Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter

216 N. Main Street • Belmont, NC 28012 • December 22, 2019

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Micah Kearney Pastor Greg Cline Organist/Choirmaster



WELCOME/GATHERING

PRELUDE: Wake Awake, For Night is Flying Ferguson

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

- P Blessed be the holy Trinity, \pm one God, the parent who rouses us from slumber, the shepherd who gathers us on the holy mountain, the deliverer who sets us free.
- C Amen.
- P Let us come before the living God in confession.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

- P As we wait and watch for the promised day of salvation,
- C we open our hearts to you, O God. Search us and know us. Reveal all that we keep inside. To you, O God, we confess our sins, known and unknown. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us in your ways of justice and peace. Make us reflections of the radiant love of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.
- P Beloved children of the Most High, you are gathered before the righteous judge who has mercy on all. Splash exuberantly in the waters of baptism, where sin is washed away in the river of life. Dwell peacefully in the loving arms of the one who nurtures all creation. Go forth boldly in the assurance that your sins are forgiven in the name of the one who is coming and is already here, + Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C Amen



Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857, st. 4 Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

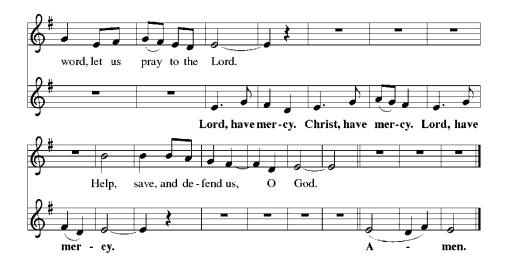
GREETING

P Sisters and brothers in Christ, beloved children of God: grace, mercy, and peace be with you all.

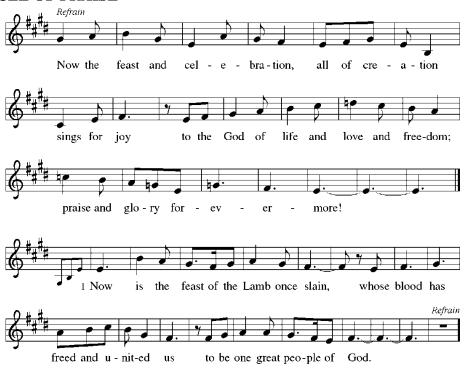
C And also with you.

KYRIE





CANTICLE OF PRAISE





SALUTATION



PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Congregation is seated and are invited to sing "Jesus Loves Me" as the children come forward.

CHILDREN'S TIME

Children ages 4 to 8 years-old are invited to go to the Education building for a 20-minute (or so) time together immediately after the Children's sermon. Children will return to their parents during the hymn of the day. Children birth through 3 years-old are invited to join others their age in the nurseries.

FIRST READING Isaiah 7:10-16

A reading from the seventh chapter of Isaiah.

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

¹⁰The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. ¹³Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

- A The word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.



LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: The fourth candle represents **LOVE**. Because of his love, all people are saved. Since God's love for us is perfect, may we perfect our answering love by loving one another.



SECOND READING Romans 1:1-7

A reading from the first chapter of Romans.

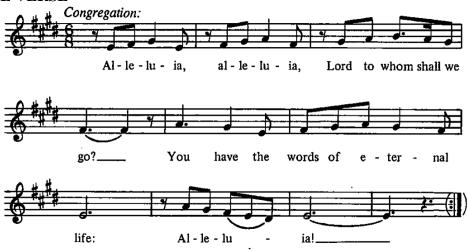
Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

¹Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- A The word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL VERSE



GOSPEL Matthew 1:18-25

- P The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.
- C Glory to you, O Lord.

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

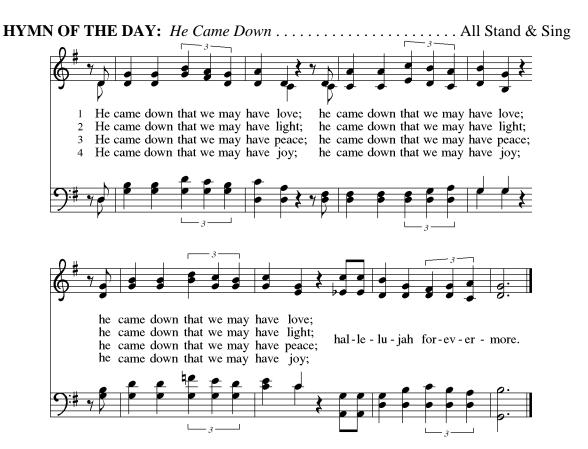
²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

- P The gospel of the Lord.
- C Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON Pastor Micah

Silence is kept for Reflection.



