



Beka's
Buzz

It's wild to think that after we go to The Dwelling in July, we will transition into Youth Gathering prep. In July of 2024 the Youth Gathering will be hosted by the city of New Orleans! The Youth Gathering is open to all rising 9th to graduating 12th graders, this weeklong faith forming experience can't be recreated! The theme of the Gathering is *Created to Be*. Each day has a different word and experience to describe it. There is an interactive learning day provides unique learning experiences for our young people, like The Dwelling. Interactive learning day can be a time to chill or play with hammock villages and/or games. This day is flexible and gives us the opportunity to tend to what our group needs. There is an Accompaniment Day where groups can pick how they learn and serve. Action projects are projects with hammers and paint brushes. Advocacy projects are projects that are geared towards learning and spreading awareness. Awareness projects are geared toward learning and challenging us. The last day is a Synod Day. Synod day is what it sounds like, we will worship with the other youth of North Carolina and then will get to explore the city together.

Each Bishop is asked to appoint one person as the "Gathering Synod Champion". This person accompanies church leaders all over their synod as they get ready for the Gathering. This looks like equipping people with information, building excitement for a long-awaited Gathering experience, and planning the actual Synod Day worship and shenanigans to follow. Our North Carolina Synod Day Champion is me! It's so exciting to walk with

youth ministers, leaders, and advocates, as they prepare for this incredible faith forming experience. Not only does this role give me the opportunity to support North Carolina leaders, it gives me the ability to know and plan some really cool stuff for our youth to experience. Serving the Gathering in this role allows me to serve in the Gathering AND attend the Gathering with our youth. When I was asked to consider this role, my first question was "will I still be able to share this experience with my youth?". This role lets me do that and have the inside scoop as we start planning! The Youth Gathering is incomparable to other youth trips, it's unique in its ability to share how big Lutheran youth ministry is. It's an incredible example that our youth are not alone in their faith. It's powerful in the ways it gives our young people an opportunity to live their faith. What a gift it is to take young people on such a moving, challenging, and powerful trip. I'll never forget our trip to Houston, one of our youth shared that he saw God in the mass gatherings each night. This trip gives youth the experience and see God.



How can you not be excited for that?! To be a part of this experience, was impossible to say no to. NOLA, here we come!

-Deacon Beka

Faithful Families Tip

Many children love the feeling of floating in water and learning to do that helps them feel more comfortable in water. The next time you are playing in a pool or lake, invite them to experience it: "feel how the water holds you up? The water carries you; it even carries me!" We can even connect this to baptism! "This pool reminds me of God's love; it carries us too."



The Holy Comforter Comment



May 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

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Treasurer's Report for March 2023

Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter Historical Financial Perspective - March 31, 2023

| Financial Category | 2023 \$Amount | % Increase from 2022 | % Increase from 2021 | 2022 \$Amount | 2021 \$Amount |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Offerings for the Month | 27,069 | 24.1 | 24.2 | 21,804 | 21,788 |
| Offerings Year to Date (YTD) | 66,434 | -2.4 | -27.7 | 68,080 | 91,908 |
| Expenses for the Month | 29,736 | 20.1 | 29.7 | 24,749 | 22,925 |
| Expenses YTD | 84,438 | 20.6 | 24.9 | 69,990 | 67,596 |
| Planned Expenses (Budget) for the Month | 28,902 | 10.2 | 12.2 | 26,222 | 25,767 |
| Budget, YTD | 86,705 | | | 78,666 | 77,301 |
| Annual Budget | 346,819 | | | 314,664 | 309,204 |

Holy Comforter's operating deficit (expenses in excess of offering income) during March was \$2,667.46. Total giving to support Holy Comforter's routine expenses for the month was \$27,069. The budget estimate of the amount needed each month in 2023 is \$28,901.58. The year-to-date deficit, through March 31, was \$18,003.98. Year-to-date spending was \$2,207.63 below the amount planned in the 2023 budget. The above table provides additional perspective and comparisons with offering income, expenses and budgets in prior years.

-Warren Heller, *Treasurer*

Weekly Gatherings

- **Sundays:**
9:30 am - Sunday School
10:10 am - Church Choir
10:30 am - Worship
5:00 pm - HCY
6:00 pm - Church Choir
- **2nd & 4th Tuesdays:**
7:00 pm - Nar-Anon Meeting
- **Wednesdays:**
4:00 pm - Adult Faith Formation Video

Sunday School, and HCY will break for Summer starting after May 7th classes.

The schedule above is our expected weekly programs and meetings.

When exceptions happen they will be posted on the website calendar and in weekly emails.

