

A Mighty Fortress Lutheran Church

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Pastor Molly Kuekes' email: pastormolly@amflc.org

October 2022

Pastor's Article

On Sunday September 11, Eden and I were called upon to provide pastoral care to the people of Friedens Lutheran Church in Gibsonville, NC. Really, it was Eden who was called upon, but she needed someone to help her get there. The congregation's pastor, Pastor Bill Zima, had suddenly and tragically died. Most of the congregation didn't get to say goodbye. They were heartbroken, devastated, and not sure how they would continue on moving forward.

Eden was called upon to come spread love to a broken congregation. We were present for both of their services (8:30am and 11:00am), as well as their Sunday school hour between. During the service, Eden sat beneath my feet receiving belly rubs from the family next to us. People were surprised that a dog could sit so calmly during worship...and you can imagine their shocked faces when I told them we usually have THREE dogs in worship at A Mighty Fortress. People could barely believe it.



Friedens Lutheran Church has a vibrant youth ministry. For many of the kids there, this was their first death they had experienced. During the Sunday school hour, the kids shared memories of Pastor Bill, read stories about grieving, and made crafts to honor Pastor Bill's life. Eden and I sat on the floor in the corner of their Fellowship Hall, ready to be present with whoever needed extra love. The kids flocked to Eden and took turns sitting with her. Some of the children held her fur as they cried into her neck. Others gently scratched her ears as they told me their best Pastor Bill stories. It was an incredibly holy space.

In Exodus 3, God tells Moses to "remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which

you are standing is holy ground.” My morning at Friedens Lutheran Church was sacred, and while I didn’t remove my sandals, I could tell I was on holy ground. Seeing the congregation come together after such tragic loss was incredible to witness. There were many hugs and tears, but they held their heads high. They knew that God would guide them through whatever would come next. And together as a community, they would embrace the future. I’m grateful that I could share Eden with another congregation, and I pray that her presence provided even just a little light to such a dark situation. They were confident that even after such loss, the ground at Friedens would remain holy.

In what way is AMF holy ground for you? We have a lot of ministry opportunities coming up, and I invite you to prayerfully consider joining something new this month. Whether it’s giving your Saturday to volunteer downtown with Hearts 2 Hands, adding candy to your grocery list for the police officers, building new relationships by being involved with the tutoring program, or however else you choose to get involved, I am confident that you’ll be standing on holy ground. I am confident you’ll make a difference in someone’s life. I’m confident that God will use you to better the world. And I’m confident that God will be with you as you walk on this holy ground.

God’s Peace,

Pastor Molly Kuekes

The month of October is Pastor Appreciation Month. One of the ways the church has been able to show our appreciation for Pastor Molly has been the establishment of a Student Loan Relief Fund. One of the main obstacles that our ministers encounter when entering the ministry is the large amount of debt they incur obtaining a four year degree and three years of seminary. For those who would like to make a donation to this fund, simply mark your contribution as Pastor Molly Student Loan Relief Fund. Thanks for all that you do in supporting Pastor Molly as she provides ministry to the congregation of AMF.

We welcomed our newest members of A Mighty Fortress, **Martha Smith** and **Sylvester James**, on Sunday September 25! We're so excited to have you join our AMF family, Martha and Sylvester!

"I am Martha Smith. I moved to Huntersville from Western New York in 2017. Home in NY was in a rural area about 50 miles west of Buffalo NY. I was very close to Lake Erie and in the middle of wine and concord grapes country. I am retired from the State University of New York at Fredonia, where I did accounting for the revenue that came in through the Student Accounts office. I moved to North Carolina to be close to my two daughters and family. My daughters came to NC in the late 1990s and since I visited often, I was familiar with NC. In spring 2021 as the pandemic was starting to let up, I found myself struggling with my faith and church and God led me to visit A Mighty Fortress, first virtually through the livestream and then in person. I am excited to become a member of the AMF church family."

"I'm Sylvester James. I grew up at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church on Beatties Ford back in the 1970's. My family left there and went to a Baptist Church. I graduated from schools in Charlotte and love this city, state, and this church dearly. I'm an avid believer in the Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth, which is my way of describing the Bible. God bless AMF Lutheran Church, the pastor, her family, and the AMF congregation!"



Keep your eyes open for something new in the narthex!

We will be dedicating a special bookshelf full of books for our children and youth that we hope will encourage them to live out their **Baptismal Promise**. When a child is baptized or confirmed, the parents and the congregation promise to support the child by *“teaching them about God, to proclaim the good news of God through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth”*. We have gathered Bible Story books from the Sunday School rooms and have purchased titles that teach about God's love, Parent's love, Kindness and Inclusion, Taking Care of the Earth, Differences among People, etc. We hope our children will check out these special books and will enjoy learning about the covenant God made with them in holy baptism.

Learning team is sponsoring the bookshelf.

