



MARCH • 2021

SHARED LIFE

Monthly Newsletter OF **NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

“Our Prayer Life”

Prayer is an important part of the life of a Christian; we pray in thanksgiving and gratitude, we pray for others, we pray for guidance, and we pray for God to respond to our needs and to our wishes. In many cases this last reason is the most used.

Now, we all remember times when God has blessed us when we didn't even ask. And yet, each time the need or desire seems to be delayed in arriving or it doesn't look like our Father may answer in quite the way we were convinced HE should, we fall into the trap of thinking we must not have used the right words, or HE is punishing us for some past offense, or HE doesn't care about me and my needs, or HIS real desire must be for us to suffer and learn how to live in poverty.

However, Scripture reminds us that it is always our Father's desire to bless His children. It has little to do with knowing a special code word or figuring out a mystery of what God wants us to do this time so that His closed doors to heaven might be opened by our exemplary words or acts. Our Lord does not offer a course in Prayer 102 - "How to Get Your Prayers Answered." God wants us always to pray from our heart!

To our God, prayer is communication between God and us in which we share our needs, our concerns, and our thoughts with Him and then open our hearts and minds to receive our Father's response in whatever form or time line He wishes to give them.

Yes, prayer is a two ways communication between you and a loving Father. Prayer is not a one-way street. Indeed, we talk to God - but we must remember that our loving God does respond - and he responds in the way that He know is best for us. Let us never forget that God does love each of us dearly. He has shown that genuine love in His coming in human flesh, living as we do, and then giving His life for our sins so that we might have everlasting life.



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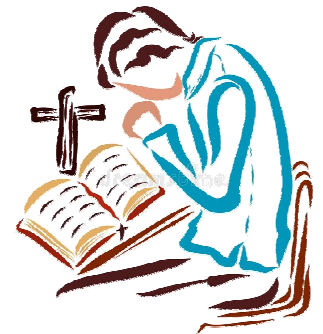
VISIT US ONLINE AT **WWW.NativityLutheranChurch15101.ORG**

Indeed, He died that WE might live - live eternally. And besides loving us. He does know us. He knows our thoughts, he knows our desires even before we express them, and He know our true needs. And he does want us to share our needs and our concerns. For as we share our needs and our concerns, we are expressing to God and to ourselves what is truly important and essential in our lives. That is certainly true - if you think about the contents of your prayers, you will quickly learn from yourself where your values are, what is important to you, and what you really want out of life!

Did you ever really think about that? Is the content of your prayers, a true message of where things are really at in your life?

Therefore, during this season of Lent, let us give attention to our prayer life. Let us make it a regular part of our daily life. May we share with our Lord our thoughts, our needs, and what is truly important to us. And may we keep in the front of our minds that God's response to our prayers is always the response of a Father who loves us dearly and knows what is truly best for us!

... Pastor Bish



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS



Thank you to all who distributed the Lenten Devotional bags to Nativity families, especially in the cold weather. Reminder to participate in the Lenten devotionals with your items. We also hope you enjoy your jelly beans and the kids enjoyed their treats.

We continue to zoom our Sunday School classes starting with the adult class at 8:30 a.m. and middle / high school class at 9:30 a.m. See weekly e-mail blasts for the links and information. All are welcome.

We are planning an Easter video for all to enjoy, details to follow. We continue to keep our committee alive and functioning during this pandemic and we hope you are enjoying our efforts.

Merlinda, Ruth K., Carol H., Jean C. and Judy B.

CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION



Lenten Mid-Week Services



The Lenten mid-week services will only be available on the "Devotional" page of our website. We will not have in-person worship or live streaming because we will be using the Holden Evening Prayer service which includes singing. The musical portion will be videoed in advance and Pastor Bish's devotional message will be incorporated separately. The service will be posted to the website so that it is available each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. and will remain there until the following Wednesday.

The theme of Pastor Bish's meditations at these services are the Seven Last Words of Christ from the Cross.

On Ash Wednesday, the meditation was on the First Word from the Cross: *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing."*

In the midst of his excruciating suffering, the heart of Jesus was focused on others rather than himself. Here we see the nature of his love – unconditional and divine.

On February 24th, the meditation was on the Second Word from the Cross: *"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."*

One of the criminals who was crucified with Christ recognized who Christ was and expressed faith in him as Savior. Here we see God's grace poured out through faith, as Jesus assured the dying man of his forgiveness and eternal salvation.

