

THE NATIVITY SCENE

Monthly Newsletter

MARCH 2021

EMBRACED

Equipped

EMPOWERED

Dear Nativity,

I want to begin by thanking all of our ministry teams that have so tirelessly worked behind the scenes this past month and your support while I was activated and serving with Task Force Freedom in our nation's capital Washington D.C. In particular, I want to thank Karen Zacher who so wonderfully blessed us on Scout Sunday with her servant leadership and outstanding preaching. Her service is a model and inspiration for us all to strive towards. I want to welcome our new Vestry leaders who so graciously responded to God's promptings to serve during these new times. Also, we welcome our new Bookkeeper Linda Knopp, who comes to us here at Nativity this month with many years of experience in her field and highly recommended by her industry.

This month we continue to journey through Lent on our way to the cross on Good Friday, and the empty tomb on resurrection Sunday. This period also reminds us that we are upon the 1-year mark since our nation really began to fully understand the implications of what COVID was and what it would mean to

our society as we collectively sacrificed to help do our part in the fight against this horrible virus. As I was serving in Washington D.C. (arguably the most powerful and influential city in the world) a city that controls the greatest number of resources to bless or punish the world, I was constantly forced to grapple with the similarities it presented with our own Christian experience and the question of how we, believers in this risen Christ, live out our faith in the world that surrounds us. As someone who grew up in the Washington D.C. area it struck me that the city was essentially a shadow of its normal self. Museums, government buildings, and even the city streets were virtually empty, fences were erected around areas that would normally be open, even the Capitol building and the White House, the "peoples" buildings were off limits, and it begs the question for us as believers, is this how people view the church?

(conclusion on page 2)

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays


**BACK TO IN-PERSON
WORSHIP IN
MARCH! AND LIVE
ON FACEBOOK!**

8:30am

10am

Wednesdays

Live on Facebook only
12pm Noonday Prayer



Springtime is the
land awakening.
The March winds are
the morning yawn.

Lewis Grizzard

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churchofthenativity.org



Are we, Christians in the wealthiest nation on Earth, using all that God has blessed us with to bless the world in fulfillment of the great commission?

Folks, we are in Lent, yet we have a resurrection hope and are infilled with Pentecostal power. As the COVID vaccines are being distributed, as the “light at the end of the tunnel” is becoming brighter we are faced with the reality that we will enter into a new way of being, what I believe will be a future better than our past. Do we really want to go back to “normal”, or a better one? Beloved, there is no going back, and during this Lenten period I want you to reflect upon the newness that God is calling us to be. The world in which we find ourselves has changed, new opportunities are presenting themselves and the Holy Spirit is prompting us.

In closing, God has presented us with a new path with new opportunities to be the church in His world. Ponder deeply in your hearts how God is shaping and forming you during this Lent, how you can step into these new opportunities that He is presenting. Let us see how God can use us to Empower, Equip, and Embrace this world for God’s Kingdom as we Carry the Light of Christ into this world.

Blessings,



So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught.

Pray for Nadiani

As you remember your sponsored child in your prayers, pray for:

- Spiritual growth and leadership at her local church
- Perseverance in her continuing education and vocational training
- Building healthy, God-honoring friendships
- A spirit of joy and hope in every aspect of life

Don't forget to say a special prayer for Nadiani on her birthday, May 30!

Releasing children from poverty
Compassion[®]
in Jesus' name

**Letter from
Katulinde Prossy
from Uganda,
our other sponsored
child.**

“Let me take this change to greet you in the name of your Lord Jesus Christ. Back to me, I am fine and my family is fine, sending greetings to you. Thank you for my letter. I was so grateful.

My Christmas was ok. We enjoyed games like playing netball. Yes, I visited my cousins and my aunt. Yes, I enjoy break at school with my friends.

I do well at the project by learning Bible study and skills like tailoring. My favorite subject is learning the history of South Africa. At home, we are planning to plant beans and rice and maize. We are continuing to pray for you. God, in this time of Covid, I thank you for your support. May God bless you. Read Psalm 23:1-2.”



CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

During COVID Nativity Church is finding new ways to nurture children and families as they grow in their faith. We had to think outside of the box as the pandemic shut down Sunday school. First, we started with online J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) Sunday school sessions. Jenny Otto led these classes with great success. These Zoom sessions ran from April to June ending with a Zoom party. Unfortunately, Jenny was unable to continue in the fall. So, Pastor Chad had a new idea, Family Home Worship Boxes, these boxes are delivered each month to families with young children. The box includes four weeks of curriculum and activities for families to use together. These activities encourage families to together grow in their faith. Our newest addition to early Christian education is on our Nativity Church Northborough's [You Tube channel \(Nativity Church Northboro\)](#).

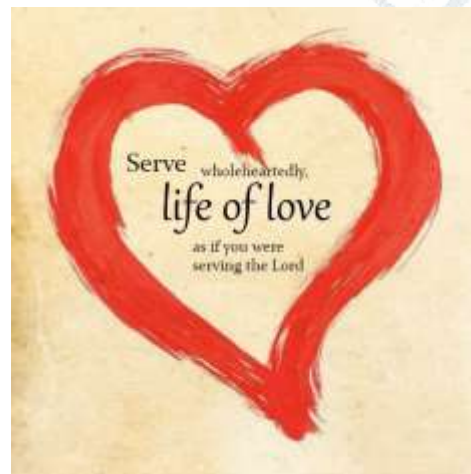


In December Deb Heseck started to record the godly play lessons for the Advent season. Parents of godly play age children are sent an email with the link to each week's lesson along with the Parent pages to help them nurture the children's understanding of the lessons. We are now beginning to explore the mystery of Easter and the faces of Easter.

Please check out the lessons, they are for children of all ages.



*Thank you,
Makayla,
for your work as
an acolyte!!*





VOLUNTEER MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Even during these social distancing times there are still many opportunities for you to serve in ministry at Nativity Church. Here are some of the areas where you could serve.

Acolyte Team Leader

Recruit new members to serve at the altar on Sundays
Organize the weekly schedule

Acolytes

Train to assist at the altar on Sundays
Adults welcome

Tech Team Members

Help with broadcasting the service on Sundays
No experience is needed

Facilities & Grounds Team Members

Work with the Jr. Warden on needed projects to maintain the church building
Volunteer to work on the grounds as needed

Work on special projects

Lay Eucharist Minister

Train to become a LEM to serve at the altar on Sundays

Readers

Train to read Scripture at the service on Sundays
This may be recorded at home and played at the service

Levite Team Leader

Recruit new members
Organize the weekly schedule for set up on Sunday mornings

Levites

Set up chairs for Sunday worship

Outreach Committee Chair

Coordinate the finances for the outreach programs
Schedule and chair monthly meetings
Monitor the distribution of funds going to outreach programs

Outreach Committee Members

Attend monthly meetings
Work on organizing opportunities for the congregation to serve the community

Sunday School Teacher

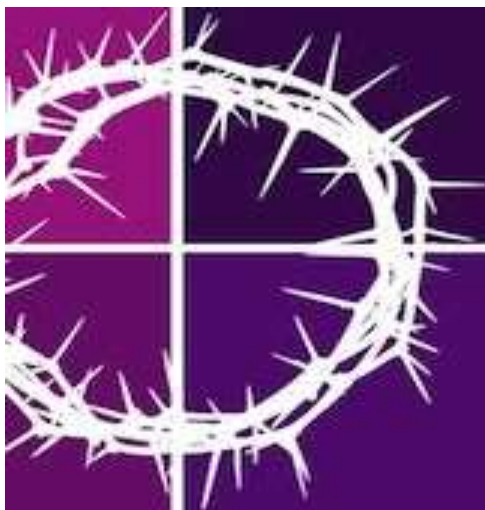
Teach Sunday school via Zoom

Counters

Count the offering money Sundays
This is done with a team of two each Sunday

Finance Committee Chair

Serve on a team to provide financial oversight for Nativity Church



ALL MARCH SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES WILL BE IN-PERSON AND LIVE ON FACEBOOK

Registration required for in-person service

LIVESTREAMING ON FACEBOOK
SUNDAYS AT 10AM
WEDNESDAYS AT 12PM

March

31 DAY SCRIPTURE WRITING PLAN

EACH OF THE SCRIPTURES BELOW TAKES TEN MINUTES OR LESS TO COPY OUT. COMMIT TO SPENDING TEN MINUTES EACH DAY LISTENING TO GOD'S VOICE AS YOU SIMPLY COPY THESE TEXTS OUT OF YOUR BIBLE.

