



The Holy Comforter Comment



January 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've never been one for New Year's resolutions. No judgment if they've worked for you, I'll gladly celebrate them with you if they have, but for me the timing of the new year never made me care about something in a new way to substantively change behavior. I do, however,

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



WISHING YOU A
NEW YEAR
FULL OF JOY

appreciate the...

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January 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.

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Riley Lewis | January 05 |
| Mary Lee | January 07 |
| Chuck Kimball | January 09 |
| Charles Mauney | January 10 |
| Brandy Milton | January 10 |
| Becky Richards | January 10 |
| Jerri Wesson | January 18 |
| Faye Heller | January 19 |
| Jane Howard | January 21 |
| Paul Nault | January 21 |
| Travis Rhyne | January 21 |
| Jill Cassel | January 24 |
| Ryan Nelson | January 25 |
| Matthew Carr | January 26 |
| Robert Kressler | January 26 |
| Gina Rhyne | January 29 |

Monthly Gatherings

- Dwelling Interest Meeting - January 7th, 4pm
- Small Group 2- January 9th, 7pm
- Prime Timers- January 11th, 10:30am
- Church Council Meeting- January 14th, 12pm
- Kid's Club - January 14th, 4pm
- Small Group 1- January 14th, 4pm
- Christian Education Meeting- January 16th, 7pm
- Outreach Meeting- January 18th, 7pm
- Dinner Church - January 31st, 6:30pm

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



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Boy was December full! We had lots going on that made for an exciting and youthful advent and Christmas season! The youth started by making their own Christmas sweaters and I must say it was

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Discipleship Academy:

Our Discipleship academy class is Bible 103. We will be taking a look at the Old Testament. Students will take a look at main characters of the Old Testament. We will meet on January 28th at 5 pm. This is an elective class worth 1 credit. If you have any questions, please contact Deacon Beka or Pastor Micah.



Outreach Opportunity:

We are collecting school supplies for our local title one schools. **Catawba Heights and North Belmont** Elementary have expressed that this time of year their initial donations have been used and they really need donations for the second semester. Donations can be tissues, sanitizer, paper towels, paper, notebooks, pencils, coloring supplies, pens, Expo markers. Catawba Heights has a clothing closet, and pants are always needed for children's sizes. Please drop off donations in the education building by January 28th. Thank you!

2024



**SIGN UP TO BE A
WORSHIP VOLUNTEER**

A huge **THANK YOU** to our volunteers from 2023. We appreciate your involvement & all your help! **2024 Sign Ups are open!**

Altar flowers are the flowers that are on the altar during worship. They can be given *in honor or memory* of someone and are a reminder of the resurrected Christ. Once worship is over, you are able to collect the flowers that you sponsored. The price per vase is \$22.50 or \$45 if you purchase both.

**2024 Altar
Flowers**

Being a Lector is an easy and important way to lead during worship. It would be most helpful for you to sign up for a month at a time, or as much of the month as you can. Readings will be sent to you the Monday before your Sunday.

2024 Lectors

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 making it available to parking lot worshippers and sanctuary worshippers. Materials for children's church are found in the binder in the fellowship hall marked "children's church binder" or at the website below. Caddies with tools, and a basket with construction paper are located in the fellowship hall for CC use. The supplies in the binder is meant to be photo copied.

Children's Church

Treasurer's Report for November 2023

| Financial Category | 2023 | % Increase | % Increase | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|----------|------------|------------|----------|----------|
| | \$Amount | from 2022 | from 2021 | \$Amount | \$Amount |
| Offerings for the Month | 20,783 | 0.3 | -29.6 | 20,725 | 29,510 |
| Offerings Year to Date (YTD) | 235,720 | 0.2 | -11.2 | 235,278 | 265,541 |
| Expenses for the Month | 27,637 | 11.7 | 4.0 | 24,740 | 26,571 |
| Expenses YTD | 313,935 | 17.7 | 19.2 | 266,717 | 263,306 |
| Planned Expenses (Budget) for the Month | 28,902 | 10.2 | 12.2 | 26,222 | 25,767 |
| Budget, YTD | 317,917 | | | 288,442 | 283,437 |
| Annual Budget | 346,819 | | | 314,664 | 309,204 |

Holy Comforter's operating deficit (expenses in excess of offering income) during November was \$6,854.16. Total giving to support Holy Comforter's routine expenses for the month was \$20,783.00. The budget estimate of the amount needed each month in 2023 is \$28,901.58. The year-to-date deficit, through November 30, was \$78,215.11. Year-to-date spending was \$3,982.05 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.

January 21 - Will and Katie Howard in Thanksgiving to God for our mothers, Jane and Joyce, on their birthdays.

January Sunday School Teachers

Pre-k: Jill Cassel
 Elementary: Rianna Nance
 Youth: Beka Forst
 Adults: Leader Needed



Children's Church

January 7 - Deacon Beka

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.

Lectors

January 7- Julia Gunter
January 21 - Julia Gunter
January 28 - Julia Gunter

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!