On March 3rd, the meditation will be on the Third Word from the Cross: *"When Jesus saw his mother there and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Dear woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'"*

Jesus, looking down from the cross, was still filled with the concerns of a son for the earthly needs of his mother. He gave this task to the Apostle John. Here we clearly see Christ's humanity.

On March 10th, the meditation will be on the Fourth Word from the Cross: *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*

In the darkest hours of his suffering, Jesus cried out the opening words of Psalm 22. Here we see the Father turning away from the Son as Jesus bore the full weight of our sin.

On March 17th, the meditation will be on the Fifth Word from the Cross: *Jesus knew that everything was now finished, and to fulfill the Scriptures he said, "I am thirsty."*

Here we see Jesus fulfilling the messianic prophecy found in Psalm 69:21: "for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

On March 24, the meditation will be on the Sixth Word from the Cross: *... he said, "It is finished."*

Jesus knew he was suffering the crucifixion for a purpose. The very reason and purpose he came to earth was finished. His final act of obedience was complete. The Scriptures had been fulfilled.

On April 2nd, Good Friday, the meditation will be on the Seventh Word from the Cross: *Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.*

Jesus entered death in the same way he lived each day of his life, offering up his life as the perfect sacrifice and placing himself in our Father's hands.

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 quilting.

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

Tues., March 2, 10:00 a.m. - Quilting - CANCELED

Tues., March 9, 10:00 a.m. - Business Meeting

Tues., March 16, 10:00 a.m. - Bible Study – *"Journey with Angels,"*
Session Three: Encouraging, protecting angels

Tues., March 23, 10:00 a.m. - Book Review: A Minute to Midnight by David Baldacci

Tues., March 30 NO MEETING

The Zoom meeting code for March meetings is **860 5153 1024** and PASSCODE; **242906**. 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.

Social Ministry

NCHO Personal Care Collection

NHCO's current sharing project is the Personal Care Collection. The need for this campaign is critical. SNAP (food stamp) benefits cannot be used to purchase toiletry products.

Items sought include:

- disposable razors/shaving cream
- toothbrushes/toothpaste/dental floss
- shampoo/conditioner
- chap stick
- body lotion
- unscented bar soap
- shower gel
- wash cloths
- deodorant

Please watch for future announcements of special donation opportunities at our church.

Your contributions can also be taken to NHCO, deposited in collection containers at church, or they can be picked up at your home by Jim Zaffuto or Jim Kiefer.

The Joy
of the LORD
is my
Strength

Prayer List

On-Going Prayer List

Pat Brick
Linda Tozier
Rob Miller
Kenny Shoemaker
David & Karol Emmert

Service Personnel

Sarah Ashmore

Kantor's Korner

"March Madness." That's what we used to call it in collegiate sports. Basketball teams were pitted against each other in brackets and moved through to the elimination round. Phrases like "Sweet Sixteen" and "Final Four" were pretty popular. Then COVID came! Another setback in this unprecedented year.

In October of 2019, the Hymn Society of America had a similar playoff event at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, in attempting to see how the future leaders of the church would select the "greatest hymns of all time."

Just like the NCAA basketball tournament, the Luther Seminary hymn bracket included 64 entries. Hymns had to pass the tournament nominations rules and were paired against each other, with seminarians voting on their favorites.

In the first round, "A Mighty Fortress" squared off against "Ah, Holy Jesus." In the final four, "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" faced "Be Thou My Vision," while "Beautiful Savior" took on "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing."

Although the system was questionable, the process revealed: "Be Thou My Vision" claimed the top prize. The brackets were all for fun's sake, but I could not help but notice how poorly Lutheran Hymns fared, especially from some of the future leaders of this Church. "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" was thumped by "Blessed Assurance," with 74% of votes preferring Fanny Crosby [the great Gospel hymn writer] to Martin Luther. A few Lutheran Hymns did squeak into the second round, but only "Beautiful Savior" made it into the Sweet Sixteen, and then lost in the Final Four.

