



NATIVITY CHURCH



Fall Edition Newsletter

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." Psalm 122:1

Dear Nativity Family,

Welcome back, welcome back, welcome back! I hope you had a wonderful Summer filled with vacations, excursions, and the joy of summertime fun. Right now, our little ones have returned to school, Fall sports have returned (Patriots please don't break our heart this year) and the New England landscape is preparing to burst forth its beautiful kaleidoscope of colors. That's right everyone, we are back at it with a wonderful new year in store for us.

This Fall we will be kicking off the year and returning to full programming which includes our youth ministries of Godly Play and ROCK, Simple Socials, Small Groups, Senior Ministry and much, much, more. This starting Sunday September 18th with Rally Sunday. This Sunday we are kicking things off with a Baptism during our 10 o'clock service, as well as the Sunday School Kickoff and with a Sundae Extravaganza experience after service (who doesn't love an excuse to have ice cream?).

Under the leadership of our Young Families Ministry Team, we celebrate the return of Godly Play with Deb Heseck leading our children in 4th grade and younger and ROCK which will be grades 5-8 and is being led by Jenny Otto. Both classes will be meeting in the classrooms located on the lower level of the Fellowship Hall building this year during the 10 o'clock worship period. In addition, mark your calendars for the annual Blessing of the Animals on Sunday October 16th followed by our first annual "Trunk or Treat" in the church parking lot.

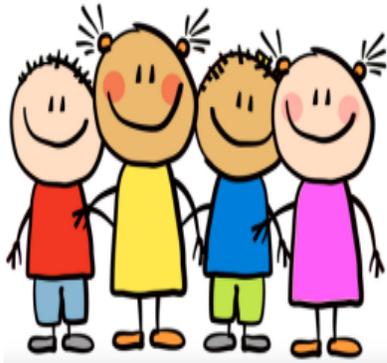
Also, this year I am excited to announce we will be introducing a new opportunity for all of us to live out our Faith in Action. This initiative (starting this Fall) is being headed up by the Outreach Ministry Team and occurs every third Sunday of the month which will be a service Sunday. What this means is that on every third Sunday of the month as part of our worship service we will incorporate our Outreach Ministries with a service opportunity for all of Nativity. You may be asking yourself "Wow, that sounds great! How do we do that and what will that Sunday look like?" I'm glad you asked. During Service Sunday we will still be gathering for worship at our regular times of 8:30am & 10:00am for an amended Rite II worship that will include music, prayer, a message, and Eucharistic celebration, but rather than concluding and go home after worship, we will highlight and serve one of our Outreach ministries. So, for example, one service Sunday we might be doing a food drive for the Northborough Food Pantry, so you would bring in canned food as part of your offering that Sunday, when the service concludes rather than leaving the cans at church for "someone" to bring over during the week, we would have a team bring them over that Sunday. Another example might be that we highlight Worcester Fellowship and instead of packing lunches between services, we would all join in after our shortened and amended worship that day ends to make the lunches and a team of drivers goes and delivers and hands out the meals, you get the picture? These are just some of the ways in which we can all participate in living out our faith as the body of Christ in real and practical ways.

In addition to all the great things mentioned above, we will be switching things up a bit this year with regards to our Annual Meeting and holding it in conjunction with the kickoff of our annual stewardship series in October instead of after the new year. It is our intent that by holding the Annual Meeting earlier in the year in conjunction with our stewardship series that we will have more participation and also help you grab a hold of the vision for the upcoming year here at Nativity and where we feel God is leading us, and we will get there.

In closing, y'all this year is going to be an AWESOME year!!! We have a lot going on all fronts, opportunities at every level for ministry, fellowship, and service. It is my prayer that you will take every opportunity available to engage your faith in new and exciting ways this year and invite your friends and neighbors to join us on this journey. Remember, you are a royal priesthood, marked as Christ own forever who have been called to bring the light of Christ into this world. You are ordinary people, Embraced, Equipped, and Empowered to do extraordinary things in this world.

