



Holy Comforter Youth (HCY) is for 6th -12th graders. We meet the first three Sundays of the month at 5 pm. We eat, we play games, and then we do a bible study. Last year we started the year off with a bible study on belonging. We used the Body of Christ scripture from 1 Corinthians and a reading from Acts about believers in community. The point of this bible study is to build a covenant and then reinforce it by naming that we all inherently belong to this group.

This year I decided that we would do a series on belonging. We would take the first half of the year to study what that means. We all have inherent value and belong, and what does the bible say about it. We are studying and dwelling in themes of community, unity, inclusivity, loyalty, hospitality, teamwork, and invitation, as ideas of belonging. The first week of this study, we do two things.

The first is we build a covenant; we write down words that we promise to live into in the youth room and out of the youth room. Our youth rewrite this covenant every year, and this year's words were caring, forgiveness, equal opportunity, dignity, supportive, inclusivity, kindness, listen, and helpfulness. So, when we fail at practicing these important words, we are reminded that we can try again.



Faithful Families Tip— A blessing for school mornings:

Give your child a simple blessing as she leaves for school in the morning. "God sustain name in the gift of _____ by your Spirit today." Name one or more of the gifts of the Spirit from the blessing spoken over them in baptism: wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, fear of the Lord, joy in your presence.

During this same week, we define what belonging means to us. Our youth define belonging as being wanted, togetherness, everyone being welcome no matter who they are, being friendly, being a part of something, and community. These are some big words our youth have put together and we pray to get better at acknowledging people's natural belonging. Some of these special definitions, I have seen our youth live out. They support one another when we do bible studies. They listen to one another during group discussion. While we have a lot to learn, we are well on our way to living faithfully and loving our neighbors.

Deacon Beka, rforst@holyc.org

This month's Discipleship Academy class is on communion. This course will look at the sacrament of Communion. This is a 1 credit required class. See you on

November 27th at 5 pm.

Communion

Discipleship Academy



November Newsletter

Worship with us Sundays at 10:30 am.

Each 10:30 am service is livestreamed on the website and transmitted to the parking lot over the radio and communion is served to those present.

Micah Kearney, Pastor
Email: mkearney@holyc.org

Greg Cline, Organist /Choirmaster

Beka Forst, Deacon of Discipleship

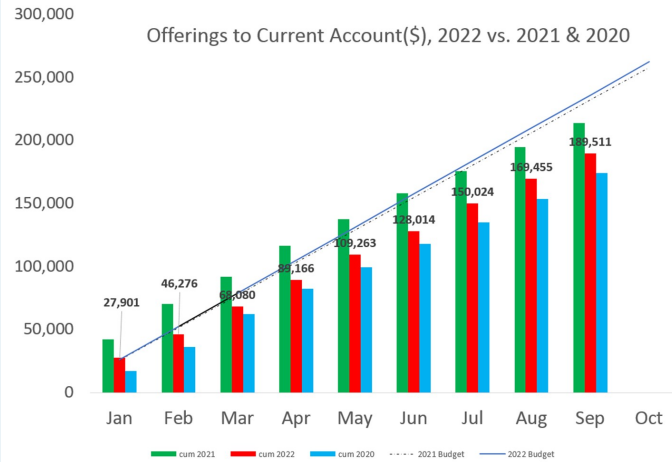
Church Office Hours: Monday—Friday: 8:30 am-2:00 pm

216 N. Main Street, Belmont, NC 28012

Phone: 704-825-2483

Email: holycomforter@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report for September 2022



Holy Comforter's operating deficit (expenses in excess of offering income) during September was \$4,869.69. Total giving to support Holy Comforter's routine expenses for the month was \$20,056.00. The budget estimate of the amount needed each month in 2022 is \$26,222.00. The year-to-date deficit, through September 30, was \$28,493.93. Year-to-date spending was \$17,993.57 below the amount planned in the 2022 budget. 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

*The schedule below is our expected weekly programs and meetings.
When exceptions happen they will be posted on the website calendar and in weekly emails.*

• Sundays:

9:30 am - Sunday School
10:10 am - Church & Chamber Choir
10:30 am - Worship in Sanctuary
5:00 pm - HCY
5:00 pm - Adult Handbells
6:00 pm - Church Choir

• Tuesdays:

7:00 pm - Nar-Anon

• Wednesdays:

