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# Mount Cross Chronicle

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January 2021

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601 E. Highway 260  
Payson, AZ 85541  
Phone: 928-474-2552  
[www.mountcross.org](http://www.mountcross.org)

## Sunday Worship Services

8:15 a.m.

*Online Worship Service*

9:30 a.m.

*In-House Worship Service*

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Pastors

Rev. Cliff Hanus

Rev. Linda Hanus

474-2552

[pastor@mountcross.org](mailto:pastor@mountcross.org)

emergency phone

928-363-1683

Music Director

Daria Mason

[daria1024mason@gmail.com](mailto:daria1024mason@gmail.com)

Accompanist

Angeline Ng

Office Administrator

Lenore M. White

[secretary@mountcross.org](mailto:secretary@mountcross.org)

Custodian

Rod Rice

## *Pastor's Ponderings*

Oh for a New and Improved Year!

Finally, Pastor Linda and I, will have taken our first Sunday off in 2020 and our first real vacation. (I'm not sure what tense to use as I am writing this on December 4<sup>th</sup>.) And although we will be away on December 27<sup>th</sup>, we still will be preparing the online service for that Sunday.

We still have 5 online services to complete before the end of December, four in person services to do and one more to prepare for on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Add to that about 15 more daily devotions, 4 E-blasts, and a partridge in a pear tree. Thus, I am working on my newsletter article well in advance. It has quickly become an extremely busy month.

When the first Sunday in 2021 arrives, we will be celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas 2020 and the second Sunday of the Christmas season. Still, the New Year will be upon us, finally!

I would like to begin by saying that 2021 will be so much better than 2020. Yes, I would *like* to say that. Okay, it *will* be better. One or more vaccines will become available for Covid-19. That's good. But roughly speaking, only half of our population seems to want to be vaccinated. Thus, the virus will probably continue to linger. I'm not sure what to expect but at some point in this new year, life will return to more of what we appreciate. There is hope on the horizon!!!

Our movement in the liturgical calendar is rather rapid at this time of year. We move from the second shortest season in the year, Advent, to the shortest season in the year, Christmas and then we quickly find ourselves in Epiphany. Epiphany means to make manifest or reveal. In this season we look for Christ's identity to be made known to all people.

January 6<sup>th</sup> always marks the beginning of the Epiphany season, as we remember the journey of the Magi and how a star *revealed* where the Christ child was to be found. I can also reveal where Christ will be/should be found, within each of us. Just as he continued to be with us through the darkness of 2020: comforting us, guiding us, encouraging us, calling us to service and simply being present within us and others, there is no doubt in my mind that we will be in for more of the same in 2021.

Although God doesn't give us everything we want, neither does God abandon us, ever. Whatever 2021 brings, God will be there too, and thus it will be a good year for us.

May Christ indeed be revealed powerfully to each and every one of us!

God's richest blessings be with you all in 2021 and always!!

*Pastor Cliff Hanus*

## New Year Blessings!

I almost forgot something that was so appreciated in 2020.

The year was very challenging! We lost so much of what we have loved about congregational life. Still, as the expression goes, *when the going gets tough the tough get going*. Many of our Mount Cross members really took that to heart. First off, thanks to Scott Stallard and Jan Loomis for doing so much audio/video work that enabled us to provide online worship, devotions, and Zoom meetings. (Scott continues to come in to tape music, lectors and the worship service. He has quite a schedule here.) To Daniel Schalesky for learning the system and for Mike Buskirk stepping up to keep our audio in line during in-person worship. Please realize that in early March none of that was happening. Heartfelt thanks to the two best musicians in Payson, Daria and Angeline. They have continued to provide uplifting music even when we were not gathering in the building. I also must offer thanks to Angeline's sons, Daniel and David. Their participation was a true blessing and a nice bonus. I especially delighted in the crazy amazing piano duets. Awesome!

Thanks also to Roger and Sally Rohrbach, Jan Harper, Nancy Kellet and Daria for providing music at *Worship Under the Pines*. Thanks to Sherrie Loomis for Altar Guild assistance Under the Pines. Many thanks to Sharon Vaplon and Herb Mueller for helping to set up and organize, *Worship Under the Pines* and in-person worship. Thanks to the lectors who shared God's Word either online or in person. Thanks to the offering counters who came in each week.

Thank you to all our Council members who served Mount Cross faithfully during very trying times. Special thanks to James Zorn for stepping into the dreaded position of Financial Secretary during 2020 and bringing quite a bit of useful experience.

