



Children's Church has been around Holy Comforter all 5 ½ years I have been here. It has been at Holy Comforter long before that too. It's the 20 minutes during the readings and sermon where our pre-k through 5th grade kids get an age appropriate message on the weekly lessons. Children's Church isn't just for the kids either, it allows parents to settle in and absorb something during the sermon. I'm going to tell you what is special about Children's Church, it is really lead by our young members.

February 20th was our first week of having a more structured Children's Church and it was incredible. We started with a video, read the story, and played an exciting rendition of hot potato with a lion, called 'Hot Lion'. (Who says church can't be fun?) Like in 'big church', we heard the story read by some of our youngest. Our lectors in Children's Church were Alex Bocchino and Emalee Carroll, there were a lot who wanted to read, which made for a tough decision. Our ushers were Nathaniel Kearney, Gabriel Kearney, and Tyler Cassel. Our greeters were every kid there, no one

felt like they didn't belong. It reminded me that our young people are leaders. We aren't just molding them for later, they are leaders right now. They are helping their peers who are new, they are walking new kids in so they don't feel alone, they are being the church right now.

To hear these special stories from young people is powerful, to see kids help one another is moving, and to have our young people welcome everyone is without a doubt loving like Jesus. It's safe to say that our Sunday school transition was a tough one for me, but seeing our kids lead in church reaffirmed to me that learning about God and being the church doesn't always happen in the ways we think we should, and it can be fun. I saw God in our young people being leaders for one another, when they helped their neighbor find the right page in the bible, and when they giggled after our rousing game of 'Hot Lion'. What a gift.

Deacon Beka



Faithful Families Tip— Pretzels for Lent!

Have you ever heard of the pretzel prayer posture? The prayer posture is when you cross your arms over your chest and hands touching your shoulder, which was a posture used a long time ago by monks. And did you know that pretzels were eaten a lot back then? Because they don't need a lot of ingredients. From Ash Wednesday to Easter eat one pretzel a day to remind you to pray and try out the pretzel prayer posture!



March Newsletter

"I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing your praise." ~Psalm 138:1

Worship Opportunities for March

- 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.
 - Ash Wednesday Service, March 2nd, 7pm.
 - Holden Evening Prayer Services / 6pm meal / 6:45pm worship.
 - Wednesdays
 - March 9th
 - March 16th
 - March 23rd
 - March 30th
 - April 6th

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

Music Notes

From Greg Cline

Our choral and handbell choirs are busy preparing all of their leadership roles for upcoming services of worship; from Ash Wednesday to morning and evening services during the Lenten Season.

The choir, as well as youth handbell ensemble members will lead our Wednesday evenings together using our traditional liturgy from Holden Evening Prayer during the month of March into April.

The choral choir ensembles have relocated temporarily back to the fellowship hall for rehearsals. This allows for greater distancing as the current Covid numbers moderate. We continue to monitor this progression. I personally have read a wealth of publications regarding the Covid impact on congregations.

While I don't necessarily put a lot of stock in just any written article...one by "Barna:" State of the Church, caught my eye. At the beginning of the pandemic and into summer 2020 one third of practicing Christians stopped attending church. At that same time data showed over half (53%) say they have streamed their regular church online within the past weeks. Another 34% admitted to streaming a different church service online other than their own, essentially "church hopping" digitally.

Would love to find current updates on these statistics in 2022. These are challenging times indeed, but when we look at previous generations I have yet to find the "utopia" free from calamity, pestilence, sin and strife.

We are no doubt finding our way with the help of God. There is always a reason for hope, for there is always hope in Christ. I am constantly reminded of the power of God through musical anthems.

This is one which will be shared by our chamber choir in the near future:
"In Christ Alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song. This Cornerstone, this solid ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm. What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease! My Comforter, my all in all, here in the love of Christ I stand."

~ Greg Cline

HCY Mission Trip Interest Meeting

March 10th at 7 pm

Serving The Dwelling



Ash

Wednesday

March 2, 7pm

Drive through ashes available
from 8:30 am to 5 pm

On Thursdays from **March 10 through April 7 from 7 to 8:15 pm**, Bishop Tim Smith will lead a Bible Study over Zoom on Gospel of Luke. We will send out the link in the weekly email so anyone can participate.

Feminine Hygiene Products and Adult Diapers Needed

Paper product continue to be a need, along with tampons, sanitary pads, and panty liners. SOCKS gives these products to the community at no cost.



Treasurer's Report for January 2022

Holy Comforter's operating surplus (offering income in excess of expenses) during January was \$4,676.99. Total giving to support Holy Comforter's routine expenses for the month was \$27,901.00. The budget estimate of the amount needed each month in 2022 is \$26,222.00.

~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:**

Sunday School has been temporarily paused! Check with Beka for more info!

10:10 am– Church Choir

10:30 am-Worship in Sanctuary

5:00 pm-HCY (First three Sundays)

5:00pm– Discipleship Academy (Fourth Sunday)

5:00 pm-Handbells

6:00 pm-Church Choir

*Service livestreamed on website and transmitted by radio to parking lot.

