



Play is holy. I remember when I worked at Agape Kure Beach Ministries, and they would tell us this all the time. My first summer as a team leader came as a surprise. I remember in the hiring process they told me that I would be a half team leader and half counselor. This meant that some weeks I would be a team leader (a counselor to the counselors) and some weeks I would be a counselor (a counselor to a cabin group). Eventually it turned out that I was going to be a team leader all summer except for one week. That one week was in the middle of the summer and perfectly timed. I'll never forget the tight hug I got from my program director with the whisper, "you get to play this week, have fun!" That week was SO much

fun. We had a lock in, makeshift campfire, so many pokémon jokes, and all the laughter you can imagine. That week was holy.



Faithful Families Tip – Hand Washing Fun

Washing hands before every meal makes good health sense. Make it more fun by turning it into a playful reminder of God's grace and forgiveness in the water of baptism. Sing "I am washing in the love of God" to the tune of "We Are Marching in the Light" (ELW 866) For a little good, clean fun!

Last week (January 22nd) families of Holy C went bowling and did we have fun! The different families mixing together to play. Kids, parents, and grandparents all played together; trash talk included. I got to bowl next to Erin Cassel and Elise Bransen, two of our youth. These two are quite the bowlers but even more were they cheerleaders for each other. Yes, there was plenty of competitive nature to go around but watching our people encourage one another was more important than winning. Another piece of this experience that is unforgettable was watching kids learn to bowl. Wade Rhyne was taught and helped by his brother, Luther. Grayson and Graham Kelly were helped by their dad, Nathan Kelly. Play is encouraging. Play is teaching. Play is holy. I'm thankful for a God who shows up in the laughter, in the teaching, and in the play. If you're looking for more holy play in your life, come find me. There is lots of play around here.

-Deacon Beka

For our February Discipleship Academy class we will be talking about how to faithfully think about current events. This is a 1 credit elective.

Class will take place on February 26th at 5 pm. For more information contact Deacon Beka or Pastor Micah.

Current Events & Christianity

Discipleship Academy

I give you a new commandment, to love one another.
John 13:34



February 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

Beka Forst, Deacon of Discipleship

Greg Cline, Organist /Choirmaster

Chelsea Spicer, Office manager

Church Office Hours: Monday—Friday: 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

216 N. Main Street, Belmont, NC 28012

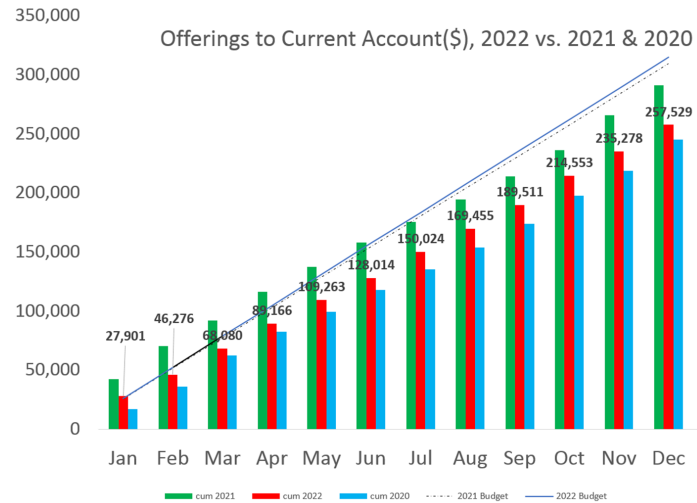
Phone: 704-825-2483

Email: holycomforter@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report for December 2022

Holy Comforter's operating deficit (expenses in excess of offering income) during December was \$4,777.97. Total giving to support Holy Comforter's routine expenses for the month was \$22,251.00. The budget estimate of the amount needed each month in 2022 is \$26,222.00. The full-year deficit, through December 31, was \$36,217.03. Year-to-date spending was \$20,918.47 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
5:00 pm - HCY
5:00 pm - Adult Handbells
6:00 pm - Church Choir