Monthly Gatherings

- ♦ Church Council Meeting - May 7th, 12pm
- ♦ Small Group 2— May 9th, 7pm
- ♦ Prime Timers - May 11th, 10:30am
- ♦ Small Group 1—May 14th, 4pm
- ♦ Christian Education - May 16th, 7pm
- ♦ Outreach Meeting - May 18th, 7pm
- ♦ Bunny Blessing Visit - May 21st, 7pm




What a difference 3 years can make. Remember where we were Easter 2020? The sanctuary doors are locked and we are broadcasting Virtual services for the better part of that year, with worship that whole summer in the parking lot. I was thinking about all that as we were preparing our festival service of worship for Easter Sunday this year; everyone now singing robustly, and unmasked. That in itself is transforming. Many visitors are entering our doors again...not always certain who are visiting family members and who are intentional seekers, but delighted to see visitors in our midst regardless of their reason for attending.

Many of the comments that I hear from "first timers" of our services of worship are along the lines of, "Man, this is work!" I know that in some traditions the congregation is more a part of viewing the religious experience performed by others; to sit back and watch...to be consumed. Nothing sinful or illegal about that, but that is a big part of why I am Lutheran; the full assembly participating from Gathering to Sending...and everything in between.

I remember one particular service of worship that I attended a few years ago as a pew sitter. It was a Lutheran service, and for the most part following the Liturgy as we do here at Holy Comforter. But I found myself not bored, but feeling like I needed to be doing something else. It finally occurred to me that I am so used to playing keys, changing registration, cueing the choir, coordinating the music from the beginning and conclusion of offertories and communion flow, and other tasks; that it is no longer always in my DNA to just follow the bulletin page by page.

In spite of that I feel ministered to and able to worship because of all of you; through word and sacrament offered by clergy, through the leadership of our choir, and the blending of voices throughout the congregation. For all this, and so much more...I give thanks for all of you!

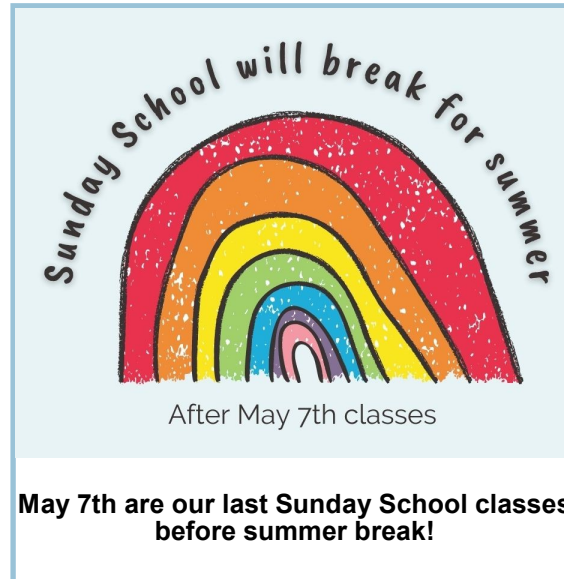
Greg Cline, M.D. (Music Director) 
Soli Deo Gloria



In about a week I am beginning my 6 week sabbatical, encouraged and supported by the synod, including financially, for rest and renewal. I am excited for this time, for the traveling that I will be doing with my family, for the opportunities for inspiration and exploring, for the intentional time I get to have with my family, for time for some reading that isn't directly related to work, which can be hard to find at times, and perhaps a project or two around the house

(someone put a hole in a wall that I patched but still needs to be sanded and painted). At the same time I have all of this excitement, it feels strange knowing I will be away this long. When I have even one Sunday off for vacation I feel out of the loop and needing to catch up. Knowing I will be gone for 6 weeks is nerve-wracking, to say the least. At the same time, it has been encouraging as we prepare for this time to see the ways folks have stepped up, and it has made me feel encouraged not only for these 6 weeks, but also moving forward as well. When Pastor Tim Canniff-Kuhn came and visited with us, he met with council, along with Deacon Beka and myself, and we had a wonderful conversation about how things will go during the sabbatical. We named some ways that our patterns shifted during the pandemic, and staff took on too much responsibility for certain things during the pandemic, for instance setting up tables and chairs for meals and events, and we never reestablished patterns otherwise. Council was incredibly supportive, and up for the task of reorienting some of those responsibilities. We really do have a wonderful and willing council, wise and faithful people who love the ministry of Holy Comforter and are willing to work for it. Pastor Tim and Deacon Beka will share pastoral care responsibilities, with Beka being the first to be called and she will work with Pastor Tim if he should be involved as well, and he will make visits to folks who are homebound during his time here. You all will love Pastor Tim, for the record. Our office manager, Chelsea, now has her feet under her, getting through Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter with us, and is such a gift to the staff and our work here. Greg continues to be his wonderful self, spoiling us by being more gracious and talented than we deserve, and you all, our congregation, continue to offer grace to us, to step up when needs arise, to care for each other authentically and beautifully. While I'm selfishly hoping I come back and am missed at least a little bit so I feel needed, I am honestly proud of this congregation at every level for your faithfulness to each other and this ministry, and feel quite comfortable leaving this ministry in your hands. Also, while I'm taking a 6 week sabbatical, God is not, and the Holy Spirit will continue to move and work in you and through this place. Of that I have no doubt.

God's peace,
Pastor Micah



May 7th are our last Sunday School classes before summer break!

