



Shared Life *newsletter*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
MAY 2026

From Pastor's Heart

As we look forward to celebrating Stewardship Sunday on May 17, I wanted to take this opportunity to talk a little more about what stewardship is, theologically. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word "stewardship"? Perhaps it's budgets and spreadsheets, money, and pledge cards? Perhaps you think of it being a grateful response to God? What about love? Stewardship is about so much more than money. It is an integration between our faith and the way that we live our lives.

Our stewardship practices are a response to God's boundless love for us and how we express our gratitude for all that God has entrusted to us. As faithful stewards and children of God, we are called to share our time, talents and finances, to care for God's earth and to love and serve our neighbors.

The practice of stewardship invites us to look in three different directions: DOWN, IN and OUT. We begin by looking at how God has come DOWN to us. We then look IN to discover all that God has entrusted to our care. We end by looking OUT to understand the needs of our neighbors. These actions don't always happen in this order, but stewardship invites all three.

Stewardship begins at creation, where God first comes down to us. In Genesis, we learn that God forms humankind in God's own image and commands us: *"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth"* (Genesis 1:28).

A steward is someone who cares for someone else's property. We are not owners, but stewards of all that God has created. God loved us so much that God sent Jesus to die for us to bring us salvation and new life. God also comes down to us in the sacrament of baptism. In our baptisms, we are claimed as children of God. We belong to God and all that we have belongs to God. We are

May Calendar

- May 3 – 60th Anniversary
Worship & luncheon
- May 5 – Worship & Music
- May 7 – National Day of Prayer
- May 8 – Fellowship Candlelight
Concert
- May 10 – Mothers Day
Christian Ed Mtg
- May 13 – Pre-Assembly
Caucus Mtg
- May 14 – Day of Ascension
Council Mtg
- May 16 – Armed Forces Day
- May 17 – Stewardship Sunday
- May 24 – Pentecost
- May 25 – Memorial Day
- May 31 – Trinity Sunday

bearers of God's love, grace and gospel. Stewardship begins with God coming down to us in love and sharing some of what is God's with us.


Our loving God has created us and blessed us with more than we could ever imagine. God has entrusted us with our time, talents, treasures, and so much more. The Holy Spirit works through us to use our gifts. God gives in abundance that we might share in abundance. When we realize that all we have belongs to God, and not us, we can't help but give it away in gratitude for God's generosity. Our resources are not ours to keep, but are God's to share.

We look out to see how God is calling us to love our neighbor with all that God has entrusted to our care. We are called to love; not just with our words, but also with our actions, and with our whole lives. Stewardship is the way that we use all our resources – time, talents, possessions and money – to love God and our neighbor.

Stewardship is what we do with all of the gifts that God has given to us. Everything we have is a gift from our loving God, and these gifts are ours to share with the world that God loves so much. As I often say; 'We are blessed to be a blessing.' Let us continue to give thanks for our many blessings and share the love of God with others.

God's Blessings,

Pastor Jennifer Soltis



“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

SERVING THIS MONTH

Offering Counters

Bonnie Varley
& Lori Coon

Coffee Hour

volunteer needed

Altar Guild

Linday Ryan
& Carol Huffman

NHCO Deliveries

Linda Ryan



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please visit our
Website and click
the Red Button
“All Sign-ups”
to view the
available Sign-ups



MAY

birthdays & anniversaries

Amanda Zelnis	1
Carl Heyne III	6
Merlinda Bisese	6
Jeremiah Bennett	9
Nancy Coon	9
Donna Heyne	18
Joanne Smith	21
Nyah Jean Chantz	26

Joe & Lori Coon	11
Kevin & Pam Hoskins	11
Robert & Merlinda Bisese	26



MAY

Baptisms

Caroline (Chantz) Bukauskas
 Marina J. (Smith) Bradley
 Rev. Kirk Bish
 Corey Bennett
 Mary Heyne
 Jack Brookman
 Marlene Grimes
 Rev. Brian Bennett
 Alisa Michael
 Maddisyn Mullen



WORSHIP WITH US

Average Attendance for April

<u>In-person</u>	<u>YouTube</u>
39	40

A Prayer for Open Hearts and Minds

O Lord, our heavenly Father, in you is the fullness of light and wisdom. We ask that you enlighten our minds through the work of your Holy Spirit. Clear away distraction and doubt, and help us turn our full attention to you.