4:00 pm - Adult Faith Formation video
5:30 pm - Unfailing Light Handbells (except 11/23)
6:45 pm - Women's Bible Study
7:00 pm - Chamber Choir

Events to Note:

- ♦ Kids Club – November 13th 4 pm
- ♦ Prime Timers – November 10th 10:30 am
- ♦ Council Meeting - November 13th
- ♦ The Dwelling Interest Meeting - November 13th 6:30 PM
- ♦ Christian Ed – November 15th 7 pm
- ♦ Outreach – November 17th 7 pm
- ♦ Lunch & Decorate - November 20th
- ♦ Advent Meal & Worship - November 30th
6:00 / 6:45 pm

Courtyard Project Update

The pavers have been fully installed as well as shiny new drains! The next steps will include landscaping and lighting installations.

Our congregation has done an amazing job coming together to raise the funds to support our courtyard project. Since the last update we received new gifts or pledges to cover an additional 36 pavers, leaving us only 200 or so pavers short of covering the cost of this project. We ask all members of our congregation to prayerfully consider if you are able to make an additional contribution to this project.

Purpose Statement and Core Values

Purpose Statement:

Journeying through faith in a joyful, safe community, welcoming and serving Belmont and Beyond.

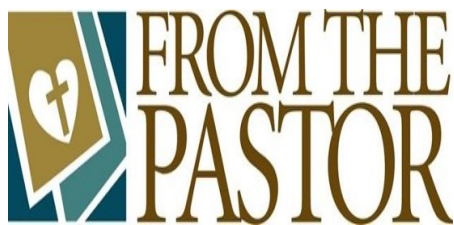
Core values:

Embrace- God creates a diverse and beautiful creation. We are here to be a community in which all people are seen and affirmed.

Grow- God calls us to journey in faith. We strive to build and strengthen the faith of all who are part of the Holy Comforter community.

Connect- God calls us together as a community of faith and belonging. We seek to nurture relationships and fellowship within the Holy Comforter family.

Give- God created a world of abundance. We give generously of ourselves, our time, our talent and our treasure.



In mid-October I gathered with a number of rostered leaders for our conference lunch (we are in the Mecklenburg Conference). We shared a good bit about the joys and struggles of ministry these days. It was helpful for me to hear that the trends we've been experiencing are not unique to us, no matter the size congregation, particularly when it comes to worship numbers and participation. As we talked together it became pretty clear to me that, while some people just got out of the habit, for a lot of people the struggle has to do as much or more with grief. Remember the 5 stages of grief: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance. I've seen all of these stages at work over the past few years including now. We think about grief primarily when it comes to a person's death, but grief can happen whenever there is a loss of any kind, and we have a lot to grieve, frankly, individually and as a community. The general trend is that churches are experiencing around 60% of the attendance that they had before the pandemic began, and that tracks about right for us. For folks who were here in 2019 or before, that means the sanctuary doesn't feel as full as it used to, and that is something they grieve. Perhaps the folks they felt closest to are some of the ones who aren't here, and those relationships in this place are something they grieve.

Even the things that have continued perhaps look different, and one program that has been around and life-giving for decades that we've struggled with is Sunday School. When we brought it back in the Spring we struggled to get people to participate, and even after a survey that got responses saying people wanted it and would participate, we've had very little participation. I think the idea of not having it would cause grief. Leadership is now talking about letting that program go if our participation levels continue so we're not investing so much time, energy, and volunteer participation, in a program that people aren't opting into. That's a hard thing to say from a pastor who grew up in these programs and was formed by them, and knowing how dear those times have been for so many here. However, sometimes in order for resurrection and new life to happen, we cannot be afraid to let some things die.

This article might seem like a downer to this point, sorry about that, but let me end by saying that I do believe that new life and resurrection is not only possible, but happening at Holy Comforter. While Sunday school has dropped off, we've been more intentional with our children's church time and kids are getting a lot out of this intentional 20 minutes each week. Our Kid's Club time has been reoriented to not only be time to play, but also time for faith formation, because that's when we have kids showing up. HCY continues to be fruitful for community and faith formation for youth, and our kids are engaging the new Confirmation program in ways they never did in the previous program. With adults we've had deep and vibrant conversations in Book Club, Prime Timers, and Women's Bible Study, and our Small Groups have now kicked off. In no

way have we abandoned Faith Formation, it is just happening in new ways as people engage differently and we try to meet folks where they are. And in worship, we have anywhere from 1/3 of our participants online, to sometimes more online than in the room. While I continue to think we are at our best when we're together and in relationship, our reach is much wider than it once was, and we're responding to trends in new ways with online engagement. Even in a pandemic time we've had new members join because God is at work in this place!

