

**THE MONTH OF
SEPTEMBER**

2026

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH NEDERLAND, TEXAS

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Message from Pastor

When Reading Declines, Discipleship Suffers

Adapted from Lauren Ducommun at www.thegospelcoalition.org

The 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress delivered sobering news. On this biennial test of a representative sample of US students, reading scores fell sharply from the two previous assessments. Thirty-three percent of eighth graders and forty percent of fourth graders are not reading at the basic level. The governing board noted that a third of eighth graders likely cannot identify basic literary elements- sequence of events, character traits, or the main idea.

That means a large share of the children in churches may struggle to read at all, including the Bible.

This should not surprise us. In 2024 Rose Horowitch observed that even students at elite colleges often cannot finish books. "It's not that they don't want to do the reading," she wrote. "It's that they don't know how." If that is true in universities, it will shape how well church members can read and understand Scripture.

Literacy Gaps Become Bible Gaps

The Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God. It is also a literary work with characters, genres, and a metanarrative. Kristie Anyabwile puts it well: we read it "as an inspired literary work from the mouth of God... for the purpose of transforming hearts by unfolding God's great story of redemption." 2 Samuel 22 says "The Word of the Lord proves true; He is a shield for those who take refuge in him." Dr Luther encourages us to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" Holy Scripture. If young believers cannot follow a text's flow or grasp its main idea, their spiritual growth will suffer now and later.

Literacy work is not a new church project. It has long been part of the Protestant tradition. During the Industrial Revolution, Christians such as Robert Raikes and Hannah More taught children to read on Sundays so they could read the Bible. That work helped give rise to what we know as Sunday School. In early twentieth-century Ireland, Protestant convictions drove literacy efforts. Wherever Protestant missionaries went, they made reading a priority so people could hear God in His Word. A core value of Lutheranism has always been education.

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Read Aloud to Build Fluency

One proven help is reading aloud. Research shows that being read to improves children's comprehension and fluency. Listening comprehension often sets the ceiling for reading comprehension. The goal is not a classroom full of early readers, but young people who become confident enough to read the Bible on their own. As media shifts toward short-form video, that work only grows more urgent. Video adaptations of Scripture have a place, but the Bible remains a text meant to be heard and read.

Start at Church and at Home

Teachers and parents can start simply. Read longer Bible stories and substantial passages in class rather than leaning on video curricula that use little Scripture. Read missionary biographies and keep good children's literature on hand. We can do some of this at church, but most discipleship happens at home. Parents should read to their children, especially from the Bible. Also, there have never been more great children's picture books and chapter books available. Classics such as *Charlotte's Web* and *The Wind in the Willows* still serve families well. Resources like Sarah Mackenzie's Read-Aloud Revival, *Stories Woven in Silver*, and *The Redeemed Reader* can guide parents. Audiobooks are no substitute for a parent's voice, but they can expose children to richer language and help parents who themselves struggle to read

God's peace and all the best,
Pastor Joshua Knippa



LWML FALL RALLY

Saturday, September 12,
9-9:30 registration –\$5/ person

Includes breakfast, snacks, & light lunch

Hope Lutheran Church
1322 Ninth St. Winnie, TX



We're having a "Closet Clean-out" to benefit the Orphan Grain Train.



We are collecting ALL types of GENTLY USED, CLEAN clothing--including jackets, purses, shoes, blankets, jeans, pants, shirts, t-shirts, blouses, & skirts.

ONLY NEW in package socks & underwear!

Bring your bagged CLOSET CLEAN OUT items to YOUR church by **September 6**.

The Orphan Grain Train Team will have their trailer on site at Hope, Winnie,

SUNDAYS 9:30AM

Adult Bible Class

9:15am Jeannie Heider,
Conf. Rm. B
Pastor Josh, Conf. Rm. A

**Children's Sunday
School**
Education Building



Join us for a
Women's Bible Study
"10 Women of the Bible"
led by **Jeannie Heider**
Sundays @ **9:15am**
in Conference Rm. B



RALLY DAY

Sunday, September 13

9:15am **Women's Bible Study**
9:30am **Children Sunday School**
Adult Bible Class
10:30am **Worship Service**
Bibles presented
New Members Welcomed

Pot Luck Meal
after Worship in the FLC.

Fit & Fun Fellowship

will meet Tuesday, September 15th,
from 1-3:30pm in the FLC
foyer. Bring a snack.



To: Funeral Meals
in memory of
Judy Sturgis

given by:
Susan & Ken Ludwig
Becky & Dennis Neeb

In memory of
Judy Sturgis
given by:

Monica Bresee
Brandy Kotz
Joyce & Nick Ewing
Jeannie Heider
Sandra & Cary Erickson
Pam Withrow
Carolyn Barras
Gail Landry
Mike Sturgis
Marla & Wade
Kieschnick
LuAnn & Tom Hansen
Melissa & Nathan
Stansbury
Joyce Marks
Clara & David Bergstein
Ida Trojcak
Ruth Ann & Walter
Perryman
Helga Champagne

In memory of
Shelby Luke
given by:
Monica Bresee
Brandy Kotz



To: Memorial Fund
in memory of
Pat Biar

given by:
Monica Bresee
Brandy Kotz
Joyce & Nick Ewing

To: Memorial Fund
in memory of
Ryan Wolford

given by:
Jeannie Heider
Sandra & Cary Erickson
Pam Withrow

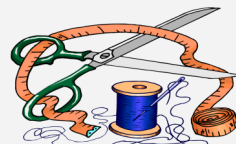
In memory of
Sarah Kieschnick
given by:
Martha Ann Murphy
Staci & Glen Duff
Mike Sturgis
Monica Bresee
Brandy Kotz
Joyce & Nick Ewing
Ruth Ann & Walter
Perryman
Helga Champagne

In memory of
Mary Helen Terrell
given by:
Monica Bresee
Brandy Kotz
Joyce & Nick Ewing

QUILTING CIRCLE

In August we had **100 quilts blessed** before
being sent to **Orphan Grain Train** along with Health
Kits & School Backpacks. If you'd like to join us come
Thursdays @ 9:30am-3pm in Conf. Rms.

