



The pandemic caused so much shifting on the fly. We have had to find ways to grow and change in ways that could be sustainable for our leaders and our kids. One of the bigger shifts we made in the pandemic is in our Confirmation program. August was coming and the pandemic wasn't over, so we had to come up with ways to engage in faithful learning while keeping kids engaged. Discipleship Academy came to us as an entire program change. It was important for us to make a change that was going to be meaningful for our students. Being confirmed is a choice and if that is the case so should the learning.

Discipleship academy is a university style program. There are 8 required courses and 8 courses of their choosing, for a total of 16 credits needed to be confirmed. Our hope was that this allowed for students to pick and choose what they explore and learn about as they start to see what it means to claim this faith as their own. Teaching a program like this leaves room for imagination and curiosity. So far this year we have taught 6 different classes where we have had more conversations about our faith than we did in our prior model. Exciting new formats for teaching that include

a podcast! Yep, you read that right! Preston, Winston, and Justin said they have really enjoyed our podcasts because they are able to go back and listen to them again. Justin shared that its helpful to go back and listen to them again when he gets confused. Along with some independent work that allows our kids to process and wrestle with what our faith means. Last semester we had the students write children's sermons about the apostle's creed. Leah Koehler said that she loved getting to write one and be creative. She said that it helped her learn more of what the apostle's creed meant. Our faith is personal, and this new way of learning is to help our young people discover what their faith means to them.

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, Bishop Tim will lead a Bible study with the synod focusing on the Book of Isaiah. All are welcome to join in! We will send a link out each week.

Faithful Families Tip

Lenten Prayer Journals-

Lent is 40 days (44, if you include Sundays) and as a family lent practice try journaling. Journaling doesn't have to be writing, it can be drawing, taking pictures, it can be painting. Each day of lent pick a time to journal a prayer. Start by sharing your day with God and pray



Micah Kearney, Pastor *email: mkearney@holyc.org*
Greg Cline, Organist /Choirmaster
Beka Forst, Director of Youth & Family Ministries
Teresa Keller, Parish Nurse



**All the ends of the
earth shall remember
and turn to the
Lord. (Ps. 22:27)**

Worship Opportunities for March

- 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.
- Holden Evening Prayer is posted each Wednesday with updated readings.

Holy Comforter Treasurer Report

Holy Comforter's operating surplus (offering income in excess of expenses) during January was \$19,849.54. Total giving to support Holy Comforter's routine expenses for the month was \$42,461.00, including a one-time donation of \$21,000. The budget estimate of the amount needed each month in 2021 is \$25,767.00.

Warren Heller



MUSIC NOTES

March 2021 Musical Notes...

Recently a member on our music ministry team shared the following... The pandemic has opened up my (and probably yours) otherwise very busy calendar. Even though it is packed, I try to engage in activities that bring me joy and hopefully provide joy for others. Almost a year ago, my world became very quiet. I no longer had choir practice, chamber choir rehearsal or handbell practice. I laugh and tell people these activities make up my social life and they did. Not only were we missing music in church, I was missing it in my life.

When Greg Cline asked the hand bell group if we would consider ringing and making a recording of songs, we all agreed that we could come together and safely ring the bells. Standing six feet apart adorned with masks and gloves, we practiced for several weeks and then recorded songs to be used in some of the services. It was such a joy to see masked faces, hear laughter, catch up with each other and even ring the bells.

Each of us rings about three bells and we do not play every note in the song but each bell and each note is important to the whole song. If you just listened to one part, you would not recognize the song and there would be a lot of empty space but, when we ring together, the notes blend and we make music that you can recognize.

I feel the same way about my Holy Comforter family. We each have a part and individually it may feel like what we do is not very important or makes an impact but when we come together, we are united in Jesus Christ and are equipped to live as God's witnesses in the world.

The response to the handbell program presented on the Internet during Advent/Christmas was unexpected. Comments arrived both near and far in appreciation of our efforts. On Palm Sunday our handbell choir will come together in our second video recording session. This collection of best loved hymn arrangements include:

*Savior, Like A Shepherd Lead Us; *It Is Well With My Soul; *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing; *O Worship the King; and *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

These songs will be presented during our services of worship (Easter Season) as well as posted on our web site, Facebook, and YouTube. While we would much prefer to perform these musical offerings live to a standing room only capacity in our Sanctuary, we are equally moved to anticipation that all these offerings, including all services of worship for the past year, have been able to be accessed by souls world wide. It is our hope that all our ministry efforts continue to impact folks around the globe in ways that we could have never imagined even a year ago.

