

DECEMBER 2020

SHARED LIFE

Newsletter

NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH



“GIVING THANKS”

On Thursday,, November 26st, the citizens of our nation will celebrate the Day of Thanksgiving. Historically, in 1621, the Plymouth colonists and Wampanoag Native Americans shared an autumn harvest feast that is acknowledged today as one of the first Thanksgiving celebrations in the American colonies. Others pinpoint the year 1637 as the true origin of Thanksgiving, owing to the fact Massachusetts colony governor John Winthrop declared a day of thanks-giving to celebrate a military victory.

Officially, on October 3, 1863, expressing gratitude for a pivotal Union Army victory at Gettysburg, President Abraham Lincoln announced that the nation would celebrate an official Thanksgiving holiday on November 26, 1863. Later, Thanksgiving Day was officially set on the 4th Thursday of November. Thus, the celebration of Thanksgiving Day has a long history in our nation.

For Christians, Thanksgiving is a day to express “our thanks” to Almighty God for the many blessings we receive from the bountiful hands of God. Now 2020, has not been a perfect year. For some people it has been a difficult year, but that doesn’t mean we are not thankful. Some of you have been battered or hurt in one way or another this past year.

Disappointments at work, at home, or in the quietness of your own heart. Life may have not treated us kindly or gently, but even in the middle of difficulties and heartaches, we give thanks.

For all of us this has been an emotionally draining and incomprehensible year as we have had to deal with the coronavirus pandemic. But still we do give thanks. Why?

Because if we stop and think about our life, we come to realize that there are many things for which we ought to be thankful. As the Apostle Paul writes in the 4th chapter of Philippians: “Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about.”

(Cont. on Pg. 2)

Thanksgiving Day is not just about family, feasting, and football. It is about stopping for a few moments and counting our blessings and, if need be, adjusting our attitude. Some of us will say “thank you” to our parents for all the sacrifices which they have made on our behalf. All of us can say thank you to men and women through the ages who made amazing sacrifices that we might have our freedom and our Christian faith.

We are thankful to those who gave painstaking hours to science and medicine and the arts and all of the positive, creative, necessary activities of humankind in order to make ours a better world.

Maybe you have seen this list of blessings that circulate about this time each year:

I am thankful . .

For the teenager who is complaining about doing dishes
Because that means she is at home and not on the streets.
For the income taxes that I pay, because it means that I am employed.
For the mess to clean after a party,
Because it means that I have been surrounded by friends.

For the clothes that fit a little too snug, because it means I have enough to eat.
For my shadow that watches me work, because it means I am out in the sunshine.
For a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning, and gutters
that need fixing, because it means I have a home.

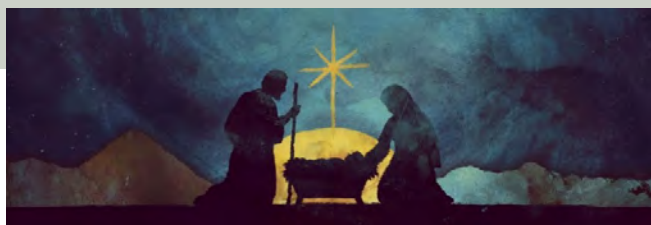
For all the complaining I hear about the government,
Because it means that we have freedom of speech.
For the parking spot I find at the far end of the parking lot,
Because it means I am capable of walking and that I have been blessed with transportation.
For my huge heating bill, because it means I am warm.
For the lady behind me in church who sings off key,
Because it means that I can hear.

For the pile of laundry and ironing, because it means I have clothes to wear.
For weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day,
Because it means I have been productive.
For the alarm that goes off in the early morning hours,
Because it means that I am alive.

But most of all, we are thankful to God, thankful to God who is mindful of our every need and who will see us through every dark hour. Thankful to God for life and health and opportunity and a multitude of blessings beyond our ability to count.

And, of course, most certainly we are thankful for the gift of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul writes in the first chapter of First Corinthians: “I can never stop thanking God for all the wonderful gifts he has given you, now that you are Christ’s, he has enriched your whole life.”

And so, on Thanksgiving Day we say, “Thank You.” “Thank you, Lord, for loving us, for caring for us, for nurturing us, for providing for us, and for saving us.” May Thanksgiving Day truly be a day of thanksgiving for you.



