



NATIVITY
CHURCH

THE NATIVITY SCENE

Monthly Newsletter

JANUARY 2021



EMBRACED

Equipped

EMPOWERED

Pastor's Corner

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.
Isaiah 43:18-19

Happy New Year Nativity!

As we welcome in 2021, I want to thank all of you who have giving so tirelessly to sustain and help Nativity flourish during this challenging year, without your giving of self, prayer, and finances we could not have made it through. I also want to encourage all of you to remain hopeful as we step into 2021 and look to the promises of God, knowing that our God is making a way in the desert. This year has been extremely challenging for all of us in different ways. Whether it was feelings of isolation, separation, and even depression; or perhaps it was financial or relationship challenges, God is

making a way for us into a hopeful future. I am so proud of all of you for making it this far, knowing how hard as it has been in staying vigilant while we Carry The Light of Christ into the darkness.

I want to thank all of you who have taken up our stewardship challenge as we Carry The Light of Christ into a new ministerial and fiscal year. During this year, we have faced the same type of financial challenges of other faith based and nonprofit organizations across the country, but because of your giving we have been able to continue wonderful ministry. We have been able to cover the cost of administering the sacraments through our monthly Communion delivery, we began a new initiative called Family Home Worship to families with young children in our Godly Play and J.A.M. Club where we deliver worship in a box which has four weeks of curriculum and activities to supplement and

(continued on page 2)

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays
ONLY LIVE ON FACEBOOK IN JANUARY!
8:30am
10am

Wednesdays
Live on Facebook only
12pm Noonday Prayer

“
For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice.
”

T.S. ELIOT

Nativity Church
45 Howard Street
Northborough, MA
01532
508-393-3146
churchofthenativity.org



Pastor's Corner

(conclusion)

support Christian Formation for families in the home, and through our continuing ability to fully fund ALL of our ministries INCLUDING salaries to ALL of the ministry staff so that they and their families don't suffer financially because of the pandemic. We can only do this because you pledge and continue to give through prayer and financial giving.

If you have not sent a pledge card in yet you still have time to do so, it is greatly needed. We have had some of our pledging families move during this pandemic which is affecting budgeting ministries and plans for 2021 and we ask you to prayerfully consider how you can support these ministries through giving. For some it will be above or at your present levels of giving, for others it will be a first time doing so, please fill out those pledge cards and send them in, ministry and support is all of our responsibilities and privilege.

Start marking your calendars because Spring is around the corner and Nativity will be having a number of offerings available to you for you to grow in your Christian journey.

As we enter the season of Epiphany on the first Sunday of January, we will begin our new sermon series "The Call of God" and see how God's call on our lives has two parts to it, the call from God and the call of you for the world.

Running from January 17th-February 17th, I will be leading a Midweek course on Spiritual Formation, based upon M. Robert Holland's book *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. This course

is all about how we can lay strong foundations of faith for ourselves and how we can incorporate ancient Christian Practices into our Daily Lives in easy and practical ways. Registration will be coming soon, and you will need to purchase this book and a Book of Common Prayer for this course. There is scholarship available for those who are in need of it for this course, please email our Parish Administrator if you are seeking scholarship.

Also, with the arrival of Ash Wednesday and Lent which begins February 17th, our Lenten Semester offerings will be starting up again soon. We will be offering Credo Course for those seeking Confirmation or Reception into the Episcopal Church, and those who just want to learn more about the breadth and scope of the Christian Faith. In addition, our Small Groups "Friends for Lent" will begin then as well. If you are interested in leading one of our Small Groups, please reach out to me directly.

Lastly, because of the drastic increase of cases of COVID19 that have arisen between Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings across our nation, Nativity will be suspending in person gatherings and will conduct worship remotely during the month of January. As we near the end of January we will reevaluate the conditions on the ground and make a decision about in person worship for February.

Stay Strong, Stay Safe, Stay Holy, and Stay Blessed

In Christ,

Stay, Holy, Stay Blessed, and Stay Safe.

Celtic Blessing of the New Year

God, bless to me the new day,
Never bestowed to me before;
It is to bless your own presence
You have given me this time, O God.

Bless to me my eye,
May my eye bless all it sees,
I will bless my neighbor,
May my neighbor bless me.

God, give me a clean heart,
Let me not from sight of your eyes;
Bless to me my family,
And bless to me my means and my home.

Carmina Gadelica



Grab a journal and take a few minutes each day to write out verses of HOPE.

