



## ***February Newsletter***

***Worship with us Sundays at 10:30 am.***

*Each 10:30 am service is livestreamed on YouTube for those that are unable to join us in person.*

**Church Office Hours:**

Monday - Friday: 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

**Micah Kearney, Pastor**

[mkearney@holyc.org](mailto:mkearney@holyc.org)

**Beka Forst, Deacon of Discipleship**

[rforst@holyc.org](mailto:rforst@holyc.org)

**Greg Cline, Organist /Choirmaster**

[gclinea440@aol.com](mailto:gclinea440@aol.com)



***Pastor  
Micah Kearney***

At our congregational meeting in January we accepted a financial report from 2023 that was less than stellar, to say the least, with a gap of more than \$70,000 between our giving and our budget. There were some mitigating factors that meant...

# ASH WEDNESDAY



WORSHIP 7 PM  
ASHES ON THE GO  
8AM-6PM

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More](#)



## 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 12	Coleen Gillespie
February 14	Will Howard
	Noah Rawlins
February 15	Leslie Crist
	Chase Doctor
	Reesa Wilson
February 16	Rochelle Potter
February 22	Marc Cox
February 25	Karen Hinkley

## Monthly Gatherings

- " Prime Timers- February 8th, 10:30am
- " Church Council Meeting- February 11th, 12pm
  - " Kid's Club - February 11th, 4pm
- " Small Group 1- February 11th, 7pm
- " Small Group 2- February 13th, 7pm
- " Ashes on the Go - February 14th, 8:00am - 6pm
- " Ash Wednesday - February 14th, 7:00pm
- " Outreach Meeting- February 15th, 7pm
- " Christian Education Meeting- February 20th, 7pm
- " Lenten Dinner & Worship - February 21st, 6:00pm & 6:45pm
- " Lenten Dinner & Worship - February 28th, 6:00pm & 6:45pm

## Sundays:

- "Sunday School - 9:30 am
- "Church Choir - 10:10 am
- "Worship - 10:30 am
  - " HCY - 5 pm
- "Adult Handbells - 5 pm
- Church Choir - 6 pm

## Mondays:

- Book Club - 7:00pm

## Wednesdays:

- Youth Handbells - 5:30pm
- Chamber Choir - 7:00 pm

## 2nd & 4th Tuesdays:

- "Nar-Anon Meeting - 7:00 pm



For over 7 decades many of our members have journeyed up the mountain to Lutheridge for days or weeks of camp, retreats, meetings, conferences, and campfirmation clusters. Just to remind parents that...

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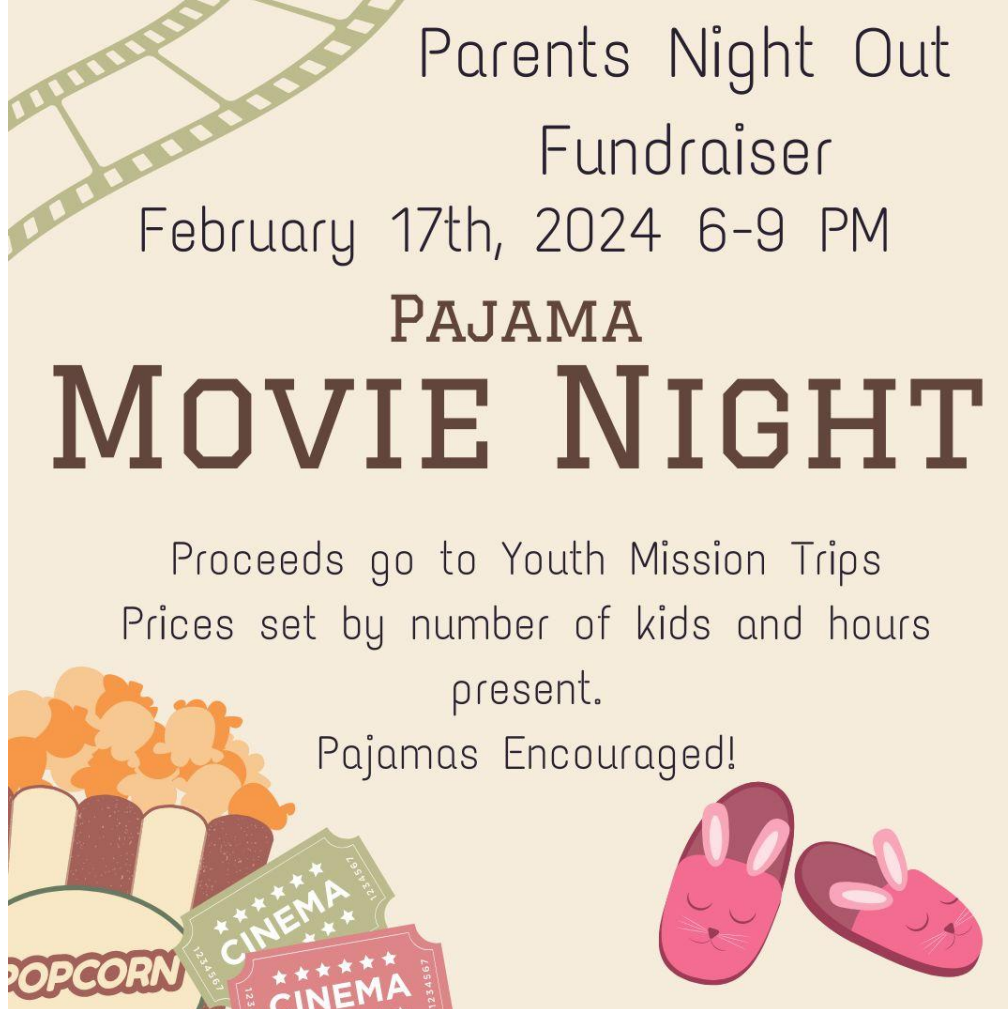
Holy February! How did we get here so fast?! Well I'm grateful for a life giving start to 2024. Here at Holy Comforter, January is a fresh breath of what is coming...

