



How is it already February?! It feels like January just got here and now we are looking towards Valentine's day,

Ash Wednesday, and Lent. When I think of Valentine's day, Ash Wednesday and Let, I think food. Hear me out, we used to have dinner together at least once a week. I loved it for three reasons. The first is because I didn't have to plan what I was going to eat for dinner at least one day during the week. Second, I love getting to eat dinner with y'all. I loved getting to catch up, tell jokes, and hear the giggles from the nursery. Third, I loved the centering worship on Wednesday that we don't get during other seasons of the church year. Oh, one more reason, because Jesus did a lot of ministry around food. So, for us to get to eat dinner together, was holy for me for many reasons.

I'll never forget the dinner where it was raining too hard for the kids to play on the playground and so I pulled out Uno. It started with Olivia Sarrazin and me and it grew to a table full. Lucy, Jack, Beckham, Erin, Leah, Justin, Henry, Alex, Mason, Mallory and on and on! The table was FULL. It got to the point where I had to excuse myself so that they could have enough cards for the deck. Fran pulled me aside and said "you know what would be fun? Teaching them penny poker!". We both laughed so hard! When the round was over, we ate dinner together. Church meals hold a very special place in my heart. I love gathering with people

Faithful Families Tip

Family Gratitude Wall:

All you need is index cards and something to color with. Each day when your family does devotion take time to draw one thing your thankful for on the note card. Tape your note cards up on a wall where you can look at them daily.

and checking in, laughing, and holy fellowship. I cannot wait for the day that we will do that again with taller kids, newer kids, and everyone else.

Beka Forst, Youth and Family Ministries

Adult Faith Formation for Lent

- Each Wednesday in the season of Lent we will post and send out a video focusing on a different spiritual discipline. Have a look and see if one might become a new one for you!
- Each Thursday, beginning February 11th, Bishop Tim will lead a Bible study with the synod focusing on the Book of Isaiah. All are welcome to join in!



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**"To you, O Lord, I lift up my
soul. My God, I put my
trust in you "**
-Psalm 25:1-2a

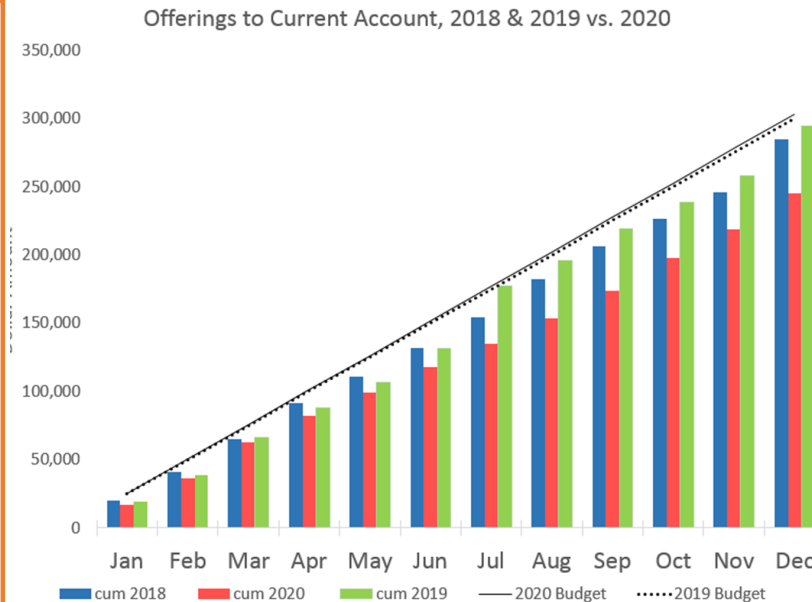
Worship Opportunities for February

- 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.
- Lent begins February 17 with Ash Wednesday. We will have virtual services that evening and each Wednesday in Lent.

Holy Comforter Treasurer Report

Holy Comforter's operating surplus (offering income in excess of expenses) during December was \$4,606.55. The year-to-date deficit, through December 31, was \$7,496.65. Year-to-date spending, curtailed because of the pandemic, was \$50,911.85 below the amount planned in the 2020 budget. Total giving to support Holy Comforter's routine expenses during December was \$26,184.00. The 2020 budget estimate of the amount needed each month was \$25,281.08. The adjacent chart compares 2020 offering income, by month, with that of the two previous years. Budget tracks for 2020 and 2019 are also presented in the graph.