. . Pastor Bish

DEDICATION OF BANNERS FOR THE ADVENT WREATH



On the First Sunday in Advent, November 29th, we will dedicate four new blue banners to be used on our Advent Wreath. These banners are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Eric Bryan Bish, by his father, Pastor Kirk Bish.

Advent

“A Season of Anticipation and Preparedness”

The season of Advent is the first season of the Church Year. It became part of the Church calendar after the Festival of Christmas itself had been established. That was late in the fourth century. The celebration of the birth of Christ was not very old when the Church felt the need of a period of preparation. Originally, the Advent Season was of the same duration as Lent, forty days. The observance of Advent dates back at least to the end of the fourth century from which date there is preserved an Advent sermon preached by Bishop Maximus of Turin. Advent was mentioned specifically at the Council of Tours in the year 567. At the beginning of the seventh century the western Church limited the Season of Advent to four weeks and it has remained that way ever since.

Thus, Advent is a season of anticipation and preparedness before Christmas. The word

“Advent” means “coming” and refers to the coming of Jesus Christ. The season emphasizes a threefold coming of Christ: his coming in the flesh at Bethlehem, his coming in grace through Word and Sacrament, and his coming in glory at the day of judgment.

The season of Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and lasts until Christmas Eve. One of the most beautiful traditions of Advent is the lighting of the Advent Wreath. The Advent Wreath is placed in the chancel area of the church. The Advent Wreath contains four blue candles. Beginning with the first Sunday of Advent, a candle is lighted each Sunday. Each Sunday then, an additional candle is

lighted so that by the Sunday preceding Christmas, all four blue candles are burning brightly.

On the first Sunday in Advent, we light the **Candle of Hope**. This candle symbolizes the Old Testament prophecies of the Advent, or Coming, of the Savior. On the second Sunday in Advent, we light the **Candle of Love**. This candle symbolizes the Coming on earth of Jesus, the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary. On the third Sunday in Advent, we light the **Candle of Joy**. This candle symbolizes the Coming of the Savior into our hearts and life through faith in His holy Word. On the fourth Sunday in Advent, we light the **Candle of Peace**. This candle symbolizes the final Coming of the Savior in glory with all His angels for the judgment.

Then on Christmas Eve, we light the white Christ Candle. This candle symbolizes the Fulfillment of the prophecy – the Nativity of Jesus Christ, the Savior and Light of the world.

May the Season of Advent and our worship during Advent be meaningful, inspiring, and insightful so that we may properly prepare for our celebration of the “Christ-Event” on Christmas!





Kantor's Korner



Time is so evasive this year. It moves so slowly and yet it just drifts away. It is part of the dilemma of coping with the pandemic and the changed behavior we have to assume. Time must adapt to the changes we make.

Our Church Year enables us to reflect upon time. On November 29th we orient ourselves to a new church year and the time which was, the time which is, and the time which is about to come. There is a hymn we sing which enables us to reflect upon time in the past, the present, and the future. Whenever we hear "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" we begin to reflect upon the time we spend "waiting" in all three of these measurements of time. Advent is a season of waiting. Waiting for just the right time when God will bring in the Day of Salvation for our entire world. Perhaps, no Advent hymn stirs in us that sense of waiting in time as "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

A year ago none of us had any idea as to what 2020 would bring and what lies ahead. Maybe we would love to sing *Veni Emmanuel* with a more reflective sound because we feel more like we are the ones waiting to be as the hymn sighs: "Ransom Captive, Israel," to a life beyond our control. A life only controlled by God. In our "Live Streaming" we can join along in the singing of this hymn in the safety of our homes.

John Mason Neal was the author of the hymn and married it with a Latin Plainsong, *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*. It is a tune based on the 9th century Gregorian Mode. Modes are far more haunting than scales which bring a sense of mystery and awe to a text. For those who are interested the tune is written in the Mixolydian mode.

The hymn text, on another note, has its origins over 1,200 years ago in monastic life in the 8th or 9th century. Seven days before Christmas Eve monasteries would sing the "O antiphons" in anticipation of Christmas Eve when the eighth antiphon, "O Virgo virginum" ("O Virgin of virgins") would be sung before and after Mary's canticle, the Magnificat (Luke 1:46b-55). The Latin metrical form of the hymn was composed as early as the 12th century. Our *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* Hymn #257 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" *Veni Emmanuel* outlines these for us.