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Students will be introduced to the topics of Racism, Sexism, and Social Justice. We'll talk about how the church approaches each of these topics, as well as the shortcomings and failures the church has had around these topics. Parents are encouraged to participate. This class is a 1 credit elective. You do not need Tough Topics 1 to take Tough Topics 2. Class will be on February 25<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. For more information or questions please reach out to Deacon Beka or Pastor Micah.





We have officially launched our youth mission trip fundraising for our ambitious goal of sending all our youth on a mission trip this summer! Our goal of \$14,000 dollars needs to

be met by June 1<sup>st</sup>. We recognize not everyone does their through the physical offering plate. To donate online please use the link below!

[Donate Link](#)



### **Isle of Palms Annual Trip**

It's time to reserve your room(s) for the Isle of Palms Coastal Retreat! This retreat is open to everyone at Holy Comforter. Rooms are available May 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th. The cost per night is \$135. We have rooms that include one queen and a set of bunk beds. We also have rooms with 2 double beds. You will need to provide your own linens (towels and sheets). Reservations must be made through Holy Comforter. If you are interested in reserving a room, please pay the church for the number of rooms and nights. We will also need to know what type of room you would like to reserve. You must indicate on the envelope or check that it is for Isle of Palms Coastal Retreat. Payment must be received to book your room. If you have any questions please contact Shelia Kelly (704-718-6161) or Amanda Kelly (828-429-6601).

Note: If you pay electronically through the church site please notify Shelia or Amanda so we can ensure your reservation is completed.

***Deadline for reserving rooms is: April 21st, 2024.***



A huge **THANK YOU** to our volunteers from 2023. We appreciate your involvement & all your help! **2024 Sign Ups are open!**

Altar flowers are the flowers that are on the altar during worship. They can be given *in honor or memory* of someone and are a reminder of the resurrected Christ. Once worship is over, you are able to collect the flowers that you sponsored. The price per vase is \$22.50 or \$45 if you purchase both.

**2024 Altar  
Flowers**

Being a Lector is an easy and important way to lead during worship. It would be most helpful for you to sign up for a month at a time, or as much of the month as you can. Readings will be sent to you the Monday before your Sunday.

**2024 Lectors**

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 making it available to parking lot worshippers and sanctuary worshippers. Materials for children's church are found in the binder in the fellowship hall marked "children's church binder" or at the website below. Caddies with tools, and a basket with construction paper are located in the fellowship hall for CC use. The supplies in the binder is meant to be photo copied.