Our collective choir voices have been virtually muted for a year now. I hear from many of you, "How much longer?" Answer: "Unknown!" However, we look to a future church that does not resemble our current worship life procedure. We have already begun the process of outfitting our choir members with special "singing masks," when they can some day come together, "With One Voice." Due to distancing maybe the fellowship hall, sanctuary nave, or courtyard could temporarily serve as our choir area. As we continue to, "think outside the box" we welcome comments and ideas from the flock. Perhaps you have seen unique and creative forms of worship. I have stumbled upon untold numbers of churches during the past year, just to see how they implement worship.

Very creative Christians out there!

Looking ahead to Holy Week

We wanted to let you know what to expect for Holy Week this year. We will hold in-person worship services for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, as well as live-streaming and broadcasting for the parking lot. We plan to hold an Easter Egg Hunt on that Saturday. For Easter Sunday, (weather permitting) we will hold an outdoor early service, a bit after Sunrise, and then our 10:30 am service indoor. The allows many folks to participate



Lent Devotions!

Lent is Christ's journey to the Cross. This year we offer some different options to help you connect to the season of Lent and the coming of Easter.

Lent In a Bag:
Family devotions with imagination, play and curiosity!
Available for pick up on Sunday 21st.

Bible Study with the Bishop:
Thursdays at 6 pm.
Registration link in email!

Christ In the Home:
Available at church in the metal bin.
If you can't get one, we will find a way to get you one.





From your Parish Nurse

So, I am a forever optimist, and I know it is still early, but I’m seeing signs of spring and I’m so excited! Our hydrangeas have new growth, our rhododendrons have buds, our maple trees have leaf buds setting on, and the pin oaks are pushing off all the brown leaves they’ve been saving since fall! I hope all of you are thinking “time to stop being a couch potato and get out and move my body!” – or something along those lines! I know that most of us are at least beginning to think about spring cleaning and sprucing up those flowerbeds and gardens, so I wanted to just give a few pointers on how to tackle those tasks without hurting your bodies that may have been a bit more sedentary during the winter months. First of all, you should gently begin exercise – not go from “couch potato” to “biking junkie” or “running fool” or anything else that takes you from little exercise to tons of exercise. Your muscles aren’t used to it, nor are your lungs, so be kind and start out gently. PEP exercise on Mondays is a perfect place to “gentle in” to more strenuous forms of exercise...gentle toning, stretching, and strengthening will prepare your muscles for more as we ease into spring and summer! Here are some OTHER tips for pain-free ways to ease into spring cleaning and gardening, and more:

- +Prioritize – decide which cleaning or gardening projects truly need to be done in the spring and leave the rest till later.
- +Ask for help – examine your to-do list and determine which tasks you can easily do, and which may need someone else’s assistance.

- +Plan your attack – tackle tasks in an efficient order. Some jobs are better done in the morning, others best in the afternoon. Switch from hand work to reaching work to bending work to avoid stressing any one part of your body too long.
 - +Avoid the urge to do it all at once – the tasks didn’t become tasks overnight nor should you try to fix them all in one day. Spread out the tasks over days or weeks.
 - +Use joint-friendly tools – long handled tools allow you to stand, not stoop, and easy-to-grip tools are hand friendly. Be sure to buy a kneeling pad or a scooter wagon for those low-to-the-ground tasks.
 - +Rest on schedule – plan rest periods every 15, 30 or 60 minutes to conserve energy. Forging ahead may let you cross off the task sooner, but you’ll pay for it in the end.
 - +Use correct posture – let your larger/stronger joints and muscles do the work whenever possible. Instead of lifting with your fingers, for instance, use the palm of your hand, your forearms or even your elbows and keep items close to your body as you carry them to properly distribute the load.
 - +Take it with you – think ahead and plan for the items you’ll need to avoid repeated trips to the closet for supplies. Try wearing an apron with many pockets but be careful of how much stress you place on your shoulders or back.
- Practice these tips and your “lesserly-used” fall/winter body will thank you as it becomes your “much-used” spring/summer body. You’ll end up with far fewer days devoted to resting your sore, achy joints and muscles, and you’ll be stronger in the long run as your muscles once again become well-toned.

