



Beka's Buzz

What a fun month of March we have had. Lenten meals, Youth Groups, Choir practices, the Blood Drive, and the Super Bowl of Caring support. I was sitting in staff meeting wondering out loud what I would write about for this newsletter? We have been doing so much and at the same time we have been doing the same things. Then I thought to myself, outreach! We have done a good amount of outreach this year so far. In three months of 2023, we have supported SOCKS, Catawba Heights, and did a Blood Drive through Red Cross. We consistently support SOCKS by giving food, paper products, and feminine hygiene products. We hosted a blood drive where 26 people came together and donated blood. Some of those people were members of Holy C and some of those people were complete strangers. It was special to see a mix of people come to love their neighbors by donating. Not to mention how cool it was to have members of the community in our space. I think this was a unique opportunity to serve and host the community.



Faithful Families Tip – Resurrection Collage

We see resurrection in all kinds of small places all around, especially in springtime: a baby bird pecking out her shell or a flower poking out of the earth. What signs of resurrection do you see all around? Gather up pictures from magazines, the internet, or a newspaper to use to make your collage. You can even add your own pictures, paintings, or drawings. When you're done, share it with other members of your family, or make it together!

We can't forget our loyal volunteers who helped make the day run. We had members checking people in and giving people snacks after they gave blood. It was a great day to love our neighbors. Catawba Heights has been a new relationship that started by donating school supplies, and in dropping off our donations we learned that they have a clothing closet. We were able to collect cold weather clothes for 4 months and stock their clothing closet. Last Wednesday (March 15), I was lucky enough to make our last drop of clothes and Souper Bowl of Caring donation off. I got to meet the principal, Staci Bradley and their content teacher, Angela Molla. Ms. Molla took me to see the clothing closet. Friends, the clothing closet was so full. She said they have been able to give clothes to kids who've had accidents, need a coat, or even need clean clothes. Giving clothes to the clothing closet is more than giving a need, it's giving dignity. No one should have to wear soiled or dirty clothes, and no one should have to be cold because they can't afford a coat. It's amazing to see the ways that we have been able to continue to love our young neighbors. We look forward to having more ways to support Catawba Heights Elementary school.

-Deacon Beka

Discipleship Academy

This month's Discipleship Academy class is an elective class about Martin Luther. This class is a one credit elective. Class will be April 23rd at 5 pm. For more information contact Deacon Beka or Pastor Micah.

Luther Lock Out



The Holy Comforter Comment



April Newsletter

Worship with us Sundays at 10:30 am.

Each 10:30 am service is livestreamed on the website and transmitted to the parking lot over the radio and communion is served to those present.

Micah Kearney, Pastor
Email: mkearney@holyc.org

Greg Cline, Organist /Choirmaster

Chelsea Spicer, Office manager

Beka Forst, Deacon of Discipleship

Church Office Hours: Monday—Friday: 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

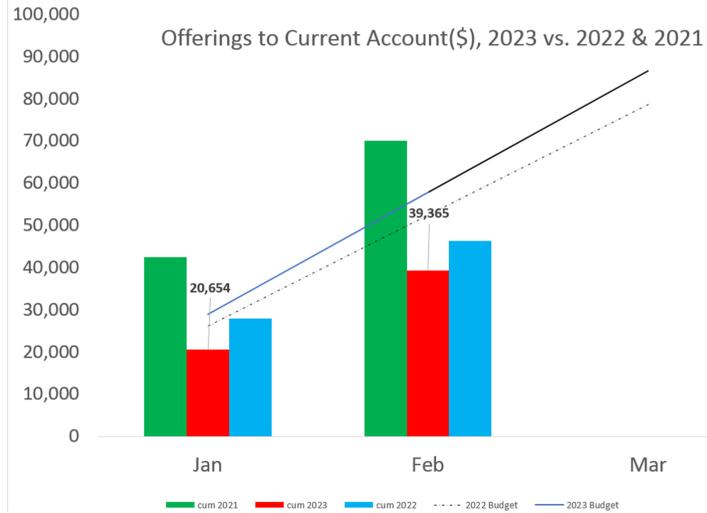
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Treasurer's Report for February 2023

Holy Comforter's operating deficit (expenses in excess of offering income) during February was \$7,435.42. Total giving to support Holy Comforter's routine expenses for the month was \$18,710.75. The budget estimate of the amount needed each month in 2023 is \$28,901.58. The year-to-date deficit, through February 28, was \$15,336.51. Year-to-date spending was \$3,101.91 below the amount planned in the 2023 budget. The adjacent chart compares this year's offering income, by month, with that of the two previous years. This and last year's budget tracks are also presented in the graph.



-Warren Heller, *Treasurer*



Music Notes

At the time of this writing we are 2/3rd through our Lenten journey. Little can be said yet concerning how glorious the Easter Vigil services were. I think that goes without saying. Easter is Glorious regardless of what we humans do. Christ did it all already!

