



December Newsletter

Worship with us Sundays at 10:30 am.

Each 10:30 am service is livestreamed on YouTube for those that are unable to join us in person.

Church Office Hours:

Monday - Friday: 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

Micah Kearney, Pastor

mkearney@holyc.org

Beka Forst, Deacon of Discipleship

rforst@holyc.org

Greg Cline, Organist /Choirmaster

gclinea440@aol.com



***Pastor
Micah Kearney***

I am a fan of the writer Aaron Sorkin, who write scripts for tv, movies, and occasionally plays. He's written tons of things, but I've watched through his...

**Read
More**



December 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.

Madison Harrington-Smith	December 01
Catherine Dytrt	December 02
Jackson Bryant	December 07
Nathan Kelly	December 08
Bob Koehler	December 09
Caitlan Reece	December 10
Denise Wiegand	December 10
Beth Brittain	December 11
Janet Achor	December 12
Stacey Wilson	December 14
Greg Cline	December 15
Mason Morton	December 17
Beverly Robinson	December 26
Trudy Whitener	December 29
Luke Via	December 30

Monthly Gatherings

- “Advent Exhibit - December 3rd, 4pm
- “ Church Council Meeting- December 10th, 12pm
 - “ Kid's Club - December 10th, 4pm
 - “ Small Group 1- December 10th, 4pm
 - “ Small Group 2- December 12th, 7pm
- “ Prime Timers- December 14th, 10:30am
- “ Virtual Christian Education Meeting- December 19th, 7pm
- “ Virtual Outreach Meeting- December 21st, 7pm
- Bountiful Blessings Volunteer Time - December 21st, 7am
- Christmas Caroling - December 21st, 2pm
- Christmas Candlelit Service- December 24th - 11pm

First 3 Wednesdays:

Advent Dinner & Worship 6:00 pm

Sundays:

- “Sunday School - 9:30 am
- “Church Choir - 10:10 am
- “Worship - 10:30 am
 - “ HCY - 5 pm
- “Adult Handbells - 5 pm
- Church Choir - 6 pm

Wednesdays:

- Youth Handbells - 5:30pm
- Chamber Choir - 7 pm

2nd & 4th Tuesdays:

- “Nar-Anon Meeting - 7 pm

Music Notes

Just a brief note to inform our church family that Holy Comforter was approached by the Lenoir - Rhyne A Cappella Choir and Brass Ensemble to be host for part of their 2024 spring tour on Thursday, March 22. Concert time is yet to be...

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Beka's Buzz

Recently I was asked a lot of good detail about the youth that make up Holy Comforter Youth. Questions like “what schools do our youth go to?”, “how old are...

[Read More](#)



Holy Comforter will be hosting our annual Advent Fine Arts Show.
Paint? Sculpt? Draw? Sew? Write? Collage? Mosaic? Dance? Act? Legos?
All forms of art will be displayed!
Create a piece for our **Oh Come All Ye Faithful Art Show** on December 3rd at 4 pm.
Pieces will be up through Christmas.
Our theme this year is Oh Come All Ye Faithful
To enter the show, email Deacon Beka



This month Confirmation will be a podcast about Doubt. This is an elective credit. We'll learn about how doubt and questions are vital for a deep faith, and we'll explore some of the common topics that people have doubts and questions about. Reflection required. Podcast will be available for the entire month of December.
- Deacon Beka and Pastor Micah

Bountiful Blessings Toy Giveaway



BOUNTIFUL BLESSINGS FOOD PANTRY

FREE TOYS GIVEAWAY

FREE* FOOD DRINKS & MUSIC

SATURDAY

DECEMBER 2ND
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

FOR CHILDREN AGES: 5-11 yrs. old
Child must be present with parent or guardian

2311 CRESCENT LANE
GASTONIA, NC 28052



Mt. Zion Restoration Church

Bountiful Blessings Drive Thru Food Pantry

We have the opportunity to **volunteer** with drive-thru food pantry, *Bountiful Blessings*, this Christmas Season!

Volunteer on **December 21st** from **7:30am to 12:30pm**. Please email Deacon Beka if you would like to join! (rforst@holyc.org)



Advent Dinner and Worship

We will be hosting our annual Advent Dinner and Worship on the first three Wednesdays of December. Please join us for a meal at 6:00pm and the "Unfailing Light" Advent service @6:45pm.

