



CROSS OF GRACE NEWS

January 2024



Merry Christmas everyone!! I hope that everyone's Christmas has been a time of joy and also a time of drawing closer to God. As we have started our Christian New Year with Advent and Christmas, it soon will be time for us to look ahead to Epiphany (1/6), the Baptism of the Lord (1/7), and Transfiguration Sunday (2/11), but not too far off is the season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday (2/14 – which is also Valentine's Day).

The Christian year is a way that we establish a rhythm of faith, and while our greater culture touches on the biggest holidays (Xmas and Easter), it misses so many incredible days of the year. As we work our way through the year, I'd urge you to take some time to explore the meaning of these lesser known holy-days (aka holidays), and to consider how each holy day might be a time to grow in our own faith.

Are you wrestling with our understanding of Baptism? What even is Baptism? Were the magi predicting Christ's death with the gifts they gave? What does it mean for several "pagan" (or more likely Zoroastrian) magi to show reverence to a poor Jewish boy? This would be like a Christian seeking insight from another faith tradition. These days invite us into the deeper story of faith and help us to understand more richly what it means to devote our lives to God – that God isn't **something** we need to carve time out for, but rather God is "in, with, over, and under" every moment we live, and how can we be more attuned to what the Holy Spirit is already doing to recreate our broken world.

Lastly, I'd like to invite you to the book study beginning January 6th, we will be studying *Holy Envy* by Barbara Brown Taylor, which is a book about Christians interacting with other faiths – rather than seeing them as rivals or threats, instead looking at their most beautiful practices and cultivating a “holy envy” of these sacred practices from other traditions. It is a short and relatively light read (especially considering the weight of the topic), and we have plenty of copies of *Holy Envy* still available (it is also available on the Hoopla app, which is available to anyone with a Putnam or Kanawha library card).

Blessings throughout this Christian year, and may we all come to grow in knowledge and love of God and love our neighbors even more.

Grace and Peace,
-Pr. Darick J. Biondi



Much fun was had by all of the ladies in attendance at the Ladies' Christmas party!

Thank you to Rose Mary Kutz and Ellen Bragg for putting together such an amazing event!

Ladies - we are going to add another piece of fun to our Christmas party next year!

Be prepared for an ugly sweater competition!
Keep an eye out for sales as this Christmas season winds down!!!



We have been blessed to have such an amazing space and an awesome staff during our time at the Hampton Inn.

However, the time has come to move to a bigger space as our congregation grows.

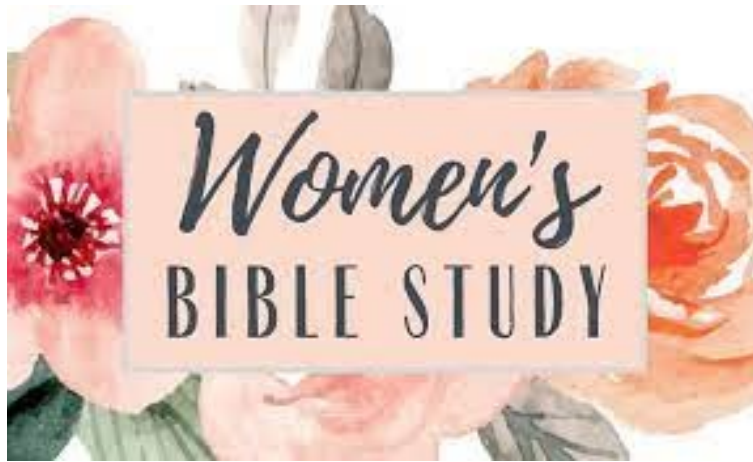
So, we will hold our last worship service at the Hampton Inn on January 7th, 2024.

Beginning January 14th, Sunday School and Worship will be held at Area 34! Times for Sunday School and worship will remain the same.

For those who are new to this facility, the address is 971 WV 34, Hurricane, WV 25526.



The next meeting of the Leadership Team will be January 21, 2024 after worship.



All ladies are welcome to join in the Women's Bible Study on Wednesday, January 10th at 10:00am at Tudors on Rt. 60 in St. Albans.



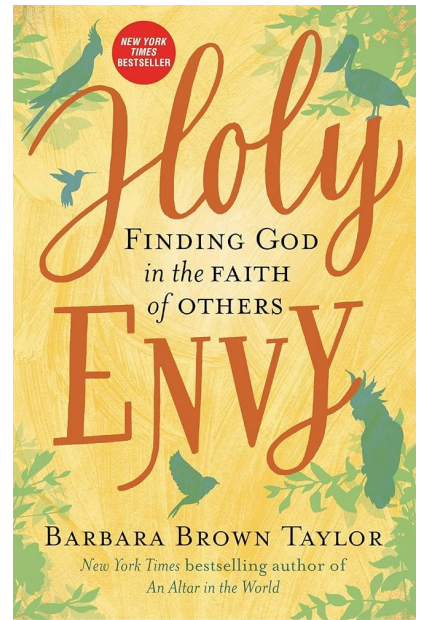
We will be providing a meal for the Rock Ministries on January 8th.

If you would like to provide food for the meal, money to assist in purchasing food for the meal or to help with this awesome ministry, please reach out to Susan Santrock.

Many thanks for the generosity of our amazing congregation!

Our next book study, which will begin on January 6, 2024, will be on Holy Envy, by Barbara Brown Taylor.

See Mike Kutz to get on the list for book order for this book study.



How To Share Information

Have information about an upcoming event, a prayer request, or any other news you would like to share with the congregation? Send it to Lauren anytime at crossofgracelutheran@gmail.com!

Bear in mind, the deadline to have it in the weekly email is Friday morning each week.

The deadline for the newsletter is the 20th of every month.

PRAYER CHAIN



Cross of Grace has a prayer chain. This is a group of people that have volunteered to add people's prayer requests to their routine prayers.

A person with a prayer request contacts

Ellen Bragg who is the first contact on the prayer chain and then the need is passed down the chain with Ellen calling the next person and then that person passes the need along to the next person in the chain.

The church prayer chain is alive and well and looking for more members as well as people to pray for. If you have a prayer need please call Ellen Bragg at 304-590-0811.

She is the beginning of the prayer chain and will pass along the prayer request. If you would like to join the prayer chain please drop a note in the collection plate with your name and phone number so that she can add you to the prayer chain.

The current Prayer Chain is:

Ellen Bragg
Debbie Goff
Rose Mary Kutz
Rosa McKinney
Mary Baker

If you need to contact someone on the prayer chain please use the directory for their contact information.



Card Ministry

We have a thriving card ministry that attempts to send a card and recognize important Anniversaries in members of our congregation's lives. If you want to be included in this ministry please return the following information by placing it in the collection plate.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Birthday: _____

Baptism Date: _____

Wedding Anniversary Date: _____

Phone Number: _____