December 17 "O Sophia" stanza #2 in Hymn 257 [O Wisdom]
December 18 "O Adonai" stanza #3 in Hymn 257 [O Lord of might]
December 19 "O Jesse Virgula" stanza #4 in Hymn 257 [O Branch of Jesse]
December 20 "O Davidica" stanza #5 in Hymn 257 [O Key of David]
December 21 "O Oriens" stanza #6 in Hymn 257 [O Dayspring]
December 22 "O Rex Genetium" stanza #7 in Hymn 257 [O King of Nations]
December 23 "O Emmanuel" stanza #8 in Hymn 257 [O Emmanuel]



So this Advent we wait for this virus to end so that we can assemble without fear, we wait in time for when we all can gather and sing this hymn together. And in our Waiting, O Lord waits with us. "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

O COME TO US
ABIDE WITH US
O U R L O R D
EMMANUEL



OUTREACH

GLADE RUN CHRISTMAS ANGEL PROGRAM:

Once again, Nativity will participate in this worthy program. Obviously, based on the current environment, we are not able to pick up the gift tags at church. So, if you would like to donate you can write a check made out to Glade Run Foundation and notate in the memo line "Christmas". The other option is to buy a gift card for Target, Walmart, Michaels, or Giant Eagle. You may mail the check or gift card directly to the church. Tom Beecher picks up the mail everyday and the donation will be secure. The representative from Glade Run will pick up the donations and tags on December 11th. Glad Run truly appreciates Nativity's continued support and it's good to know you will make an underprivileged child smile on Christmas morning. If you have any questions, please contact Charlene Ott @ 724-586-2625 or [email...charott1@aol.com](mailto:charott1@aol.com)

Adopt A Student- Fun-filled "care packages" were mailed from the congregation to our college students this past week. Additionally, all six students have been adopted by members of the congregation, who will keep in touch throughout the school year. This reminds the students that they are in our thought and prayers.



Prayer Requests

On-Going Prayer List:

Pat Brick
Mitch Kasenic
Kenny Shoemaker
Esther Tolan
David & Karol Emmert

Service Personnel:

Sarah Ashmore

Normally you would fill out the paper form found at church, but times being as they are, we have created an on-line form you can fill out and all appropriate parties will be notified immediately via email.

You can also call the office and leave a message if you don't have access to a computer.

Check out the front page of the church website for the link to fill out a prayer request.

Names will be automatically be removed after 60 days, but if they can be removed sooner, please let us know.

"An Up-date on Pastor Bish's Health"

As many of you know, I was admitted to Passavant Hospital with the coronavirus on Thursday, November 5th. I had a temperature of 101 degrees and did not feel well. At that time I was quarantined in a hospital room. The only person able to enter my room was my nurse. She would bring me my food trays, take "my vitals," give me my medications, and draw blood at 4:00 a.m. in the morning! My doctor gave me the two treatments that had been given to President Trump. My temperature quickly returned to normal as did my "vital signs."

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the kind "get well" wishes, the many telephone calls, and prayers for recovery from this coronavirus during my hospitalization. I so appreciated the many telephone calls which kept me from having only myself "to talk to"!

I was discharged from the hospital on Tuesday, November 10th. I was instructed to quarantine myself at home until November 25th. Since coming home, I am in the process of regaining my strength and dealing with an upset stomach which I believe was caused by the steroids that I had to take at home for five days by mouth. My stomach has improved some.

I also want to express my appreciation for the cards, greetings, and telephone calls since coming home. In addition, I wish to thank those members who have provided me with food – lots of food!! All of this really means a lot to me!

I am grateful to be "on the mend"! Hopefully, I will continue to regain my strength and energy and soon be back to normal!

... Pastor Bish

Expressions of Sympathy

We express our sincere Sympathy to Kevin & Pam Hoskins on the passing of Pam's mom on Nov 16.

We also express our deepest sympathy to Ed and Carol Banks on the passing of Ed's mother, Erna Dean.

May God comfort them and keep them in His hands and care during this time of deep sorrow.