That being said, we are currently preparing for Palm Sunday...when the children (Kid's Club) will gather with the church choir in the courtyard (weather permitting) to present the gathering anthem, "Wave the Palms!"

Maundy Thursday will feature the anthem, "Set me as a Seal Upon Your Heart." The text continues to echo the preparation into Good Friday..."For love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love; neither can the floods drown it!"

Good Friday service concludes as the congregation is engulfed in darkness as we sing the final words of the thief on the cross asking, "Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your Kingdom."

Sunrise and 10:30 services will celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord. This year the latter service will feature guest musicians from the Catawba Valley Brass Ensemble. Our balcony will be filled to the brim as we utilize the "Festival Setting" of the liturgy which include fanfares and descants symbolic of the day.

All this leads me to say how profoundly grateful I am for the gifts of our church musicians, both ringers and singers. Church choir, chamber and adult handbell ensembles devote many hours throughout the year to provide musical offerings. This Lenten season our Evening Prayer services were accompanied by assistant, Julia Gunter, as well as Erin and Tyler Cassel, and Gabriel and Nathaniel Kearney.

I personally find it challenging to express how all of our ministers of music "minister" to me. So many folks express their appreciation of the music within the body of our services of worship. I share those words with the choirs...and it means a lot to know that lives are touched through this ministry.

To all of you a most Blessed Easter Day and Season!

Greg Cline
Organist /Choirmaster

Weekly Gatherings

- **Sundays:**
9:30 am - Sunday School
10:10 am - Church & Chamber Choir
10:30 am - Worship
5:00 pm - HCY
5:00 pm - Adult Handbells
6:00 pm - Church Choir
- **2nd & 4th Tuesdays:**
7:00 pm - Nar-Anon Meeting
- **Wednesdays:**
4:00 pm - Adult Faith Formation Video
5:30 pm - Youth Handbells
7:00 pm - Chamber Choir

Easter Sunday April 9th will not have Sunday school, or small group in acknowledgement of the holiday.

The schedule above is our expected weekly programs and meetings.

When exceptions happen they will be posted on the website calendar and in weekly emails.

Monthly Gatherings

- ◆ First Communion Class - April 1st, 9am
- ◆ Easter Egg Hunt - April 8th, 2pm
- ◆ Prime Timers - April 13th, 10:30am
- ◆ Outreach Meeting - April 20th, 7pm

HOLY WEEK worship schedule

Palm Sunday, April 2nd 10:30AM

Maundy Thursday, April 6th 7:00PM

Good Friday, April 7th 7:00PM

Easter Sunrise Worship, April 9th 7:00AM

Easter Worship, April 9th 10:30AM



It is often interesting to find out how people feel about Holy Week. Easter is relatively universal in how people appreciate it. It is pure good news, pure joy, God's victory over sin and death in Jesus Christ, the pinnacle of not only our worship but also of the promises we hold to in Christ. The rest of Holy week, however, is a mixed bag for many folks. Palm Sunday begins the Sunday before Easter with Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, welcomes like a conquering king, celebrated by the crowds. Decades ago the Church realized many people missed Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, so in to make sure they at least got a glimpse of the whole story Palm Sunday shifted into Passion Sunday. It is now an interesting progression, as the service begins in celebration but ends with grief as the mood shifts, the crowds change their opinions, and we hear of Jesus crucifixion.



Maundy Thursday, named for the Latin word "mandatum," or "mandate," focuses on Jesus' last supper with the disciples. From John's gospel we hear the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet and his command to love one another as he as loved us, a lesson of humble service from the gospel that has the highest Christology, or most leans into the divine nature of Christ. As we gather around the altar for communion we remember from the other gospels how Jesus commands us to remember him, an act that means more to re-member, to put together again, than it simply means to "think about him." Maundy Thursday is a proclamation of God's deep love through Jesus, and a command to share that love with others.

On Good Friday we hear the story of Jesus' crucifixion, how the crowds turned on him, how the disciples abandoned him, and how even Jesus felt forsaken by God. We see the sins of the world rebel against Christ and put on the cross the one who is perfect love. In Jesus' suffering we realize that no matter what we go through, Jesus knows our suffering and pain, and enters into it with us. It is a solemn night when we realize that, though we were not there, we participate in the sin that nailed Jesus to the cross.

Though, death is not the end of the story, and on Easter morning as the sun rises we realize that a new era has dawned as well, an era where sin and death that dominated our minds mere days before have been defeated, and we celebrate the promise that Christ draws us up into everlasting life as well.

Our lives of faith can often mirror Holy Week. We celebrate Christ as Lord, like the crowds in Jerusalem, without really knowing what that even means. We may become disenchanted when we realize what we had hoped that would mean isn't what Jesus promises, that God is not a fairy godmother granting wishes, for instance, that God does not exist to fulfill all our hopes and dreams. We struggle with disappointment, with hard realizations about our sinfulness and selfishness, before we realize that a life of faith is about aligning our hearts with God's, not getting what we want, and we are then able to celebrate the good news that God DOES bring in Jesus Christ.