Warren Heller



Answer: Currently the two vaccines approved for use in the U.S. are those produced by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. The first shot helps the body recognize the virus and primes the immune system to defend against it. The second shot strengthens that immune response bringing the total response to nearly 95% efficacy in both cases. During trials, after one shot the volunteers in the program only displayed about a 50% immunity.

Question: Do we have to continue the mitigation precautions (masking, social distancing, limiting the size of gatherings) after we get vaccinated?

Answer: Yes! These mitigation efforts have been the main tools currently preventing infection and transmission of the virus. Wearing a face mask – properly (it has no protection if it's under your nose or chin) – has been proven to reduce an individual's risk of infection by 70%. These safety guidelines must be continued. Here are the reasons why:

- Vaccination trials did not track whether participants wore masks. Given that lack of data, there is no way to determine how much of the benefit of the vaccine was due to the vaccine itself or to practicing safety guidelines.
- The real world does not mimic a controlled clinical trial. How the vaccine is stored, transported, administered, and the health of the individual all have bearing on overall immunity. Folks who participated in clinical trials were healthy individuals with stable preexisting diseases – not a real-world comparison to the general public.
- The herd immunity threshold for Covid-19 is unknown. Herd immunity occurs when enough of the population is exposed to the virus, preferably through vaccination, and limits the ability of the virus to spread. The percentage of population requiring vaccination to achieve herd immunity has yet to be established for Covid-19, it simply hasn't been around long enough to determine the long-term conditions needed to stop its spread.

Teresa Keller, Parish Nurse



From Your Parish Nurse...

I am excited! After one of my recent weekly "From Your Parish Nurse" articles about the Covid-19 vaccination, I got feedback from many of you stating you'd gotten your vaccination or were scheduled to get one. But I also continue to hear from people everywhere, not just our church members, with questions around the subject of the vaccine, so I'm going to address some of those questions:

Question: Will it really make a difference? I mean the flu kills just as many people each year – is Covid really that bad a threat?

Answer: Yes, the flu kills many each year. The CDC reports that the flu has resulted in 45 million illnesses, and between 140,000 and 810,000 hospitalizations annually since 2010. BUT it has only caused 12,000-61,000 annual deaths. Covid-19, comparatively, has caused less illness (approximately 24,000 as of 1/14/21), and fewer hospitalizations (approximately 129,000 as of 1/14/21) annually but has caused over 400,000 deaths. It is a MUCH deadlier virus!

Question: Why do we need two doses?

MUSIC NOTES

February 2021 Musical Notes...



February 2021 Music News... One of our music ministries has resumed for the year. On January 24, with 100% attendance, our adult handbell ensemble gathered for a reunion in the sanctuary balcony. During the month of February and March we will set our goals to prepare another collection of anthems which will be utilized during our Easter season services of worship. These anthems will also be available for access on the church website, as well as our FaceBook page and YouTube. Special words of recognition to these hearty souls for their renewed sense of dedication to the music ministry at Holy Comforter.

In February members of our choir who have been attending worship and serving as Cantors will



gather to record two services of worship. Holden Evening Prayer is one such service, which will be utilized midweek through the season of Lent. Our Ash Wednesday service of worship will be offered this year in a virtual on-line format.

Elizabeth Bruchon recently shared an article published in Time magazine entitled, "No Joy Without Singing." Too lengthy to share in totality, here are a few paragraphs worthy of note...

It speaks of a guy named Tom, who a few years ago began to take vocal lessons. Eventually falling in love with the benefit that singing together is ridiculously good for us; improving sense of well-

being, even lowering blood pressure, Tom joined a church choir. Then suddenly...Covid-19. Singing was history, at least in public groups.

In the months that have followed Tom misses choir, as I know many can relate to here. We miss the fellowship as much as the music. Like all the number of quarantined choirs, and choral singing is America's most popular performing art by participation, we dream of the day our voices...and breath...reunite!

Peace! Greg Cline

Daily Devotionals

Daily Devotionals from Augsburg Fortress called "Christ in Our Homes" are available at the church. You may pick one up during worship, in the metal box outside the office doors, or upon request from the office.

