

A Mighty Fortress Lutheran Church

8200 McClure Circle
Charlotte, NC 28216
(704) 392-6214
www.amflc.org

Pastor Molly Kuekes' email: pastormolly@amflc.org

June 2022

Pastor's Article

Wade is officially on the move! He's crawling everywhere and trying to pull up on anything he can – couches, drawers, the dishwasher, and even Bowser. He's getting into everything and likes household objects (especially remotes!) more than his own toys. It seems like he grows more anytime we simply blink. Within the last few months, he's been introduced to solid foods. He has really enjoyed trying all sorts of new food – his favorite seems to be avocado! He has a big appetite and loves mealtime. Eden and Bowser love that Wade is eating solid food now too, because they are always ready for dropped pieces under his high chair. They take their job as crumb patrol very seriously. Our Kuekes family meal time is a lot more fun (and messy) these days!



Big smiles for messy dinners!

This Easter season, we restarted our own family meal of Holy Communion at the altar rail.

Easter Sunday was Wade's first time coming forward to the altar rail for the distribution of communion.

I'm looking forward to the day Wade will take communion. Right now, he is still learning the fine art of chewing and swallowing. We are careful when giving him foods, knowing that he hasn't fully refined his eating skills. But once we are confident he won't choke on a piece of bread, I intend to offer Wade communion at the altar rail if he shows interest.

Will Wade understand exactly what receiving Holy Communion means? No. But will he recognize that he's being left out of this A Mighty Fortress family meal? Absolutely. Even now, at just 10 months old, I'm sure he's aware that his dad gets bread when coming forward, but he does not.

We receive God's grace during communion, and I believe that God's grace is for all, no matter how young or old you are. Skipping over him seems to give the message that he doesn't deserve God's grace – and that's a slippery slope to fall down, especially as his mother **and** the pastoral figure in his life!

We will never fully understand the depths of theology surrounding the Lord's Supper. God is present somehow in, with, and under the bread and wine...but it's a mystery. Even *I* don't fully understand the complexities of this special meal; I just know it's the way we feel God's presence and love in a tangible way.

I still think First Communion classes are extremely important (we'll hopefully be offering one soon!). That's the safe place where kids can ask those tough questions about communion, and receive teaching about this holy tradition. But do we figure it all out during First Communion classes? Nope. The learning doesn't even stop once the class is complete. Learning about God happens over a lifetime. We truly can never pin down God, the Bible, or any of our Christian theology. That's why it's called **faith**.

My prayer for Wade is that receiving communion will just be the beginning. I hope that his faith will continue to be kindled throughout his life...and the same is for each of you. Never stop growing in your faith.

God's Peace,

Pastor Molly



Eden and Bowser know the place to be when Wade is eating!

AMF Resource Board Update

Greetings from the AMF Resource Board. We have a few updates that we would like to share with the congregation:

1. First, we have reconstituted the makeup of the Resource Board by adding two new members: Kathy Dukes and JoAnn Dimmer. Also on the Resource Board are Debra Sarvela (outgoing Treasurer), Greg Damron (incoming Treasurer), John Johnson (Financial Secretary), Terry Saunders, Junior Bryant and Rick Rozzelle (Resource Board chair).
2. The Resource Board has been working recently to make the job of Treasurer a little less burdensome on any one individual. To that end, the Treasurer role is being split into 3 parts: an Accounts Payable (AP) role, a General Ledger (GL) role and Treasurer. The AP writes the checks, the GL enters the debits and credits into QuickBooks, and the Treasurer reconciles the books each month and prepares reports for Council. These roles are being transitioned to Terry (AP), Rick (GL) and Greg (Treasurer).
3. It's important to note that the Treasurer role and the Financial Secretary role are officers of the church and appointed by the Council. They are also important members of the Resource Board.
4. Effective in May, we have transitioned the Treasurer role from Debra to Greg. We owe Debra a BIG thank you for performing the role of Treasurer for the past couple of years. In its "undivided" form, the Treasurer role had become quite burdensome. Debra performed these tasks well and put in a lot of hours ensuring our financial transactions were well documented and organized.
5. When the 2022 budget for AMF was approved last year, Council opted to take the more conservative approach of giving quarterly bonuses to staff instead of permanent increases to salaries. The quarterly bonuses were contingent upon the fiscal health of AMF as the 2022 year progressed. So far this year, the staff bonuses have been approved for the first and second quarter.
6. We want to remind the congregation that there are 3 methods besides cash and checks for donating to AMF. These include:
 1. Bank draft - this is an option that you can work out with your bank. There is no charge to either the donor or AMF for most banking institutions for this service.
 2. Vanco Mobile - a phone app that you can download and send donations to AMF. You can find out how to get started with this option at: [How_to_Give_Using_Vanco_Mobile.pdf](https://www.vancopayments.com/How_to_Give_Using_Vanco_Mobile.pdf) ([vancopayments.com](https://www.vancopayments.com))

3. GivePlus - a phone texting option still offered by Vanco for giving that is the easiest option for online giving - it's as simple as sending a text. The process begins by texting to AMF's unique # 704-275-9242 and then following the prompts. You can find out more about this option at: [Text to Give Guide for Churches | Vanco Faith \(vancopayments.com\)](https://www.vancopayments.com)

Both of the Vanco options have a small processing fee that AMF has to pay for each donation.