In Christ,

Pastor Chad+



Welcome back to Godly Play

It is with great anticipation that we start our new Godly Play Sunday school year. Godly Play is a wonderful program that allows the children and teachers to come closer to God through the telling of sacred stories, parables, silence, prayer, and play. We run a modified Godly Play program, for children preschool through grade four here at Nativity Church so that the program will fit the varied needs of our children.

Parents receive an email each week with the lesson that we will be discussing along with the parent pages that explain the lesson and give the parents some ideas on how to engage the children in discussion about the lesson. This helps to bring Christian formation comfortably into our homes. The lessons are always Bible based so it is an opportunity to read to the children from their Bibles or have them read to you.



Thank you for sharing your children with me. I can't wait to see what God has instore for us this year.

Deb Hesek



Welcome back!!!

For this Fall the Young Family Ministry has a lot in store, and we hope to use fun, family events to bring attention to the church and strengthen relationships and trust within the community.

This year we have two awesome classes running for our kids:

Godly Play

4th grade and under which will be led by Deb Heseck

ROCK

for youth from grades 5-8 led by Jenny Otto

Also, we will be holding an October Blessing of the Animals and Trunk Or Treat.

In November we hope to assist with a food drive as a community service opportunity that kids can get involved with.

Lastly, we hope to execute and expand our beloved Living Nativity live Christmas performance.

We are super excited about this upcoming year and hope to see you Sunday morning!

Welcome back!!!

This year in Outreach we are excited about some wonderful opportunities that we have in store and we will be inviting our congregation to participate in.

Starting in October, on Family Sunday we will have an opportunity as a congregation to make a difference by volunteering as a Service Sunday.

We as the Outreach committee have been discussing new ways for us to act out and engage our faith. The Outreach Committee is this year really wants to help us to be a people living out our Baptismal Covenant.

The goal is to engage everyone in some way. Details will be shared soon but it will be a food drive...And maybe not Northboro.

Needless to say, we hope you are as excited as we are, and we look forward to seeing you on Sunday.

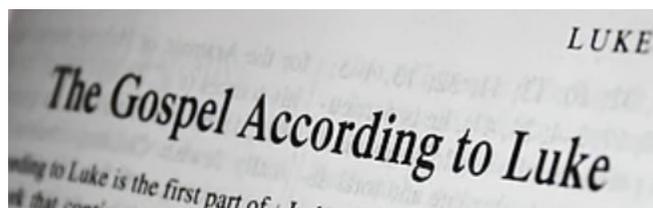
Bruce Reilly and the Outreach Committee

ACOLYTES

Thank you very much to **Matthew Pellizzari** for his many years of service to Nativity as an acolyte. Pray for a successful first year of college for him as he goes away this fall. Please contact Pastor Chad if you would be interested in becoming an acolyte for the 10am service.



Wednesdays from 10am-11:30am the **Women's Bible Study** meets online going through the **Book of Luke** using the Jesus Walk Bible study guide. This is a no-homework study where we pray for each other and look at God's word a little bit each week. If you are interested in joining, contact Rachel Manley.



Praise Band

This summer we had combined worship with music performed by Gary Mott, Howie Gelles, Binto John, Rachel Manley, Glen Campbell, Dick Hummel and special return guest Sonja Mott (Gary's daughter who was home from college for the summer). We welcome Judy Yauckoes back from her summer vacation and look forward to seeing everyone at church Sundays at 10am.



Faith Matters: On living a God-centered life

By **THE REV. JASON A. BURNS**
Deacon, St. John's Episcopal Church,
Northampton



Before the second agricultural revolution, virtually every person had a role to play in their own survival and that survival was linked directly to the growing season. In the spring you planted the fields, in the summer you tended them, in the fall you harvested, and in the winter you did more specialized work and waited for the next growing season.