Give us grace to receive your Word with reverence and humility. Shape our hearts so we may listen not only with our ears, but with willing spirits, ready to be taught and transformed. Remind us that true understanding does not come from our own insight or effort, but from your truth revealed to us in love.

As we hear and reflect on Scripture today, draw us closer to you. Strengthen our faith, deepen our trust and guide us in the way we should go. May your Word take root within us and bear fruit in our lives, bringing honor to your name.

We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, through whom all wisdom and grace are given. Amen.

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*)
- ♥ Andy & Linda Halcoussis (*Nativity Members*)
- ♥ 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*)
- ♥ Matt Fickes (*Friend of the Coon's*)
- ♥ Lorraine Howell (*Traci Saunder's mom*)
- ♥ Keith Huffman (*Carol Huffman's son*)
- ♥ Sandy Hutchins (*Friend of Ruth Kiefer*)

Service Personnel:

- ☞ Sarah Foster (*Traci Saunder's daughter*)
- ☞ Allison Stover (*Cheryl Kilbert's granddaughter*)

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.

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 May is as follows:

- May 5** Project Day – Quilting
- May 12** Business Meeting
- May 19** **Bible Study:** “God’s Name, God’s Promise,” Session Three: “God Who Leads Us: Resurrection and Life”
- May 26** **Book Review:** The Lost Girls of Willowbrook by Ellen Marie Wiseman



Nativity’s W/ELCA Group would like to thank congregation members who attended the April Coffee Hour and who donated gift cards and monetary gifts to support the Southwest PA Synodical group’s designated outreach charity for 2026, **“Reagan’s Journey.”**

This charity collects gently used pediatric durable medical equipment and supplies, sanitizes them and redistributes them to children in need. Your generosity is truly appreciated.

Rain: A Gentle Reminder of God's Care



A rainy day can be many things ...
It can be moisture for the farmer's garden,
Or the picnic that has to be postponed;
It can be the replenishing of a stream,
Or the overflow of a flood;
It can be relief from a hot summer day,
Or the chill of an autumn wind.
The rotating cycle of clouds to Earth
Is part of Nature's plan
For stability throughout the Universe,
As old as the hills,
And dependable as the seasons.
Rain and sunshine are equal partners
In the daily expression of God's love.

— Jeanne D. Birrell

NHCO's Spring Cleaning Collection

This project gathers items to provide families with a bag of cleaning supplies. Donations can be brought to the church and placed in the marked bins under the coat rack. The collection runs through June 7th.

Additional information for specific items needed are on the flyer posted on the bulletin board across from the kitchen, on the table in the Narthex, on our website under Missions/NHCO.

Please see Carol Huffman if you have any questions.



On Stewardship **Sunday, May 17**, during the service, we will be collecting the commitment cards that were given and sent out.

If you are not able to come to worship that day, please drop off or send in your commitment cards to the church by May 17. Thank you!



ANNUAL MEETING

**Mark your Calendars for
Sunday, June 7**

When the Spirit Turned Fear Into Courage

When Jesus was arrested, his apostles fled in fear. Peter, shaken and afraid, found himself denying that he even knew Christ. Christ's followers hid in confusion and grief, feeling brokenhearted and hopeless.

Then, on the Jewish Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came mightily upon them. Suddenly, they were empowered. Immediately they were galvanized. Right then and there, they were filled with enormous courage. Boldly, forthrightly, not far from the site of the crucifixion, they began to proclaim that Christ had been raised from the dead and that he was most certainly the long-awaited Messiah.

The fire of the Holy Spirit burned so vividly within them that people from all over came to see and hear what the apostles were claiming. Peter told them the story of Christ as best he could. Then Peter offered his hearers the opportunity of becoming Christ's followers. Amazingly, three thousand people responded to the offer at that very minute (Acts 2:41). We call that event the birthday of the Church.

Suzanne de Dietrich writes this about Pentecost in *Free Men*: "A great wave of faith and love swept through this newborn community. People gave their hearts to God and shared their possessions with their brothers and sisters in Christ. These believers could not keep silent. Their joyful freedom broke down every wall others tried to place around them, and no prison could silence their witness."

The power of God upon them and within them was truly astounding.



