

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2019

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Welcome to Holy Cross!

Our church's mission is to
connect with God,
connect with people, and
make a difference!

Worship with us each Sunday at 8:30am or 11:00am.

Faith Learning Hour is offered for all ages from 10-11am.

A staffed nursery with paging system is provided during the worship service and the Faith Learning Hour up to age 4.

A **Service of Healing with Light Supper** is held the first Wednesday of every month (except during Advent & Lent) at 5:30pm



A Message from Pastor Hilkert

Dear People of Holy Cross,

This year our church is traveling together through the gospel of Luke. At several key points in Luke's Gospel, Jesus makes an important proclamation that begins with the word "today."

"Today is born to you a savior."

"Today, this word has been fulfilled in your midst."

"Today, salvation has come to this house."

Luke attends to the many ways in which Jesus' ministry changes things today. Jesus brings healing, forgiveness, and a new way of life for us today.

How do you see Jesus at work today in the life of our church? How do you see healing, forgiveness and a new way of life being offered in the ministries of our congregation? My prayer is that in the pages ahead, you will find new ways to engage more deeply with what Jesus is doing in our midst today.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Nathan Hilkert +
nathan@holycrossathens.com



A Message from Deaconess Spangler

As we make our turn into "Ordinary Time," the season of time set apart for the growth and everyday work of the Church, it is good to see how the Lord has prepared the fields for sowing.

We wrapped up our 2019 VBS program: *Athens: Paul's Dangerous Journey to Share the Truth*. We had 29 participants, 21 volunteers, and an average daily attendance of 32, combined. Each day, children, youth, and adults gathered to learn about the dangerous truth Paul was sharing in Athens—that God LOVES us! We also danced, ate Greek foods, served on juries, practiced for the Olympics, learned how to use quills and ink, made laurels, and designed pottery!



Back in May the youth led worship on Mother's Day. They picked and performed music, wrote and delivered the sermon and Children's Moment, and served as excellent lectors, ushers, A/V techs, acolytes, and worship leaders. I am very proud of their hard work! We also celebrated three graduations: Emma and Andrew, who graduated from Oconee High; and Emily, who completed her M.S. at UGA. We enjoyed a nice dinner, sponsored by the Hospitality Team; photo slideshows; speeches by loved ones; and a quillow ceremony. There were many tears and a lot of laughter. Thank you to those who made quillows (a quilt that folds into a pillow) for Emma and Andrew!

Looking ahead, I am excited about an upcoming Bible study I'll offer between services during July and the first Sunday in August. We'll learn about the baptismal vocation of *diakonia* (service): what it is, why it's everyone's vocation, and what makes the diaconate (deacons, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers) different from all Christians' call to *diakonia*.

I also can't wait for the So Long Sweet Summer Lock-in for youth, during which we'll finally get to practice our Escape the Space skills! Join us July 19 beginning at 9 p.m. for games, movies, midnight devotions, homemade breakfast, and whatever other holy mischief we can get ourselves into.

In August our program year begins again. We will bless backpacks and briefcases during worship on August 4. August 11 we'll enjoy Rally Day festivities, and August 18 we will pray over and present our 3-year-olds, 3rd graders, and 6th graders with their faith milestone gifts: prayer books for those entering Sunday School; Bibles for 3rd graders; and welcome to youth group for 6th graders. Regular Faith Learning Hour classes will resume this day.

In September classes will put together backpacks as part of our contribution to God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday. We'll also be committing covert acts of service: keep your eyes peeled and see if you can spot us!

God be with us as we travel this Ordinary Time together, learning and growing in faith and service in Christ.

Deaconess Amanda Spangler
Director of Faith Formation Ministries
deaconessamanda@holycrossathens.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

July

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Light Supper/Healing Service..... | July 3 |
| Prayer Shawl | July 3 |
| Church office closed..... | July 4 |
| Thanksgiving for Baptism | July 7 |
| Book Club | July 9 |
| Prayer Shawl | July 17 |
| Bigger Vision..... | July 17 |
| Youth Group Lock-In..... | July 19 |
| Men's Breakfast | July 24 |

August

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Thanksgiving for Baptism..... | August 4 |
| Blessing of the Backpacks..... | August 4 |
| Prayer Shawl | August 7 |
| Light Supper/Healing Service..... | August 7 |
| Rally Day | August 11 |
| Book Club..... | August 13 |
| Faith Learning Hour Milestones Presentation..... | August 18 |
| Bigger Vision..... | August 21 |