We truly appreciate The many, many sympathy cards and kind words we received upon my mom's passing. Our congregation is filled with abounding love. We also thank you for the comfort blanket. We will treasure it and the warmth it will provide. We are truly blessed to have such an amazing church family.

Lori & Joe Coon & Family

CELEBRATIONS

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

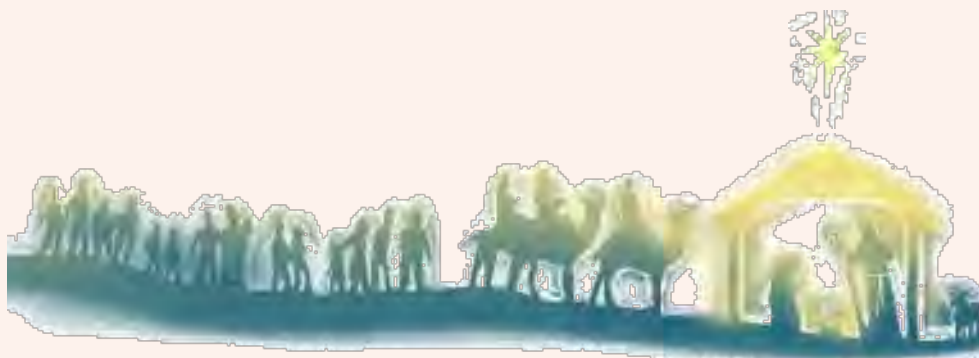
Louise Kilbert Smith	1
Andrea Specht	1
Robert Grimes	3
John Mitchell	3
Charles Brandt, Jr.	4
Andrew Brandt	4
Erin Brandt	4
Gerry Schmid	4
Thomas Weller	5
Laura Hazelton	7
Jean Amstutz	9
Traci Saunders	14
Declan McCartney	16
Thomas J. Richardson	16
Charlotte Bisese	17
Linda Ryan	18
Alexis Davis	19
Christina Hurnyak	22
Jean King	24
Samuel Kara	25
Linda Halcoussis	26
Rebecca (Henne) Kara	27
Jessica Kiefer	31
Betty Weller	31

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Martin & Darlene Matisz	30
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DECEMBER BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

James D. Chantz	12/12/99
James H. Coon	12/17/67
Jesse A. Coon	12/13/92
Joseph B. Coon	12/07/69
Robert Grimes	12/ /37
Mary Hembrock	12/01/26
Carol J. Messner	12/22/39
Lillian K. Messner	12/28/03
Chauncey Roefs	12/11/11
Traci Saunders	12/24/64
Kathryn J. Sever	12/13/70
Paul E. Specht	12/23/84
Atius Samuel Anson Weller	02/22/11
Holly L. Werner	12/ /78



Wise Men and Women Still Seek Him

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

If you would like to order poinsettia plants this Christmas, you may call Linda Ryan at 412-486-6314 or go to our church website's homepage and click the link to order on-line.

Cost is \$6.50 per plant.

Plants may be taken home after the service on Christmas Eve or left in the Fellowship Hall for pickup later.



LIVE FROM NATIVITY... IT'S SUNDAY MORNING!

We will be livestreaming services beginning Advent Sunday, November 29th. We will conduct this live service much like our YouTube services with only Pastor Bish, a worship assistant, and an organist in attendance. There will be no singing by the service participants but our members may sing in their own homes with the organ accompaniment.

You are encouraged to watch for the "Friday News" from Tom Beecher in order to learn how to connect with the "live-streaming" on Sunday.

ILO Romero, sons and crew installed remote controlled cameras in the front and rear of the sanctuary over a couple weekends in early November. This project cost about \$3,000, most of which has been covered by direct donations. A HUGE Thank You to Ilo and his family for making this dream a reality!!



Turkey on Every Table Results

The annual Turkey on Every Table campaign netted 5 boxes and 5 bags of Thanksgiving groceries, \$340.00 cash\gift card donations through designated offerings, and some online/mail-in donations to NHCO. Your generosity exceeded expectations during these difficult times.

Thanks so much!



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday School

We continue to have zoom Sunday School classes every Sunday. The Adult Sunday school starts at 8:30 a.m. and the Middle/High School class starts at 9:30 a.m. The classes usually last around 40 minutes. We have some interesting topics and questions. All are welcome! Please use the link provided on Tom Beecher's e-mail blasts. Feel free to wear your PJs and bring a cup of coffee for our discussions!