We so appreciate the continued support of Altar Guild, for new positive relationships we are enjoying with them, for new people who have come forward to join Altar Guild and for Nancy Kellett stepping into the presidency. Nancy and Ernie are such a blessing.

Special thanks to the Property Committee that continued to gather each Thursday, and other times as well, to fix, clean, rake, repair and do whatever else was necessary to keep Mount Cross alive and well. Thanks also to Tony Andretta for being an ever present force to be reckoned with.

Thanks to Karyl Blair for her constant efforts and support and for Barry Peiffer who, like clockwork, shows up each weekday to do treasurer *stuff*.

We also truly appreciate people who felt safer at home but found ways to encourage and support the work of Mount Cross and Pastors Hanus. Kathryn and Bill Lee have been such a positive, shining light for us! Others found ways to engage the new "Love Note" card ministry through LSS of the Southwest. The response to that ministry has been outstanding as has the Prayer Shawl/Knit Caps Ministry participation. So many people also participated in feeding the *Homeless in the Forest* in October and November.

Thanks to Lenore who is the glue that holds together so much of what is done at and through Mount Cross Lutheran Church. She is very sticky!

To all I have neglected to mention, you are not forgotten and your participation in ministry has been greatly appreciated!

*There is much to be thankful for at Mount Cross!*

**One final thought:**

*When life gives us lemons we can make lemonade or become sourpusses.*

*Thanks to all who provided delicious lemonade in 2020. Keep it flowing in 2021.*



Our STATEMENT . . .

† ChristConnectingCommunity



Thanks to all the Mount Cross disciples who were able to contribute \$1,053 as 2020 SouperBowl donations. This amount was divided between the Deacon's Pantry and Saint Vincent de Paul food banks. In addition, items of canned or nonperishable food items were also donated which were given to Deacon's Pantry.

This year, the soup pots will once again be available during the service on Superbowl Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. Paper bags and the grocery cart will be available to receive non-perishable items. If you forget to bring food items, a financial gift of cash or a check will be welcomed. When writing a check, please make it out to Mount Cross Lutheran Church with "SouperBowl" in the memo line. All non-perishable items will be brought to Deacon's Pantry at the Presbyterian Church which is jointly supported by the four main-line congregations in Payson: Community Presbyterian, United Methodist, St. Paul's Episcopal and Mount Cross Lutheran.

Let's make an effort to exceed last year's totals! We are doing God's work with our hands.

The Global Missions Team

**Please note: Payson Community Kids Sloppy Joe Supper has been cancelled for the month of January.**

Election of Church Council officers for the 2021 year are as follows:

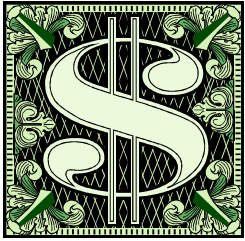
President	Un-decided as of newsletter publication
Vice President	Alice Natale
Secretary	Diana Fletcher
Financial Secretary	James Zorn

Supporting members are:  
Barbi Buchanan, Scott Fellin, Mary Havenor, John Proescholdt, and Libby Winter.

Prayers and support are appreciated and the Council welcomes your questions and input.



***Please note: the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the Annual Congregational Meeting, which will address the annual budget, will be held on Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, after the service. A copy of the proposed budget will be sent via email; for those who do not have an email, a printed copy will be provided.***



Mount Cross Financial Report (January – November 2020)

2020 Approved Budget . . . . .	\$312,284.00
Income . . . . .	\$242,066.00 (77.5% of 2020 budget)
Expenditures . . . . .	\$24,103.00 (77.2% of 2020 budget)

Total given to the Mortgage Fund during November 2020 . . . . .	\$735.00
Total paid out in 2020 for mortgage . . . . .	\$39,419.00

*Please note: above amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar.*

Total income received from Thrivent "Choice Dollars" in 2020	
Mount Cross . . . . .	\$530.00

The Church Council for 2020 met for the last time December 17<sup>th</sup>. Normally we have generated the budget for the coming year, but COVID 19 has made that a difficult task.

To that end, we will be calling for a Congregational meeting on Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, and will occur after the service.

The purpose of this Congregational Meeting is two fold:

- 1) Approve By-law change to identify fiscal year from July 1st - June 30th; and
- 2) Approve a Budget from January 1 - June 30, 2021.


Please join us for this important meeting.

Yours in Christ,  
James Zorn  
Financial Secretary

Office Hours in January


Friday, January 15  
9:00 – 11:30 a.m.  
*Pastors only*

Office Closed  
Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup>  
in observance of  
Martin Luther King  
Federal holiday.