In my 50 years of Lutheran Ordained Ministry, I've suspected that Lutheran congregations aren't that familiar with or enamored with Lutheran Hymns and this "fun-loving" exercise from Luther seminary confirms my suspicion. Imagine, "Be Thou My Vision" beat out "A Mighty Fortress." Although popular hymns in congregations would see choices like: "Amazing Grace;" "What a Friend We have in Jesus;" "How Great Thou Art;" "I love to Tell the Story," the source of all of the hymns come from non-Lutheran sources. I suppose this reflects the ecumenical spirit represented in the Church these days but this leads to the question "Why Lutheran Hymns in the First Place?" And is there any difference? I will address this concern in my April "Kantor's Korner."

Lutherans have such a powerful heritage. Does it make a difference that we are missing something by not singing Hymns by Paul Gerhardt in place of Fanny Crosby? I think we are. But I have noticed an absence of Lutheran hymns not only in congregations but at Lutheran summer camps, synod assemblies, and other places where Lutheran gather, not to mention the famine in so-called "contemporary" worship services. Why the scarcity? It surely isn't for lack of material. Is it something about the history of American Lutheranism in which the transmission of European Hymns was hindered by the presence of readily available English hymns written by Anglicans or Methodists? Or is there something about Lutheran hymnody that doesn't fit our current ecclesiastical and spiritual agendas? Stay tuned. Maybe I can encourage you to celebrate our Musical Heritage. It is a Godly Heritage and one deserving of our attention.



MARCH

Birthdays & Anniversaries

BIRTHDAYS

Pr. Scott Hall	7
Wendy Wolfe	7
Melissa Chantz	8
Andrew Werner	11
Carol Francis	12
Taylor Radebaugh	12
Atius Samuel Anson Weller	12
Victoria Hoburg	13
Virginia Yeager	14
Kyra Sever	15
William Chapman	17
Richard Chapman	17
Rafael Romero Lauro	18
Sarah Rembe	18
William Lamberson	19
Judy Beecher	20
Shaun Price	21
Kerry Bishoff	23
Tim Bishoff	23
Diana Mitchell	25
Alexandra Lamberson	27
Joyce Zelnis	27
Marlene Grimes	30
Charlene Ott	30
John Ott	31

ANNIVERSARIES

Jerry & Nancy Sever	22
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MARCH

Baptisms

Kerry Bishoff	3/ /73
Charles T. Brandt	3/03/68
Jean M. Chantz	3/06/60
V. Gayle Henne	3/ /54
Jessica R. Kiefer	3/09/80
Kelsey A. (King) Thimons	3/12/89
Jonathan D. Knapp	3/06/88
John R. Maier	3/18/79
Louise K. Smith	3/23/69
Thomas K. Weller	3/21/37
Betty L. Weller	3/26/50

March 14



A Special "Thank You" to the following people this month:

- **Merlinda Bisese** for assembling the Lenten Resources for our members.
- **Merlinda Bisese, Carol Huffman, Carol and Ed Banks, Mary Lynne Bennett and Jeremiah, Joanne Smith and Jack Brookman, Rafael and Quentin Romero Lauro, Don and Sharon Schmitz, Judy Beecher and Janey Roefs** for delivering these Lenten Resources to our members.
- **Ed Banks and Tom Beecher** for erecting the Cross in the sanctuary for Lent.
- **Carol Banks and Linda Ryan** for preparing the sanctuary for the season of Lent.
- **Ed Banks and Carl Heyne** for erecting the outside Cross for Lent.
- **Heather Johnson, Ilo Romero, and Kevin Hoskins** for their dedication, commitment, and weekly work to provide the live streaming of our worship services.
- **Kim Brandt** for creating several sign-ups for our website, and for her assistance in collating and stapling the in-person church bulletins, and her work on our monthly newsletter.

Thank You
Notes

.... Pastor Bish

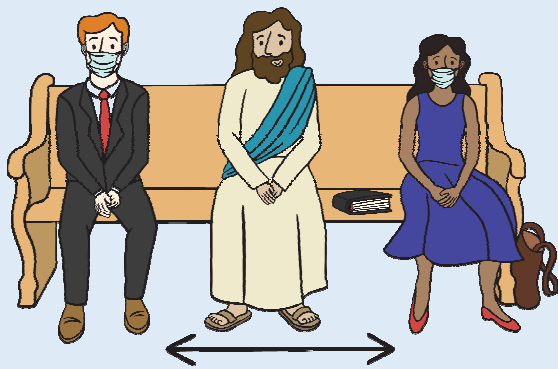
Welcome Back

We returned to limited In-Person Worship on February 14.