Week 1	Week 3
DAY 1- JOEL 2:12-14	DAY 15- GALATIANS 6:1-6
DAY 2- JOSHUA 1:5-9	DAY 16- GALATIANS 6:7-10
DAY 3- JAMES 1:2-8	DAY 17- ROMANS 5:1-5
DAY 4- JAMES 1:9-12	DAY 18- ROMANS 5:6-11
DAY 5- JAMES 1:13-18	DAY 19- 1 PETER 1:3-9
DAY 6- EPHESIANS 2:4-10	DAY 20- PSALM 61:1-5
DAY 7- EPHESIANS 4:22-28	DAY 21- ISAIAH 43:1-7
Week 2	Week 4
DAY 8- EPHESIANS 4:29-32	DAY 22- 1 JOHN 4:13-17
DAY 9- PHILIPPIANS 3:12-14	DAY 23- 1 JOHN 4:18-21
DAY 10- PSALM 91:1-4	DAY 24- MATTHEW 5:13-16
DAY 11- PSALM 91:5-8	DAY 25- 1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-15
DAY 12- PSALM 91:9-13	DAY 26- 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-22
DAY 13- PSALM 91:14-16	DAY 27- 1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-28
DAY 14- GALATIANS 5:13-15	DAY 28- MATTHEW 21:21-22
Week 5	
DAY 29- JAMES 3:13-15	
DAY 30- JAMES 3:16-18	
DAY 31- CHOOSE YOUR OWN VERSES	

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.
Psalms 119:18

Extraordinary People

This month's #Extraordinary Life of the Month is Dick Hummel. Dick has been providing us with beautiful music both during the Sunday services and when he hosts the Tiny Desk concerts. Please thank Dick for his dedication to us and to the Lord.



Pastor Chad serving at National Guard's Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner



Palm Sunday

MARCH 28, 2021

SERVICE AT 10AM IN PERSON AND LIVE ON FACEBOOK

SCOUT SUNDAY



IF GOD IS YOUR PARTNER
MAKE LARGE PLANS



*What do you long for most?
What is most precious to you?
What do you want more than anything else?*
Lent and the Longing for God

Co-sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts and open to all.



Led by the Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, this online retreat will invite participants to explore their own desires, as well as the desires of the One "to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid."

Saturday, March 6, 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Find more details and register online here:

www.diomass.org/event/lent-and-longing-online-retreat

Presiding Bishop Curry's Word to the Church:

Who shall we be?



[January 8, 2021] Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has issued the following Word to the Church.

And now in the name of our loving, liberating, and life-giving God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

In another time of national crisis, another time of danger for our nation, in 1865 on March the fourth, Abraham Lincoln concluded his second inaugural address with these words:

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

Lincoln knew in that moment, in the moment of a national crisis, a moment of great danger, that such a moment was a moment of decision, when a nation, when a people must decide who shall we be? What kind of nation, what kind of people shall we be? A hundred years later, Martin Luther King faced the same reality. Who shall we be? The civil rights movement was waning. The great victories that had been won had been won. And yet now questions of poverty and economic despair and disparities raised an awesome specter on the nation. We were at war.

We were at war in another country, but there was war on our streets. The nation was deeply divided. Cities burned. There were riots. Riots at national conventions of political parties. The future of the nation was in question, and it was at that time that Dr. King realized that in moments of danger, a decision must be made. And he titled his last book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community*. I be-

lieve as he believed, as Abraham Lincoln believed, as I believe you believe, that we must choose community. Chaos is not an option. Community is our only hope.

The truth is Dr. King spoke often of all that he did and labored for was for the purpose of realizing as much of the Beloved Community of God as it is possible on this earth. He spoke of Beloved Community, the Bible, the New Testament, Jesus spoke of the kingdom or the reign of God. Jesus taught us to pray, and to work, and to labor for that Beloved Community, that reign of God's love in our time and in our world, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth just as it is in heaven. Those are our marching orders from Jesus himself.

