

Shared Life Newsletter

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
MARCH 2026



From the Pastor's Heart

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Joel 2:13)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with your free Spirit. (Psalm 51:10)

Both of these scripture readings from Ash Wednesday appear in our liturgy during Lent. Throughout the season we sing “Create in Me a Clean Heart” as our Offertory Hymn and “Return to the Lord” as our Gospel Acclamation. Lent invites us time to pause, rest in God, and turn away from anything that separates us from God. Both readings open space for that as we turn to God for help.

Joel reminds us of God's character in a way that draws us back toward God. Imagine if the message were the opposite: “Return to God and be ready for anger, punishment, and discouragement.” Instead, Joel tells us to return because God is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Even when others fail to show love, or when our own minds convince us we are unworthy, God's love remains constant. Returning to God is life giving. It is like reconnecting with loved ones after a long absence and rediscovering the joy and love in community. It is like coming home after a long journey or hospital stay and finally resting in your

March Dates

Mar 4 –Lenten Service & Soup

Mar 6 – National Day of Prayer

Mar 7 – Daylight Saving Time (Spring Forward)

Mar 10 – Worship & Music

Mar 11 –Lenten Service & Soup

Mar 12 – Council Mtg

Mar 14 – Game Night

Mar 17 – St Patrick Day

Mar 18 –Lenten Service & Soup

Mar 20 – Spring Arrives

Mar 22 – Coffee Hour

Mar 25 - Lenten Service & Soup

Mar 29 – Palm Sunday

own bed. It is like enjoying your favorite meal made by your favorite person. Who wouldn't want to return to such a place of nourishment, comfort, and encouragement?

During Lent, we are invited to find this home with God again. As we look to the cross, we see the depth of God's love — a love that surpasses all human understanding. Jesus lived this love so abundantly that it is nearly impossible for us to doubt it. We are loved so completely that nothing we do can place us beyond God's forgiveness. God's mercy is everlasting.

In the Kyrie, after each petition, we sing "have mercy on us" because we trust that God listens. We were created from the dust of the earth — dust that is, in fact, stardust. The elements that form our bodies came from a star that once exploded far away. We are, quite literally, made of light. God breathed life into us so that this light could shine for God's glory.

The psalmist helps us understand that light shines best through something clean and clear: "Create in me a clean heart." When our hearts are clouded and dirtied by sin, God clears and cleans it away, enabling the light within us to shine. It is like trying to drive with dirty windows streaked with winter salt — seeing and driving become difficult. God renews the Holy Spirit within us so we can see clearly again and remember the promises of our baptism.

At times we feel lonely, yet the Holy Spirit is always with us. In the well known *poem Footprints in the Sand*, the narrator notices only one set of footprints during the hardest moments of life. God responds, "Those were the times I carried you." Throughout Lent and always, may we experience God's love in life giving, sustaining ways. May that love uphold us, restore us, and fill us with the joy of God's salvation, now and forever.

Blessings on your Lenten journey,

Pastor Jennifer Soltis

LENT Lent LENT Lent

Serving this Month

Offering Counters

Charlie Brandt & Lori Coon

Alter Guild

Kim Brandt

Coffee Hour

Stewardship (March 22)



WORSHIP WITH US

Average Attendance for February

<u>In-person</u>	<u>YouTube</u>
38	42

SOCIAL MINISTRY NEWS



Melissa Chantz	8
Carol Francis	12
Rafael Romero Lauro	18
Judy Beecher	20
Diana Mitchell	25
Joyce Zelnis	27
Marlene Grimes	30
John Ott	31

Jerry & Nancy Sever 22



Charlie Brandt
Jean Chantz
Jessica Kiefer
Thomas Weller
Louise Smith
Betty Weller

NHCO's Personal Care Collection continues through March. This project gathers full size personal care items for distribution to families and individuals that use the food pantries. Donations can be brought to the church and placed in the marked bins under the coat rack through April 12. Additional information for specific items needed are on the flyer posted on the bulletin board across from the kitchen and on the table in the Narthex.