**Children's Church**

# Treasurer's Report for December 2023

<u>Financial Category</u>	<u>2023</u> \$Amount	<u>% Increase from</u> <u>2022</u>	<u>% Increase</u> <u>from 2021</u>	<u>2022</u> \$Amount	<u>2021</u> \$Amount
Offerings for the Month	32,728	47.1	27.9	22,251	25,596
Offerings Year to Date (YTD)	268,519	4.3	-7.8	257,529	291,137
Expenses for the Month	26,344	-2.5	4.7	27,029	25,164
Expenses YTD	340,325	15.9	18.0	293,745	288,471
Planned Expenses (Budget) for the Month	28,902	10.2	12.2	26,222	25,767
Annual Budget	346,819			314,664	309,204

Holy Comforter's operating surplus (offering income in excess of expenses) during December was \$6,453.80. Total giving to support Holy Comforter's routine expenses for the month was \$32,798.25. The budget estimate of the amount needed each month in 2023 was \$28,901.58. The year-to-date deficit, through December 31, was \$71,806.31. Full year spending was \$6,494.19 below the amount planned in the 2023 budget. The foregoing table provides additional perspective and comparisons with offering income, expenses and budgets in prior years.

-Warren Heller, *Treasurer*



Altar flowers are available to be sponsored. If you would like to do so in honor or memory of a loved one or to celebrate a milestone please click the button above.

**February 11** - Will and Katie Howard in celebration of Jack Henry Howard's 4th birthday.

**February 25** - Carole Jolley in honor of my daddy's birthday, PG Jolley.



## Children's Church

**February 4** - Deacon Beka

**February 11** - Shelia Kelly

**February 18** - Jenn Kearney

**February 25** - Amanda 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.*

## February Sunday School Teachers

Pre-k: Jill Cassel  
Elementary: Jenn Kearney  
Youth: Travis Rhyne  
Adults: Pastor Micah



## Lectors

**February 4** - William Charnock

**February 11** - Sherry Alexander

**February 18** - William Charnock





### Lenten Season at Holy Comforter

You can hardly read the gospels without noticing how often Jesus seemed to be sitting down and eating with people. You may have heard the comment, 'Jesus ate his way through the gospels.' Jesus seemed to think it mattered to eat with others, and he built it into his ministry. Makes sense if we build meals into ours too!

Please join us for a **meal and fellowship** each Wednesday evening prior to our Lenten worship services!

February 21 & 28, March 6 & 13

Meal: 6:00 pm

Worship: 6:45 pm

We need a team of three volunteers weekly to prepare and serve a **simple** meal. If you are unable to cook but would like to help, you can sponsor a meal with a monetary donation.

Once you sign up using the link below, the Congregation Life Team will contact you with details!



[Sign Up  
Here](#)



The church calendar is updated weekly and can always be found on the church website under the events tab. Take a look!

[Church  
Calendar](#)

Holy Comforter Lutheran Church | 216 N Main St, BELMONT, NC 28012

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Grace and peace,

At our congregational meeting in January we accepted a financial report from 2023 that was less than stellar, to say the least, with a gap of more than \$70,000 between our giving and our budget. There were some mitigating factors that meant the hit to our cash reserves wasn't quite as big as that gap, but suffice to say that trend can't continue for long before having to make some hard changes. This kind of a situation might cause some to worry, and I understand that. It means that maintaining the status quo isn't an option, and we tend to like the status quo, especially at church which can be the comfortable constant in a world that feels chaotic and in constant change. But as I said in my sermon at Dinner Church in January, we are not called to maintain the status quo, we are called to love God and love our neighbor, which we live out in a plethora of ways.

In that sense, a situation that shows us that "the status quo" is not an option is a call to renewed intentionality. I believe our leadership is working on that, working with an organization called GSB Fundraising who helped us with an appeal that helped us communicate the work God is doing in this place so that 40% of our congregation felt called to raise their giving by \$20 a week for 2024. We continue to encourage everyone to fill out intent cards which help our leadership plan, but even more help you to be intentional about your financial support of God's mission here, to help you give intentionally, not on a whim, and not just what is leftover at the end of a week or month.