Meals provided by:
December 6th- Jennifer Kearney
December 13th- Amanda Kelly
December 20th- Anne Reese and Lyn Miller

Faith Story - Interactions Matter

Erin Cassel has a heart that is warm and caring and she was excited to learn how to love and care for people who are without a home. Erin is 12 years old and the daughter of Jill and the sister of Tyler. She has grown up at Holy Comforter and is an active member of the youth group. This summer Erin took part in the mission trip to Spark and Dwell in Winston-Salem, NC.



“I did not expect to have interactions with so many people who are homeless. We had lots of time to meet people and learn their stories. There is lots more than what society tells us.” Erin met Cheryl who shared her very personal story. “I met her on the first day as we did a simulation of homelessness. Cheryl knew where to go to get services and she talked about her son and wanted to prove to him that she could get better. She did not want him to experience what she did when she was homeless.”

Returning to Holy Comforter Erin wants to continue to be kind and caring to those she meets. She know that just asking someone what their name is shows respect for them as humans like us. Her favorite activity was painting a mural on the wall between the Dwelling and the neighborhood. “It made the place homier” She was equally impressed with the NIMBY gate. Ask her what this is and she would be glad to share the story!

Erin’s heart for folks in need is one of the many reasons Holy Comforter discerned that a better plan for caring for people experiencing hunger and homelessness in Belmont is one of our goals for 2024.

Poinsettias for Christmas



Each Christmas we decorate our sanctuary with poinsettias that have been given by members of the congregation.

You can sponsor poinsettias in honor or memory of someone, or to the glory of God. After Christmas you are welcome to take the poinsettias home with you.

Poinsettias this year cost \$18.00 each, and we need orders in by Sunday, December 10th to have our order in on time. Sign up using the link below, or take a form in the sanctuary. Thank you!

[Purchase a](#)

Treasurer's Report for October 2023

Financial Category	2023	% Increase	% Increase	2022	2021
	\$Amount	from 2022	from 2021	\$Amount	\$Amount
Offerings for the Month	24,498	-2.2	10.6	25,042	22,160
Offerings Year to Date (YTD)	214,937	13.4	-8.9	189,511	236,031
Expenses for the Month	27,077	12.9	14.8	23,992	23,577
Expenses YTD	286,298	18.3	20.9	241,977	236,735
Planned Expenses (Budget) for the Month	28,902	10.2	12.2	26,222	23,073
Budget, YTD	289,016			262,220	257,670
Annual Budget	346,819			314,664	309,204

Holy Comforter's operating deficit (expenses in excess of offering income) during October was \$2,578.93. Total giving to support Holy Comforter's routine expenses for the month was \$24,498.00. The budget estimate of the amount needed each month in 2023 is \$28,901.58. The year-to-date deficit, through October 31, was \$71,360.95. Year-to-date spending was \$2,717.63 below the amount planned in the 2023 budget. The foregoing table provides additional perspective and comparisons with offering income, expenses and budgets in prior years.

-Warren Heller, *Treasurer*



Altar flowers are available to be sponsored. If you would like to do so in honor or memory of a loved one or to celebrate a milestone please click the button above.

December 3 - Julia Gunter in honor of the Church Council Members

December 24 - Julia Gunter in honor of Greg Cline and all church musicians.

December 24 - Shelia Kelly to honor and glorify Christ Jesus' birth



Children's Church

December 3 - Jill Cassel

December 10 - Hanging of the Green

December 17 - Deacon Beka

December 24 - Jill Cassel

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

HYC & Kids Club Meal Provider

December 3 - Cheryl Bansen

December 10 - Volunteer Needed
December 17 - Amanda Kelly

HCY
Meals



December Sunday School Teachers

Pre-K/K - Jill Cassel
Elementary- Jenn Kearney
Youth - Travis Rhyne/ Deacon Beka
Adult - Pastor Micah

Lectors

December 3 - Brian Achor
December 10 - Brian Achor
December 17 - Brian Achor
December 24 -William Charnock
December 24 - Brian Achor
December 31- Brian Achor



No better way to start your winter break than
Christmas Caroling with us!

Join us
Thursday, December 21st @2:00pm

The church calendar is updated weekly for any events and can always be found on the church website under the events tab. Take a look!

[Church
Calendar](#)

Holy Comforter Lutheran Church | 216 N Main St, BELMONT, NC 28012

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I am a fan of the writer Aaron Sorkin, who write scripts for tv, movies, and occasionally plays. He's written tons of things, but I've watched through his shows West Wing, about the inner workings of the White House, and Newsroom, about the inner workings of a 24 cable news network, multiple times. In each of these he has used a line that says something to the extent of "Every two years we get to (peacefully and legally) overthrow the government." It is a statement about elections, and it is a call to action, to not miss an opportunity, to not take for granted that we have the power to effect what happens in government.

