

As we settle into the month of May, we have been taking some intentional time to think about the things

we would celebrate and do in the coming months. We would be finding ways to celebrate our graduating seniors, Matthew Carr, Garrett Carpenter, Mallory Morton, Noah Rawlins, and Alec Via. Each of them have worked hard this year and done so much. Mallory was in her senior play, Radium Girls. Matt played his senior season of South Point soccer. Garrett was awarded with his Eagle Scout rank. Alec got to conduct 8th graders in their band concert in the fall as a teacher cadet. Noah celebrated his senior year with friends, participating in big moments with close friends. The one big accomplishment they share is that they will/did graduate from high school this year. Our young people work hard and deserve credit and acknowledgment in this milestone. I find myself thinking hard about how to celebrate them in this season, and there are some surprises still to come-stay alert. Beyond graduation is our summer programming.

We are still looking at how our current environment will contribute to our summer stuff. We are waiting to hear about Agape Day Camp and how this can happen with respect to what is happening. Our beach trip is being looked at in new light, what could service look like? What could a spiritual retreat mean to our young people, if possible. Vacation Bible School will look different too and how can we still hold some of our mountain top programming up, and do it in a respectful way. Its hard not to be curious of what this will look like, and how this pandemic has changed the way

we have done things in the past. Honestly, it makes me excited! We get to try new things, gather together with a new level of love and eagerness. So with looking forward, stay tuned for what is to come!

Lutheran Youth Organization Assembly (LYO Assembly) was a weekend filled with learning, faith building, and community affirmation. 507 participants from all over North Carolina gathered in Greensboro to learn more about what it means to be the Body Of Christ with the theme, Together We Are One. Leah and Justin Koehler, Kaylin Leitner, Eva Kline, and Reid Passer were 5 of 507, what an amazing faith forming opportunity for our young people. Some of their quotes about the weekend are: "I felt God when we were all singing together" – Kaylin Leitner "I would tell new people going that everyone is nice and will make you feel welcomed."- Justin Koehler "The thing that touched me most, was when the youth would go up and talk about their lives"-Eva Kline "What shocked me most, was how many people were there."- Leah Koehler

Faithful Families Tip-

Love Thy Neighbor

For the next 40 days take time to pray for different kinds of neighbor. Remember our neighbors in leadership, friends at school, our neighbors in need, neighbors at church.



May Family Fun Calendar!

Each day there is a fun activity for you and your family to do! Sundays are activities that go along with the Gospel. Some activities just for kids-for parents to get some down time. Some are just fun! The calendar is found in Beka's weekly email! We can't wait to hear about the family fun!



Lutheran Church of the
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Teresa Keller, Parish Nurse



⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9

Worship Opportunities for May

Throughout this time of social isolation we will post worship opportunities on Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings on our website.

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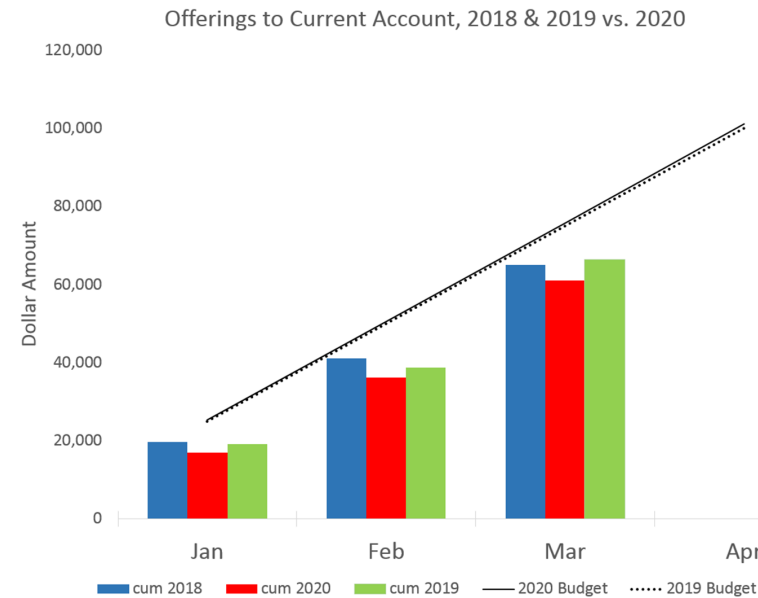


SUNDAY SCHEDULE 9:30 am Sunday School
10:30 am The Service
Church Office Hours Monday-Thursday
8:30 am—3:00 pm

Special Treasurer's Report for March

Holy Comforter's finances during March 2020, the "First Month of Pandemic", were well supported by the congregation's commitment and generosity. As the attached graph shows, offerings during the month exceeded those of January and February as many of you mailed in gifts to the office, dropped them by and made increased use of electronic giving through the Realm application. While expenses have been pared (to \$19,131 during March), we pray that your generosity will continue to help us through this time of difficulty and waiting for traditional, in-person gatherings to resume.