The church tapped into this cycle and strategically planned the church year to follow this pattern so that our bodily and spiritual lives would be in sync. Easter coincided with the spring fertility festivals, which is why the bunny and egg became associated with the holiday. Christmas coincided with the Roman festival of Saturnalia, which was a festival of lights celebrated on the shortest day of the year to remind people that the days would be growing longer and the season of growth and new life was coming. Lent, a season of reflection and penance, coincided with the winter months because the natural cycle of plants and animals requires a period of rest before they are ready to bring forth new life.

As western society moved away from subsistence living, it became much more difficult to integrate our faith life with our daily life because our daily tasks no longer matched the teachings of the church. It is easy to make the connection between resurrection and the growth of flowers and veggie plants; it is not so easy to link resurrection with proms and baseball.

Liturgy is the fancy church word for what we do together on Sunday morning, but it has a much deeper meaning that has basically been forgotten. The root meaning of the word liturgy is "the work of the people." So liturgy is not just the prayers we say together on Sunday morning, it is the work that we do, collectively and individually, to draw closer to God. As our daily lives are no longer intimately connected with our faith life, the question is how can we achieve a connection to God while worrying about prom dresses and spring training? Well, the short answer is to just do it; but as that is less than helpful, let's explore a little bit.

The first step is to acknowledge that we need to repent, which is another fancy church word that simply means "to change our thinking." We need to be willing to think about God at times other than Sunday morning, which would likely require a conscious decision for most of us. As we race through the day, leaping from one task to the next, it can be incredibly difficult to keep the presence of God in the forefront of our minds. Medieval peasants had the advantage of having the church telling them about the resurrection of Jesus at the same time that they were watching their crops – which was literally the food that would keep them alive – pop through the dirt. While living a God-centered life is difficult, it is not impossible and it can be done simply. It can be smiling to ourselves with gratitude as the sun warms our face; it can be thinking fondly of a lifelong friend as we clean out a bookcase; it can be sharing a quiet moment with someone in pain; and it can be pausing for 20 seconds to acknowledge the presence of God in our lives.

While our daily lives may no longer be tied directly to the rhythm of the church year, that doesn't mean that we are not engaging in liturgy on a daily basis. So as summer turns to fall, as the temperatures begin to drop and as the crops begin to yield to their natural cycle, I encourage us all to think about the liturgy of our lives. Where is God in the ups and downs of the day?





Upcoming Events

October

9th Annual Meeting
10th Columbus Day
16th "Trunk or Treat"
23rd Blessing of the Animals

November

6th Day Light Savings
Fall Back One Hour
11th Veteran's Day
24th Thanksgiving Day
27th First Advent

Service Sundays

October 16th
November 20th
December 18th

Sunday Worship

8:30 and 10:00

Sunday School

10:00

Wednesday Worship

12 Noon



STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

WHOSE woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost



Your Nativity Church Resources

45 Howard Street Northborough MA 01532 508-393-3146

Nativity Website

www.churchofthenativity.org

Nativity Church News & Notes Weekly Email

Coming out each Friday

Breeze Nativity Church Database

churchofthenativity.breezechms.com

Facebook

www.facebook.com/NativityNorthboro

Listen to Sunday Services via telephone

Call 508-503-6442 and Nativity will call you.

Walking with Luke Zoom Meeting Wednesdays

10m-11am with Rachel Manley

Sunday and Wednesday Worship

8:30 12oon

10:00

Sunday School

10am Godly Play and ROCK

Prayer Request

PrayerChain@churchofthenativity.org

10 Things Christians Should Know About The Episcopal Church: History and Beliefs

The Episcopal Church was established after the American Revolution when it became independent from the Church of England. The Episcopal Church characterizes itself as "Protestant, yet Catholic". It is a Christian church divided into nine provinces and has jurisdictions in the United States, Taiwan, Micronesia, the Caribbean, Central and South America, as well as the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe and the Navajoland Area Mission.