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

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I've never been one for New Year's resolutions. No judgment if they've worked for you, I'll gladly celebrate them with you if they have, but for me the timing of the new year never made me care about something in a new way to substantively change behavior. I do, however, appreciate the value of goals, the way that they can keep us focused, the way that they help our behavior match our named values. While it is by no means comprehensive, our Purpose Statement and Core Values that we discerned together in the past couple of years are our named values. This fall our council named three goals that we hope will keep us headed in the right direction and living into our named values. Our goals are to maintain ministry excellence, namely funding the ministry we currently have, to develop a plan to address homelessness and hunger in our area, and to discern strategies for evangelism. We believe these goals to be in line with our named values, and we hope to live into these goals in 2024.

We have some first steps to live into those goals. We are working with a professional organization to lead us in our stewardship work, not just in the fall but throughout the year. They've been enlightening to work with. In January and early February we will take steps to work towards our other two goals. We are inviting someone from The Dwelling, in Winston-Salem, a ministry of and for folks experiencing homelessness, to do some education for us and give us some perspective on what these folks might be going through. We will then have a brainstorming session together, with anyone who would like to be a part of it, to think through how our ministry for folks experiencing homelessness here might evolve. We will later have a brainstorming session around evangelism as well. From these sessions we will develop strategies to work towards these goals through the year.

I encourage everyone to be involved in these brainstorming sessions, as well as to find ways to join in the work beyond as well. Caring for the poor and downtrodden, as well as spreading the good news of Christ's love and redemption for all people, are core to our call as disciples of Christ. If we do little else, we should be doing these things, and talking about how we can be doing them better, since these are things we do engage in already at some level. We don't all have specific knowledge or experience in these areas, and some people feel called to this work more than others, but we should all find ways we can contribute to it, be aware of it, and consider how we can grow in it. We're still confirming the dates for these events, but keep an eye out, and together let's discern how we can live out our named values, as disciples of Christ, through these goals for 2024.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Micah



Music Notes

Some of us have heard a bit about the recent upgrade to our pipe organ. Not enough space in a paragraph or two to explain all the details; but we went basically from 1980's to 21st Century technology. The pipe organ at Holy Comforter still looks and sounds the same to the person in the pew; But with playback capability it gives the organist the flexibility to hear the choir from anywhere in the worship space...just as the congregation does on Sunday morning. Just this aspect alone is a glorious leap forward in understanding the true sound blend of the offertory anthem, for example. We also have been "experimenting" with other capabilities such as utilizing the programming of the carillon before and after worship, as well as use in varied parts of the service such as prelude/postlude and hymn accompaniments.

Another feature is the ability to spot tune any one of the 1883 pipes, without having to climb up and down ladders for each individual note. Nor is it now always necessary to hire someone/or volunteer someone to hold each key as it is tuned. I am happy to demonstrate the workings of this "*King of Instruments*" to interested individuals. The pipe organ gets this description for a good reason. After all, what other musical instrument in our worship space weighs in excess of 22,000 lbs.

No church budgeted funds were used for this upgrade project, but only through the generosity of members and friends who contribute to our ongoing music fund. These typically come through gifts of honorariums and memorial gifts.

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A big shout out to all of our church musicians who led our services of worship both morning and night through the season of Advent and Christmas. Our choirs are a great bunch of talented folks with which to work. They are consistently ministers to this church musician throughout the year. So to everyone in the church choir, chamber choir, handbell choir, and youth handbell ensemble...well done, good and faithful servants!

Soli Deo Gloria!

Greg Cline M.D. (Music Director)





Beka's
Buzz 

Boy was December full! We had lots going on that made for an exciting and youthful advent and Christmas season! The youth started by making their own Christmas sweaters and I must say it was their brilliant idea! So, I went online and found some felt materials and they brought their own shirt/sweatshirt and we spent that Sunday making gorgeous sweaters that would be worn at our Christmas party. The following Sunday our Kids Club met and made nativities out of candy. My favorite quote is from Luther Rhyne, he asked "is it wrong for baby Jesus to taste good?". They had one rule, your creation can't stay at church. It had to be eaten, taken home, or thrown away! Safe to say, lots of nativities were consumed. This same day HCY went Christmas shopping for three angel tree kids. We annually take angels, and the youth break into teams and split up in Walmart to shop for presents. It's heartwarming to see them care so much about what these young people, maybe their peers, get for Christmas. We came back to the church and wrapped all the gifts given. This day doesn't happen without the generous support of the benevolence fund. The following Sunday we took a group picture in our sweaters and exchanged white elephant gifts, be sure to ask the youth what they took home. Our last formal youth activity of the year was serving at Bountiful Blessings. Our youth find value and joy in serving the low income and unhoused community of our county through handing out food at Bountiful Blessings. Some handed out ice cream, some gave out crackers, and some gave out pies. This particular day was important because we handed out the things people would make a Christmas meal out of. What an honor it was to be a part of their Christmas experience. Bountiful Blessings holds a special place in our hearts. SO much so, that we are going back January 4 th. Anyone is welcome to join us! These activities don't include how our young people help lead worship on Wednesdays, Christmas eve, and went caroling! It's safe to say we had a very full December filled with joy, worship, and service. God was definitely moving in our young people this holiday season. These opportunities aren't limited to our youth, serving and loving the neighbor is always open to everyone. We pray in the new year you will find ways to love Belmont and beyond.

Deacon Beka
rforst@holyc.org