Thank you to all the members of the congregation who have volunteered to make deliveries of collections to NHCO in 2026. We are still looking for a few more volunteers to cover all the months.



In the spirit of friendliness and hospitality, as we welcome visitors, we encourage you all to wear your name tags. Let Kim know if you need a new one

Women of the ELCA

All women of Nativity and their friends are welcome to join our weekly meetings and activities which are held on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m.

Our schedule for March is as follows:

Mar 3	Project Day - Quilting
Mar 10	Business Meeting
Mar 17	Bible Study: "God's Name, God's Promise" Session One: "God Who Abides"
Mar 24	Book Review: <u>How to Age Disgracefully</u> by Clare Pooley (Carried over from February)
Mar 31	Project Day - Quilting

Church FAMILY PRAYER LIST

Members, Family & Friends in need of on-going prayers

- ♥ Andy & Katy Greer (*Friends of the Heyne's*)
- ♥ Adam Brandt (*Charlie Brandt's Nephew*)
- ♥ Pr. Tony Schneck (*SWPA pastor*)
- ♥ Pr. John Cawkins (*SWPA pastor*)
- ♥ Beth Neese (*Friend of the Brandt's*)
- ♥ Carol Bednar (*Alex Bednar's mother*)
- ♥ Andy & Linda Halcoussis (*Nativity Members*)
- ♥ Matthew Frankovich (*Helga William's grandson*)
- ♥ Janet Liotta (*Nicole Kirkland's Aunt*)
- ♥ Tim Wargo (*Friend of the Bank's*)
- ♥ Terri Brandt (*Charlie Brandt's Sister*)
- ♥ Dave Miller (*Lori Coon's Father*)
- ♥ Dick Grance (*Bank's brother-in-law*)
- ♥ Matt Fickes (*Friend of the Coon's*)
- ♥ Paul Scalamonga (*Joanne Smith's brother-in-law*)
- ♥ Lorraine Howell (*Traci Saunder's mom*)
- ♥ Keith Huffman (*Carol Huffman's son*)
- ♥ Sandy Hutchins (*Friend of Ruth Kiefer*)

Service Personnel:

- ☞ Sarah Foster
- ☞ Allison Stover

A Prayer for those in Need:

Almighty and merciful God, you are the source of health and healing; you alone can bring calmness and peace. Grant to our siblings, an awareness of your presence and a strong confidence in you. In their pain, weariness, and anxiety, surround them with your care, protect them by your loving might, and grant to them once again the gifts of health and strength and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.



Please join us in warmly welcoming into membership of our faith community:

Rev. Richard (Dick) and Barbara Grance (Ed Bank's sister).

Here is their contact information if you'd like to welcome them or get in touch with them.

513 Keystone Dr.
New Kensington, PA 15068
(724) 335-7262

bjgrance@comcast.net - Barb
rpgrance@yahoo.com - Dick



Spring forward in faith!
CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS and
join us on time for worship

When Life Needs a Little Wind

Botanists say that trees need the powerful March winds to flex their trunks and main branches, so that the sap is drawn up to nourish the budding leaves.

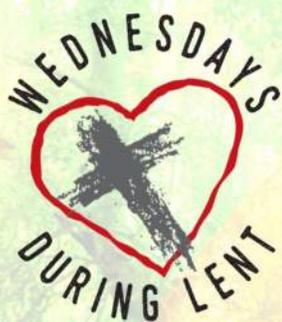
Perhaps we need the gales of life in the same way, though we dislike enduring them. A blustery period in our fortunes is often the prelude to a new spring of life and health, success and happiness, when we keep steadfast in faith and look to the good in spite of appearances.

—Jane Truax



If you would like to help decorate the sanctuary for Easter, we are offering Lily's and Tulips this year. There is a signup sheet across from the nursery and an online for your convenience. Lilies will be \$9.30 & tulips will be \$7.00. Deadline for orders is March 19

You may pick up your flowers after the Easter Service on April 5.