It is more than just money that we are being intentional about. I am excited about this council. The way we elect people to council in general, and then assign roles, means we don't always have people whose skills and passions best align with their roles. This year, across the board, it seems we have people passionate and gifted for their roles in leadership, and they're already at work. Jim Buell, as council president, has an energy for moving forward that can light a fire under you. Council's work, however, is not to do all the work, but to lead, and for any of it to be successful will mean that you join in their work, finding places of passion and purpose to be a part of our goal of building relationships with and reaching people in Belmont not connected to churches, and our goal to build strategies to care for the hungry and homeless in Belmont. The status quo isn't working right now, which can be an unnerving thing, and I am not immune to that. And yet, it can also be a way that God is calling us forward into what is next, to let die the status quo and the complacency that often comes with it, and to join in the new life that is before us as we follow our call to be Christ's disciples in our own time and place. I believe the intentionality to which this time calls us is one that calls us not to fear, but to renewed discipleship, to be intentional in all areas of our lives, how we use our money, our time, our ideas, our experiences, our gifts, our passions, in service to Christ's mission. In all of this we remember Christ's promise to be with us, always, because we do not do any of this work alone, but lead by, accompanied by, and sometimes shoved along by, our God who is at work to bring new life to the whole world.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Micah



For over 7 decades many of our members have journeyed up the mountain to Lutheridge for days or weeks of camp, retreats, meetings, conferences, and campfirmation clusters. Just to remind parents that Holy Comforter still offers 50% scholarships to music week at Lutheridge, July 7 - 12. These scholarships are endowed through generous gift offerings, honorariums, and memorials to the church music fund. Child members of Holy Comforter of grade school age may apply for these scholarships. Contact Greg Cline for details...but you may google Lutheridge to also learn more. Registration is already in progress. Available space is limited.

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**The Lenoir-Rhyne University Choir will present a concert of  
sacred repertoire:  
Thursday, March 21 at 7:00  
Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter Sanctuary**

We hosted the L-R choir 7 years ago as part of our Centennial year celebration. They enjoyed singing in our worship space so much that they asked if they could return as part of their spring 2024 tour. There will be a free-will offering to help defray expenses. We would like to ask each member of our church family to mark your calendars and invite your neighbors, family, and friends. This wonderful evening should not be kept a secret!

Help us spread the word!

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**Holy Comforter will use the Liturgy from Holden Evening Prayer during our  
Lenten Wednesdays together. The schedule for those events will be as follows:**


**Wednesday: February 21 - March 13 at 6:45.  
A congregational meal will be served at 6:00.**

{On those dates the youth handbells will meet at 5:30. Chamber Choir will follow after the services.}

Greg Cline M.D. (Music Director)





Beka's  
Buzz 



Boy was December full! We had lots going on that made for an exciting and youthful advent and Christmas season! The youth started by making their own Christmas sweaters and I must say it was their brilliant idea! So, I went online and found some felt materials and they brought their own shirt/sweatshirt and we spent that Sunday making gorgeous sweaters that would be worn at our Christmas party. The following Sunday our Kids Club met and made nativities out of candy. My favorite quote is from Luther Rhyne, he asked "is it wrong for baby Jesus to taste good?". They had one rule, your creation can't stay at church. It had to be eaten, taken home, or thrown away! Safe to say, lots of nativities were consumed. This same day HCY went Christmas shopping for three angel tree kids. We annually take angels, and the youth break into teams and split up in Walmart to shop for presents. It's heartwarming to see them care so much about what these young people, maybe their peers, get for Christmas. We came back to the church and wrapped all the gifts given. This day doesn't happen without the generous support of the benevolence fund. The following Sunday we took a group picture in our sweaters and exchanged white elephant gifts, be sure to ask the youth what they took home. Our last formal youth activity of the year was serving at Bountiful Blessings. Our youth find value and joy in serving the low income and unhoused community of our county through handing out food at Bountiful Blessings. Some handed out ice cream, some gave out crackers, and some gave out pies. This particular day was important because we handed out the things people would make a Christmas meal out of. What an honor it was to be a part of their Christmas experience. Bountiful Blessings holds a special place in our hearts. SO much so, that we are going back January 4 th. Anyone is welcome to join us! These activities don't include how our young people help lead worship on Wednesdays, Christmas eve, and went caroling! It's safe to say we had a very full December filled with joy, worship, and service. God was definitely moving in our young people this holiday season. These opportunities aren't limited to our youth, serving and loving the neighbor is always open to everyone. We pray in the new year you will find ways to love Belmont and beyond.

Deacon Beka  
[rforst@holyc.org](mailto:rforst@holyc.org)