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
- 5:00 pm- Handbell Choir Meets (except Feb 7)

• 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
- 7:00-Nar-Anon

• Saturdays:

- 9:00 am-Yoga for Holy C (open to all. Sign up to participate)

Events of Note:

- Feb 17: **Ash Wednesday**. Virtual video posted in the evening. Drop-in ashes available all day.
- Beginning February 11-Bible Study with Bishop Tim Smith focusing on the Book of Isaiah. This will take place on Thursdays until March 25, from 7-8 pm.
- Each Wednesday in Lent we will post Holden Evening Prayer, recorded for this season, with readings for each week.
- Each Wednesday we will post a video for Adult Faith Formation.

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

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

February 1	Teddy Scharpenberg
February 4	Scott Carr
February 8	Chris Hullander Scott Zander
February 9	Shelia Kelly
February 14	Noah Rawlins Will Howard
February 15	Ressa Wilson Leslie Crist
February 16	Rochelle Potter
February 22	Marc Cox



Grace and peace,

It seems a little cruel that we are soon to begin the season of Lent, when it honestly feels like we never completely moved out of last year's season of Lent. Last March I remember someone saying, "this is the Lentiest Lent I've ever Lented," and much of what made it feel that way, the isolation, the somber tones, the unintentional fasting of things like high quality toilet paper, have continued at least at times even up to now. In a normal year we gather together for Easter in worship and community celebration of resurrection and life, a release from the fear of sin and death, but this year even the fact that we didn't get to worship in-person for Easter was a reminder that sin and death, while ultimately defeated in Christ, still have power even in their death throws. So in many ways it seems like we didn't ever get to completely move out of Lent, even as we celebrated Easter, Pentecost, Advent, Christmas, and now Epiphany.

But even though it seems like we never left it, in some ways we need Lent this time around as much or more than usual. The year since last Lent has been an incredible challenge for folks. There have been things to celebrate as well, absolutely, but between the pandemic and its isolation, job security issues for some, racial justice tension, political upheaval, and the anxiety that has permeated it all, this has been an incredibly challenging year overall. Often what anxiety and stress do to us is turn us inward, have us focus on ourselves and block out the challenges and concerns of our neighbors. When we do this for defined periods of time this can be self-care, even sabbath rest, and can be a good thing. Even God rested on the 7th day so certainly we are meant to rest as well. But self-care and sabbath rest are meant to equip us to then get to work, to help us be the best versions of ourselves so that we can then live in service to others, and ultimately the kingdom. Extended periods of anxiety have a tendency to turn us inward, to make us less empathetic towards others, to consider our neighbors less, and while that is completely understandable in times like the one in which we currently live, one definition Martin Luther gave for "Sin" was to turn inward on yourself.

I think we may need this season of Lent as much or more than others because it is possible this has been a year when we have become more turned in on ourselves for an extended period of time. Even if we've had good reason, this Lenten season can be one in which we spend time in introspection considering how that is true, and allow ourselves to repent, to open ourselves up

again to God and to our neighbors. This takes some honest wrestling, and may even include admitting we were wrong (the horror!), but doing so may also allow us to live into Luther's notion that each day in baptism is a dying and rising, a dying to our old sinful selves and rising to be, more each day, who God has called and created us to be. So while we may feel like we never left Lent from a year ago, this fast approaching season (Ash Wednesday is February 17th), I invite you to commit to this season of Lent and the opportunity for repentance and renewal that it can be.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Micah

Yoga at Holy C!

David and Heather Povinelli have recently completed certification as yoga instructors and they're excited to share those gifts with the church. Classes will begin **Saturday, February 6th**, initially over Zoom.

"Please join us on **Saturday mornings at 9AM** for a yoga flow class that's a perfect start for your weekend. We will focus on building your practice in a fun, relaxed class. Our friend and teacher is lending us her Zoom account and online platform for the class, but it is a free class for members of the church. Please go to <https://daisyogastudio.com/schedule/>, and scroll down until you see "Holy Comforter Yoga." The sign-up works best on a PC. There will be a registration process if you have never signed up before."

Ash Wednesday Worship

This Ash Wednesday (February 17th) will look much different than normal, and will include two parts.

- Our worship will be virtual, recorded ahead of time specifically for this year. It will be posted and emailed the afternoon of Ash Wednesday for folks to participate in as they are able.
- Drop-in Ashes-From 8 am to 6 pm on Ash Wednesday you are invited to drop in at the church to receive ashes, along with a few sentences of confession and forgiveness together. If you'd like to remain in your car we can come to you, or you are welcome to come into the sanctuary to receive them.