**You Are Invited to Assist with...**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Sanctuary Un-Decorating Event<br>Tuesday, January 5 <sup>th</sup><br>11:00 a.m. | Property Committee<br>Christmas Tree Removal<br>Wednesday, January 6 <sup>th</sup><br>8:00 a.m. |
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As we continue to celebrate the twelve days of the Christmas season, we want to thank you for your thoughtful and beautiful Christmas cards and gifts.

Each one is greatly appreciated and reflects the love and light of the Christ child.

*Pastors Linda and Cliff Hanus*

Many thanks to all who made our Christmas celebration so wonderful! We are most grateful to Daria, Angeline, the hand bell choir, vocalists, Mike, Scott and Daniel, the lectors, Altar Guild, and Lenore for making it happen both online and in-person. It takes a team to put it all together. Good work everyone!

***"Glory to God in the highest..."***



## Journeys with Angels

### *Looking up*

You are invited to join the Women's Bible Study as we gather in spirit on January 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. The complete devotional can be read in the "Gather" magazine or obtain a copy at the church building by the mail boxes.

If you received the January-February "Gather" magazine, please note that it has two lessons in it, one for each month. The one for January starts on page 24 and says "Session One" under the top heading. Angels are not a major focus of Scripture, nor are they ever mentioned in our Christian creeds. Yet they show up with frequency at pivotal moments in the Old and New Testaments. This first study introduces us to some glimpses of angels in the Bible and the meaning of various words used in the Bible to describe angels. We will also challenge ourselves to look for angels who inspire us to honor God's awesome works throughout nature.

Angels are numerous (329) in the Bible, but they are not a uniform bunch. They move between heaven and earth sometimes with wings and sometimes with words and sometimes with ethereal ladders (Genesis 28:12). The Hebrew and Greek words for angels do not refer to wings at all. Angels are known for carrying messages from God to humans. Their existence tells us something about the immensity of God, the universe God has created, and our own human place and potential in relationship to God's cosmos.

Psalm 8 paints a grand, multisensory, panoramic portrait of creation, asking us to first raise our eyes to the heavens, then attune our ears to the cry of an earth-bound baby (v. 2), then again gaze upward to the stars of the night sky (v. 3) before planting our human feet firmly among the creatures of earth and sea in the psalm's second half. In the middle (v. 5) is the fulcrum: a dance of humans with angels. On this side of eternity, we earthlings are situated a little lower than those angels. On earth, it is our mission to glorify God.

Job 38:1-7 reflects a place where God honors Job by speaking directly to him – no angel intermediaries are employed – and yet God demands that Job pay attention to the angels. God reminds the long-suffering Job that human beings are cosmically younger than the angels and have much to learn about human purpose and destiny in the broad context of time and eternity.

Revelation 1:16a and 20 indicates that each star in 1:16a represents an angel. John has a vision of the risen Christ holding seven stars in his right hand. In *The Physics of Angels: Exploring the Realm Where Science and Spirit Meet*, published in 2014, theologian Matthew Fox and biologist Rupert Sheldrake write about the remarkable parallels between the new discoveries of modern science and the traditional theological exploration of the roles of angels. "*We now have a vastly expanded view of the heavens, with countless galaxies, quasars, pulsars, black holes, and 15 billion years of cosmic history. . . I think one of the things we need to do is recover a sense of the life of the heavens so that when we actually look at the stars (and) at the sky, we become aware of this divine presence in the sky and of the intelligences and the life within it* (p. 17).

After Psalm 8 and Job 38: 1-7, the author writes that the third major time we meet cherubim in the Bible is in a vivid, downright weird vision given to the prophet Ezekiel. (Ezekiel 1: 5-14; 10:15-20) Scholars believe much of the symbolism of the descriptions is simply lost to us. Maybe that's the point—they are strange enough to make us realize that we aren't in relationship with a tame God, a God our human minds can comprehend. These bizarre cherubim awaken us to awe and wonder.

The first angel on the scene in the New Testament is Gabriel who also first appears in Daniel 8:16. The only other named angel is Michael, who appears three times, all in the book of Daniel. Gabriel means "God is my strength." He fulfills his messenger role admirably as he delivers stunning news to Zechariah, and then to young Mary. Gabriel assures Mary that God is her strength, and that her impossible pregnancy will result in the gift of a Savior for the whole world. It is unclear which angel appeared and terrified a group of earthy shepherds while delivering the most beautiful news in the world: "To you is born this day . . . a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord."