On Sunday, May 3 we wished a fond Farewell and Godspeed to **Jim & Dottie Zaffuto** as they prepare to move to Florida. We wish them a safe journey and a relaxing and exciting new chapter of their life!

Farewell and Godspeed to our organist: **Alex Bednar.**

Sunday, May 10, will be Alex's last day with us. We give thanks to God for Alex and the gifts he shared with us here at Nativity.

We so enjoyed the beautiful music he played, his creativity, and his musical leadership. We wish him well in his future endeavors!



VIBRANT FAITH
GOD SHINES THROUGH US

2026 Synod Assembly

The 2026 Synod Assembly of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be held Friday & Saturday, June 12 & 13.

This year's assembly will take place at PennWest University – California, PA

This year's theme invites us to notice and celebrate the many ways God's presence is already shining through our communities. In acts of care, justice, welcome, and creativity, vibrant faith takes shape in everyday ministry.

We are looking for two delegates to attend assembly. Let Pastor Jen know if you are interested.

Camp Blast

Saturday, May 9, 2025
11:00 am - 4:30 pm

FREE! RAIN OR SHINE!

Join us for a day of FUN that highlights all that Lutherlyn has to offer. There are many awesome indoor and outdoor activities to enjoy at CampBlast!

Puzzle!

In spring and summer, we remember mothers and fathers with special days. Find the parents of these Biblical children. Check the verse given for help.



- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Joash (2 Kings 11:2) | A _____ |
| Obed (Matthew 1:5) | B _____ |
| Joseph (Genesis 35: 22-24) | _____ C _____ |
| John the disciple (Matthew 4:21) | _____ D _____ |
| John the Baptist (Luke 1:13) | _____ E _____ |
| Lo-Ruhamah (Hosea 1:6) | G _____ |
| Jezreel (Hosea 1:4) | H _____ |
| Esau (Genesis 25:28) | I _____ |
| David (1 Samuel 16:19) | J _____ |
| Jacob (Genesis 25:28) | _____ K _____ |
| Samuel (1 Samuel 1:19-20) | _____ L _____ |
| Gershom (Exodus 2:21-22) | M _____ |
| Samuel (1 Samuel 1:19-20) | _____ N _____ |
| Jesse (Matthew 1:5) | O _____ |
| Gershom (Exodus 2:21-22) | _____ P _____ |
| Joseph (Genesis 35: 22-24) | R _____ |
| Isaac (Genesis 21:3) | S _____ |
| John the Baptist (Luke 1:13) | _____ T _____ |
| Jonathan (1 Samuel 14:1) | _____ U _____ |
| Solomon (1 Kings 2:1) | _____ V _____ |
| Jesus (Matthew 1:18) | _____ Y _____ |
| James (Matthew 4:21) | Z _____ |

Answers: Ahaziah, Boaz, Jacob, Obed, Zipporah, Rachel, Sarah, Elzabeth, Saul, David, Mary, Zebedee, Eliknah, Moses, Hannah, Zebedee, Zechariah, Gomer, Hosea, Isaac, Jesse, Rebekah.



Scripture Readings for May

May 3

Acts 7:55-60

The martyrdom of Stephen

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. (Ps. 31:5)

1 Peter 2:2-10

God's people chosen to proclaim God's mighty acts

John 14:1-14

Christ the way, truth, and life

May 10

Acts 17:22-31

Paul's message to the Athenians

Psalm 66:8-20

Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of praise be heard. (Ps. 66:8)

1 Peter 3:13-22

The days of Noah, a sign of baptism

John 14:15-21

Christ our advocate

May 17

Acts 1:6-14

Jesus' companions at prayer after his departure

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

Sing to God, who rides upon the clouds. (Ps. 68:4)

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

God will sustain and restore those who suffer

John 17:1-11

Christ's prayer for his disciples

May 24

Acts 2:1-21

Filled with the Spirit to tell God's deeds

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth. (Ps. 104:30)

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

Varieties of gifts from the same Spirit

John 20:19-23

The Spirit poured out

May 31

Genesis 1:1—2:4a

The creation of the heavens and the earth

Psalm 8

How majestic is your name in all the earth! (Ps. 8:1)

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Paul's farewell to the church at Corinth

Matthew 28:16-20

Living in the community of the Trinity

