

"Happy Thanksgiving",  
"Happy eating-in-fall-  
day", "Happy Diwali", and  
"Merry Grace-Giving", all

sayings that are said around the November holi-  
day, but all of them celebrating the same thing,  
thankfulness of the people who love us. I don't  
know about you, but this year it's been really easy  
for me to overlook all the things I have to be  
thankful for. The biggest one has been grace.  
God's grace as shown up for me every day. I have  
no doubt about that, but whether or not I was  
aware enough to see it is a different story. This  
Thanksgiving was an eye opener. I wasn't able to  
gather with my family due to a lot of different cir-  
cumstances that made it unsafe. At first, I was  
kind of excited, that is my introvert dream. The  
day before thanksgiving my mom came to drop off  
thanksgiving goodies at my house, and due to  
health reasons, she couldn't come inside. We  
stood outside and had a conversation in the front  
yard. We both knew that was the best thing for  
us. We both knew to keep each other safe that we  
would wear a mask. We both agreed it was for the  
best. When it came time for her to leave, I could-  
n't hug her goodbye. That got me. Honestly, that  
was unexpectedly the hardest part. It was the best

for both of our health. We got to laugh together,  
and we will again. We got to talk about the future,  
because we know we will have one, and in that  
really hard thing I experienced so much grace. The  
grace in my holiday went on. I got to talk to so  
many people on Thanksgiving. I talk to my imme-  
diate family, my best friends, my friend's kids, my  
grandparents, some church members, and snug-  
gled my pups. Let me tell you God's grace really  
showed up. So, when my mom called me later  
that night, I told her that this thanksgiving was  
different for me, I really experienced God's grace.  
So much so that I jokingly called Thanksgiving  
"Grace-Giving". Which was followed by a lengthy  
conversation as to whether it should be "Happy"  
or "Merry", I like merry, she liked happy. So as the  
months come and we create more faithful dis-  
tance with the promise of reunion, grace will be  
there. With the season of Advent here, we know  
Christmas isn't far away. The incarnation is one of  
the biggest acts of unmerited love and grace that  
we will ever receive. Grace doesn't stop there. Let  
this Advent be graceful to you and grace-filled for  
you.

*Beka Forst, Youth and Family Ministries*

## Faithful Families Tip

**Luminaries**-A luminary is simply an object that gives off light and  
put outside. They are made with paper bags with designs cut in-  
to them, and designs colored on them. After your design is done,  
you place a battery-operated candle at the bottom of your bag.  
See the light shining through your cut outs, illuminating your  
brilliant designs. When you light your luminary repeat Jesus'  
words, I am the light of the world.