It made me think about worship, and the opportunity that we have every time we gather together for worship. We aren't overthrowing the recognized authority, namely God, for Christians, but rather we are providing space for God to be injected into the world, to let God overthrow things in us. It is an opportunity to hear about grace, about how God does not love us or not based on our actions, but because of our inherent worth as creatures of God's creation, as made in God's image, as beloved children of God. And it is an opportunity to remind people of the power that they have, and that it matters what they do with it. It matters when we use it to tear people down, to treat people poorly, to make victims, and God wants us to cut it out. That's the law part that makes us feel uncomfortable. And it matters when we treat people well, when we love and support them, when we lift them up, because the kingdom of God is taking hold in the world in those moments when we convey the inherent worth that exists in each person. Worship is an opportunity for all of these things, and the quote reminded me to take advantage of this opportunity, to not squander it.

As we move into the season of Advent in church, and as we go full tilt into the Christmas season in our culture, it isn't just in worship when we have the opportunities to provide space for God to be injected into our lives. In all of the meals we take part in, even the routine ones that have no special designation, we have an opportunity to recognize God's presence in the provision of the food, in the company around the table, in the love that is shared. In a season that is full of unhealthy commercialism focused on so much "stuff," we can recapture the joy of getting, and more importantly giving, gifts as gestures of compassion and thoughtfulness for those we love. As we decorate, cook special recipes, go to parties, and participate in all the beloved traditions of the season, we can approach them open to the ways that God will be present in all of them, and allow God to disrupt us, recenter us, and help this season to be the celebration and manifestation of God's love for us that it was meant to be.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Micah



Music Notes

Just a brief note to inform our church family that Holy Comforter was approached by the Lenoir – Rhyne A Cappella Choir and Brass Ensemble to be host for part of their 2024 spring tour on Thursday, March 22. Concert time is yet to be determined. They presented a concert here in 2017 which was then a part of our Centennial Year Celebration. Due to our superb acoustics and pipe organ they would like to return. This date is the Thursday before Palm Sunday, if that makes it easier to remember. More details in the New Year.

All of our choirs are preparing for this very busy Advent/Christmas season. From our Wednesday Evening Advent Services entitled, "*Behold Our Light*," accompanied by our youth handbell ensemble...Sunday morning services including our annual "Hanging of the Green," as well as Christmas Eve Services. Since Christmas Eve this year is on Sunday we will celebrate our services of worship at 10:30 a.m, and at 11:00 p.m. Throughout the season of Advent the choral choirs will offer a *Tapestry of Light*, which are a collection of traditional carols, primarily from the British Isles...culminating Christmas Eve night with Handel's, *Hallelujah Chorus*. Our chamber choir and handbell ensembles will also offer time-honored selections of the season.

For the Christmas Eve night service you may want to arrive about 20 minutes early to hear the entire Prelude.


This is a wonderful tradition which we have offered to the community for now over a hundred years. Invite your friends and family.

A Blessed Advent and Christmas Season to all of our church friends. We are a truly blessed congregational family!

Greg Cline M.D. (Music Director)





Beka's
Buzz 

Recently I was asked a lot of good detail about the youth that make up Holy Comforter Youth. Questions like “what schools do our youth go to?”, “how old are the youth in our youth group?”, “how do you get 6th graders and 12th graders to open up with one another?”. If I’m honest I was so excited to get to share about and brag on our youth. They really are an amazing group of young people. They are kind, bright, hilarious, and so different than the groups we have had before.

So, to share with you the answers to those same questions. Did you know that our youth span seven schools? We have youth at South Point High School, Stuart Cramer High School, Belmont Middle School, Cramerton Middle School, Mountain Island Charter School, Gaston Day School, AND Gaston Christian School. We have youth all over the place! Our youth group is for 6th graders all the way to 12th graders, which is ages 11-18, which is a wide range of ages. Which always leads to the last question, HOW do we get 6th graders and 12th graders to get along? Well, the answer includes multiple pieces. The first, we have dinner every week. It’s important to gather around a table where our most basic need is met. This time is unstructured where they share about life, catch up with one another, and laugh together. We play games, where everyone is building trust with everyone, where everyone is silly, and everyone is participating. Lastly we talk about faith as a place of inclusivity and a place and space where everyone belongs. Youth group is a place where we affirm everyone naturally belongs, and we do that through forming a group covenant. Promises to forgive, offering dignity, everyone is welcome, and gets an equal opportunity to share. We practice listening first and responding second. How do we get all those young people in the same room, we eat, we play, we listen. Youth group is holy.

Deacon Beka
rforst@holyc.org