

# THE NATIVITY CHURCH

## THE NATIVITY SCENE

Monthly Newsletter  
MAY 2021

**EMBRACED. EQUIPPED. EMPOWERED.**

### FROM PASTOR CHAD'S DESK



Greetings Nativity Family,

Welcome to the changes of the seasons! New England is rejuvenating to life in so many beautiful ways, evident in the releafing of the trees, daffodils and flowers opening up and showing off, and for the wider world as more and more people are being vaccinated and we

slowly (and safely) begin to reenter a world where gathering becomes possible again. As we all have experienced, COVID has caused us as a people to adopt new habits and customs, it has caused a state of change to which we all must adjust in some way or another. As the world has had to adapt, adjust, and change, so has the church, and that is a good thing.

Over this past year I have preached in different ways that this is a new era in the life of being the church. We as Christians can no longer operate under the old model of "churchianity," we must boldly take this new opportunity and step into living out "Christ"ianity if this faith we believe in and proclaim is to matter to a world that is increasingly seeing little benefit or relevance of the church in the public square.

Churchianity was the old false idol that said appearances were more important than action and function; churchianity was the model that said we

#### WORSHIP SERVICES

##### Sundays

**IN-PERSON  
AND LIVE  
ON FACEBOOK!**

8:30am, 10am

##### Wednesdays

Live on Facebook only  
12pm Noonday Prayer



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

This year's community egg hunt was a little different than usual. Instead of one hunt, we had three!

To accommodate Covid spacing and contact-tracing requirements, parents and kids had to pre-register for one of three time slots. Parishioners donated pre-filled eggs as we were unable to host our usual "Stuff-the-eggs" party.

Nonetheless, all three slots were completely filled and the kids had as much fun as ever!



Thank you for the Easter Egg hunt and pictures with the Easter Bunny!

Your gave your time for the children and they enjoyed it.

Susan Patterson

member on a daily basis that we were bought with a price and given a mission to carry the light into the darkness of our present age. Christianity is us being the church in the particular ways God has called us to.

This month we celebrate Pentecost, the birth of the Holy Spirit anointing the church and its mission here on Earth. As the world begins to emerge from its slumber, we as the church will be doing so as well in various ways and we are asking you as fellow workers to join us in this new season.

How will we do this ? I am glad you asked. First, this month you will receive a survey that we would really love for you to fill out and send back. Filling out and returning this survey is very important and we greatly appreciate the effort and honesty you put into it. We will take this survey and, as Vestry and Ministry Leaders, rely on them to help us make informed decisions as to how we can best be the church in this new era. This survey will help us best serve you and our greater community.

Second, on Saturday May 15th, we will have a church clean up, utilizing safe distancing practices, and your help is greatly needed.

Third, beginning the week of Pentecost we will be launching our “Friends for Pentecost” Small Groups centering around a study of the Book of Acts and Linda Tower Pevey’s study We Are the Church...Lets Act Like it.

Lastly, please, please, please “like” and “share” our videos on Facebook. I cannot overstate the impact of the simple act of “liking” and “sharing” our worship and other videos on your Facebook and other social media in getting the Gospel of Jesus out into our communities. When you “like” and “share” these videos, they spread out into the community and beyond, on a large scale that makes it an easy way to do our part in evangelism. Thank you for your witness to Christ in our communities.

These aren’t the only steps we will be taking, but they are good beginning steps that will help us best serve you and our greater community as the body of Christ and what it is to be the church in this era.

Before I close out, I want to let you know we are actively searching for a new Assistant here in the office. Until that position is filled, we welcome Mr. Raul Quispe who will be working with us over the next month in assisting with our administrative functions and, more importantly, revamping our online media and social presence as we move into this new era. Raul comes to us with years of experience in graphic design and online media management ranging from Butlers Brand and the GB Agency, to the Putnam County News & Recorder and Fox News Headquarters in New York City. He is a 2013 graduate of The Art Institute of New York. Additionally, he just happens (full disclosure here) to be my nephew.

Folks, we are in an exciting time in the life of the church. I am encouraged and I want you to be as well. The Holy Spirit is moving and there is no stopping God and His people on the move. We are the church carrying a **Light into the Darkness**.