Lutheran Church of the

**Holy Comforter COMMENT**

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**"A voice cries out:**

**"In the wilderness pre-  
pare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert  
a highway for our  
God. "**

**-Isaiah 40:3**

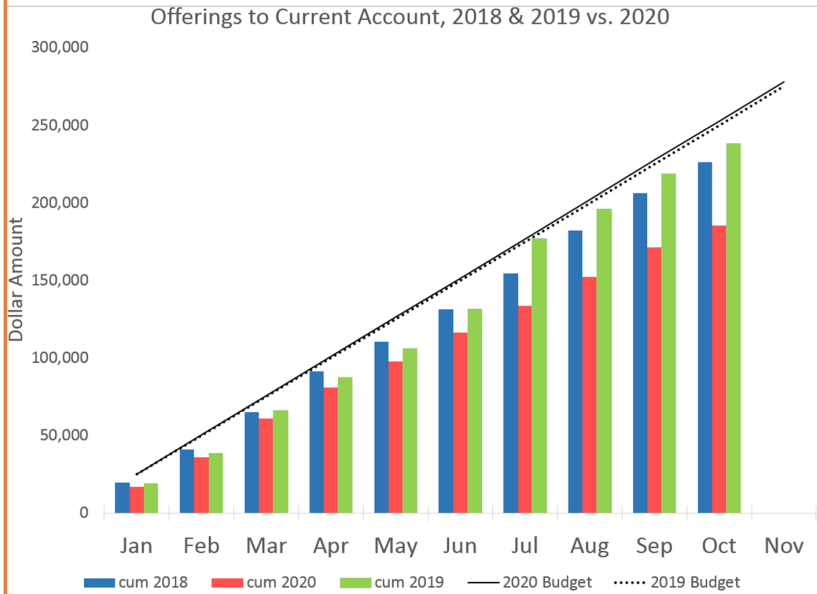
## Worship Opportunities for December

- Worship is offered each Sunday at 10:30 am. If you'd like to attend in person, please register ahead of time either through your email or with the church office.
- Each service is livestreamed on the website and transmitted to the parking lot over the radio and communion is served to those present.
- Christmas Eve will include a 4 pm outdoor service, and a 7:30 pm indoor Candlelight service.

# Holy Comforter Treasurer Report

Holy Comforter’s operating deficit expenses in excess of offering income) during October was \$5,755.27. The year-to-date deficit, through October 30, was \$25,283.55. Year-to-date spending, curtailed because of the pandemic, was \$41,975.78 below the amount planned in the 2020 budget. Total giving to support Holy Comforter’s routine expenses during October was \$14,152.00. The budget estimate of the amount needed each month is \$25,281.08. 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



## From Your Parish Nurse...



A very blessed December to you! What a wonderful time of year...a time of hope and jubilation in the celebration of the birth of our Lord. This year has been one full of sadness, loneliness, economic struggle, anxiety, losses...but at the same time it’s brought us together in so many new ways and has challenged us to be creative in ways we never knew possible.

PEP exercise classes are continuing with consistent attendance, and the ability to make new friends, as we’ve enticed some folks from other churches, and even some from other states, to join us. We’d love to have you join us. Some sessions end with guided imagery and relaxation (some of the attendees say they like that part the best!) so you go away from it feeling refreshed and relaxed. It’s a good way to unwind from the stresses of the day, especially as the holidays approach!

You know, we hear about the leading causes of death but have you ever thought about the leading causes of life? In a book titled “The Leading Causes of Life” it says this: “It is important to follow our doctor’s advice: Walk a few thousand steps every day, wash our hands, floss our teeth, eat something green, and wear a seat belt. But those things won’t make us more alive. The only way any of us can do that is by allowing

ourselves to be more richly connected, to seek meaning and coherence, to act on the choices that lead to life, to extend ourselves in webs of blessing, and to nurture hope in all things. In short, the only way is to allow the causes of life [connection, coherence, agency, blessing, hope] to weave in us at the very same time they work through us.” But what about loneliness, stress and depression? People who live alone, or who have been isolated because of Covid, sometimes find themselves lonely, stressed and depressed. Loneliness is not a medical condition, but often results in health problems such as depression and increased blood pressure. And chronic stress is associated with high cortisol levels which are noted as having adverse affects on our bodies by virtue of increased risk for atherosclerosis, memory and learning problems, inflammatory processes like arthritis, and so on. High blood pressure has been linked to heart, kidney disease, and stroke while depression has been linked to cardiovascular disease and diabetes. So, what do we do about the loneliness to ward off these ill health affects? One way to nip loneliness in the bud is to bring a pet into your home. Or, if you can’t, like at our home, take in the care and keeping of a stray, if one is available...we have a stray cat that has adopted us! Pets alleviate loneliness in many ways: You’ll have a living being to talk to (some birds, for instance, even talk back!); you’ll feel a sense of companionship; if you get a dog, you’ll get the benefit of an increased sense of security as the dog alerts you to strange noises or strangers approaching your home; walking a pet guarantees you’ll get valuable exercise and the chance to socialize with others; and caring for a pet gives a sense of purpose and feeling needed – all things we need as human beings.