• **Tuesdays:**

7:00 pm- Nar-Anon

• **Wednesdays:**

4:00 pm- Adult Faith Formation afternoon video

7:00 pm– Chamber Choir

Starting March 9th

Holden Evening Prayer Services

6pm– Meal

6:45pm Service

Events to Note:

-Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner-3/1-6pm

-Ash Wednesday service– March 2nd, 7pm

-Prime Timers– March10th 10:30am.



We have hired an interim attendant, Mallory Morton, who has begun working in the nursery. She will work until we find a more permanent person, and we are excited to have her.

If you know of anyone who would be interested in working in the nursery with our littles or you need more information please reach out to Beka.



Prime Timers Bible Study

Our Prime Timers group, those of retirement age and up, will gather again for Bible Study in person on **Thursday, March 10th at 10:30am.** We will meet at the church in the fellowship hall. We will be looking at the gospel of Luke 13:31-35. We look forward to a time of Bible Study and fellowship together!



Discipleship Academy

Learners will explore the troublemakers and unconventional people who have contributed to building the kingdom on earth. This elective course is worth one credit and will be on March 27th at 5 pm.

For more information please contact Beka Forst or Pastor Micah.



March Birthdays

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

March 4	Dean Halvorson
March 5	Rob Ratchford
March 6	Debbie Baker
	Jo Singleton
	Ashley Hyman
March 7	Roger Dibiase
March 10	Dee Smith
March 12	Veronica Bryant
March 13	Raini Kimball
March 14	Tracey Nault
	Nancy Powell
March 16	Jack Kirby
March 17	Brittany Lewis
March 20	Mike Wesson
March 21	Riley Fleming
March 24	Mollie Caldwell
March 25	Pat Koehler
March 26	Cheryl Grant
March 28	Callum Nance
March 31	Pat Long

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.



Grace and Peace,

The language of “wilderness” is often used to give a biblical perspective to times of confusion and trial. It alludes to two primary biblical stories: The Israelites wandering in the wilderness after their deliverance from slavery in Egypt until they enter the promised land 40 years later, and Jesus’ 40 days in the wilderness after his baptism and before he publicly begins his ministry. Times in the wilderness are trying. The Israelites lived in fear of survival, doubted God, turned to idols by worshiping a golden calf, criticized their leader Moses, and wondered if they’d ever make it to any promised land. Jesus fasted and was tempted by Satan when Satan believed him at his weakest and most vulnerable. Times of wilderness are difficult, trying for individuals and communities, can test our faith, can challenge relationships, often with an end that is unclear. This month marks two years since our communities and lives were thrown into turmoil with the pandemic and all the challenges, divisions, and loss of community that have stemmed from it, and I think it is faithful to say we have been in a time of wilderness.

As numbers improve and predictions grow less demoralizing, I’m cautiously optimistic that we’re approaching a time when Covid-19 will not dictate the patterns of our lives. With that in mind, I start to look at what happens just after those wilderness stories. And basically what happens is that God gets to work doing a new thing. Following the Israelites’ time in the wilderness God leads them into the Promised Land. It isn’t easy work, and there are some challenging things that they are called to do as God establishes God’s people there and sets them apart from other peoples, but it is foundational work in which we see God’s continued faithfulness to God’s people in their covenant relationship. New life grew out of despair. Following Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness he got to work, calling disciples, proclaiming the kingdom of God come near in word and deed. New life for the whole world grew from the suffering he endured. New life didn’t mean going back to what was, and it doesn’t mean we can’t grieve what was lost, but it means going forward into new possibilities with a promise of and formed by God’s presence and grace.

I am hopeful that as we come out of this pandemic that new life is what awaits us as well, both as individuals and as a community of faith. It will take work, just as both Jesus and the Israelites got to work in order to follow God’s call for them, but it is work that will bear much fruit. I am hopeful for this because the same God who led the Israelites into new life and was faithful in relationship to them is the same God who has been with us through the pandemic for whom resurrection/new life is a core value. That is one reason I am excited about the Planting Hope work we’ve done including naming a new Purpose Statement and Core Values, and the strategic planning that follows. This work will guide us into this new life in ways that are connected to who we’ve been, that are life-giving for who we are, and that are faithful to who God is calling us to be. It will shape how we develop worship, relationships, and service both within our congregation and the community beyond. We’re still in the wilderness, our numbers in worship and faith formation experiences certainly point to that, but I have hope that we’re nearing the end, and faith that God is working new life for us to come.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Micah



Depending on when you read this newsletter, we either are about to, or already have, claimed and blessed our new purpose statement, **“Journeying through faith in a joyful, safe community, welcoming and serving Belmont and beyond,”** in worship on February 27th. That same day we either will, or have, talk about and name our Core Values as a congregation and then as a group will work to craft them. Together these two resources will guide the work and ministry of Holy Comforter, helping us to plan what we do, as well as hold us accountable to who we say we are. It will also give us language to tell others about the world that God is calling us to, how we feel called to be Christ’s hands in the world, and invite them into this community and ministry together. I am excited for this work as we come out of the pandemic and plan for our future together and wonderful ministry in Christ’s name.