

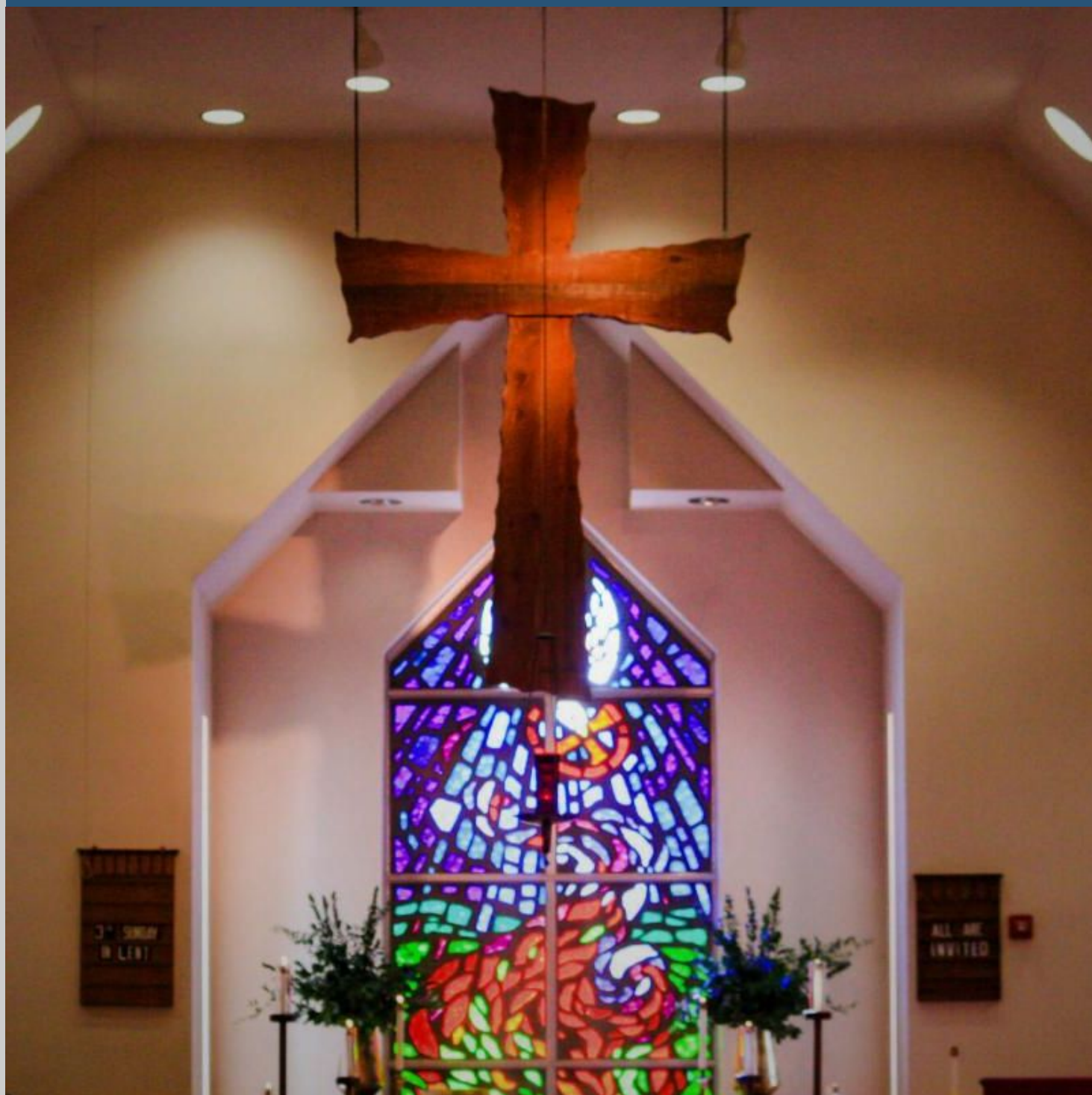


A MIGHTY FORTRESS

LUTHERAN CHURCH

(704) 392-6214

Give
Today



AMF March 2024 Newsletter

Pastor's Article

Talk in my clergy groups often focuses on questions about children in church. How on earth are we going to get kids to come to church? No one wants to be acolyte in my congregation, what is your strategy for recruiting young volunteers? We've taken the children's sermon out of worship because of the lack of kids, will we ever be able to bring it back?