Campus Ministry begins.....August 21

Prayer ShawlAugust 21

Ministry FairAugust 24

Men's BreakfastAugust 28

Butter Beans at Talmage Terrace/Lanier Gardens.....August 29

September

Family Promise Interfaith Hospitality Host Week.....September 1-8

Thanksgiving for Baptism.....September 1

Church office closed.....September 2

Prayer Shawl.....September 4

Light Supper/Healing Service.....September 4

God's Work. Our Hands.....September 8

Youth serving dinner at Campus Ministry.....September 11

Prayer Shawl.....September 18

Men's BreakfastSeptember 25

Mobile Food Pantry.....September 25

Worship Server Training.....September 28

Carnival at Talmage Terrace/Lanier Gardens.....September 28

Unity Service.....September 29

Fall Small Groups begin.....September 29

Bigger Vision Feed the Hungry Project July 17th & August 21st



Holy Cross Community Care Team would like to invite our church family to provide and serve three evening meals to 40 residents this summer at the Bigger Vision of Athens Homeless Shelter (95 North Avenue, Athens). On each date, we will need donations of various foods, 5-9 volunteers to prepare donated foods in advance to be delivered, and 6-10 volunteers to arrange and serve the food from 5:30-7:00 PM, as well as to help clean up the serving area and tables afterward. For more information about volunteering, please contact Linda Tiller, 706-215-9256. (You can leave questions or a message at this number.) THANK YOU! For more information about Bigger Vision visit www.biggervisionofathens.org.



Blessing of the Backpacks August 4th

Teachers, students, and all educational staff are invited to bring their backpacks, briefcases, and tools of the trade for a special blessing during worship. For more information contact Barbara Hawman at bhawman@gmail.com.

Ministry Fair August 24th

Join us for a fun filled afternoon as our Ministry Teams share their missions and what they are doing to accomplish them. Great opportunity to find a place or places to share your gifts. For more information contact Jeani Goodwin at msjeanig@aol.com.



Family Promise Interfaith Hospitality Host Week September 1st-8th



Several times a year Holy Cross opens our campus to host homeless families who are clients of the Family Promise of Athens Interfaith Hospitality Network. We provide dinner, fellowship, overnight accommodations, breakfast, and travel to and from schools and the FPA Day Center. For more information about IHN visit www.ihnathens.org. For information about volunteering during a host week contact Diana Pearson at dianapear@charter.net
Remaining host week: November 24th—December 1st



God's Work. Our Hands. September 8th

This day is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. We will have several service activities available for you to participate in. Service activities offer an opportunity for us to explore one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans: that all of life in Jesus Christ – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God's grace. Look for more information soon. Jane Connelly racketwoman@yahoo.com.

Worship Server Training September 28th



...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,... *Ephesians 4:12*

What does an usher, acolyte, communion assistant, etc. do? Join us as we equip you with knowledge and answer your questions about the vital roles that make your services run smoothly. Questions? Contact Amanda Sacchitello at amanda@holycrossathens.com.



Small Groups begin... September 29th

Small groups are a casual gathering of people meeting in homes, restaurants, and coffee shops throughout our community. Groups typically last 8-12 weeks to allow for easy start and finish points. Groups are a wonderful environment to grow spiritually as we engage in conversations about our faith. Kathi Wilson kmallenderw@gmail.com



Follow us on Facebook:

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Athens GA (ELCA)



Follow us on Instagram: [holycrossathens](https://www.instagram.com/holycrossathens)



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OR

Text HCA to 84576



**Sign up for our weekly e-news, published every
Friday**

Text HCLC to 42828

OR

email your request to churchoffice@holycrossathens.com



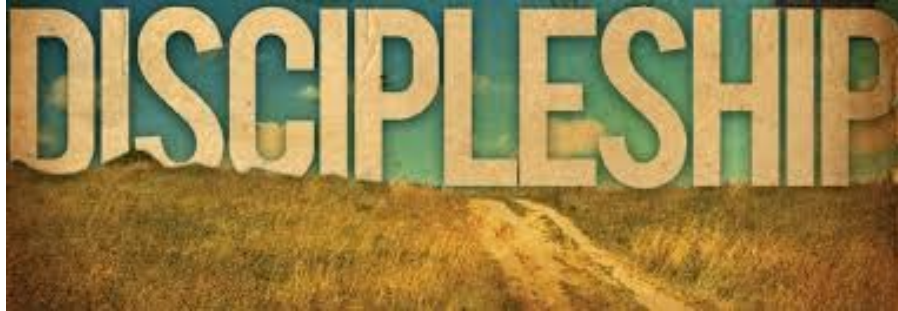
Worship & Music Ministry

The Worship and Music Team ended the spring semester with a beautiful and meaningful Holy Week. The three days leading up to Easter were full of rich messages and exemplary musicians, and it made for a very special end to Lent and beginning to the Easter season.