Now, obviously, a dog isn’t the pet for everyone – a person with physical or financial limitations would not be a good candidate for a dog, for instance – but there are other wonderful pets: Cats, birds, fish, hamsters, guinea pigs, and rabbits. If you don’t think a pet would be for you, find other ways to get out of the ‘loneliness’ pattern before it sets up residency with you and causes you ill health. Join a club or organization involving a hobby you enjoy (Have you heard of meetup.com? It’s an online source for meeting others – even virtually – who have common interests); if you have grandchildren, get more involved with them and their activities; be sure to join in fellowship with other Christians.

It’s important to be in fellowship with others to give us “cause of life” so you need to do all within your power to alleviate loneliness if it has you in its grip. Do something good for yourself today...knock on a neighbor’s door (with your mask on!) and invite them over for coffee on the back porch (with six feet between you!)...the coffee, the fellowship, and the break from isolation will do you both some good!

Teresa Keller, Parish Nurse

# MUSIC NOTES

## December 2020 Musical Notes...



During the month of December we will continue to provide Advent/Christmas musical offerings in various and creative ways. As we have been doing, for most of the year, we are utilizing our archives of music from past services of worship. In this way worshippers can still experience full congregational participation in combination with our church choir voices and pipe organ. There is also quite a bit of live music within the body of the service of worship. We are also featuring our children's ensemble singing songs that were recorded last year. We certainly look forward to the day when we can all join hands and sing collectively again in unison. Until then, continue to keep a song in your heart!



As noted in the October and November newsletters our church choir and handbell ensemble spent a number of hours recording Advent and Christmas selections this fall. December will feature audio and video from the result of those efforts. Tim Baker will be editing and posting these songs on our web site. Look for those soon. Tim has spent untold hours this year assisting us with what is seen on line virtually, as well as our now live streamed service. We will also utilize the audio from these recordings during our services of worship during the Advent and Christmas season. Thanks to all of our church musicians who

gave of their time and talents during this unprecedented time in history. Our handbell choir will resume rehearsal in the New Year, with more updated recordings for spring. We will try to get the church choir together again for perhaps a Zoom reunion. Details in January.

A blessed Advent and Christmas Season to all of you in our church family. As long as our faith and hope rest in Christ alone..."We Will Not Fear!"

Peace, Love, Hope, and Joy!  
Greg Cline



## Holy C Angel Tree

**Thank you to all the folks who have claimed a child from the Angel Tree. We have three names left. Check your emails or contact the office to sign up and claim a child!**

### BCO/SOCKS Matching Challenge!

**One of our members has challenged us to raise \$1,000 to support BCO and SOCKS, two organizations that help folks in need on our community, and will match donations up to that amount! Let's be up for the challenge and make a difference this holiday season!**

## Weekly Schedule-

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

- **Sundays:**
  - 10:30 am-Worship in Sanctuary
    - Service livestreamed on website and transmitted by radio to parking lot
  - 4:00 pm- Kid's Club Zoom Faith Formation
  - 5:00 pm- HCY Zoom Faith Formation
- **Mondays:**
  - 6:30 pm- PEP Exercise Class over Zoom
- **Tuesdays:**
  - Noon-Zoom lunch together. A time to check in and be in fellowship with one another
- **Wednesdays:**
  - 7:00 pm-Adult Faith Formation
  - Evenings-Advent worship recordings posted (video from previous years with updated readings)
- **Thursdays:**
  - 7:45 am-Morning Prayer Gathering

### Events of Note:

- December 24-
  - Outdoor Family Service at 4 pm.
  - Indoor Candlelight service at 7:30 pm.