It is time for us to continue our journey to better understand systemic racism AND to become better allies to our BIPOC sisters and brothers. We'll be joining other Lutheran churches in NC for this study. Please join us as we study *The Color of Compromise* by Jemar Tisby, beginning on October 13 and ending on November 17, 2022. We will begin at 7:30pm and conclude at 8:35pm. Here is a short paragraph from an extensive review by Melissa Roving Vanden Bout, Asst. Professor of Philosophy at Trinity Christian College:

*How shall American Christians understand our relationship to racism? Enter Jemar Tisby's *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism*. He is not the first historian to use his training in service of illuminating American Christianity's role in slavery, Jim Crow, or the manifestations of racism in our ostensibly "color-blind" present. Nor does the book attempt an entirely new take or uniquely exhaustive survey of this theme. What drives this work and sets it apart is the author's superlative understanding of the state of our current conversation and his deeply charitable approach in removing barriers to an honest reckoning of American Christianity's choices to accommodate white supremacy. This depth of insight is well-matched by a concluding section that directs readers to individual and collective next steps, and which shares an inspiring vision for Christian leadership in this area. If you have been looking for Christian scholarship to aid your own understanding and witness, or are in search of a resource on racism well suited for a Christian classroom or church book group, this may be it.*

If you want to join, let Pastor Molly know and she will sign you up so you can receive the Zoom link each Thursday!

Senior Moment Workshop

Would you like to learn more about preventing falls and other home safety balance issues? What about a tax free 401 K distribution in 2022?

On October 19 (Wednesday) at 10:00 am, Mary Merlin and Katie Williams, both associated with Atrium Rehabilitation Center, will be in our Fellowship Hall, giving some tips on how to live safely at home through fall prevention and balance training. Greg Damron, an accountant, will also give us some information about taking the 401 K distribution for 2022 as a tax free contribution.

We are fortunate to have some talented folks in our church who are willing to share their knowledge with us.

Please come-have a snack and learn together about how we can improve our quality of life.

This is a good Senior Moment to have! Questions? Please ask Mary Merlin, Greg Damron, or Libby Holman.

Please sign up on the bulletin board so we will know how many to expect.

Lutheran Men in Mission Updates

Calling all men of the AMF family and community!

The Lutheran Men in Mission will be starting back meeting every 2nd Sat of the month. Starting Oct 8th @ 9am the men will meet at the fellowship building for breakfast and fellowship. All you have to do is come as you are and all are welcome. Looking forward to seeing your there because this is the day to rejoice in the Lord and be glad in it!

Your Lutheran Men in Mission President:

Dwayne Graham
704-726-8215

AMF,

Please join us for worship on Sunday Oct 23rd as we have a special worship service planned. During the worship service, the Lutheran Men In Mission along with some special guest, will be honoring Bob Stroup with the NC Lifetime Membership / Memorial.

To The Men Of AMF,

This Fall, the National LMM is offering 2 opportunities to be a part of the One Year To Live Men's Retreat.

- Oct. 7-9 @ Tracey's Camp in Pinewood, SC
- Oct 14-16 @ Camp Cherokee in Blacksburg, SC

Please contact Dwayne Graham if you are interested. 704-726-8215



It's time to invite and ask you to sign-up for the **AMFWL (AMF Worship Leaders)**. The areas to consider volunteering include ushering and/or worship assistant. We have two ushers each Sunday with one primarily covering the Narthex while meeting and greeting individuals as they arrive. The second one makes sure all goes smoothly within the sanctuary and documenting number of participants. Both assist the congregation

during communion. The worship assistant is the helper for the Pastor including reading the lessons, prayers, and leading the congregation in parts of the service. This person will assist the Pastor in the distribution of communion. Guidelines and training are available for either of the positions. We hope you will prayerfully consider either or both of these volunteer positions. If you have specific questions or concerns feel free to contact Pastor Molly or Jim McGee. The 2023 Worship Leaders schedule will be made during November and early December.

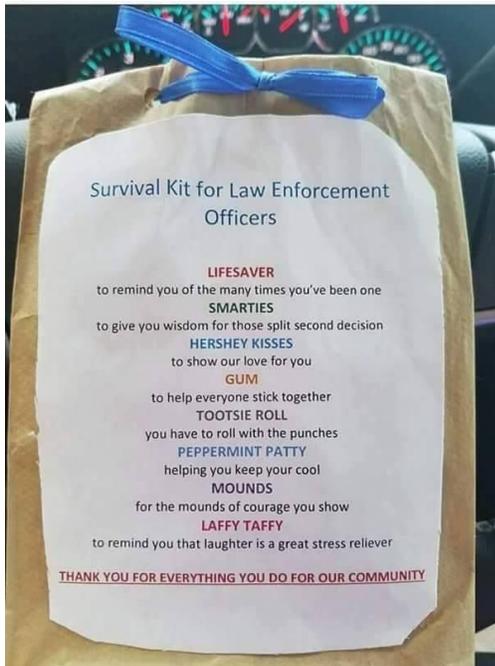
Outreach

For God's Work, Our Hands in September, we provided a meal for 3 local fire stations. Thanks to everyone who helped by making contact, providing food, cookies and treats, and delivering meals. We had many hands involved - thanks again!