Altar Flowers

May 7 - Flowers for Erin Cassel's Birthday from mom and Tyler

May 21 - Rochelle Potter in celebration of Perri Gross' Birthday

Sign up for Altar flowers by following the link on the weekly email. The price per vase is \$22.50.



Children's Church

May 7 - Beka Forst

May 14, 21, 28 - Volunteers Needed

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



Newsletter Format Change

Approximately 85% of our newsletter readers are currently viewing our correspondence online, either on a phone, tablet, or computer, so we are excited to announce that the monthly newsletter will be distributed in a new digital format in the coming months. The new format will be provided in an email, much like the current newsletter and emails that are sent out weekly. The church will still provide physical copies for those that prefer that method. Please contact the church office if you need to update your email address or contact information.
(holycomforter@gmail.com or 704-825-2483)

Lectors

May 7 - Julia Gunter

May 14 - Julia Gunter

May 21 - Emilie Bruchon

May 28 - Brian Achor

*special thanks to our volunteers!

Interim Pastor Introduction

Friends of Holy Comforter,
I look forward to walking with you “from Mother’s Day to Father’s Day, providing some pastoral coverage during Pastor Micah’s time of sabbatical restoration. I grew up in Wisconsin, graduated from the UW-Milwaukee, met my wife, Mary, at a church camp in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, after which we both attended Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. After serving a congregation in Florida, we were called as Co-Program Directors of Lutheridge Camp where we served for 25 years, fulfilling a passion for following Jesus and seeing God in Creation and Community. After leaving Lutheridge, Mary and I served a 2-year interim in Taylorsville, NC, during which time I received training for interim ministry. Upon completion of our interim work, we returned to our house at Lutheridge and have been enjoying the fruits of retirement. We have 3 grown sons, who are all married to wonderful women, and 5 grandchildren. My interests include camping, music, and all things Wisconsin sports (go Packers, Brewers, Bucks and Badgers) with a special love of hockey. During my time with you, I plan to arrive for Sunday morning worship, stay in the area and use the afternoon for pastoral care visits and preparation. I will attend church staff meetings on Monday morning before returning home later in the day. There may be weeks where the schedule changes for things like a mid-week bible study, but I will be available by appointment. I will be “on-call” during the entire time of Pastor Micah’s absence. Obviously, I will not be fully replacing Pastor Micah. Deacon Beka will have increased responsibilities, including responding first to issues of pastoral care and will be invaluable in helping me know when it’s important for me to respond to a situation in person. Holy Comforter is blessed with a gifted staff, and we will work together to provide good care and leadership during this interim. I agreed to provide interim coverage because I’ve found a sabbatical to be valuable in the health of a pastor and congregation. I look forward to walking with you and watching how the Holy Spirit is at work in your lives and the life of Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter.

-God’s Peace, Pastor Tim Canniff-Kuhn



Pastor Tim and Pastor Mary

Ministry Highlight



Recently we celebrated Easter by hosting our annual Easter Egg Hunt. To some this is a tradition that doesn’t always make sense, bunnies don’t lay eggs? But Easter Egg Hunts are fun. Faith can be fun! We traditionally do two hunts, one for prizes and one for a lesson. This year’s lesson involved solving a mystery and where that mystery took place hid a GIANT golden egg. The egg was empty (do you see where I’m going here?). The egg is an object lesson for the tomb. We talk about the miracle of resurrection and why we celebrate Easter so big. Friends the Easter Egg Hunt is fun! It’s full of learning, and it’s faithful. The Egg Hunt allows us to meet our youngest members and visitors where they are and remind them that faith is fun!



Bunny Blessings Visit

Bunny Blessings is a 501c3 nonprofit ministry that serves to fulfill the commandment to Love One Another through adorable bunnies.

Jesus’ commandment in **John 13:34-35** “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Bunny Blessings strives to use this commandment in all aspects of ministry including visits in the community, volunteer relations and Bunny Barn experiences to clearly show love for others.

Another goal of the ministry is to teach people of all ages to find their own gifts to love and serve others. Everyone has different skills, purposes and spiritual gifts that are equally important to the functioning, mission and efficacy of the church of believers. We encourage YOU to think of and use your unique gifts to Love One Another!

Join us for a visit from Bunny Blessings on May 21st at 4pm in the Fellowship Hall.

**This event is for PreK–Highschool students*

May 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.

| | | |
|-----|----|--------------------|
| May | 1 | Katie Howard |
| May | 1 | Phillip Piscatelli |
| May | 2 | Lucy Bocchino |
| May | 3 | Erin Cassel |
| May | 4 | Dariel Rogers |
| May | 5 | Tom Bocchino |
| May | 7 | Alec Via |
| May | 8 | Madeline Hogge |
| May | 13 | Rebekah Milton |
| | 13 | Jan Buell |
| May | 22 | Cynthia Scholler |
| May | 24 | Perri Gross |
| May | 26 | Matthew Hogge |
| May | 29 | Angie Morton |
| May | 31 | John Zander |

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.