Text: Cameroon traditional
Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional; arr. John L. Bell, b. 1949
Arr. © 1986 Iona Community, GIA Publications, Inc., agent. 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.
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APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Keeping awake as we watch for Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Hear your church, O God, as we pray for all who belong to Jesus Christ. Where the church is scorned, preserve it; where the church is privileged, grant it humility. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Hear your earth, O God, as we pray for its healing and care. Protect the grapevine and the mighty cedar, the mountains and seas and all that is in them. Give life, that all life may call on your name. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Hear the nations, O God, as we pray for those who hold power and authority over people and lands. Help those who create and uphold good laws and those working to reform what is unjust, that the world might better reflect your grace. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Hear those in need, O God, as we pray for all who face uncertainty: refugees and immigrants, those who are imprisoned, and those without work, housing, food, or health care. Bring good news to all in need of hope. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Hear this community of faith, O God, as we pray for families and friends who gather in this season, for travelers and hosts, and for those who will work or serve others this Christmas. Let the peace of Emmanuel, God-with-us, shine in every heart. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Hear all who mourn, O God, as we remember the lives of our beloved departed. Encourage the living to learn from our ancestors in faith as we follow your call. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You hear the cries of our hearts, O Lord. Fill us with hopeful expectation, that in each day and hour we may love and serve our neighbors, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

PEACE

- P The peace of Christ be with you always.
- C And also with you.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM: Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord Church Choir

OFFERTORY RESPONSE: *Lo, How a Rose* All Stand & Sing



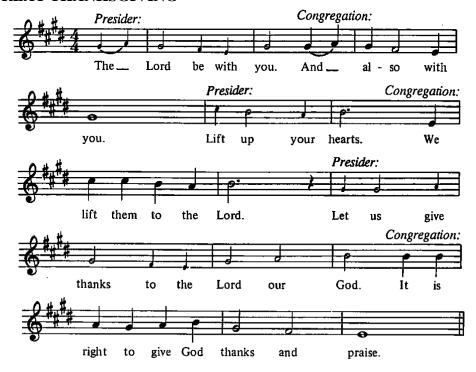
Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851–1934, sts. 1–2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845–1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876–1948, st. 4 Music: ES IST EIN ROS, Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesünge, Köln, 1599

OFFERING PRAYER

A Let us pray.

C Giver of every good thing, we set before you the gifts that you have already given to sustain our lives and to share with others. Help us to be good stewards of the earth and all that is in it, and let our lives be a testimony to the abundant feast you prepare for all who hunger. Amen.

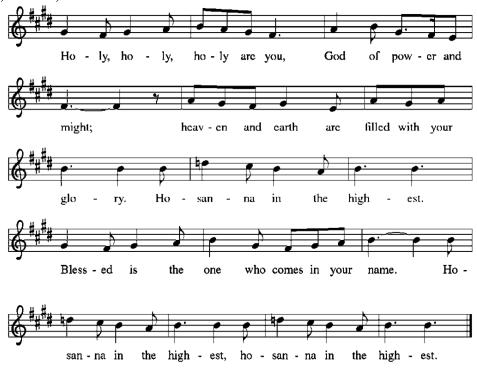
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING



PREFACE

P ...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

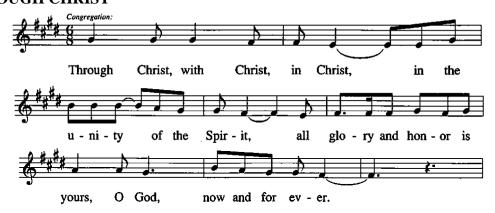
HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P ... and in whom we live, Jesus Christ.

THROUGH CHRIST





LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

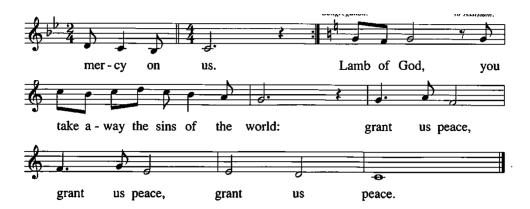
INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Come now with joy to Emmanuel's table. Feast at the banquet of hope and love.

C Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION SONG







COMMUNION

A cordial invitation is extended to all baptized persons to participate in the celebration of the real presence of the Risen Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION:

Twas In the Moon Of Wintertime	Suzanne Fairbairn
The Angel Gabriel	Suzanne Fairbairn
Carols for Choirs	Chamber Choir

COMMUNION HYMN: O Little Town of Bethlehem All Sing



Beth - le - hem, how see thee 0 still we lit - tle town of lie! For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a bove giv'n! How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go while mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love. God im-parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings So of his heav'n. out our sin, and en - ter be born in to - day. cast in, us



O morn-ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth, No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin, We hear the Christ-mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of the years are all met in thee to - night. God the king, and peace to and prais - es sing to all the earth! where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in. a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el! oh, come to us,

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893

Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908

- P The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
- C Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

C God of abundance, we give you thanks that in this holy meal you have invited us to feast with you and one another. May the taste of your love remain with us, and may our words and our work in your name invite others into your bountiful grace. Send us from your table to proclaim your presence, even as we await the glorious coming of Christ our Savior. Amen.

BLESSING

P May God direct your ways in peace, make you abound in love for one another and for all, and strengthen your hearts until the coming of our Lord Jesus. Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C Amen.





Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866 Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.; arr. Robert L. Pearsall, 1795–1856

SENDING

- A Go in peace. Christ is with you.
- C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *Angels From The Realms of Glory......* Johnson

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<u>A CORDIAL WELCOME</u> is extended to all our visitors on this **Fourth Sunday in Advent.** We pray that you will find a warm fellowship while you are among us and that you will return home with a renewed sense of dedication to Jesus Christ. Please sign our guest register or a visitor's card so that we can become acquainted with you. If you are without a church home, we invite you to investigate membership in this family of God.

CHILDREN ARE WELCOME IN WORSHIP. Jesus said, "let the children come to me!" Parents are encouraged to utilize the Kids Worship Kits found in the Narthex for older toddlers through early elementary age. A nursery for children (infants through 3 years old) is in the Education building. Let an usher know if you need assistance.

KIDS' WORSHIP CENTER: Pick up kits as you enter for worship! **Please return the tote bag** with the plastic bag of crayons, scratch pads, and pencils to the stand in the narthex. The children may take any papers home with them.

PRAYER REQUESTS: A notebook has been placed in the narthex for your prayer requests during the week. The book will be in the narthex on Sundays and in the church office during the week. If you wish a name to be added to our prayer board, please fill out a form from the prayer book or fill in the online form at www.holyc.org.

THE FLOWERS ON OUR ALTAR TODAY are given by Andrew and Beverly Robinson in memory of Ed Robinson.

<u>Those who have placed flowers on the altar</u> may use containers to take them home, but please return the containers to the church. *Julia Gunter, Worship & Music*

THE FIGURES OF A SHEPHERD & SHEEP ARE ADDED TO OUR CRECHE. This morning we are reminded that on a hillside overlooking Bethlehem, some shepherds were watching over their sheep when a bright light appeared in the sky, and they were afraid. The light was angels sent by God proclaiming Good News for all people. The Son of God had been born and they would find him in Bethlehem. The shepherds went to find the baby.

THE BLUE CANDLE in the crèche reminds us that we are to keep our hearts and minds in confession and prayer this entire Advent Season.

Attendance & Budget Report for Sunday, December 15, 2019:

Attendance: 128

Budget Report This Week Year-to-Date (Unfavorable) Offering 6,683.00 \$269,068.38 (\$18,549.05) Expenses 5,774.35 \$ 1.565.13 \$286,052.30 Offering less Expenses (\$16<u>,983.92)</u> (\$ 16.983.92) 908.65

Sanctuary Roof and HVAC Status as Of: 12/15/2019

Goal: \$225,000 Received to Date: \$225,730

ASSISTING MINISTERS:

LECTOR: Billy Joye **GREETER:** Pat Koehler

ACOLYTE: Jack Bryant TELLERS: Tim and Shelia Kelly

CRUCIFER: Volunteer CHILDREN'S CHURCH: Jenn Kearney

ALTAR GUILD: (Team 4) NURSERY:(10:30-11:45 am) Stacy Kirby

Katie Howard, Càptain Ó
Dean Halvorson
USHERS: Volunteers
Diann Halvorson

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS: EUCHARIST PRESENTERS: Volunteers

Volunteers

THIS WEEK'S MEETINGS:
Today, Sunday, December 22

8:45 am Children's Ensemble

9:30 am Sunday School 10:10 am Church choir prep

10:30 am Worship w/Holy Communion

3:00 pm Caroling

4:00 pm Decorating Cookies

5:00 pm Handbells

6:00 pm Church choir practice

<u>Tuesday, December 24</u> (Christmas Eve)

4:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship 11:00 pm Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service

Wednesday/Thursday

<u>December 25-26</u> Church Office Closed

BIRTHDAYS FOR THE WEEK: December 22-28

December 22 Remi Ince December 24 Kurt Rodgers December 26 Amy Alvarez



December 27 Laura Dibiase December 28 Molly Koehler



Holiday Nutrition Strategies

The fall months roll into "the holidays." For many people, extra pounds roll on along with the favorite holiday foods and treats. Here are 10 tips to enjoy healthy nutrition and maintain your weight through the holiday season.