The musical groups are taking a break over the summer to get in some much-deserved rest and relaxation. Everything will ramp back up again in August - the SonRise Singers and Handbell Choir will resume their weekly rehearsals, and all musical groups will perform on a regular basis throughout the school year. The Healing services continue to be the first Wednesday of every month, and are preceded by a light dinner beginning at 5:30 PM, followed by the service, which now includes music. A Ministry Fair will help kick off the fall on Saturday, August 24th, displaying the many ministries Holy Cross has to offer, and hopefully guiding parishioners and guests to a group suitable to fulfilling their skills and interests. The Unity Services on the fifth Sunday of the month are offering a time for people from both services to come together, co-mingle, and enjoy a little fun after worship. The next Unity Service is September 29th.

The A/V Team Leader, Anthony Heiges, has helped build, guide, and teach this team for a year and a half now, and he is ready to hand over the reins. We thank him for all of his hard work and awesome organization! This team will surely continue to thrive because of the ground work that Anthony has laid down. Becky Kerr will be our new A/V Team Leader.

Amanda Sacchitello amanda@holycrossathens.com



Faith Formation Team

2nd Quarter Highlights from the Children and Youth Faith Formation Team:

- On 5/5/19 Tears and giggles were enjoyed by all as we celebrated the Milestone of graduation with Emma Brandt, Andrew Hart, and Emily Pauline. A delicious supper was served and memories were shared.
- Sunday morning 5/12/19 our sanctuary was taken over by a dozen of our very capable young people as they lead inspiring and enthusiastic worship services!
- VBS “Paul’s Dangerous Journey to Share the Truth” was a huge success and we say thank you to Kris Brandt, the VBS Team, and all the many volunteers!

Looking Ahead:

- Our Children and Youth Faith Learning takes a break in July while families enjoy time together and our FLH teachers rest and plan for the coming year. If you feel called to help our team please, talk with Deaconess Amanda or Barbara Hawman.
- Bring yourself and your backpack to worship on Sunday 8/4/19 to be blessed for the new school year.
- FLH will resume on Sunday 8/11/19. Join us at 10am for Rally Day to kick off our new faith learning year.
- Sunday 9/8/19 at 10am: As part of God’s Work Our Hands day our children and youth will assemble School Kits for Lutheran World Relief.

Barbara Hawman bhawman@gmail.com

Small Group Ministry

Our most recent small group session ran from March to May. Our Spring Small Groups were limited to five groups:

- Gentle Chair Yoga
- How Did We Get the Bible?
- I Believe, I Believe, I Believe
- Fly Away Fridays
- Ukearist for Everyone

Most of these groups were social or hobby-focused, with only two meeting for theological study. Nevertheless, all had a time for sharing concerns and joys and for praying together. We had 36 total participants.

We are taking a summer vacation while we prepare for the 2019/20 program year. During July and August we will be working on restructuring the program based on participant feedback, setting long-term goals, and identifying and recruiting both curricula and facilitators. We are very excited to bring on board a few new facilitators and to have a full-length small group session beginning September 29.

The Small Group Ministry Team has the following needs as we plan ahead:

- A Team Lead (chair)
- Additional team members (we are excited about fresh ideas)
- Specific topic suggestions or book recommendations for small group curricula
- Names of people who are interested in learning how to facilitate small groups
- Names of people who are willing to host a small group in their home or neighborhood venue

Please contact:

Deaconess Amanda Spangler, staff liaison (deaconessamanda@holycrossathens.com) or Kathi Wilson (kmallenderw@gmail.com), Council liaison if you are interested in learning more. Or stop by our table at the Ministry Fair on August 24! We'd love to chat with you!



Book Club

The Holy Cross Book Club meets once a month on the second Tuesday. We meet at Dominick's in Watkinsville at 11:30. As a group we decide which book we are going to read each month. Then when we gather we discuss the book, enjoy lunch and socialize for approximately an hour and a half. All Holy Cross members and friends are welcome. The books for the next 2 months are:

July - *A Woman of No Importance* by Sonia Purnell

August - *Next Year in Havana* by Chanel Cleeton

Marybeth Harris mbtomharris@aol.com

Men's Breakfast

We continue to have 6 to 10 men gather for breakfast at IHop (Parkway Blvd.). We share stories, ask about our church family, friends and make plans for future events.

Join us on the 4th Wednesday at 8:30am.

