14 so they can be included in the 2022 Annual Report. Thank you!

Before she died, Lois Watts expressed her deepest thanks to everyone at Mount Cross for their love, prayers, and cards. She said, "I didn't realize how much I was loved." Thank you, church, for being the Body of Christ.

2022 Church Directory

We are working on next year's church directory! If you have any changes or additions to make to your directory entry, please contact the office.

If you are not receiving emails from Mount Cross, please contact the office so we can add you to our email list or add you to our call list! Make sure you also double-check your spam folder and add office@mountcross.com to your contacts so you have the most up-to-date information possible. Thank you!

Mount Cross Lutheran Church
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The next newsletter deadline is Thursday, January 20, 2022
Please send all articles to carina@mountcross.com.

January Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy Birthday to...

- 2 Mary Kienitz
- 3 Jackson Burke
Caroline Hobbs
Betty Hough
Eric Kienitz
- 4 Leigh Bensen
Glenda Greason
Rochelle Smith
- 5 Iris Corey
Jerry Kienitz
Evonne Kuchera
- 6 Orion Christeson
- 7 Nora Fajnor
- 8 Carol Broderick
Stephen Burke
Matthew Rowley
Krista Stoll
- 9 Rick Mann
Chloe Vieira
- 10 Jaida Jones
Jean Scott
- 11 Becky Riley
- 12 Kayleigh Simmons
- 14 Morgan Fanner
Alexa Jackowski

- 15 Ron Higginbotham
- 17 Lorraine Carpenter
Mike Hobbs
Kathleen Lennox
Keira Lennox
Anne Valencia
- 19 Cathy Channels
- 20 Don Hauser
- 21 Madeline Bouchard
Jesus Duran
Tiana Stouch
- 22 Nicholas Tasker
- 24 Brian Fisher
- 25 Sandy Fox
Norma Harvey
Theodore Koupal
- 26 Rita Carolan
- 29 Baelin Christeson
- 30 John Barrett
Kason Kenz

Happy Anniversary of Baptism to...

- 2 Carol Fehr
- 4 William Rowley
- 7 David Griffis
Katelyn Abernathy
- 8 Jake Pitsch
Samantha Kienitz
- 10 Joseph Diehl
Zachary Abernathy
Baelin Christeson
Orion Christeson
- 12 Justice Jones
- 13 Glen Gramacki
Matthew Fisher

- 14 Iris Corey
Jasmine Jones
- 18 Erin Rowley
Paul Brickley
Kathleen Jones
- 20 Whitney Fajnor
Madison Davis
Luca Kennelty
Maggie Martin
Denise Pipkin
Evan Pipkin
- 23 Colin DuHamel
Gavin DuHamel
- 26 Arlene Proctor
- 29 Katrina Karazissis
- 31 Bill Greason

Happy Anniversary to...

- 2 Carol & Edward Broderick
- 5 Richard & Marilyn Gardner
- 9 Vic & Sharon Korzan
- 22 Steven & Jeanne Michel