Don't just **Zoom** by those homeless individuals you see standing on the streets and at intersections holding signs for food and money. Instead, hand them a **ZOOM BAG** from our church. ZOOM stands for **Ziplock Outreach Opportunity Ministry**. It is a project of our Outreach Ministry and supported by donations from individuals within the congregation. The items within the bag consist of protein, fruit, carbohydrate and water. Please take and keep these bags in your car for handing out when you see the need. See it as another way of *God's Work Your Hands*.





During the month of October we will also be collecting candy for 2 police divisions to be delivered in plastic containers to their break rooms. See an example to the left, and bulletin board in hallway with what candy will be collected. These will be delivered to the North Subdivision which covers the church and to Freedom Division which covers most of Coulwood including Belhaven Estates and Paw Creek Elementary and Coulwood Middle Schools.

Outreach has supported Paw Creek Elementary over the last 10 or so years, but have not been able to send volunteers for the last 2 years. Now those of us who did volunteer on a regular basis are no longer able to be at the school to help. You can link your Harris Teeter Vic Card to Paw Creek by visiting <https://tie.harristeeter.com/together-in-education>. Contact Karen Bryant with any questions.

The 44th annual Charlotte CROP Hunger Walk is October 16, 2022. This year's walk will be at the American Legion Memorial Stadium at 1:30, or it can be "virtual". (Virtual means we walk "where we are" - we can walk around our church neighborhood, your own yard, or walk in spirit from the comfort of your couch.)

To be a part of the AMF walk contact Sharon Johnson at 704-392-1932 to let her know your t-shirt size and how you want to walk with year, and then go to charlottecropwalk.org and register to join the A Mighty Fortress Lutheran Church CROP Walk team.



In 2021 the Charlotte CROP Walk had the highest recorded donations in many years - \$220,000. AMF had an excellent year as well with its highest number of walkers and donations!!!! Plan now to participate in 2022. "Be a fighter"! Help fight hunger and poverty in Charlotte and around the world.

Please share with anyone else you think may be interested in joining our team as a CROP walker.

Hearts to Hands is performing an outreach mission on Saturday, October 15th, at 11 AM. Volunteers will have the opportunity to serve Charlotte folks who are experiencing homelessness. We will be providing hot food, fall and winter clothing, shoes, toiletries and kindness to neighbors in need. Volunteers will meet and serve at First Ward Park, 301 East 7th Street. You can help cook and serve food at the park, or walk approximately 2 miles, pulling wagons of supplies to be distributed between 11AM and about 1:00 PM. If interested, please visit their website, HeartstoHandsCLT.org, or contact Doug Wells at 704-651-7074. They ask that volunteers register on the website before the mission.



Food Truck Thursday

October 27th

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Soul Bistro from Charlotte

Invite your friends, neighbors and help by advertising thru social media!



We'll be restarting our Tutoring Program on **October 4th** here at A Mighty Fortress and we are looking for volunteers!! *No previous tutoring experience is required!* Please know that this program isn't all about teaching the students; building a relationship with your student is just as important (if not more important!). Yes, learning is important of course, but the main goal is for the students to know they have another adult in their life who cares about them. We'll begin with dinner each Tuesday at **5:45pm**, and then you'll meet with your student from 6pm-7pm. If you are interested or have questions, please reach out to Libby Holman (libholman@gmail.com).

Save the Date for AMF Work Day!

AMF Family,
Please save the date Oct 22nd. On this Sat starting at 8am will be having AMF's Work Day. We plan to do a lot of outdoor / indoor projects that are desperately needed around our beloved church. The more people show up the less work we have to do. The LMM will be providing coffee, water, doughnuts, and snacks. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Doug Wells or Dwayne Graham.



Youth Group Meeting!

October 2 following worship

We will meet right after worship for a light lunch (kid-friendly of course). Then we'll hear Bible stories, sing songs, make crafts, and most of all, have FUN!

October Anniversaries & Birthdays

Anniversaries

Karen & Jr. Bryant – October 3rd
Linda & Terry Price – October 12th

Birthdays

JoAnn Dimmer – October 1st
William Graham – October 1st
Joe Brigman – October 4th
John William Merlin – October 5th
Kathy Dukes – October 10th
Terry Saunders – October 16th
Jessica (Bryn) Bridges – October 18th
Betty Mick – October 22nd
Harry Sheldon – October 23rd
Aiden Pitoniak – October 26th



October

2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Youth Group after Worship	3	4 Tutoring 5:45 p.m.	5	6	7	8 Lutheran Men Meeting 9:00 a.m.
9 Council Meeting after Worship	10	11 WELCA Meeting 4:30 p.m. Tutoring 5:45 p.m.	12	13 Book Study 7:30 p.m.	14	15 Hearts 2 Hands
16 CROP Walk	17	18 Family Life Meeting 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 5:45 p.m.	19 Senior Moment Workshop 10:00 a.m.	20 Book Study 7:30 p.m.	21	22 Work Day
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 Reformation Sunday		Learning Team Meeting 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 5:45 p.m.	Outreach Meeting 4:00 p.m.	Food Truck 5:30-7:30 p.m. Book Study 7:30 p.m.		