If you have any questions or concerns about this update or the AMF finances in general, please feel free to contact one of the Resource Board members.

WELCA (women of the ELCA) welcomes every lady to join us for our monthly meeting. Each meeting begins at 4:00pm in the church conference room in person and there is a link should you wish to join via zoom.

This is an opportunity for fellowship, a short devotion, sharing of each other's needs and to focus on our chosen service project. Please join us and invite a friend as we determine additional ways, we can support each other and our community. Our upcoming meeting is June 14th & Diana Graham is providing refreshments.

Hope to see you there - AMF WELCA led by Joyce Olson





Thrift United Methodist Church

Gathering for Christ, Growing in Love, Going to Serve

Dear A Mighty Fortress Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your continuous donations both monetary and food to the Thrift UMC Food Pantry. It is through your generosity and support that we are able to help those people who are in need every week. Without your help and the help of others, we would not be able to give out the amount of food that we do. May the Lord Bless you, and you have similarly blessed us, by sharing your bounty with others.

With much appreciation,
Ann Williamson
Food Pantry Coordinator
Thrift United Methodist Church

Don't forget, we have the shopping cart out in the narthex throughout the week for nonperishable food donations for Thrift UMC Food Pantry. If you'd like to give a monetary donation, you may write a check to A Mighty Fortress and indicate Thrift Food Pantry on the memo line



Volunteers Needed!

We are looking to expand **both** our altar guild and livestream operator teams. We are really in need of help for these two roles!!

If you want to help with the changing of the worship parameters and communion set up, please reach out to Pastor Molly. She will work with our current altar guild team to find a time for training.

If you want to learn how to run the livestream on Sunday morning, please reach out to Karl Kuekes (karl.kuekes@gmail.com or 919-616-7568). No previous experience required – anyone can volunteer!

Thank you for using your gifts to help with these important aspects of worship here at A Mighty Fortress!

In October, we will have a Blessing of the Animals service. This service is in celebration of the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, the Patron Saint of Animals and the Environment. If you are interested in helping plan this service, reach out to Pastor Molly. Animals play a special part of our life together here at A Mighty Fortress, so we hope to make this service extra meaningful.

Get excited, we will be celebrating Christmas in July next month! We'll have fun opportunities throughout July to get into the Christmas spirit this summer including an angel tree and caroling. Mark your calendars - we'll have a special Christmas themed service on **Sunday July 24th** followed by a **Christmas Cookout** where lunch will be provided for everyone. Be on the lookout for more details to come.



A Mighty Fortress will be participating in the Coulwood Fourth of July parade this year! We plan to have a few vehicles, a decorated float trailer, and walkers to represent the church during the parade. The parade takes place on Monday July 4th at 9:00am starting at Coulwood Middle School. If you'd like to participate in the parade in any way, please **meet at A Mighty Fortress at 8:00am** that morning so we all can head over together. Please signup ahead of time on the sheet at the church so we know to expect you.

We'll be decorating our float trailer that Saturday before (July 2nd) at 10:00am at the church. All are invited to come help us prepare for the parade!



Mark your calendars! Another Food Truck will be coming to A Mighty Fortress on Thursday June 30th from 5:30pm-7:30pm. Stayed tuned for more details about what type of Food Truck it will be.

Racial Justice Zoom Book Study - Thursday nights at 7:30pm

Are you ready for another book?? Join us for a 6-week study. This book is just what you need to continue your journey to become an ally to our brothers and sisters who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color - BIPOC, to learn more about this topic, or to join in fellowship with your faith family as we work to change the culture in our churches and our country.

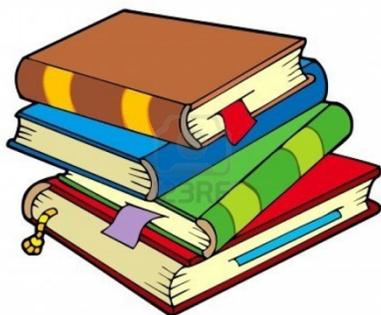
We will begin on June 16, 2022 and continue through July 21, 2022,

SO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT RACE, by Ijeoma Oluo - *So You Want to Talk About Race* is a 2018 non-fiction book written by [Ijeoma Oluo](#), an American author of Nigerian descent whose columns and news articles on race have appeared in *The Guardian*, *The Stranger*, and *Jezebel*, among other places. The title gestures to the [discourse](#) that is necessary to combat racial oppression in the United States. The book made *Bustle*'s list of 14 recommended debut books by women as well as *Harper's Bazaar*'s list of the 10 best new books of 2018. It was a *New York Times* bestseller. In her candid introduction to race and racism in America, Oluo frames each chapter as a question, which she explains and unpacks, interweaving personal experiences with critical terms and issues.