1. The word "Episcopal" is defined as "of or pertaining to bishops."

The word for "bishop" in Greek is "Episkopos," which literally translates as "overseer." The Episcopal Church was named so because it followed the tradition of appointing bishops as clerical authorities. Other churches that also have bishops are the Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Lutherans, among others. Bishops are ordained women and men who have a special role at the regional level for oversight and governance of the Church. According to Episcopal tradition, the Apostles were the first bishops of the Church, and all the bishops throughout history up until now are their successors in this role.

2. The Episcopal Church in America separated from the Church of England during the Revolutionary War.

The Episcopal Church originates from the Church of England, which in turn



originates from the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation. The Episcopal Church was established as independent from the Church of England during the American Revolution. In fact, many of the founding fathers of the United States were actually Episcopalians. Just as the United States was the first of many former colonies to seek independence from England, The Episcopal Church led the way for a series of independent churches of English tradition to establish all over the world.

3. Episcopal doctrine holds that Scripture is the revealed word of God.

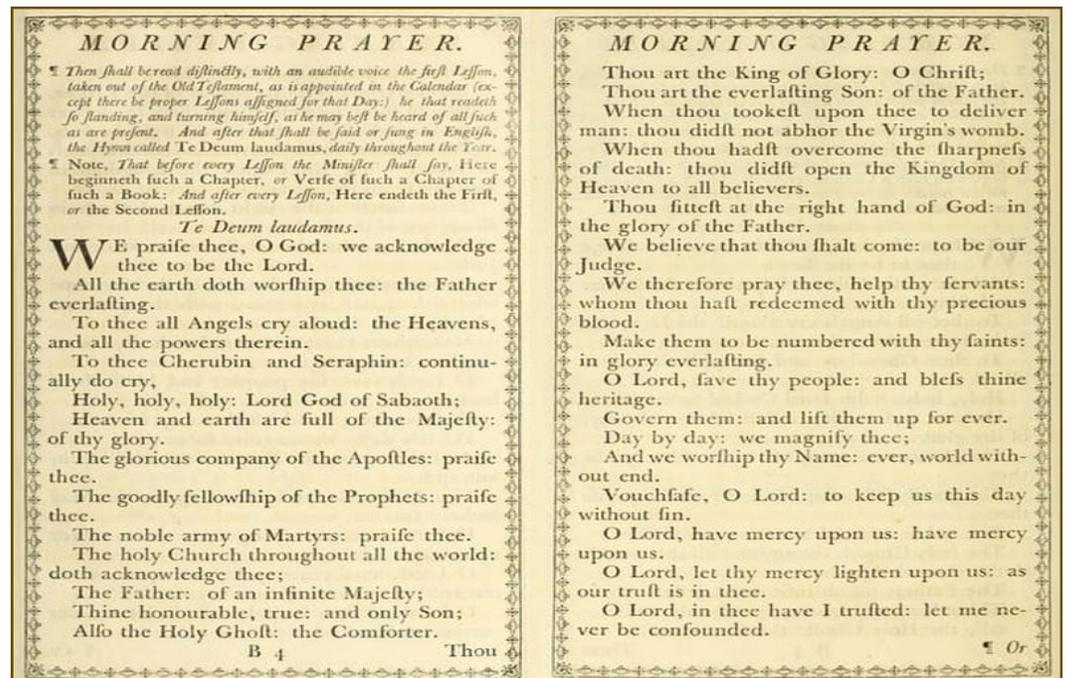
Episcopalians believe that the Holy Scriptures are the revealed word of God, and "contain all things necessary for salvation." Far from Biblical fundamentalism, Episcopalians trust that this revealed word is best interpreted within the community of the Church, advised by tradition, reason, and the ongoing guidance of the Holy Spirit.