In Christ,



### VERSE OF THE MONTH

*“For behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.”*

*Song of Solomon 2:11-12*



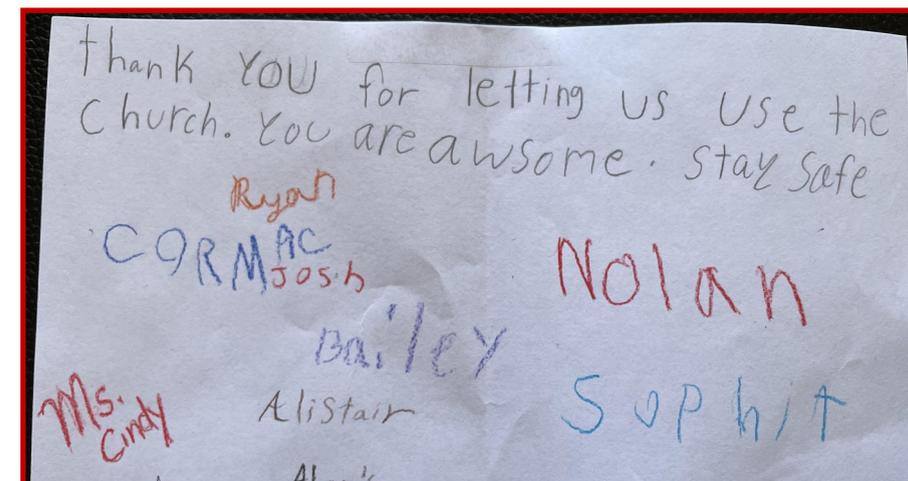
Northborough Extended Day Programs, Inc.



The Northborough Extended Day Programs, Inc. (NEDP) is a private, non-profit organization that provides before- and after-school care for children in Kindergarten through Grade 5 in each of Northborough's four public elementary schools. Once Covid-19 struck, the schools were limited in the space available for NEDP.

Fortunately, our very own Cindee Morin is Co-Executive Director of Northborough! As such, last fall she sent the vestry a proposal for NEDP to rent space from Nativity for their after-school K-5 programs. Being already licensed for our preschool, Nativity easily gained approval to host NEDP as well. Careful guidelines were established to maintain separate areas for each program, so that staff, children, and equipment were able to stay completely separate.

Ultimately, Nativity hosted 18 children from 13 families, mostly K-2 (but up to grade 5) from 7:45 – 3:30 each day. It was a win-win-win situation with the school superintendent having a safe place in which to run the program, the children being able to play and learn safely, the parents secure in the knowledge that their kids were safe, and Nativity bringing in a nice chunk of income.



Wizard of Oz: The Wizard turns out to be Oscar Diggs, a circus showman and regular person from Omaha, Nebraska.

If we were to pull aside the curtain at Nativity, who would be the “regular person” getting things done in Sabina’s absence? You’d actually find a TEAM of people, namely Deb Heseck, Cathy Terwedow, and Larry Engholm, each of whom is generously giving their time and gifts to fill in such administrative chores as:

- Formatting, printing, and cutting the Sunday bulletins for May
- Stuffing envelopes and deciphering the label code for this month’s communion packets
- Writing, formatting, and scheduling the Friday emails
- Writing and formatting this newsletter
- Updating the website

And that, of course, does not exclude the incredible work of Howie Gelles, who is always behind the scenes getting things done at our facility, or Larry Engholm, who puts in an inordinate number of hours preparing and broadcasting our services each week.

Yes, we are looking for a new administrative assistant but, in the meantime, nothing happens without volunteers. Our heartfelt thanks go out to all those who work ‘behind the curtain’ at Nativity to keep things going.



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## **Evangelize from the Comfort of Your Sofa!**



Seriously, God tells us to spread the Good News. That’s it. That’s our job. He does not call us to convert people or to change people’s hearts. That’s not our job. That’s His job.

Evangelism sounds scary. It sounds like we have to knock on people’s doors and proclaim God’s Word. But that’s not what it means at all. It just means we need to share the love of God with others. Now, with the advent of social media, there has never been an easier way to do it.

Just “Like” and “Share” our Sunday services and Facebook posts with your own friends and family. One or two clicks and you’re evangeliz-



**More pictures from the Egg Hunt !**

## **Spring Cleanup Time!**

Here are A FEW of the tasks we'd like to get done. Many hands make light work so PLEASE consider coming to help!

### **Outdoors:**

1. Re-assemble the stage.  
This is an all-day project that will require at least four able-bodied helpers. Please bring socket wrenches and related tools if you have them.
2. Repair memorial planter boxes. Several need minor repairs.
3. Clean up church grounds. Tasks include cleaning up dead brush and leaves, weeding, and picking up sticks. Plant flowers if you wish!
4. Beautify the Memorial Garden by pruning, raking, and thinning out the plants. Some minor repairs. We'd also like to plant some flowers around the "tomb." Flower donations are welcome!

### **Indoors:**

1. Re-arrange the chair room. Tables need to be flat and stacked against the back wall, with a minimum



## **“Father, Forgive them...” by Kathy Clausen**

Hi, I'm Kathy Clausen. My Good Friday meditation today on the last words of Christ is from Luke Chapter 23: Verse 34, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

The Holy Spirit has guided me to talk about Jesus's teachings on forgiveness for this meditation. It provides the foundation of his character and attributes because his Word teaches us how we are to live and think. He leads us the way we should go and we can trust Him to lead us the right way.