Day 1- Psalm 27:13-14	Day 17- Lamentations 3:25-26
Day 2- Psalm 33:18-19	Day 18- Micah 7:5-7
Day 3- Psalm 33:20-22	Day 19- Romans 4:17-18
Day 4- Psalm 37:5-7	Day 20- Romans 5:3-5
Day 5- Psalm 39:7-8	Day 21- Romans 8:24-25
Day 6- Psalm 43:3-5	Day 22- Romans 15:4
Day 7- Psalm 62:5-6	Day 23- I Thessalonians 5:8-9
Day 8- Psalm 62:7-8	Day 24- I Thessalonians 5:10-11
Day 9- Psalm 123:1-2	Day 25- I Timothy 6:17-19
Day 10- Psalm 130:5-7	Day 26- Hebrews 6:17-18
Day 11- Proverbs 10:27-29	Day 27- Hebrews 6:19-20
Day 12- Isaiah 30:18	Day 28- Hebrews 8:1-2
Day 13- Isaiah 40:30-31	Day 29- I Peter 1:13-15
Day 14- Jeremiah 29:11-13	Day 30- I Peter 3:14-15
Day 15- Lamentations 3:19-21	Day 31- I John 3:2-3
Day 16- Lamentations 3:22-24	

Questions to Ask: What does it mean to wait on God? What do hope and waiting have in common? Where should we put our hope? What do we put our hope in that eventually disappoints us?



Women's Virtual Retreat
January 23, 2021, 9:30-11:30AM
on Zoom

(Sign up will begin on January 4 via email or by calling Lynn DeAngelis at 508-330-4111)

Journeying Beyond the Familiar: Leaving the Old Ways and Breaking Fresh Ground with God. (Phrases taken from a prayer by St. Bendan of Clonfert)

The analogy of pilgrimage has long since been used to describe our life-long journey with God. Like Abram and Sarai, we don't know where God is leading us, and perhaps we have never felt that so keenly than now in this time of great upheaval. What we do in this liminal (threshold) space is crucial. Will we surrender to God's deepening in us or allow our discomfort to drive us to distraction? Together let's explore God's invitation and make space for God. When we make space for God, God will fill it.

Rev. Dr. Laurel Coolbaugh is a beloved daughter of God Most High who has been called to help people increase in their intimacy with the Triune God. Laurel has served for 11 years as a pastor of The Sanctuary at Woodville in Hopkinton, MA and has been a Spiritual Director for 13 years. Bill and Laurel have been married for 40 years and enjoy ministering together with their adult son, Gethin, at The Sanctuary, a Church that is also a Christian Retreat and Spiritual Formation Center.

Bishop Christmas Message 2020

Christmas is always an emotional time. And it has its own Spirit that can carry us away. We all get caught up in the experience of a dark church singing Silent Night as the candles are lit and the light spreads.

In most years, we get caught up in Christmas. But this year we have to choose it. We have to make a choice for Christmas.

Recently I was reading a Christmas sermon by Warren Swenson. He says the biblical passage from the Christmas Eve service that we should pay special attention to this year



Christmas Tree Removal

Sponsored by BSA Troop 101 Northborough

The annual

Annual Christmas Tree Removal
sponsored by Troop 101

will take place on **Saturday, January 9, 2021.**

NEW THIS YEAR- Offering online payment!
Sign Up and pay online at

<https://scoutsales.org/?560.98.771>

To be added to our pick-up route, simply sign up and pay before Friday, January 8, 2021 by 5 PM (or call 508-281-9972 and leave your information). Then just leave your tree near the curb before 8:30 AM on Saturday, January 9th, 2021.

Cost: \$10 per tree.

Questions?

Email: Nborotroop101Treepickup@gmail.com or call 508-281-9972.

Thank you for your continued support of Troop 101.

is the Letter to Titus. Now you might be saying "what is that?" I remember Luke's story of the census and the innkeepers and the shepherds and the angels and the manger. I remember all the great Christmas hymns. No one ever comes out of a Christmas Eve service saying, "Wow. That reading from Titus was really awesome."

But it is there. The second reading. Here is part of it: "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all...Jesus Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds." The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to ALL. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry did not preach about Titus in his Christmas message but his words help us understand it.

(continued on page 4)

MATT PELLIZZARI'S EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

Matt put together a proposal for his Eagle Scout project in March and, after a few setbacks, was officially approved in June. It consists of saving the veteran-related photographs and memorabilia found within the Shrewsbury American Legion Ray Stone Post, and sharing the findings with the Shrewsbury Historical Society for cataloging and further preservation. Matt and his team are nearly finished emptying, cleaning, painting, and refurbishing one of the Post's back rooms where many of the pictures and artifacts were found, converting it into a bright, dry storage area for the items that the Veterans have asked remain in the building. Matt is currently working with local frame shops to restore & repair the oldest pictures and documents. Once that part of the project is complete, he plans to create QR codes so the history of the Post and its Veterans may be known with a quick click and scan from your phone.

Congratulations on this amazing idea and work, Matt!



Bishop Christmas Message 2020 (conclusion)

“Mary gave birth to her first born son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. There, in the simplest bed, lies the One for whom no room was made. And yet strangely, there lies the One whom not even the universe can contain.”

The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all. And what is our response to that greatest gift? Titus says it is a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

I have been inspired over and over again by the generosity of our churches to community organizations that are addressing the rising food insecurity of this time and other



Ministry leaders are asked to return their annual reports to the Parish Administrator **on or before January 18, 2021.**



social needs. And checking in on one another. And finding ways to be community in such a challenging time. And by doing the good deed of wearing a mask.