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
- **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:

- Thursdays until March 25, from 7-8 pm-Bible Study with Bishop Tim Smith focusing on the Book of Isaiah.
- 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 March.

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

March 2	Khloe Tench
March 4	Dean Halvorson
March 5	Rob Ratchford
March 6	Jo Singleton
March 6	Debbie Baker
March 7	Roger Dibiasse
March 10	Dee Smith
March 12	Veronica Bryant
	Arden De Nicholas
March 13	Raini Kimball
March 14	Tyler Ange
	Tracey Nault
	Nancy Powell
March 16	Jack Kirby
March 17	Brittany Lewis
March 20	Mike Wesson
March 24	Mollie Caldwell
March 25	Pat Koehler
March 26	Hailey Ange
	Cheryl Grant
March 28	Aiden McGinnis
	Callum Nance
March 31	Pat Long



Grace and peace,

I always appreciate the Ash Wednesday worship service. While it isn't the most exciting or energetic, it often feels about the most honest, a service where we do not live in denial of our mortality or sinfulness, but name it. The ashen cross as a dual symbol of both our mortality and sinfulness, as well as the forgiveness and everlasting life we have in Christ, is an honest image of our reality, bound to a promise while also plagued by our brokenness. I really appreciate that service, and often feel peace from it, but rarely would I describe it as joyful.

While it might have betrayed the normal mood of the day, this year it was hard to not find joy in the "drop in ashes" we offered on Ash Wednesday. We had 40+ people drop by to receive ashes, and it was a great assortment of folks who have been in the sanctuary recently, worshiped online, in the parking lot, have been away at school, and even some former members who grew up in the congregation. While the purpose of the day was somber, seeing faces I haven't seen in months was such an incredible gift. I heard from folks, time and again, how meaningful it was for them to be in the sanctuary again after so long, and selfishly it was wonderful for me to get to see those folks in there.

Suffice to say, I miss you all. This month we will hit the year mark for existing in some form of lock-down. A year since we were all able to gather together in the sanctuary in worship and praise. A year since we gathered for food and fellowship. A year since we were able to be in full-community with one another, since we've seen many of the faces that have been fixtures in our lives, since we've embraced in loving hugs. (I really miss hugs. I had a dream a while back that was completely about me missing hugs). It has been a trying year, one filled with fear, with lament, with grief, with loneliness.

And yet, in the midst of such a challenging year, we have continued in our lives of discipleship, worshiping in new ways, finding new techniques for faith formation, supporting one another and serving others. We have continued to proclaim Christ in word and deed. We've hit a bit of a rhythm with worship, but even so it has not felt like we want it to, and we yearn for the day when we can share a meal together, sit shoulder to shoulder, and sing jubilantly with one another.

It's coming. I hear more and more members say they're receiving their vaccine, numbers are improving, and as the weather improves we have more options to gather safely. We aren't there yet, and I urge everyone to continue to be vigilant in their safety protocols both for their sakes and their neighbor's, but the light is on the horizon, and I look forward with hope to that day.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Micah

Outdoor Ministry Opportunities!

Each staff member at Holy Comforter was significantly formed and impacted by Outdoor Ministries. Camps have given us foundational relationships, a community to help us discern calls to ministry, joy in service, and a unique lens for how Christ is at work in the world.

After not hosting camp programs in the summer of 2020, NC's two Lutheran camp ministries, Novus Way (Lutheridge/Lutherock) and Agape/Kure Beach, are both hosting programs this summer. There are a variety of protocols they will use to be mindful of hosting camp while Covid is still a significant consideration. We invite you to visit their sites and learn more, both about their protocols, and the formative programs they offer.

Greg would like to remind you that the music ministry has an endowment to pay 50% of the cost of each member who attends Music Week (July 11-17), and there is financial help available to make sure no kid misses out on camp because of financial concerns.

Isle of Palms Retreat Center

Isle of Palms, SC retreat center has hosted Holy Comforter retreats for 30+ years. Last year the center was closed, and while it has reopened, the restrictions on use of the kitchen and gathering spaces make it prohibitive to plan a retreat during our normal Memorial Day weekend. We look forward to returning to spending wonderful time of fellowship with one another there in the future. In the meantime, individual families are able to rent rooms if they would like. We will keep you informed if we are able to reschedule for a time later in the year.