This first session helps us begin the spiritual exercise of looking for angels above us (Psalm 8), beyond us (Job) and among us (Luke 2). Next month, we will come up against angels who *confront* us.

Copies of the January Bible Study can be found on a clipboard by the church mailboxes.



#### REMINDER TO COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS:

Committees that were awaiting their December bank statements, your annual reports are due on Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup>. If you are the chairperson for a committee that does not rely on banking statements to complete your report, the due date for your report has passed, but will still be accepted up until the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month.



*“Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and restore a right spirit within me, cast me not away from your presence, take not your Holy Spirit from me, restore to me the joy of your salvation, and deliver me from sin.” Psalm 51*



#### January Birthdays

- 11 Ernie Kellett  
Patricia Proescholdt
- 12 Jim Cheek
- 13 Marilyn Black
- 16 Sharon Schimke
- 18 Lynn Sloan
- 19 Libby Winter
- 24 Kathryn Lee  
Sherri Taylor
- 26 Bob Marley
- 27 Tamé Adams
- 28 Nina Slonaker
- 31 Wes Hathaway

#### January Wedding Anniversaries

- 21 John/Barbi Buchanan
- 28 Gary/Barbara Greer

**God's work.  
Our hands.**



We have a warming center. Now that Christmas is over, it is easy for many to forget that hunger remains year around. Help the warming center, help Lutheran World Hunger, help those who suffer from hunger... or who need a coat, a pair of shoes, or just a friend. Be a friend. That is a part of God's work.

It's a new year and there are plenty of opportunities for you to beautify the altar with a gift of fresh flowers. Some of you may be new to Mount Cross and may not be familiar with the process of giving flowers; the procedure is as follows:



1. Locate the flower chart on the west wall of the Narthex (close to the mailboxes).
2. Pick your desired date, place your name on the line next to that date, and provide a reason for the flower gift.
3. Either buy flowers and bring them to the church. You may also order flowers and have them delivered to the church OR call Pastor Linda to arrange delivery/pick up for your chosen date.
4. On Sunday, you may pick up your flowers after the service. Take them home and enjoy their beauty.

If you have any questions, please call Pastor Linda at 474-2552.

## Spiritual Growth Opportunities

### Ongoing opportunities:

#### Daily Devotions

A daily devotional time, led by Pastors Linda and Cliff Hanus, is available online via the church website on Facebook.

Online devotional held Tuesdays through Saturdays, 8:30 AM.



As we look towards a new year, a bit jaded, a bit exhausted, and with feelings of loss, the usual catch phrase of Happy New Year just does not ring quite as easy as in the past.

Being a glass half full person, the thoughts of what this new year will bring are challenging. We have the rebirth of hope, with the possibility of a COVID vaccine around the corner, and we have new opportunities to look forward to in our walk with Christ. We have the rebirth of joy as the world starts to recover. We have the survivors guilt to deal with as we celebrate those who now live in heaven. All in all, let's hope this new year brings us to terms with what God wants us to do in this world he created.

I read an article from the Order of St. Luke magazine at the November Council Meeting about our lives with God. It reminded us that if we are not praising God, as well as asking for his blessings and intercession, we are not in a close relationship with him. That relationship is so important to us, but like a friendship it requires us to thank God, to praise God, and to appreciate all he has done.

In addition in a recent Bible study with several ladies who do not attend our church, we had a lesson devoted to "spiritual dryness." What are the signs of our being in this situation? Briefly we have seasons of such dryness. For instance, we pray as a habit. We are not praying out of joy, but with a feeling of duty. We may be overwhelmed with tasks, or grieving, or hopelessness, but we pray while on empty. The suggestion with this is to read Psalms 51.

When we neglect prayer or conversation with God, he feels distant. He is still there, but we have drifted away from the one thing we need the most...God. It is our job to reconnect. Talk to God. It does not require a beautiful prayer, just a conversation. Soon the reconnection is there.

Many of us have dealt with considerable loss in this past year, with the result of negative thinking creeping into our lives. The next step can be judging others, etc. Stop the press. Read Romans 14. Just throw that negativity down the drain, and pick up the cup of joy in a long talk with God. Rejoice, look for possibilities, and take a few steps to restoring your soul. Sing the doxology. Praise God from whom all blessings flow....sing it until you feel it.