It is in these conversations that I am reminded how blessed we are at A Mighty Fortress by the presence of kids in worship. I see kids running into the narthex on Sunday mornings. Like sliding into home base, they will slide in right next to Eden and Bowser to give them a big ole hug (hey, whatever draws kids to church works, right?).

As worship approaches, I am bombarded by kids asking, "can I be acolyte this week?!" When I tell them that position is filled already, they'll quickly reply, "okay I'll be crucifer then!" to which I have to disappoint them again, letting them know that position is filled also.

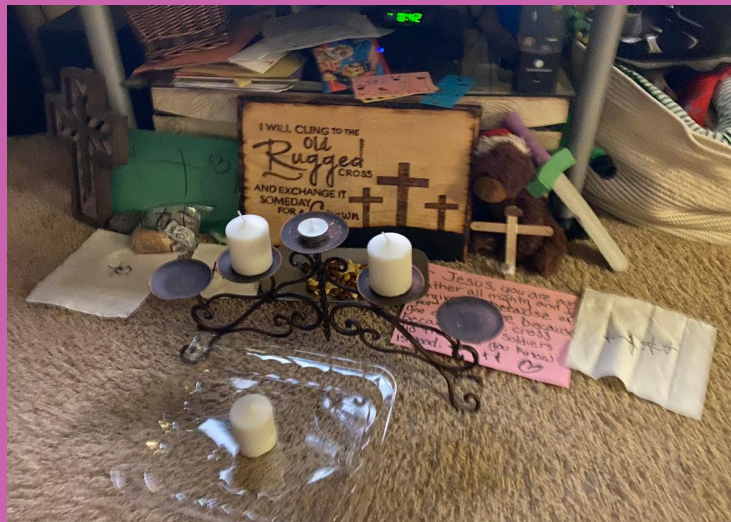
During the children's message, I'm not afraid I'll have no children come forward, but more afraid of the difficult questions they'll ask me during our brief time together... What great problems to have!

I love seeing kids comfortable in God's house. From singing in the choir, to walking (okay, running) a little too fast for comfort down the aisle with fire, to proudly wearing an usher badge and helping with that special worship duty, to admiring God's story through our stained glass – it all makes me smile. I am so proud that we have created a space for kids to feel safe to be...well...kids. How else will they learn to love worship as they grow up?

The presence of children in worship is a reminder that God truly welcomes all. Grace abounds. No exceptions. I think we have a bigger problem when our worship lacks the beautiful noise of children. So, let's continue to welcome kids, support them in their worship leadership roles, give them a smile as they proudly carry the cross down the aisle, and let them know they did an excellent job playing handbells.

If you are wondering if any of this matters – know that it does. Within the last several months, I have received messages from two different parents of kids at A Mighty Fortress.

The first one was about a kid's Lego build for an extracurricular activity. **This kid built a church scene out of Legos, complete with robots helping to honor God and...a dog!**



The other one was **about a kid building a home altar**. Here is the text I received: “My preacher baby has built an altar at our house. This was completely unprovoked. I had no idea what he was up to (besides destroying the house). It’s been up for almost a week, and it grows daily. It’s complete with every cross he could find in the house, candles, a couple slices of bread, an “offering” of nutty trail mix and a letter he wrote to God. He prays here often and seriously. This kid is committed to his love for God. I want to be just like him when I grow up.”

So again, if you are wondering if any of this matters – know that it does.

We are kindling a love and joy of not just church, but of God’s story and of God’s grace. Do you ever worry about the future of the church? Look around at the beauty of Sunday morning worship – the noise, the giggles, the laughter, and the chaos. The church is okay friends, I promise!

God’s Peace,
Pastor Molly Kuekes

BIBLE STUDY

Pastor Molly’s Lenten Bible study is underway!