**We recognize and celebrate these birthdays in the month of December.**

**We are thankful for the life and Spirit of those we celebrate.**

**December 1 Madison Kelly**  
**December 5 Aaron Nault**  
**Margaret Millard**  
**December 7 Jackson Bryant**  
**December 8 Nathan Kelly**  
**December 9 Bob Koehler**  
**December 11 Beth Brittain**  
**December 12 Janet Achor**  
**Elizabeth Smith**  
**December 15 Greg Cline**  
**December 17 Mason Morton**  
**December 22 Remi Ince**  
**December 24 Kurt Rogers**  
**December 26 Beverly Robinson**  
**December 27 Laura Dibiasse**  
**December 28 Molly Koehler**  
**December 29 Trudy Whitener**  
**Lauren Schmaltz**  
**Elizabeth Schmaltz**  
**December 30 Luke Via**





Grace and peace,

A bit of a warning, I realized as I was writing it that this article may turn out to be a foreshadowing of my Christmas sermon. This Christmas is going to be a Christmas like no other. There is no way around it. While we've largely found ways to adjust to what life looks like in the time of Covid, there continue to be sacrifices that we make and new things that we mourn. For instance, for many people this Thanksgiving looked much different than any in their memory. Many families did not gather like they normally do, or shifted their traditions if they did. One of the Thanksgiving Day NFL games was postponed, and the Macy's Day parade had no audience, both due to Covid.

Many families decorated for Christmas a bit earlier this year, mine included, because they needed to have something to celebrate, to draw on the joy of the season and the traditions that have been meaningful to them in years past. Unfortunately there are many ways that our time-honored traditions around Christmas will also look much different. We might be traveling less, possibly needing to be a bit more frugal in our gift-giving, not filling our calendars with Christmas Parties, and even our worship will look different.

Our staff at Holy Comforter is hard at work shaping Christmas Eve worship services that will be meaningful and gospel-centered, that feel like the worship services that have been meaningful for us in years past while also recognizing that, in order to be low-risk, need to look much different. At this point on Christmas Eve we plan on having an outdoor, family-centered, worship service at 4 pm and an indoor candlelight service at 7:30 pm. Singing is still in question, and not really an option for indoor, so we're being creative in coming up with ways to still engage meaningful traditions like singing "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World," and providing battery candles since we can't remove a mask to blow out real ones. Who knows, while we plan on transitioning back something similar to what last year looked like once this pandemic is behind us, it is possible we find new traditions in this that we'd like to continue.

There are certainly things that we'll grieve as we make these changes, both in worship and our traditions at home, which makes it even more important to lean not on the traditions of Christmas, but the gospel-promise of it. Christmas is a promise of Emmanuel, God With Us, a promise that there is no time or place in which God is not present with us, accompanying us in good times and bad. The promises of Christmas cannot be undone by a pandemic, were never contained in a building, and were never made real by any one tradition. Those promises are ones that we will celebrate this year, perhaps even more deeply than in years past because they mean more to us in a year that has been so challenging to so much of our lives.

This Christmas will be one like no other, and yet perhaps it is exactly the same as all the others. Because the promise is the same. A promise that we are never alone, no matter what each day brings, accompanied by a God who knows us intimately, loves us dearly, and is at work bringing healing and restoration to a weary world.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Micah



## Magnifying the Light!

**Join us each Wednesday evening at 7 for our Adult Faith Formation class. This season we focus on the series, "Magnifying the Light."**

**From the material: "Together we magnify the Light that comes again and again, that comes to inform, warm, and show truth. It's that time of year when we remind one another that God is dwelling among us, and God's not going anywhere that we aren't. God is transmitted eye to eye, hand to hand, word to ear, food to mouth."**



### **Celebrate this Advent Season in a variety of ways:**

- Daily Advent Devotions-prepared by members of Holy Comforter and sent out daily.
- Advent Wreath-to light as you gather for meals and mark our time of waiting. We have extras at church!
- Advent in a Box-Beka has assembled Advent in a Box, with supplies to help you celebrate and walk through the Advent Season at home. It is aimed at families, but useful for all!
- Advent Evening Worship-Each Wednesday we will post our Advent worship from last year but with new readings for this year. A chance to worship and re-center mid-week.