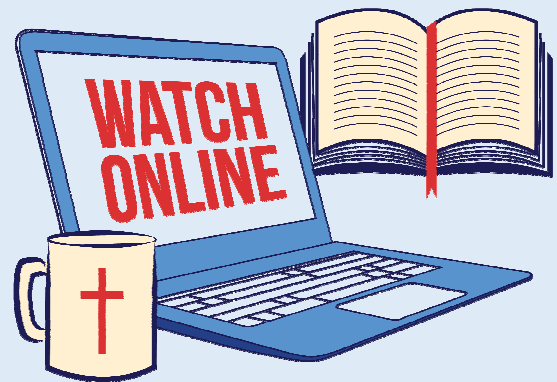
Registration is required in order to maintain appropriate social distancing. You can register for Sunday services via the sign-ups on our website or by calling the church no later than Saturday morning of the week you wish to attend.

We will continue to live-stream each service for those viewing at home.

LEAVE ROOM FOR JESUS



Please sit 6 ft. apart



Easter Flowers

If you would like to help decorate the chancel for Easter Sunday by purchasing lilies, mums, and spring flowers, please use the Sign-up Genie on the church website or call Linda Ryan (412-486-6314) to order.

The cost this year is \$7.50 per pot.

Flowers may be taken home following the service on Easter Sunday, or please call the Church office to arrange for pickup at a later date.

Posting of the altar flower chart for 2021 will be temporarily delayed due to the COVID-19 situation.



Congratulations to Jack Brookman

Jack Brookman, one of our congregation's youth, is a champion! He participated in a regional Powerlifting Event on February 20th, in Altoona, sponsored by the US Powerlifting Association.

The event's division in which Jack participated was age 15 and under, 67.5 kg max weight.

He won the squat lifting event for his class, setting a state record at 134 kg also recorded as 294.5 lb. He also won the Deadlift event and set a state record at 160.5 kg, also recorded as 353.5 lb.

Jack's bench press was 155 lb. The total weight that got him first place was 803 lbs.!

Jack was also the overall winner of the event - having the highest total of his best successful lifts in the three events of that day.

Jack is the grand-nephew of Joanne Smith and she is one great supporter of Jack!

Jack, congratulations on a great performance!



Dear Nativity friends,

I want to thank you for taking the steps necessary to offer your services virtually as well as a Thank You to Tom Beecher for sending me the links each week. Enclosed is a donation to help with the expenses. I hope you will continue the virtual option even after in person services will be possible.

Thank you & Blessings,

Sue Roberts

"The Cross Was His Own"

They borrowed a bed to lay His head
When Christ the LORD came down;
They borrowed the ass in the mountain
pass

For Him to ride to town;
But the crown that He wore,
And the cross that He bore ...
Were His own.

He borrowed the bread when the crowd He
fed

On the grassy mountain side;
He borrowed the dish of broken fish
With which He satisfied;
But the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
Were His own.

He borrowed the ship in which to sit
To teach the multitude;
He borrowed the nest in which to rest,
He had never a home so rude;
But the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
Were His own.

He borrowed a room on the way to the
Tomb

The Passover lamb to eat;
They borrowed the cave; for Him a grave;
They borrowed the winding sheet.
But the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
Were His own.

The thorns on His head were worn
in **my** stead,

For **me** the Saviour died.
For guilt of **my sin** the nails drove in
When Him they crucified;
Though the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
Were His own--

They rightly were mine!