Join us for our Mid-week Lenten Services and Soup Suppers, every Wednesday through March 25, at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall. Take a moment in your week to Pause with the Psalms and reflect on your life as a Christian during this Lenten season. We hope you will join us for worship, discussion, food, and fellowship.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from the kitchen if you would like to bring soup, bread, or dessert.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Submitted by Nan Shuey

The purpose of stewardship is to manage resources wisely for God's glory, the betterment of creation, and the building of His Kingdom.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

Before the creation, there was nothing. Then God created everything. Everything ultimately belongs to God, and we are temporary managers (stewards) of His blessings, not owners. All that we see, touch, and feel—as well as things beyond our natural senses—are his.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. Genesis 2:15

Genesis 2:15 says God put man in the garden to work it and take care of it. This is one of the earliest Bible verses about stewardship, showing us the meaning of stewardship in the Bible as caring for creation. Taking care of our planet, the environment, and the animals was the first task God used to teach responsible stewardship.

There was a purpose behind God's creation of the world, and part of his plan involves us being faithful to manage what we have been given. It impacts daily life by promoting environmentally conscious decisions, recognizing that caring for the Earth is an integral part of honoring God.

Sixty years ago God provided a group of loving people willing to share the resources God had given them – time, energy, money and love - so that in 2026 we, Nativity, have a place and opportunities for sharing our faith with others.

Nativity members continue to work hard managing God's resources and the blessings He has entrusted to us. We faithfully use His gifts to pay staff salaries, utility bills, taxes, furnace maintenance, and organ repairs. Volunteers on the Property Committee use their unique talents and time overseeing the maintenance and cleaning of the church building. They manage the lawn mowing, snow removal, cleaning sidewalks, weeding, electrical and plumbing repairs, painting, light bulb changing, and everything else needed to support ministry activities.

While the Bible may not explicitly address environmental concerns as we understand them today, the broader concept of stewardship can be applied to caring for God's creation.

Some simple things you can do to responsibly manage the earth and its resources as God's gift:

Recycling doesn't mean only separating your cans and bottles. Use things a second time. Reuse or recycle all of those shipping boxes. Scratch out the address on padded mailing envelopes you got in the mail, tear off the stamps and use it again.

Stewardship is HEART WORK



Take reusable bags to the grocery store. The average American uses 350 bags each year. Plastic bags that end up in streams, rivers and oceans cause needless deaths of marine life.

Fill a reusable water bottle at home and bring it with you. Last year Americans went through about 50 billion plastic water bottles.

Plant a tree! It is good for the soil, good for the birds, good for reducing global warming, and good for the air we are all breathing.

Get off mailing lists. If you are receiving catalogs from companies you don't buy from, call them and tell them to get you off their list.



Fellowship Opportunities



On Saturday, **March 14**, join us for a Game & Mahjong night. Alex has offered to show anyone interested in Mahjong how to play this day.

Bring a game to play or share, bring a friend and bring a snack to share for this fun event. Games begin at 4pm.

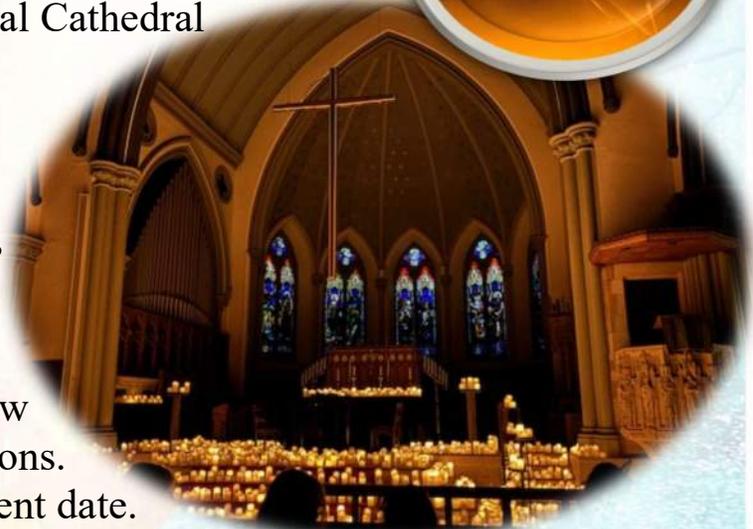
Another Game Night is planned for **April 10** at 7:00pm



Mark your calendar for an unforgettable night of candlelight music! We are planning a night out to *Pittsburgh's Candlelight Concert series: A Tribute to Fleetwood Mac* at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral on **Friday, May 8**.