We need the whole story of Holy Week, because it is very much our story, and to truly celebrate the glory of Easter takes wrestling with what comes before it. May this Holy Week and Easter be a faith-enriching time for you, wherever you find you self in your journey of faith.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Micah

Lector

April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - Ashley Hyman

Easter Lilies

All are welcome and invited to purchase Easter Lilies this year that will be displayed



on the altar during the Easter Services and then taken home to enjoy. If you would like to purchase one or more please use an order form during a weekly service or online through the link in the weekly email. They are \$17.50/ plant this year.

**payments may be made online, in person at the church office or by mail via check/ cash.*

Altar Flowers

April 23 - Will and Katie Howard in celebration of the baptism of Mackenzie Jane Howard.

April 30 - Susan and Don Nelson in loving memory of our son, Charles Grafton.

Sign up for Altar flowers on sign up genius – follow the button on the weekly email. The price per vase is \$22.50, or \$45 for both.

Baptism

Please join us in celebrating with Mackenzie Howard for her baptism on April 23rd.

Children's Church

April 2, 16, 23, 30- Volunteers Needed

April 9 - Beka Forst

Children's Church is available for preK - 5th graders every Sunday during the readings, the Gospel, and the Sermon. Children's church takes place in the fellowship hall.

Sunday School

Sundays at 9:30 am



For all Ages and Stages

April Sunday School Teachers

Pre-k Class:

Mark and Rebecca Yount

Elementary Class:

Rachel Bailey

Middle/High School Class:

Deacon Beka

Adults:

Pastor Micah

Courtyard Update

"We are excited to be able to celebrate the completion of our courtyard project after worship on March 26th! Will Howard and his team have done incredible work to make the courtyard both safe and beautiful, as well as do wonderful work on the landscaping and lighting on the grounds as well.

The lights in the courtyard, sanctuary, and bell tower really showcase the unique architecture of Holy Comforter, as well as make our grounds more welcoming, inviting, and safer place to gather. Thank you to the Yount family for the initial gift to get this project started, and thank you for your support of this project to make it possible!"



Easter Egg Hunt

APRIL 8th 2-4 PM

PreK & Elementary Age Groups up to 5th Grade

Egg Hunt

Join us for our Easter egg hunt on April 8th for Pre-K through 5th grade age groups. We hope to see you there!



Last Chance to Join us at the Beach!

For 30 years Holy Comforter had reserved the South Carolina Lutheran Coastal Retreat Center until the Covid pandemic. Several years have passed during quarantine periods and various issues that prevented us from attending. We are reserved this year for the following:

Thursday, May 25 - Monday, May 29. (Memorial Day Weekend)
\$135.00 per night/per room (2 night minimum)
Deadline for reservations is **Easter Sunday, April 9.**

[Checks made to: Holy Comforter Lutheran \(memo: Coastal retreat\)](#)

Because of a variety of time off, family health, and other responsibilities our staff won't be present, but we encourage members to enjoy this time together. Worship opportunity at St. Marks on Sunday at 10am. Google: SCLRC and click coastal retreat for details.

April Birthdays

We recognize and celebrate these birthdays! We are thankful for the Life and Spirit of those we celebrate. May the blessings of God flow in the life of each of you.

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|--------------|-----------|--|
| April | 1 | Abby Featherstone |
| April | 3 | Garrett Carpenter |
| April | 4 | Sherry Alexander
Susan Clark
Sandra Cline |
| April | 5 | Wade Rhyne |
| April | 7 | Theresa Keller |
| April | 8 | Shirley Causby
Fran Holland |
| April | 14 | Rianna Nance
Suzanne Fairbairn |
| April | 16 | Misty Koehler
Debbie Neagle |
| April | 23 | Tim Baker |
| April | 25 | Julia Gunter
Kathy Barker |
| April | 27 | Heidi Scharpenberg |
| April | 28 | Rita Stewart |
| April | 30 | Debbie Williams |

If we have unintentionally left any member's name off the birthday list, or if there are any errors, please call the church office. Thank you.



Ministry Highlight

Over the next year we will highlight a ministry with more than simply "time and place" information. This month we are lifting up Prime Timers, our bible study and lunch group for folks who are of retirement age and up. Prime timers meets once a month, and is a group that carried me through the latter half of the pandemic. Their authentic care for one another, concern for the ministry of Holy Comforter, and willingness to wrestle with scripture and hard conversations gave me energy and hope in a time when I was otherwise burnt out and not being filled by much in ministry as everything seemed to happen with compromise or tension, wondering how folks might receive it. To have a group that was willing to be open and who have hearts for ministry and people was a sure sign of Christ in this community in a time when I needed it most. If you're of retirement age or beyond, I encourage you to join in, the second Thursday of the month at 10:30 am, and be fed!"

-Pastor Micah