Call **Rosemarie** if you know someone
who needs a quilt @ 409-543-3928.



Deadline for
October Newsletter
is Monday, September 21st!

SEPTEMBER

Birthdays

- 1—Brett Becker
Graham Smalley
- 2—Colton Carter
- 3—Brenda Dunlap
Bodhi Kieschnick
Ryan Molbert
Larry Singleton
- 4—Beckie Block
Judy Jordan
- 6—Clint Caywood
Jeremy Lavespere
Melissa Lavespere
- 7—Harley Guarnera
- 8—Zach Wiley
- 9—Colton Tate
- 10—Tanya Lewis
- 11—Jon Erickson
Kris Halbert
- 12—Wayne Halbert
Tom Haas
Kensey Stahl
- 13—Sheri Furby
Jo Strahan
- 14—Travis Gunter
- 15—Dianne Krautz
- 16—Lance Hansen
Yolanda Schrader
Judy Sturgis
Travis Wiedenfeld
- 17—Rachel Clevon
- 18—David Collins
- 20—Blake Borel
Craig Rising
Judy Zizmont

- 21—Caity Molbert
- 22—Carolyn Barras
- 23—Chad Irvine
Morgan Irvine
- 24—Dee Dunlap
- 25—Peyton Caywood
- 26—Kyra Day
Karin Smits
- 27—Donny Gribnau
Todd Shuford
Tim Terrell
- 29—Brandy Kotz
Daniel Wheeler
Laurie Wiley

Anniversaries

- 5—Sue & David Tindel
- 6—Kathleen & Glenn Tate
- 12—Lisa & Art Richard
- 22—Becky & Dennis Neeb
- 23—Traci & Brad Perryman
- 26—Pam & Daryl Williams
- 30—Debbie & James Cook

Find us on Facebook
to keep up with our
activities, announcements
& information



UBM Needs You!

United Board of Missions
is in need of Volunteers
(stocking & organizing pantries).



If you're interested, please
contact either—

Pam or **Steve Vincent** @ 409-718-5767
or **Carolyn Barras** @ 409-963-7866 or
Lori Halbert @ 409-719-6235. Thanks!

UBM Pantry is in need of: pasta, rice, canned
fruit, & canned meat. Cash donations accepted.

See additional flyers on our bulletin Board in the
Narthex of different opportunities & services that
UBM provides. We've got several representa-
tives who are members & on the Board.



Please contact the church office
at **409-722-1609** upon the ill-
ness, hospitalization, and/or
death of a member or loved one.

Please update us with the status of prayer
requests. We try to notify members via FB
page and text messages of deaths &
funeral arrangements.

ECE NEWS

First days of school are Wednesday, Septem-
ber 9th and Thursday September 10th.

Lunch Fundraisers are Wednesday, September
23rd and Thursday, September 24th.

We are looking forward to a great new school
year and are excited to have our kiddos back.

God's Blessings,
Veronica Ochoa
& ECE Staff





Holy Cross Lutheran Church—Nederland, TX



September 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Elder: David Smalley 254-913-4205 Altar Guild: Christie LeJune Kathy Pinnt	Lay Readers: 6—Kathy Pinnt 13—Babette Ford 20—Leah Elisar 27—Dannis McCullough	1	2	3 9:30am Quilting	4	5
6 9:15am Ladies Class 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship with Communion	7 Office Closed 	8 8:30am Circuit Professionals @ St. John's Beaumont 8 8:30am ECE Chapel 1-3:30pm Fit and Fun Fellowship	9 First Day for ECE 6pm Midweek Classes Confirmation, Young Adults, and Adult Bible Class	10 9:30am Quilting	11	12  9am LWML Fall Zone Rally Hope Lutheran In Winnie
13 9:15am Ladies Class 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Pot Luck Meal in FLC after worship 	14 6pm Board of Education Meeting	15 9:30am ECE Chapel 6pm Midweek Classes Confirmation, Young Adults, and Adult Bible Class	16 9:30am ECE Chapel 6pm Midweek Classes Confirmation, Young Adults, and Adult Bible Class	17 9:30am Quilting	18	19
20 9:15am Ladies Class 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship with Communion	21	22 9:30am ECE Chapel	23 9:30am ECE Chapel 6pm Midweek Classes Confirmation, Young Adults, and Adult Bible Class	24 9:30am Quilting	25	26
27 9:15am Ladies Class 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Spare Change Sunday 	28	29 9:30am ECE Chapel 6pm Church Council	30 9:30am ECE Chapel 6pm Midweek Classes Confirmation, Young Adults, and Adult Bible Class	Ushers: 6—Thad Kieschnick Daryl Williams 13—Stuart Kieschnick Ken Ludwig 20—Todd Kieschnick Ronnie Vize 27—Chad Ford David Smalley	Acolytes: 6—Greer Smalley Hugh Smalley 13—Bryson Malbert Jackson Katz 20—Brooklyn Riley Carrigan McCullough 27—Abel Trevino Landon McCullough	