Warren Heller



Caring for Our Neighbors

The nature of this pandemic has made it difficult to "show up" for our neighbors in ways we might otherwise do. However, we are working to care for our neighbors in a few different ways:

- Regular collection of food goods for BCO and SOCKS. Watch for communications as to what the current items are, though all items are welcome.
- We are joining with First Presbyterian Church of Belmont in collecting personal hygiene items to give out with school lunches for Gaston County Schools "grab and go" lunches.
- Members of the church have made masks that are available if you need them. Contact Teresa Keller, our Parish Nurse, if you would like one.
- A member of the church offered \$1000 in matching funds for BCO and SOCKS. We are accepting those donations online (make sure to choose BCO or SOCKS in the fund designation) or through the office through the first week of May.



From your Parish Nurse...

So...here we are, May already, the weather has been typically spring – warm and sunny, a little rain, then warmer and sunnier. Beautiful weather for getting out. And, I know you all are getting out as much as you can, given the stay-at-home orders. But, what about when you can't? What about when you are "working from home" or "teaching your children" or simply maybe have conditions that don't allow you to get out as easily, or the weather prevents it. What then? How do you fit some exercise into your routines so that you give your bodies the full benefit of all that you can?

Quoting from a recent article in the NY Times, "past science suggests that any health impacts from prolonged home confinement are likely to be greatest among older people. In multiple studies, when adults of any age become more inactive because of illness, injury, or requests from scientists, they rapidly lose strength and endurance and develop early signs of insulin resistance and molecular changes related to muscle loss. In younger people, such physiological weakening typically reverses as soon as they start moving and exercising normally again. But in older people, the effects can linger and accelerate the onset of frailty." Experts state that regardless of age, move whenever and however we can, using whatever equipment we already have at hand.

Try the following:

- 1) Wall squats or pushups. Stand with your back against the wall, feet about 6"-12" from the wall and squat, then return to standing. Or for pushups, stand facing the wall, with feet 6"-12" from the wall and palms on the wall. At the count of 5 bend elbows bringing your face close to the wall then push away again. Repeat these several times.
- 2) During calls or when waiting for your microwave meals to cook, walk around the room, up/down a hall-

way, or up/down stairs several times. When watching television, sit with back straight and feet on the floor – raise heels then toes several times, then straighten and raise each leg several times, holding your leg up for a few counts before lowering it back down.

3) For upper body and/or arm strength – use soup cans to do elbow curls with the can held upward in your palm. Stand with arms straight at your sides, can in hands with palms forward, then bend upward at the elbow. Try countertop pushups – stand with your feet a slight way from the counter, lean toward it from the ankles and with back straight. Grab the edge of the counter and bend and straighten your arms at the elbows. Wall arm stretches are good, too – stand facing a wall, feet 6" back. Place your palms on the wall at shoulder height and to the count of 5 walk your fingers up as high as you can reach, then hold that position for a bit before walking your fingers back down. Switch sides and do it again.

Our PEP exercise class, currently on hold, consists of primarily seated exercises that work the entire body. These would be especially good for those of you who are having to work from home and sit for long periods, for those of you who have issues with joints or lack of muscle strength, or who just simply haven't been involved in a regular exercise routine. If you'd like a sample copy of the exercises, please contact me at parishnurse0407@gmail.com and I'll gladly email one to you.

And don't forget one more opportunity to exercise – the internet! The internet is chock full of exercise and dance videos, free classes, and instructions. Just get going! It's important that we continue to care for our bodies during this period of confinement!

MUSIC NOTES



Just like everyone we are navigating uncharted waters at Holy Comforter. As you know we are posting virtual services of worship on Sunday and Wednesdays. This leads me to say that, from a musical standpoint we can open the floodgates, allowing individuals and families to share a musical moment even from the comfort of your home. We have had individuals share scripture readings from home; happy to have a chat about how that might be with musical offerings. Please feel free to contact me directly for that conversation.



Julia Gunter and I continue to host Sunday mornings at 9:30 with the children's ensemble utilizing the Zoom application method for communication. Response has been well received and it is such a delight to see and hear what is going on in the lives of the kids. We are doing the same thing during our old rehearsal time on Sunday evenings with members of our church and chamber choir ensembles. We actually have rehearsed a bit for a planned "Easter" reunion celebration at an unknown date in the future. I must admit that nothing can replace physical community, no matter how clear the audio and video is on the screen.

On a church choir note this is to inform that each member will be getting a homework assignment that you have the whole upcoming summer to work on. Following our planning for the future guide, during the month of May I will personally be ringing your front doorbells and running. At your door will be a sanitized copy of the Candlelight Service of Carols entitled, "Holy Light." There is also a CD accompaniment to allow for isolated rehearsal time. This is the first time in history that we actually would have the opportunity for memorization, but that is totally optional. (Extra credit points awarded.) I will contact before each delivery so you will know to look for it.

On a final note, because of my proximity to the church facility there are few days when I am not in the building for some purpose. Easter Sunday morning I arrived after breakfast to retrieve and check on a few things. In an empty structure, totally devoid of sound and human presence, was a truly unforgettable moment. It reminded me of what we already know, but perhaps take for granted at times. We, flesh and bone, are the church. This brick and stone will not stand forever. So, as I continue to practice the pipes in an empty shell, I long more than ever to one day worship with each of you face to face.