The 1 hour concert begins at 8:45pm. Ticket prices are by seating section. We are planning to purchase the \$57.50 tickets, but \$ 37.50 tickets are also available.

Please consider bringing a friend. These sell out quickly so please let Charlie know if you are planning to attend or have any questions. Carpooling will be coordinated closer to the event date.



COMMUNICATIONS HELP NEEDED



The communication committee needs help to get the word out about Nativity Lutheran Church and its welcoming presence in the community. We are in need of people with new ideas on how to reach people through publications, and especially, **social media**. Please let Margie Radebaugh know if you have ideas and/or would like to be involved.



We still have a number of Nativity t-shirts in various sizes available for \$10 each.

See Pastor Jen or Ruth Kiefer if you are interested in purchasing one



Nativity will celebrate our church's 60th anniversary on

Sunday, May 3, 2026.

Signups are hanging up on the bulletin board across from the kitchen. Please consider signing up to help and don't forget to sign up on the **RSVP!**

RSVP's are also available on-line through our website.

Scripture Readings for March

March 1

- [Genesis 12:1-4a](#)
The blessing of God upon Abram
- [Psalms 121](#)
I lift up my eyes to the hills; my help comes from the LORD. (Ps. 121:1, 2)
- [Romans 4:1-5, 13-17](#)
The promise to those who share Abraham's faith
- [John 3:1-17](#)
The mission of Christ: to save the world

March 8

- [Exodus 17:1-7](#)
Water from the rock in the wilderness
- [Psalms 95](#)
Let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation. (Ps. 95:1)
- [Romans 5:1-11](#)
Reconciled to God by Christ's death
- [John 4:5-42](#)
Baptismal image: the woman at the well

March 15

- [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#)
David is chosen and anointed
- [Psalms 23](#)
You anoint my head with oil. (Ps. 23:5)
- [Ephesians 5:8-14](#)
Awake from sleep, live as children of light
- [John 9:1-41](#)
Baptismal image: the man born blind
- [John 12:20-33](#)
The grain of wheat dying in the earth

March 22

- [Ezekiel 37:1-14](#)
The dry bones of Israel brought to life
- [Psalms 130](#)
I wait for you, O LORD; in your word is my hope. (Ps. 130:5)
- [Romans 8:6-11](#)
Life in the Spirit
- [John 11:1-45](#)
Baptismal image: the raising of Lazarus

March 29 (Palm Sunday)

- [Isaiah 50:4-9a](#)
The servant of the LORD submits to suffering
- [Psalms 31:9-16](#)
Into your hands, O LORD, I commend my spirit. (Ps. 31:5)
- [Philippians 2:5-11](#)
Humbled to the point of death on a cross
- [Matthew 26:14-27:66](#)
The passion of the Lord



March 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Art Group - 1p AA - 8p	3 WELCA - 10a NA - 6:30p	4  Lenten Service & Soup	5	6 	7 
8	9 Art Group - 1p AA - 8p	10 WELCA - 10a NA - 6:30p W&M mtg - 7p	11  Lenten Service & Soup	12 Council Mtg - 7p	13	14 
15	16 Art Group - 1p AA - 8p	17  WELCA - 10a NA - 6:30p	18  Lenten Service & Soup	19	20 	21
22 	23 Art Group - 1p AA - 8p	24 WELCA - 10a NA - 6:30p	25  Lenten Service & Soup	26	27	28
29 	30 Art Group - 1p AA - 8p	31 WELCA - 10a NA - 6:30p	1	2	3	4
5	6 AA - 8p	Notes We worship every Sunday at 10:15 am Adult Sunday School meets each Sunday from 9:15 am & Children's Sunday School meets the 1st & 3rd Sundays at 9:15 am				