~Author Unknown ~

Lenten Quiz

**** Answers in this Friday's Nativity News ****

1. What does the term "Lent", which comes from "Lenten", mean?
 - ☐ Sacrifice
 - ☐ Time
 - ☐ Spring
 - ☐ March Madness
2. How were ashes imposed in the early church?
 - ☐ The shape of a cross was drawn on the forehead
 - ☐ Ashes were smeared across closed eyelids
 - ☐ Ashes were poured or sprinkled over the head
3. Why do people give things up for Lent?
 - ☐ To follow the example of Jesus' 40-day fast in the wilderness
 - ☐ To help us focus on prayer and devotions
 - ☐ To give the acquired savings to the poor
 - ☐ All of the above
4. What snack food has significance during Lent?
 - ☐ Chocolate
 - ☐ Pretzels
 - ☐ Popcorn
 - ☐ All of the above
5. Many People fast during Lent. How often did John Wesley fast?
 - ☐ Twice a week
 - ☐ Twice a month
 - ☐ Twice a year
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ He did not fast
6. Why does Lent last 40 days?
 - ☐ To represent the time Jesus spent in the wilderness being tempted by Satan
 - ☐ To recall the 40 days and nights the earth was flooded in the Old Testament
 - ☐ To remind us of the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the desert
7. What do some United Methodists NOT sing at Lent?
 - ☐ Doxologies
 - ☐ Alleluia
 - ☐ "In the Garden"
 - ☐ The communion liturgy
8. Which Hymn, based on St. Patrick's prayer, would be a good Lenten devotion?
 - ☐ "Jesus Walked This Lonely Valley"
 - ☐ "Christ Beside Me"
 - ☐ "Oh Happy Day, That Fixed My Choice"
 - ☐ "Come and Find the Quiet Center"
9. True or False? Sundays are not counted in the 40 days of Lent.
10. When early Methodists in America sat in church on a mourners bench, they would:
 - ☐ Repent of their sins
 - ☐ Experience new birth
 - ☐ Rededicate themselves to Jesus
 - ☐ All of the Above

Scripture Readings for March 2021

MARCH 7 - 10:15 a.m.

Scriptures: Third Sunday in Lent (Purple)

Assistant: Kim Brandt

- First Reading: Exodus 20:1-17
- Psalm 19
- Second Reading: First Corinthians 1:18-25
- Gospel: John 2:13-22

MARCH 14 - 10:15 a.m.

Scriptures: Fourth Sunday in Lent (Purple)

Assistant: Tom Beecher

- First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9
- Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
- Second Reading: 2:1-10
- Gospel: John 3:14-21

MARCH 21 - 10:15 a.m.

Scriptures: Fifth Sunday in Lent (Purple)

Assistant: Ken Saunders

- First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34
- Psalm 51:1-12
- Second Reading: Hebrews 5:5-10
- Gospel: John 12:20-33

MARCH 28 - 10:15 a.m.

Scriptures: Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday (Purple)

Assistant: Pastor James Dollhopf

- First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a
- Psalm 31:9-16
- Second Reading: Philippians 2:5-11
- Gospel: Mark 15:1-39

Offering Tellers for March: Linda Ryan & Jane Dollhopf

Altar Guild: Carol Banks & Linda Ryan



Worship Participation

January 17, 2021

January 24, 2021

January 31, 2021

February 7, 2021

February 14, 2021 13 in person

February 17, 2021 13 in person

- 27 viewed on live-stream, 14 viewed on webpage

- 33 viewed on live-stream, 17 viewed on webpage

- 29 viewed on live-stream, 15 viewed on webpage

- 26 viewed on live-stream, 11 viewed on webpage

- ?? viewed on live-stream, 11 viewed on webpage

- 27 viewed on live-stream, 8 viewed on webpage



March 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 2:00 pm – Worship and Music Mtg. on Zoom	3 Lenten Mid-Week Service (on webpage) 7:00 p.m.	4	5	6
7 8:30 am-Adult SS Class 9:30 am-Youth SS Class 10:15 am – Worship “Live-Streaming” 11:30 am – Christian Ed. Meeting on Zoom	8	9 10:00 am – Women of the ELCA – Business Meeting on Zoom 7:00 pm – Council Meeting on Zoom	10 Lenten Mid-Week Service (on webpage) 7:00 p.m.	11	12	13
14 8:30 am-Adult SS Class 9:30 am-Youth SS Class 10:15 am – Worship “Live-Streaming”	15	16 10:00 am – Women of the ELCA – Bible Study on Zoom	17 Lenten Mid-Week Service (on webpage) 7:00 p.m.	18	19 Deadline for the April Newsletter	20
21 8:30 am-Adult SS Class 9:30 am-Youth SS Class 10:15 am – Worship “Live-Streaming”	22	23 10:00 am – Women of the ELCA – Book Review on Zoom	24 Lenten Mid-Week Service (on webpage) 7:00 p.m.	25	26	27
28 8:30 am-Adult SS Class 9:30am-Youth SS Class PALM SUNDAY 10:15 am – Worship “Live-Streaming” 11:15 am – Coffee Hour “via zoom”	29	30	31		Pastor Bish’s hours Tues., Thurs., Fri. 10:00 am – 1:00 pm	