Ross Perry lrpdfp@hotmail.com

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The goal of our group is to provide prayer shawls to those in need. These are available to all members and friends of our congregation for sickness, death, baptism, graduation, weddings, and farewells. At this point we have an ample supply of shawls as well as yarn to make more. If any of you have someone you would like to give a prayer shawl to, please let us know and we will help you in selecting one and give a card to present with the shawl. Our group meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 1-3p. All are welcome to attend.

Julie Westphal jjwestphal@bellsouth.net

Member Care

The Member Care Team Members (including: Denise Gabriel, Nancy Heiges, Gene Lou, Sue Maier, Mary Ann O'Neill, Diana Pearson, Glen and Marlo Wiggans and Pastor Hilkert) have provided the loving dedication, support and flexibility which have allowed our Team to succeed despite numerous and changing challenges! The member care team continues to effectively expand its scope to support more members and their associated prayer concerns which in many cases include non-members.

Our Team's scope includes helping with logistics needs (e.g. transportation, doctors visits, food needs, etc.), medical and emotional health concerns, life situations, and near / end of life situations. Our member care ministries visit our homebound folks, carrying them communion, healing oil, healing prayers, and singing ministries which have been extremely well received.

As a result of the positive responses received during healing prayers that were offered during our Sunday Lent services, we are considering continuing this practice in the future.

Last but not least, our member care team continues to reach out to every family in our congregation to check in, asking whether there are needs for which we can pray or for which we can offer additional support, which have been extremely well received and appreciated by many members. With all our ongoing and expanding challenges we appreciate your prayers and considerations for joining us to help our church family members in need in loving, meaningful ways which truly make a difference!

God's work, our joyful hands, feet, voices and spirit! We continue to strive to "bear one another's burdens" and offer God's healing and hope to everyone in our congregation and their associated family and friends as appropriate. If there is a way in which we can serve you, please reach out to Pastor Nathan, or to Gene Lou, our Member Care Team leader.

Nathan Hilkert nathan@holycrossathens.com; Gene Lou gwlou@bellsouth.net



Community Care Team

Notation: As you read about Holy Cross' involvement with the Athens community, please consider participating. Names of committee leads are listed with the work that is being done. Any of these folks would love to tell you how you can assist in these areas. What a wonderful way to get to know others in the church and at the same time reach those who need YOU! No volunteer effort is too small.

SECOND QUARTER SUCCESSES

Fifteen volunteers worked The Jewish Film Festival. Other members of the congregation attended. All seats were filled at every showing. A great interfaith program success! The Jewish Film Committee suggested doing another interfaith program with us. (Halley Page halleypage@charter.net)

IHN supported three families at the Church 4/28-5/5/2019. The congregation was very generous in volunteering for this program. The next IHN program starts 9/1/2019. (Diana Pearson dianapear@charter.net)

If you have noticed a bit of activity in the Brooklyn Cemetery, it is all part of a special project. Dr. Victor Thompson and his team from the Archeology Department at UGA have been testing their ground penetrating radar, magnetic gradiometer, and electrical resistivity meter, trying to determine unmarked graves in the cemetery. To support this effort, another Holy Cross grounds clearing workday is scheduled for 9/7/2019. The April workday was cancelled due to wet grounds from ongoing rainfall. (Jane Connelly racketwoman@yahoo.com)

The Alps Food Pantry, which takes place in our parking lot, had a successful first year (August, 2018-May, 2019). Eighty new families participated. A total of 265 families were served this year. (Kathi Wilson kmallenderw@gmail.com)

Our Church raised over \$5,000 for Relay for Life. This amount included monies raised during the St. Patrick's Day lunch. (Lynn Faust lynn.faust@gmail.com)

Community Care sponsored two programs for the Lenten Giving Project—the Franklin Food Pantry and the Cancer Foundation. Thanks to the generous response from the Congregation, each group received \$2,000 for their programs. (Kathy Lou, klou@uga.edu and Glen Wiggins gwiggans@charter.net)

A Food for Kids program was launched to support food-deprived children in Oconee County. The program ran May 1 through June 15. (Linda Schroeder lcubed@gmail.com)

Two members of the Community Care Team are working to develop a Ministry Volunteer Fair- which identifies and highlights volunteer opportunities with all Holy Cross ministries. Community Care is looking forward to participating as needed. (Aneela Qureshi alqureshi@gmail.com, and Jeani Goodwin msjeanig@aol.com)

The Seasoned Citizens program continues to offer ongoing programs to seniors at Whispering Pines Assisted Living and Talmadge/Lanier Gardens. (Jim Connelly jamesconnelly726@yahoo.com, and Jeani Goodwin msjeanig@aol.com)

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Holy Cross will join with other churches to provide a dinner for 40 people once a month at the Bigger Vision Homeless Shelter in Athens in June, July, and August. (Linda Tiller tybeehouse@aol.com)