The series will continue the Wednesdays during Lent (3/6, 3/13, and 3/20 remaining). For this series, we are using new material from *Animate: Practice*. Each week, we watch a video featuring a leading voice from the Christian faith and use their insight

to guide our discussions.

The sessions do not build on each other, so if you've missed the first few, you're still invited to join for the final ones!

Each Wednesday, there are two opportunities to join:

- 10:00am in person in the Fellowship Hall
(rides available if needed)
- 7:00pm through Zoom
(link sent out Wednesday morning)

Hope to see you there!

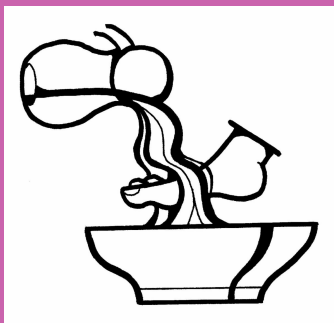
HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE



Palm Sunday– March 24 @ 10am

(Potluck after service, kids are invited to an Easter Egg hunt following lunch!)

Join us as we wave palms and hear of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. We'll have a dramatic reading with instruments to tell the story of Holy Week.



Maundy Thursday– March 28 @ 7pm

Join us as we hear of Christ's last meal with his disciples. As Jesus washed his disciples' feet, we'll participate in a hand washing ritual during the service, symbolizing the call to give and receive love in humble service to one another.

Good Friday – March 29 @ 7pm

Join us as we hear the story of Jesus on trial before being sentenced to



death.

We'll extinguish candles as we read the solemn story, knowing the promise that the tree around which we assemble is indeed a tree of life.

Easter Sunday – March 31 @ 10:00am

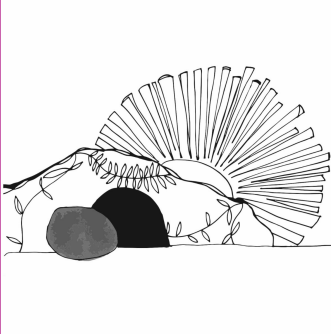
(Easter breakfast before,

be on the lookout for more details)

This is the day the Lord has made!

Christ is risen, and through him all creation is made new! Come hear the story of

Jesus' resurrection and help place flowers on the Easter cross!



Holy Week and Easter is a special time of the year and we want everyone to be able to come to worship. If you need a ride, please reach out to Pastor Molly. We have people available who want to help get folks to and from worship!

All our services will be livestreamed to our YouTube channel - A Mighty Fortress Charlotte, NC.

ACTIVITIES



Women of ELCA

The AMF Women's Group will have its March meeting Saturday, March 2, at 10:00 in the AMF Fellowship Building. Joyce will lead our book discussion.

ZOOM access will also be available.

Hearts to Hands CLT

has several upcoming missions planned. Volunteers help serve food, supplies and hope to our inner-city homeless neighbors.

In the past year, at least 12 AMF members served on one or more of the H2H missions.

If you are interested in volunteering, mark your calendar and visit their website to sign-up: HeartstoHandsCLT.org

They start at 11 am with volunteer arrival by 10:45 am at First Ward Park on

Saturday, April 13th
Saturday, June 8th
Saturday, August 10th



If you have questions, check their website above or contact Doug Wells .

LMM March Upcoming Events

101st Gathering Of The LMM / Living Water

- Where: Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1686 6th Street SE, Hickory, NC 28602
- When: March 9th 2024 @ 9am
- How Do I Register?

Please contact Dwayne Graham @ 704.726.8215 if you would like to register. He can help guide you and even help with your transportation.

***** This will replace the March LMM meeting.
Next LMM in person meeting will be Sat 4/13/24 at 9am.

AMF Workday

- 3/23 @ 9am
- Interior and Exterior projects will be done are TBD.
- Please consider saving the date to help with the upkeep of our sacred grounds.

The more hands we have, the less work we have.