Until that day...Blessings and Safety.

Greg Cline

CHURCH SCHEDULE:

Weekly Schedule-

Throughout this time of social isolation we have worked to create some new patterns for worship, faith formation, and community. Currently each week we have:

- **Sundays:**
 - 9:30 am- Children's Ensemble meets over Zoom video conferencing
 - Before 10:30 am- Virtual Worship posted during the morning to watch at your leisure
 - 4:00 pm- Kid's Club Zoom gathering
 - 5:00 pm- HCY Zoom gathering
 - 6:00 pm- Church Choir Zoom meeting
- **Tuesdays:**
 - Noon-Zoom lunch together. A time to check in and be in fellowship with one another
- **Wednesdays:**
 - 6:45 pm- Zoom Bible Study
 - In the evening our Evening Prayer service is posted with updated scripture

Each week Beka sends out faith formation resources for families during this time, and Teresa sends out a weekly Parish Nurse article.

Reminder!

If you are planning to come to the weekly Zoom meetings, that Zoom invites will be sent out through email, 30 minutes in advance of meetings!

We hope you will join us!

We recognize and celebrate these birthdays in the month of May. 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.

May 1	Katie Howard Melissa McGinnis Krystyna Sarrazin
May 2	Lucy Bocchino
May 3	Erin Cassel
May 4	Daniel Rogers
May 5	Tom Bocchino
May 7	Alec Via
May 9	Tony Dibiase
May 10	Zac Hullander
May 13	Rebekah Milton
May 16	Sherry Perry
May 22	Billy Joye Jr. Arch Lineberger Chuck MacDonald Cynthia Scholler
May 24	Perri Gross Mandi Kline Denise Taylor
May 25	Will Kline
May 26	Matthew Hogge Amelia Kline
May 28	Richard Fox
May 29	Angela Morton
May 30	Jonathan Baker
May 31	John Zander

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



We're a month and a half into this wrench in the societal system called Covid-19, or social isolation, or "the sickness" as Nathaniel calls it, or however you want to refer to it. For a month and a half we've been cut off, limited, or have had altered, the way we work, the way we socialize, the way we buy groceries, the way we raise and educate kids, the way we worship, and so many other things. There is a huge range of ways in which we have been coping with all of these adjustments we've had to make. Sometimes we are coping well, finding ways to care for ourselves or others and be healthy, finding joy in the things we have around us, finding ways to bridge gaps between us and the people we love and miss. Sometimes we aren't coping as well, and we are worried about the response to the virus, worried about finances, unmotivated to do much of anything, highly irritable and annoyed with every situation and every person around us, maybe even including ourselves.

When I began seminary our Pastoral Care professor, Dr. Everett, took out this chart with stress inducers, largely of major life occurrences, with a point system assigned to each one. When we looked at the list we realized that many of us had multiple things on the list going on: getting married, making a move, starting school, changing jobs, having children. Even good things can bring stress, by the way. The word "pandemic" did not appear anywhere on the chart, but I imagine if it did it would be darn near the top, and unlike many stress inducers where someone in a community is going through something and the rest of us support them, we are all going through this stress-inducing life experience at once. Even more so, it has been a catalyst for so much other stress, over health, finances, jobs, community, education, parenting, and all without a finish line for when it will all be over.

Which is to say, if you're overwhelmed, or anxious, or unmotivated, or irritable, among other things, you're not crazy or weak or ill-equipped. You're stressed, and for very good reason. None of us have been through this before, and we're doing it

all together and trying to adapt quickly and we're not going to make the right choices all along the way. It is ok if this season that we're in is not your best parenting, your highest-efficiency work, or the cleanest your house has ever been. If good enough has ever been good enough it is certainly true now. Give yourself a break, or in church language, "grace."

This is also a good time to give other people a break, or grace, as well. It may be that this needs to happen with people in your home, people you run across on your social-distanced excursions or work time, or with folks on social media (maybe the hardest?). In times like this, when none of us are at our best, giving people a break will often look like forgiveness for those times when our nerves get stomped on and we don't react well, or vice versa. When we don't do "the Christian thing" on our first try, the Christian thing becomes being about the work of forgiveness and reconciliation. So confess, apologize, and forgive, all because the forgiveness that we offer and engage in is only a glimpse of the forgiveness that we have been given in Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Micah

BYOL WITH BEKA
(BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH)

**JOIN BEKA ON TUESDAYS
AT NOON FOR A TIME TO
CHECK IN, AND EAT LUNCH
TOGETHER ON ZOOM!**

**ZOOM INVITATIONS WILL
BE SENT OUT THROUGH
EMAIL 30 MINUTES PRIOR.**

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Join Pastor Micah and Beka for
virtual Bible study at 6:45 pm
on Zoom.

Zoom invitations will be sent
out through email 30 mins
prior.

SUNDAY!
KIDS CLUB (K-5) ZOOM
GATHERING- SUNDAYS AT 4 PM

HOLY COMFORTER LUTHERAN CHURCH

ZOOM

INVITES SENT THROUGH EMAIL

HCY (6TH-12) ZOOM/FACETIME
GATHERING- SUNDAYS AT 5 PM