And may we be zealous in choosing the resilient spirit of Christmas this year. We might not be caught up in Christmas because some of our traditions are not happening the way we always did them. And there is a deep sadness to that. But we can choose to live in the Spirit of Christmas. No one says this better than Howard Thurman, a leader in the Civil Rights movement and a great theologian.

“I will light candles this Christmas

Candles of joy, despite all the sadness.

Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.

Candles of courage where fear is ever present.

Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days. Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens.

Candles of love to inspire all my living.

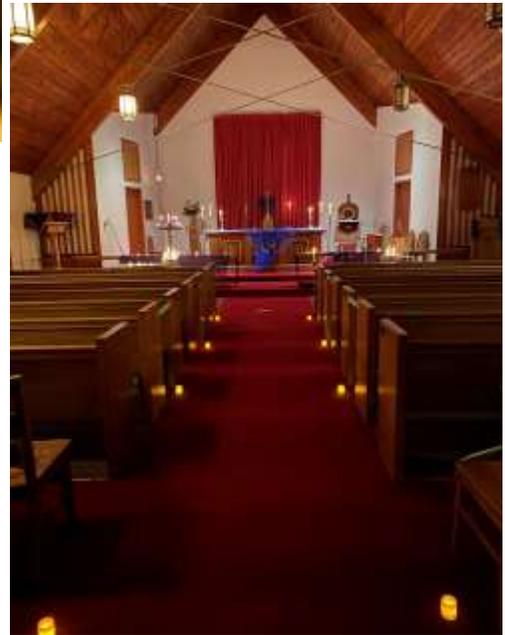
Candles that will burn all the year long.”

We are blessed by God taking flesh in Jesus and the gift of salvation. May we respond zealously with the good deed of choosing to be a light in this world. May God bless you with a resilient Spirit this Christmas.

+Doug



"You keep us waiting. You, the God of all time, want us to wait. For the right time in which to discover Who we are, where we are to go, Who will be with us, and what we must do. So thank you ... for the waiting time."
 John Bell, quoted in The Westminster Collection of Christian Prayers, compiled by Dorothy M. Stewart



DECORATING NATIVITY CHURCH

*Thank you Pastor
Chad and Ethan!*

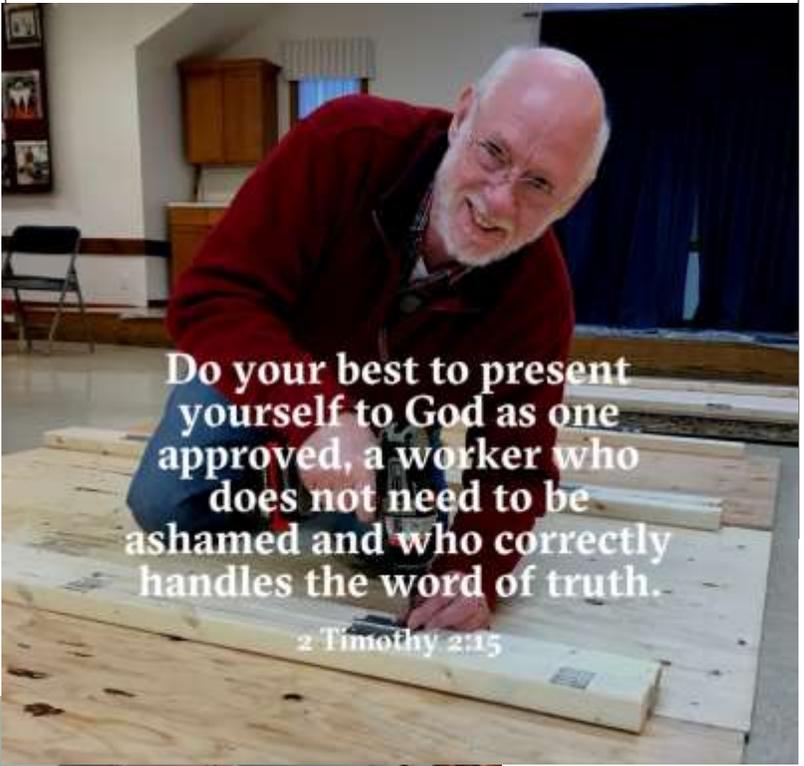




Samantha is enjoying her Christmas Sunday School Box and online class!

Extraordinary People

This month's #Extraordinary Life of the Month is Howie Gelles. Howie has gone above and beyond, working tirelessly for Nativity as Jr. Warden. There isn't a project too big or too small that he hasn't tackled. You can see his work all over the property but most visible in the outstanding work in the Hall. Please thank Howie for his dedication to us and to the Lord.



Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.
2 Timothy 2:15





Thank you to all the musicians that made our Christmas season so special!

Rachel Manley
Binto John
Dick Hummel
Chad and Karen Gentry
Judy Yauckoes
Glen Campbell



Here's hoping 2020 really is hindsight!