Please reach out if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing all of you on Zoom, from the comfort of your own home. Let Pastor Molly know if you would like to participate and she'll make sure you're signed up.

For the first evening on June 16, please have the introduction and chapters 1 & 2 read - but know that if you cannot finish the reading, you are still encouraged to join.

From your racial justice book study leadership team,
Pam Petry, Beverly Foster, Pastor Ward Misenheimer, Pastor Molly Kuekes, Pastor John Petry



Outreach will resume the Summer Reading Program at Belhaven Estates this July!

We will meet at the Belhaven Estates parking lot by 10:15 am on Wednesdays starting July 13th through August 17th. Kids will be there from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The kids will pick out books to take home for week (after using hand sanitizer). There will also be an organized game/fun time each week. We will also use name tags with first names each week. Adults will have the option of wearing masks/gloves as they are comfortable. All books returned will be put into separate aired containers and not returned to inventory this summer.

If you have an interest in helping please contact Karen Bryant at 704-398-2633 or karenbryant@mindspring.com.

June Anniversaries & Birthdays



Anniversaries

Jennie & Brian Pitoniak - June 23rd

Birthdays

Libby Holman - June 2nd
Zoe Hoffman - June 6th
Donna Kretschmer - June 10th
Austin Malmberg - June 18th
Dana (Hedrick) Nash - June 23rd
Matthew (Matt) Shaw - June 23rd
Jim McGee - June 24th
Amanda Graham - June 25th
Mary Lautensleger - June 27th



JUNE IS LGBTQ PRIDE MONTH

When is Pride Month?

June. Although it has been celebrated for more than 50 years, President Bill Clinton officially declared June as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month in 2000. President Barack Obama expanded the observance in 2011 to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month. To learn more history about Pride Month, go to [Gay pride - Wikipedia](#).

Why do we celebrate Pride Month?

Pride Month was initially inspired by the 1969 Stonewall Uprising and works to achieve equal justice and opportunity for LGBTQ Americans. The purpose of the month is to recognize the impact that LGBTQ individuals have had on society locally, nationally and internationally.

Why do we celebrate LGBT History Month?

The month is meant to highlight and celebrate the history and achievements of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. According to GLAAD, *“during the early years, the celebration was largely marked by a call to action and commemoration. But since then, LGBT History Month has blossomed into a national coordinated effort to highlight exemplary role models from the LGBT community. Since 2006, this push has so far been led by LGBT rights and education organization Equality Forum.”*

2022 North Carolina Juneteenth Festival

What Is Juneteenth?

Juneteenth is a holiday marking the end of chattel slavery in the United States. In the confusion and turmoil as the Civil war drew to a close, many enslaved Africans did not immediately learn of General Robert E. Lee’s April 1865 surrender to Union General Ulysses S. Grant in Virginia. In fact, Texans fought on through May, when they finally learned that the war had truly ended. When Union Army General Gordon Granger landed at the Texas Port City of Galveston to take command of the military district of Texas, one of his first actions after landing in June 1865, was to read General Order #3 to the people of Galveston. General Granger read, “The people of Texas are informed...all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves...” Thus, June 19th (Juneteenth) - became the emancipation date of those sons and daughters of Africa long-suffering for freedom in these United States. This tradition of celebration has remained strong well into the 21st century and is celebrated in many states throughout the nation. Juneteenth is honored with the veneration of our ancestors, prayer, African drumming, and dance. There are inspirational speeches, art, poetry readings, picnics, games, singing, and fellowship. The celebration of Juneteenth is a recognition of the endurance of the African spirit over the cruelty of chattel slavery. For African Americans, it is a tribute to the strength, perseverance, and faith of our ancestors. For all of America, it is a reminder of a disgraceful past and a promise of a hopeful future! Visit [Juneteenth Festival of The Carolinas](#)

juneteenthofthecarolinas.com) to learn of the celebrations going on in Charlotte.

Hope you will attend!

JUNE

2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Lollipop Handout at Belhaven	2	3 Synod Gathering	4
5 Pentecost	6 Learning Team Meeting 2:00 p.m.	7	8	9	10	11
12 Council Meeting after Worship	13 Family Life Meeting 6:30 p.m.	14 WELCA Meeting 4:00 p.m.	15	16 Book Study 7:30 p.m.	17	18
19	20	21 Outreach Meeting 4:00 p.m.	22	23 Book Study 7:30 p.m.	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 Food Truck 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Book Study 7:30 p.m.		