*Alice Natale*

WELCA president

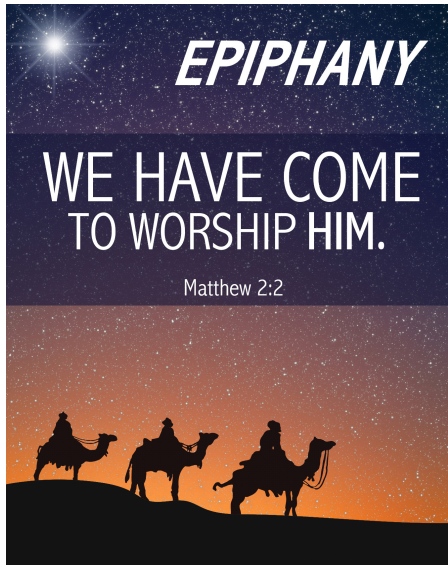
### **Lector Schedule for January 2021 9:30 AM Sunday Service**

3	10	17	24	31
Nancy Kellett	Jean Larson	Volunteer needed	Volunteer needed	Volunteer needed

The online service lector for January is Libby Winter.

Thank you to Pastors Hanus and Alice Natale for handling Altar Guild duties in December.

## EPIPHANY – JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup>

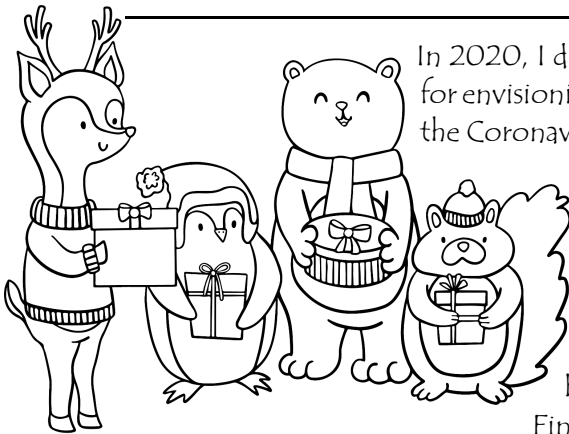


Epiphany is celebrated every year on the first day after the Christmas season – January 6<sup>th</sup>. On the festival of Epiphany, we celebrate the arrival of the magi at Jesus' home. This event established Jesus' worldwide significance. As a result, Epiphany is a time to celebrate the presence of Christ as the light of the world.

Though Epiphany celebrates the revelation of Christ to the nations and the arrival of the three kings, we should note that tradition has expounded upon what is actually recorded in Scripture.

The second chapter of Matthew does not indicate that the magi were kings, nor does it indicate how many magi visited Jesus. The Old Testament reading for Epiphany (Isaiah 60) speaks about camels coming from three different places (Midian, Ephah, and Sheba) and this, along with the mention of three gifts (gold, frankincense, and myrrh) is what has given us the tradition of the three kingly wise men.

Regardless of the accuracy of our traditional story, that three foreign kings would come such a long distance to bow down and worship a child is a powerful story. That a child of such humble origins can be the focus of so much attention requests our wonder-filled consideration.



### My 2020 PRESENT ♥

In 2020, I did not get what I wanted! As a newly elected president, I had such ideas for envisioning our Mount Cross future!! But, all that evaporated into the ether when the Coronavirus turned into a pandemic. Rather than press toward goals for growth, ministry and outreach, our vision was focused on what we daily found on our plate to deal with NEXT!

And, this is what I got: Vice President, Scott Stallard, always gave me support and truth; Secretary, Diana Fletcher, spoke softly with her voice but her fingers transcribed volumes of important words of Council business, which was recorded for your knowledge of Council discussions; Financial Secretary, James Zorn, a "quick study" with Mount Cross finances gave an open heart to our Mount Cross mission; Alice Natale is full of sage advice...when she speaks, I listen; John Proescholdt sees both the big picture of

a matter and attends to the minute details of the same; Sharry Lien shares our history of success as she continues to impart present touchstones; and Roger Zen walked his talk as he added President Libby to his Call Chain and every week called me to see how I was doing amid this pandemic!

Our Pastors Hanus are ex-officio members of the Council and they attended every Council meeting and always gave spiritual direction when it seemed the compass couldn't find "true north." And, with almost 16 years of Mount Cross employment, Office Administrator, Lenore White, always found answers to my *every little question!* In fact, all staff members have only showed me a willingness to work together for the benefit of Mount Cross!

No, instead of getting what I wanted...MY PLANS...I got this Dream Team to experience the present!!

God has provided me quite a lesson and a gift in 2020. While I started the year thinking MY PLANS for the future were important, God gifted me with HIS PLANS and let me learn the value of simply staying in the PRESENT!

My gratitude to each of you for the extraordinary opportunity you have given me.

*Libby Winter*

2020 Congregational President