I am a follower of Jesus of Nazareth because I believe that his way of love and his way of life is the way of life for us all. I believe that unselfish, sacrificial love, love that seeks the good and the welfare and the well-being of others, as well as the self, that this is the way that can lead us and guide us to do what is just, to do what is right, to do what is merciful. It is the way that can lead us beyond the chaos to community.

Now, I know full well that this may to some sound naive, to others, idealistic, and I understand that. And yet, I want to submit that the way of love that leads to beloved community is the only way of hope for humanity. Consider the alternative. The alternative is chaos, not community. The alternative is the abyss of anarchy, of chaos, of hatred, of bigotry, of violence, and that alternative is unthinkable. We have seen nightmarish visions of that alternative. We saw it in Charlottesville just a few years ago when neo-Nazis marched through the streets of an American city, chanting, "Jews will not replace us." That alternative is unthinkable. We saw it in Minneapolis-St. Paul, where a public safety officer knelt with his knee on the neck of another human being. A child of God, just like he was, and snuffed out the breath of life that God gave him. The alternative is unthinkable.

And we have seen it this past Wednesday, when a monument to democracy, the Capitol of the United States of America was desecrated and violated with violence by vandals. Lives were lost. A nation was wounded. Democracy itself was threatened. My brothers and sisters, this way of love that Jesus taught us when he said, "Love the Lord your God, and your neighbor as yourself." This way of love that Moses taught even before Jesus. This way of unselfish, sacrificial love, it is the way to redeem a nation, to save a world. It is the way of hope for us all. But do not make the mistake of thinking that I speak of a sentimental and emotional love.

(conclusion on page 7)

Jesus spoke of love most consistently the closer he got to the cross. This way of love is the way of sacrifice, the way of unselfishness, the way of selflessness, that seeks the good of the other as well as the self. And that is the way of the cross, which is the way of life. And if you don't believe me, ask another apostle of love. Not Dr. King, not Abraham Lincoln, ask Archbishop Tutu. Ask one who has given his life for the cause of God's love in the way of Jesus. Ask him; ask Nelson Mandela in your mind. Ask them what love looks like. They knew that the way of love was the only way that could guide South Africa from what could have become a bloody nightmare and civil war to the way that could build a nation.

And it was not sentimental. Remember truth and reconciliation. They had to face painful truths. They had to do what was just and what was merciful. They had to do what the prophet Micah said, that the motivation and the guide was love. Archbishop Tutu said this:

Love, forgiving, and being reconciled to our enemies or our loved ones is not about pretending that things are other than they are. It is not about patting one another on the back or turning a blind eye to the wrong. True reconciliation exposes the awfulness of the abuse, the hurt, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse for a while. It is a risky undertaking but in the end it is worthwhile, because in the end only an honest confrontation with reality can bring forth real healing. Superficial reconciliation only brings superficial healing.

This is the way of love that can heal our hurts, that can heal our land, that can help us to become one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. So, I would ask

you to do two things. I'm asking you to make a commitment, a renewed commitment, to live the way of love as Jesus has taught us and to do it by making a commitment to go out and bless somebody. Bless somebody you disagree with. Bless somebody you agree with. But to go out and bless somebody by helping somebody along the way. Go out and bless somebody by listening to their story and their life. To go out and be an instrument of God's peace, an agent of God's love.

And then I would ask you to pray. Pray for this nation but pray with some specificity. Pray that we may have the wisdom and the courage to love.

God of grace and God of glory,
on thy people pour thy pow'r.
Crown thine ancient church's story,
bring her bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour

- Harry Emerson Fosdick, God of Grace and God of Glory

With malice toward none, with charity toward all. With firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right. Let us strive to finish the work, the work that we are in. To bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan. To do all which may achieve and cherish, a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

God love you. God bless you. And may God hold us all in those almighty hands of love.

VERSE of the MONTH

**BE STRONG and
COURAGEOUS!**

DO NOT *be* AFRAID
OR DISCOURAGED.

FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD
IS WITH YOU
WHEREVER YOU GO.

Joshua 1:9