- 1) Eat breakfast. Studies show folks who eat breakfast take in fewer calories during the day.
- 2) Plate it. Putting food on a plate, rather than grazing at a holiday party, helps keep you more mindful of what and how much you are eating.
- 3) Portion control. Grab a smaller plate to help manage the temptation to put more on your plate than you need.
- 4) Start with veggies. Eat a few vegetables first to curb your appetite before sampling treats.
- 5) Choose proteins. Nuts, low-fat dairy, legumes, and lean meat in healthy portions will help you feel full.
- 6) Skip it. If you don't love it, skip it!
- 7) Slow down. It takes your brain time to receive the signal that you're full, so slow down and enjoy every bite.
- 8) Wait for the seconds. If you wait 10 minutes (remember your brain needs to get that signal!), you'll feel fuller and the temptation for seconds will pass.
- 9) Focus on a few bites. The first bites are the most satisfying; enjoy them without thinking you need the entire dish.
- 10) Be a little brave. Experiment with new flavors and seasonings; you might find some healthy new traditions.
- Eating a salad or soup prior to the meal can help you feel full before digging into the "real deal" also. And number 7 really does work! Good luck with keeping the pounds off this is a tempting season!

NOTE: No PEP exercise classes 12/23 or 12/30. Have a wonderful holiday and I'll see you January 6th!





PRAYERS FOR OUR FAMILY OF HOLY COMFORTER

Cathleen Allen
Cynthia Buchanan
Family of
Brenda Dabrowski
Becke Featherstone
Ellen Fleming

Sarah Tench Helms
Kay Holden
Zac Hullander
Ben Moose
Sherry Perry
Caitlan Reese

Marguerite Shive
Denise Taylor
Beverly Reynolds
Jerri & Mike Wesson

GREATER FAMILY OF GOD

Meredith Hovis

Mary Huggins
Steve Leonard
Ruth Lyerly
Jane Marino
Family and Friends of
Sue Parsons Mast
Al McCoy
Clarence McLain

Family of Dawn Mitchell Ann Mundy Linda Nichols Robert Nichols Sarah Nichols Tommy Smith Brody Thornburg Jeff Wiles

OUR SERVICEMEN

Beau Carroll

Tom Kasmer

Leo Kasmer

Colton Parker



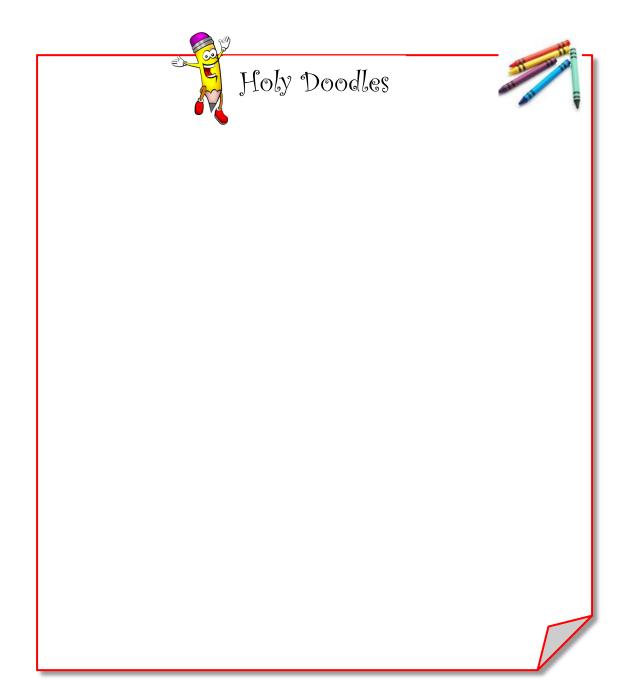
Please remember these people in your prayers.

If anyone has a person who needs to be added or removed from this list, please inform the church office.

The sign-up prayer forms are in the narthex and online at www.holyc.org.

NOTE: To ensure inclusion in the bulletin all information is due to the office by 12

Noon on Wednesdays.



Holy Comforter Lutheran Church

216 N. Main Street Belmont, NC 28012 704-825-2483 holycomforter@gmail.com

SUNDAY SCHEDULE: 9:30 am Sunday School, 10:30 am The Service Church Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 am — 3:00 pm

Micah Kearney, Pastor email: MicahKearney@gmail.com Greg Cline, Organist /Choirmaster Beka Forst, Director of Youth & Family Ministries Teresa Keller, Parish Nurse