Brooklyn Cemetery. The next workday is set for September 7, 2019. (Jane Connelly racketwoman@yahoo.com)

An Interfaith Program involving several area churches, including the Jewish Synagogue, is being planned for the September/October timeframe. More details to follow. (Tom Remar tkremar@aol.com, and Halley Page halleypage@charter.net)

Habitat for Humanity has asked for our assistance in upcoming projects. This is still in the development stage. (Ross Perry lrpdfp@hotmail.com)

The September God's Work/Our Hands project(s) need to be identified. This project will be discussed at the next Community Care meeting in July. (Jane Connelly racketwoman@yahoo.com)

Jane Connelly racketwoman@yahoo.com

Campus Ministry

This Summer...

Bonnie Johnson and I are making lots of preparations for the upcoming academic year at the University of Georgia. We've updated our status as an "official" student organization, which means that we are able to use space on campus, host tables at the student activity fair, and send messages via the campus events digital "bulletin board."

I continue our group's membership in the Campus Ministry Association, the umbrella organization for all the officially sanctioned faith groups and their leaders on campus.

I've represented the Campus Ministry Association at 2 new student orientation fairs, and engaged with lots of new students— including a few Lutherans.

I've also made a new video, which was shown at Affirm, and will be posted on our website and social media accounts. You can also watch (and share!) this video via YouTube (https://youtu.be/FMpQDZ_SVnA or just google "Holy Cross Lutheran Campus Ministry at UGA")

Last, but not least, we are urgently trying to engage with new students for next year, as all our students from last year have graduated. We have already received some referrals from pastors in the synod whose youth will be attending UGA. We will be reaching out to all the ELCA churches in Georgia via phone calls to try to drum up more referrals. If YOU know a young adult who will be attending UGA this fall, please make an official referral at <https://bit.ly/2LoiTMA>.

Bonnie and I will be putting together "welcome packages" to mail to all our prospective students, with information about our Holy Cross Campus Ministry, our schedule, and tools and treats to help welcome them to Athens and UGA.

Our schedule for the Fall:

- CAMPUS MINISTRY KICK OFF— Kayaking and dinner on the Apalachee River, Sunday 8/25 at 1:00pm. We'll meet in the church parking lot to carpool out to High Shoals. After an afternoon of kayaking and swimming, we'll grill out and enjoy the evening together. If you're interested in taking part, talk to Pastor Nathan or Bonnie Johnson. We would love to have some folks to help transport students, cook, and meet our newcomers.
- Our weekly gatherings at the Presbyterian Student Center will take place on Wednesday evenings (except during Advent and Lent) at 7pm and will center around dinner, programming and evening prayer. Worship styles vary each week, to include Traditional "by the book" ELW worship, Dinner Church, Taize, Prayer Around the Cross, and uniquely planned worship for special occasions. Again, we would LOVE for some wise, mature, and faithful Christian adults at Holy Cross to be involved in these gatherings, as dinner hosts, and worship participants.
- As always, I will be on campus weekly in front of the Tate Center to talk to students, offer encouragement, and prayer.
- In the academic year ahead, I plan to focus on leadership development, with the long-term goals of equipping a student (or students) to lead a weekly lectionary-based study group, and a peer-led student small group to aid first year students at UGA in their transition to college.

Depending on the age and skill sets of the students we draw, I would like to begin...

- A monthly Theology on Tap group, open to those who are 21+ to discuss theological topics in depth over drinks.
- A regular outreach effort by the campus ministry group in the Athens area.
- An annual Spring Break Pilgrimage that will focus on service, with some elements of recreation and fellowship built in (e.g. a Civil Rights Pilgrimage in Alabama, or a trip to our companion synod in Guatemala).
- A Weekend Retreat each semester, in order to focus on a special topic such as vocation, sabbath, or spiritual practices.

Thank you for all your support and prayers— and I look forward to welcoming on board some wise, seasoned, and faithful adults at Holy Cross to participate in the work of campus ministry!

Grace & peace,
Nathan Hilkert nathan@holycrossathens.com and
Bonnie Johnson johnsonbonnie3@gmail.com



Property Team

With the approval of the church congregation and council our construction and repair projects began in June. Projects include roof repair and replacement, altar and choir loft floor replacement, and painting in the sacristy, nave, and narthex. Big changes are coming.

Jim Connelly jamesconnelly726@yahoo.com

Staff

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nathan@holycrossathens.com

Deaconess
Amanda Spangler
deaconessamanda@holycrossathens.com

Director of Music
Amanda Sacchitello
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Administrative Assistant
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