• **Mondays:**

7:00 pm – Book Club

• **Tuesdays:**

7:00 pm - Nar-Anon Meeting

• **Wednesdays:**

4:00 pm - Adult Faith Formation video
6:45 pm - Women's Bible Study
7:00 pm - Chamber Choir

Monthly Gatherings

- ♦ Church Council - February 12th, 12 pm
- ♦ Kids Club - February 12th, 4 pm
- ♦ Small Group 1 - February 12th, 4pm
- ♦ Small Group 2 - February 14th, 7pm
- ♦ Prime Timers - February 9th, 10:30 am
- ♦ Confirmation - February 19th, 5:00pm
- ♦ Christian Education - February 21st, 7 pm
- ♦ Outreach Meeting - February 16th, 7 pm

I'm looking forward to seeing how God will work through our new council president, Jim Buell, who has a wonderful passion for ministry and gifts for visioning and planning. I am immensely thankful for the leadership of all of these people, and for Jim's willingness to serve, and for the ways God continues to be faithful to Christ's ministry through Holy Comforter.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Micah



Many folks lose track of the date of the month, or even the day of the week, especially during the past couple of years when routines and schedules get altered and disrupted. This is often the case in the music ministry. For example, the church choirs are always working on anthem material months ahead of time. Our first rehearsal of the year for all ensembles included compositions for Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, and Easter seasons. We are already preparing rough drafts of the Easter Festival services of worship...and everything in between. It is a team effort involving staff and dozens of volunteers to make all of this a reality. We are truly blessed to have a dedicated music ministry at Holy Comforter.

More details will follow in March regarding the upcoming Lenten services, but Ash Wednesday does occur in February. Our choirs will lead us in Ash Wednesday Impositions on February 22. Invite family and friends to this worship opportunity who may attend other houses of worship on Sundays, or who may have no church home. I read where one of the biggest reasons for the decline of church growth in the United States was due to the omission of individuals within the church to simply extend a personal invitation. Our closing post communion canticle that we sing on occasion states the simplicity of this Christian duty; "Thank the Lord and Sing His praise...Tell Everyone What He Has Done!"

Greg Cline
Organist /Choirmaster



As a rule, I tend to believe that God is at work in everything going on, whether that means God is guiding things entirely, or weaving God's grace into certain moments to give us what we need to get through them. But often when you're in the moment it is hard to say specifically what things are God's work and will lead to good, and where God might be waiting to help bring redemption to hard situations. As you continually see God at work in certain situations, it becomes easier to believe in the moment that God is at work. One of those places, for me, is with our congregational council and its leadership. Throughout my time here, eight and a half years so far, we have had a number of people rotate through council and be our council presidents. It becomes apparent to me that it is by the grace of God that those people have had the gifts and skills needed to face the issues of the day. We have had people with hearts for stewardship, particularly of gifts and talents, people with administration skills, emotional intelligence to care well, people with long histories in the church and new ideas not bound by "the way we've always done it." As the pandemic began and was in its height, along with our then-parish nurse, Teresa Keller, we had two members who worked in public health with writing policies and communication who were able to help us move through that time as responsibly as possible, making us one of the best equipped church councils in the state for a time such as this. In particular, as I look at the council presidents over my time I have seen God at work in bringing people to leadership best equipped for their time of service. When I was called to Holy Comforter, Tim Baker was council president, someone with a long history at Holy Comforter and an ability to provide clarity in transition. Will Howard was the next council president, and served in a time the church needed a lot of work done on our property and buildings, leading the rebuilding of our HVAC work as well as a new roof on the sanctuary. And then after Will, Julia Gunter, who did not know that she was agreeing to serve through the pandemic, the first time the more than 100 year old congregation wasn't able to gathering for worship for an extended period of time. And yet Julia is a person of great integrity, who earns the trust of others well, an important quality through a time when people were questioning almost everyone's intentions and actions, and helped us move through the pandemic much more peacefully than many other congregations I know. God has certainly been at work through the leadership of this congregation in my time here, and I feel certain long before I was called here.