4. Episcopal tradition adheres to the "Nicene Creed."

An important part of the Episcopal tradition is a statement of belief known as the "Nicene Creed." A "creed" is simply a statement of what a person or a group believes. "Nicene" refers to the ancient city in Eastern Europe called Nicea, where it was formally adopted. The Nicene Creed is a foundational text for most Christian churches, expressing a basic understanding of the nature of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Church.

5. The Book of Common Prayer contains "instructions" for public worship.

The first Book of Common Prayer was created in England more than 350 years ago, with a goal of rendering the prayers of worship in the language of the gathered people instead of the language of the educated elite. This tradition of common language worship continues today and the Book of



Common Prayer has been translated into nearly every spoken language on earth. The most recent revision of the Book of Common Prayer in the Episcopal Church was in 1979 and allowed for the choice of either "traditional" or modern language.

6. The Holy Eucharist is the central act of worship for the Episcopal Church

The Eucharistic service is commemorative of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is deeply related to the Mass of the Roman Catholics, the Divine Liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox, and the various communion services of Protestantism. As in all religious customs that have a Eucharist or Communion service, the ceremony is modeled after the words and actions of Jesus Christ at the Last Supper. The distinct form of sacrament used by the church is found in the Book of Common Prayer. The main features of the Eucharist are bread and wine, which are blessed, broken, and shared by all.

7. Baptism is an initiating sacrament for the Episcopal Church.

In addition to the Holy Eucharist, the Episcopal Church celebrates the sacrament of Baptism, by which people become a part of the Body of Christ, meaning the church congregation, through water and the Holy Spirit. Those who are Baptized in Christ are "baptized into his death," and are recognized as born again into the life of Christ, "dead to sin, but alive for God in Christ Jesus." The Episcopal Church, ever aware of the connection of all believers, acknowledges the baptisms enacted by other Christian churches and traditions.

8. The Episcopal Church accepts and ordains people that other denominations would not.

According to the Episcopal Church, it affirms the dignity and equality of all human beings and welcomes all people without any exceptions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, orientation, age, or any other reason. Also, what has been met with both condemnation and celebration from the Christian community, Episcopal churches accept women and LGBT people into their Ordained Ministry.

9. A quarter of US Presidents have been Episcopalians.

Eleven Presidents, from early American history to the 20th Century, have identified as Episcopalians. They are listed from the earliest to most recent below: George Washington, James Madison, James Monroe, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce, Chester A. Arthur, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Gerald Ford, and George H. W. Bush.

10. Episcopal membership and attendance has declined in the United States since 2000.

Episcopal membership decline was slower in the 1980s and 1990s and became marked since 2000. There were significant regional differences, with decline worst in the East and Midwest and some growth in the West and the South (up to 2000), though all regions have been shrinking since around 2000. The decline between 2010 and 2015 is slightly slower than in 2005 to 2010 but continues to be pronounced. The reporting of average Sunday attendance began in 1991. During the 1990s average Sunday attendance was relatively stable but from around 2000 serious decline set in. This has continued and average Sunday attendance dropped by nearly one third, while there is some regional variation.

When I say,

"I AM A CHRISTIAN"

©1988 carol wimmer

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not shouting, "I've been saved!" I'm whispering, "I get lost sometimes! That's why I chose this way."

When I say, "I am a Christian," I don't speak with human pride. I'm confessing that I stumble needing God to be my guide.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not trying to be strong. I'm professing that I'm weak and pray for strength to carry on.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not

bragging of success. I'm admitting that I've failed and cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I don't think I know it all! I submit to my confusion asking humbly to be taught.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not claiming to be perfect. My flaws are all too visible but God believes I'm worth it.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I still feel the sting of pain I have my share of heartache, that's why I seek God's name.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I do not wish to judge I have no authority ... I only know I'm loved.



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THE MINISTER'S A SUB,
SO WE'RE ALL GOING TO
SING THE WRONG HYMN...
PASS IT ON...