There are certainly things we've lost worth grieving, individually and as a community, but as we process that grief we should not let it keep us from seeing the ways that God's faithfulness continues to be constant, to breathe new life into places of grief, and to invite us to participate in God's work to extend that work into the world.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Micah



From Greg Cline, MD (Music Director)

The membership of the church choir welcomes Cheryl Bansen to the ensemble. Cheryl, a soprano, is a local musical instructor of pre-school children. We are delighted to have Cheryl share her musical gifts with us.

November is one of the busiest months for all our choirs as we attempt to provide inspiring musical offerings for all our festival services through the end of the year. Like much of our ministries there is much behind-the-scene activity that happens before 10:30 on Sunday mornings. This dedicated group of volunteer musicians are a joy to work with as we collectively minister during all of our services of worship.

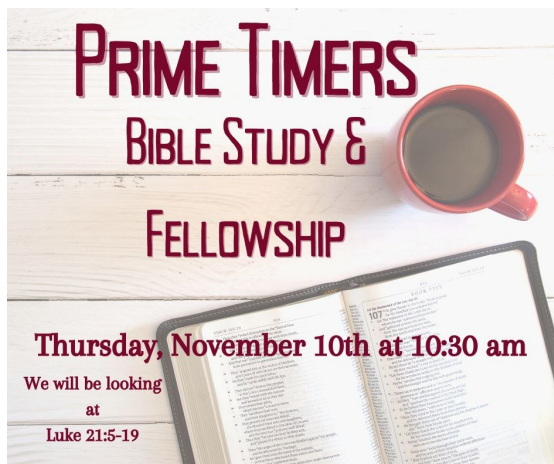
Our evening Advent Service of Worship begins on Wednesday, November 30. A congregational meal is served at 6:00...Worship @ 6:45. There are two additional mid-week services that follow in December.

Unfailing Light is the service liturgy that will be led by our church choir, Gabriel Kearney and Erin Cassell on handbells, with Julia Gunter, flute, and yours truly on keyboard. An introduction to this beautiful liturgy at the close of the day suggests that when the Spirit calls us out of time marked by daylight and darkness, measured by clocks and calendars, and gathers us into time welling up from the past, we welcome eternity.



We invite everyone to extend a welcoming invitation to family, friends, and neighbors who maybe are not available to attend worship with us on Sunday mornings...but who possibly could join us mid-week.

PRIME TIMERS
BIBLE STUDY &
FELLOWSHIP



Thursday, November 10th at 10:30 am
We will be looking
at
Luke 21:5-19

second week of the month

Small Groups



Sunday 11/13 @ 4pm
Tuesday 11/8 @ 7pm

Clothing Drive

Gently used winter clothes for
Catawba Heights Elementary Clothing Closet



November 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.

November 1 Donna Bean
November 2 Beckham Bryant
November 3 Brad Milton
November 4 Declan Nance
November 5 Debbie Mendez
November 6 Debbie Bray
Jennifer Kearney


November 8 Tom Nance
November 9 Jim Buell
November 12 Amelia Hyman
Greg Byrum
Judy Caldwell
Collins Luge

November 15 Mary Yavelak
Leslie Luge
Kodie Nelson
November 16 Dylan Fox
November 18 Brian Achor
November 19 Nathaniel Kearney

November 20 Danny Potter
November 21 Lucy Mitchell
November 23 Jordan Doctor
November 25 Cheryl Fox
November 27 Mallory Morton
November 29 Sue Lahr
November 30 Rickie Neagle
Sabrina Starnes

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

CHRISTIAN



rooted, raising & reaching

EDUCATION

3RD TUESDAYS AT 7PM

Women's Bible Study

Inspired
by Rachel Held Evans

Wednesdays
through November 23rd
6:45pm



Catawba Church of the Holy Comforter

Advent Decorating & Lunch

Sunday, November 20th
immediately following worship

We will have a potluck lunch and decorate for the Advent season



OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Meets 3rd Thursday at 7 pm



WORSHIP



Volunteers Needed

BEGINNING NOVEMBER 30TH

UNFAILING LIGHT



ADVENT MEAL & SERVICE

WEDNESDAYS AT 6:00 PM