Altar Flowers

- February 5 - Available for sign up!
- February 12 - Katie Howard in celebration of Jack Howard's Birthday
- February 19 - Rochelle Potter in honor of Rochelle Potter's Birthday
- February 26 - Carole Jolley in honor of my daddy, PG Jolley

Altar flowers are the flowers that sit on the altar during worship. They can be given in honor or memory of someone. Altar flowers remind us of the resurrected Christ. Once worship is over, you



are able to collect the flowers that you sponsored. **Sign up for Altar flowers on sign up genius – follow the button on the weekly email.** The price per vase is \$22.50, or \$55 for both.

Baptism

Please join us in celebrating Madeline Hogge with her Baptism the third Sunday of February!

Children's Church

- February 5 - Jenn Kearney
- February 12 - Beka Forst
- February 19 - Jenn Kearney
- February 26 - Madison Kelly



Children's Church is available for pre-k-5th graders every Sunday during the readings, the Gospel, and the Sermon. Children's church takes place in the fellowship hall.

Lector

Brian Achor—February 5, 12, 18, 26

*Special thank you to all of our volunteers for their time dedication!

Staff Introduction

Please join us in welcoming Chelsea Spicer as the new office manager. She is an alumna of Appalachian State University and lives in Gastonia with her husband, twin seven-year-olds, Beau and Eleanor, and Border Collie, Rowdy.



PRIME TIMERS BIBLE STUDY & FELLOWSHIP

Thursday, February 9th at 10:30 am

Prime Timers Bible Study

Our Prime Timers group, those of retirement age and up, will gather again for Bible Study in person on Thursday, February 8th, at 10:30am. We will meet at the church in the fellowship hall. We look forward to a time of Bible Study and fellowship together!

Sunday School

Sundays at 9:30 am



For all Ages and Stages

February Sunday School Teachers

Pre-k Class:
Teacher needed

Elementary Class:
Jenn Kearney

Middle/High School Class:
Deacon Beka

Adults:
Pastor Micah



Annual Beach Trip is BACK!

For 30 years Holy Comforter had reserved the South Carolina Lutheran Coastal Retreat Center until the Covid pandemic. Several years have passed during quarantine periods and various issues that prevented us from attending. We are reserved this year for the following:

Thursday, May 25 - Monday, May 29. (Memorial Day Weekend)
\$135.00 per night/per room (2 night minimum)

Deadline for reservations is **Easter Sunday, April 9.**

[Checks made to: Holy Comforter Lutheran \(memo: Coastal retreat\)](#)

We need someone who is attending to assist Sheila Kelly with details. Contact the church office if you can help. Because of a variety of time off, family health, and other responsibilities our staff won't be present, but we encourage members to enjoy this time together. Worship opportunity at St. Marks on Sunday at 10am. Google: SCLRC and click coastal retreat for details.

February 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.

February 2	Allie Flusche
February 4	Scott Carr
February 7	Susan Nelson
February 8	Scott Zander
February 9	Shelia Kelly
February 10	Jack Howard
February 14	Will Howard
	Noah Rawlins
February 15	Leslie Crist
	Chase Doctor
February 16	Rochelle Potter
February 22	Marc Cox
February 25	Karen Hinkley

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.



Youth Music & Arts Week

This year we have some exciting new changes to our traditional Music Week at Lutheridge, including a shorter week that ends on Friday instead of Saturday and some additional program elements for youth campers.



July 9-14, 2023 (ends Friday after Lunch)

- Programs for our youth campers who have completed 1st– 12th grade
- 1st & 2nd graders have a music only focus
- 3rd– 12th graders will be able to choose 2 of 4 different Music & Arts Disciplines
- Youth are housed in camper cabins
- Prices start at \$580 per camper

*Contact Greg Cline ASAP for details; Scholarships Available!