Advent Packages

Advent starts on November 29th. Advent is a time to prepare our hearts with Hope, Joy and Love as we eagerly look forward to Christmas – the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are putting together Advent Bags for Nativity families with devotional materials, craft projects and a special treat. These materials can be used to celebrate the Advent and Christmas seasons. The packages were delivered to local homes the weekend of November 21 or 22. We hope you enjoy your items.

We are looking into a Christmas program for all to enjoy. More details will be forthcoming.

....*Merlinda*



WELCA NEWS

All women of Nativity and their friends are welcome to join our weekly meetings, which are held via the Nativity Zoom Account, with the exception of our Quilting meeting.

Our schedule for **December** is as follows:

Tues., Dec. 1, 10:00 a.m. - Quilting - CANCELED

Tues., Dec. 8, 10:00 a.m. - Business Meeting + Bible Study: Advent
Devotional – “Singing, writing, moving, connecting” on Zoom

Tues., Dec. 15, 10:00 a.m. - “Christmas Tea Party” on Zoom.

Join us with your tea or coffee as we participate in Christmas trivia, word games and Holiday music.

Tues., Dec. 22 and Tues., Dec. 29 NO MEETINGS

The Zoom meeting code for December meetings is **822 4635 4158** and the passcode is **541977**.

You will sign in and wait until the leader, Ruth Kiefer, lets you in to the meeting. If you have questions or problems with this, contact Ruth at 412-512-6049.

The **SW PA Women of the ELCA Advent Cluster Event** will be held on **Saturday, December 12**, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom.

Everyone is invited to attend.

The Zoom Meeting ID is:

993 6472 8848 and the Meeting Pass Code is: **123456**.

The call in phone number is 646-876-9923.



NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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412-487-1071

Email: info@nativitylutheranchurch15101.org
www.nativitylutheranchurch15101.org

DECEMBER 6 - 10:15 am

Scriptures: Second Sunday in Advent - (Blue)

- First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11
- Psalm 85:1-2,8-13
- Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-15a
- Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

DECEMBER 13 - 10:15 am

Scriptures: Third Sunday in Advent (Blue)

- First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
- Psalm 126
- Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
- Gospel: John 1:6-8 19-28

DECEMBER 20 - 10:15 am

Scriptures: Fourth Sunday in Advent (Blue)

- First Reading: 2 Samuel 7: 1-11, 16
- Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
- Second Reading: Romans 16:25-27
- Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

DECEMBER 24 - (time TBD) **CHRISTMAS EVE**

Scriptures: Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Eve (White)

- First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7
- Psalm ;95
- Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14
- Gospel: Luke 3:1-14 (15-20)

DECEMBER 27 - 10:15 am



- Scriptures: First Sunday of Christmas (White)
- First Reading: Isaiah 61:10—62:3
- Psalm 148;
- Second Reading: Galatians 4:4-7
- Gospel: Luke 2:22-40



Offering Tellers for December: Tom Beecher & Joanne Smith
Alter Guild: Kim Brandt & Linda Ryan



December 2020

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 7:00 pm – Worship and Music Mtg. on Zoom	2	3	4	5
6 8:30 am-Adult SS Class 9:30 am-Youth SS Class 10:15 am – Worship “Live-Streaming” Noon – Ch. Ed. Zoom	7	8 10:00 am – Women of the ELCA – Business Meeting on Zoom 7:00 pm – Council Meeting on Zoom	9	10	11	12
13 8:30 am-Adult SS Class 9:30 am-Youth SS Class 10:15 am – Worship “Live-Streaming”	14	15 10:00 am – Women of the ELCA – Bible Study on Zoom	16 Deadline for the January Newsletter	17	18	19
20 8:30 am-Adult SS Class 9:30 am-Youth SS Class 10:15 am – Worship “Live-Streaming”	21	22 10:00 am – Women of the ELCA – Book Review on Zoom	23	24 Christmas Eve Service(s) To be announced	25  Christmas Day	26
27 8:30 am-Adult SS Class 9:30am-Youth SS Class 10:15 am – Worship “Live-Streaming”	28	29	30	31		Pastor Bish's hours: Tues., Thurs., Fri. 10:00 am – 1:00 pm