Easter Breakfast

- Easter morning 3/31 before worship. Time TBD.
- Sign Up Sheet will be posted on the bulletin board for you to volunteer on how many casseroles you would like to make. You can also contact Dwayne Graham @ 704.726.8215.

Kids Fishing Day

- Sign Up ASAP if you, your kids, and friends want to go fishing and have a cookout. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board if you are interested. Please sign-up before March 23rd.

- Your response will determine the location, time, and specific details.

A projected timeframe of holding the event would be sometime in April.

- Any kid under the age of 16 does not require a fishing license. If your child does not have a fishing rod, that is ok. Please contact Dwayne Graham @ 704.726.8215 and he can help assist with getting one for your family.

- If anyone 16 and older that wants to attend, please make arrangements for a daily fishing license by contacting Dwayne Graham @ 704.726.8215.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



We Welcome the Wolff Family to AMF!

Alex, originally from West Virginia, and Jon, originally from Eastern Pennsylvania, met in Charlotte in 2018.

They married in 2020 and moved to the Mountain Island Lake area that summer. Madelyn was born in January of 2021 and Lydia was born in September of 2023.

They have 2 dogs, Jordy and Enzo, and 1 cat named Stevie.

Alex works as a Clinical Pharmacist at Levine Cancer institute and Jon is a pilot for American Airlines out of CLT. They enjoy spending their time on the lake, at the pool, or traveling to see family. They're looking forward to getting to know everyone

better and have already felt the love of the congregation in their short time here!

LMM Announcements

Did you know the LMM had Ambassadors throughout the US? We also have several here in NC and it just so happens that Dwayne Graham is representing the LMM in our area. Please look in your AMF mailbox to see what a LMM Ambassador is committed to, what a LMM Ambassador is responsible for, the LMM Vision, the LMM mission, and how to sign up for the LMM Synod Newsletter.

All are welcome to the LMM meeting here at AMF. The meetings are scheduled every second Saturday at 9am unless otherwise communicated. Join us for fellowship, food, and fun while we plan exciting events for the kids, support AMF teams/congregation, and support our community.

I challenge you to become a bold and daring follower of Jesus Christ.

NOTICE: AMF, if you encounter a failed One Call message, please send to me a statement by e-mail of the issue that you experienced; include date & time if possible. I'd like to determine if there is a common cause involved in failures.

Terryesaunders@bellsouth.net

NOTE OF THANKS



A huge thank you to everyone who donated to the food pantry at Thrift United Methodist church!

Whether you give non-perishable food items to the shopping cart, or give financially, it is all greatly appreciated.

This ministry is a great ecumenical partnership between several denominations – Christ United Methodist church and Covenant Presbyterian church also support the food pantry. In the past year, we have raised \$1,300 for the food pantry, as well as donated countless bags of food. Thank you all again!
Way to share God's love, AMF!

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES AND BIRTHDAYS



Happy Anniversary

March 1 Greg & Penny Damron
March 7 William & Diana Graham
March 24 Danny & Mary Merlin

Happy Birthday

March 2 Karl Kuekes
March 4 Elaine Beal
March 10 Janet Drake
March 17 Mary Merlin
March 21 Mia Strong
March 28 Jennie Pitoniak
March 30 Emily Jessee
March 30 Madison Jessee

CALENDAR

March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 WELCA Meeting @ 10am
3 10am Worship Youth Group after worship	4	5 Tutoring @ 6pm	6 10am in-person Bible Study 7pm Zoom Bible Study	7	8	9
10 10am Worship Council meeting after service	11	12 Tutoring @ 6pm	13 10am in-person Bible Study 7pm Zoom Bible Study	14	15	16
17 10am Worship	18 Outreach Meeting @ 4pm	19 Tutoring @ 6pm	20 10am in-person Bible Study 7pm Zoom Bible Study	21	22	23 LMM Workday @ 9am
24 10am Palm Sunday Worship Potluck follows w/ Easter Egg hunt	25	26 Tutoring @ 6pm	27	28 7pm Maundy Thursday service	29 7pm Good Friday service	30
31 Easter breakfast 10am Easter Worship						

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