The setting is: Jesus nailed to the cross; in pain and suffering with criminals on his left and right. It is a degrading experience being naked and publicly exposed while Roman soldiers are gambling for his clothes. The Jewish leaders are mocking him and the crowd is cursing him. Surrounded by this most unworthy group, he prays for them. He cries out, “Father, forgive them.”

His concern for his enemies who were putting him to death is beyond our understanding. This was a prayer demonstrating his glorious compassion, mercy, and love.

Even in this darkest, most painful situation, our Lord Jesus is teaching us how to live out our lives on Earth. He asks forgiveness for his enemies as he taught.

There are many scriptures that reference forgiveness, especially in Psalms. However, my focus is going to be on the lessons Jesus taught to his disciples just before his crucifixion. He always used scripture to make a point. So, I will reference scripture and then try to apply it.

In the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew Chapter 5, Verses 43-44, Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” This is exactly what he did on the cross. It goes against human nature to pray for, or to be considerate to, those who hurt us. However, God gives us the strength to love as he does. It's an unconditional affection that does not depend on worth, response, or merit.

Another lesson from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew Chapter 6, Verses 12-15, Jesus says: “Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive men when they sin against

you, will refuse to forgive us because we are sinners in need of God's forgiveness. When we ask God to forgive, we should ask ourselves, “Have I forgiven people who have hurt me?”

In the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, Matthew Chapter 18, Verses 21-35, Jesus explains more about forgiveness. When Peter asks how many times he should forgive his brother when he sinned against him...he offered 7 times thinking he was generous because in the day, the Rabbis taught people to forgive at least 3 times. Jesus corrects with saying he needed to forgive not 7 times but, 70 times 7.

The parable is a lesson on offering mercy to others as we have been given mercy from the Father. Jesus sums up, “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

God expects those whom He forgives to forgive everyone who sins against them up to the amount they themselves have been forgiven. We should not withhold forgiveness from others. When we don't forgive we are putting ourselves above Christ's law of love.

By the way of the cross, Jesus provided forgiveness for all those who would ever believe in Him. He paid the penalty of the sins we commit in ignorance, and the ones we've committed deliberately.

God's grace for us is absolute and our only hope of spending eternity with Him. We see God's goodness in His love and faithfulness. He is good to all people and satisfies those in need. He offers hope, refuge, and care to all who come to Him and promises to make all things work together for our good.

This past year has been difficult being isolated by the Covid virus and we've been politically divided as a nation. My prayer, as I reflect on these teachings would be for us as Christians to receive Christ Jesus as our Savior.

We need to be mindful and take responsibility for having a servant's heart to others, as Jesus proclaimed the greatest person in God's kingdom is the servant of all. And, we must love one another.

Please think, “What would Jesus Do?” before posting a revenge opinion on social media and redirect your thoughts to the examples Jesus taught about forgiveness. He demonstrated his own willingness to forgive especially while dying on the cross.



**“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” Luke 23:43**  
**By Betsy Hummel**

Early this past Tuesday morning, as I sat in the dentist chair waiting for the sound of the drill to start up, an interesting little conversation began. My dentist asked me how I was and I told him, “Honestly, I’m sad because someone I cared very much about, passed away yesterday after many years of suffering with a cruel and debilitating disease.” My dentist is a kind man and he responded by saying, “Well I hope she’s in a better place.”

Immediately, and somewhat to my surprise, out of my mouth came, “Oh yes, I know she is, she loved the Lord and she’s with Him now.” At that point the dental hygienist joined in and added, “You know she’s free now of all sickness and pain and she’s completely healed, and she’s with Jesus!” Then she turned to the dentist and said, “See, this is what I have been telling you about,” and all I could think was, “You preach it sister!”

Well, what on earth does this have to do with the scripture of Jesus promising the thief on the cross next to him that he would be with him in Paradise that day? Let’s back it up to the verse before it. We know this promise of Jesus’ is in response to the criminal’s request “that Jesus remember him when he came into his Kingdom.”

Even though the interaction between Jesus and the thief was very brief, it changed the entire trajectory of this man’s life; there were no fancy words, not even a confession, the man just said, “Remember me.”

I suspect Jesus saw right into this man’s heart and knew everything about him; he saw his sin, his regret, his humility, and his deep hunger and longing for forgiveness. What Jesus didn’t say to the thief was, “Well, you should have been better behaved. It would have worked out a lot differently for you if you had started following me much earlier,” and, although those words would have been completely true, it’s not where Jesus goes because it’s not what the thief needs. Instead, He gives the man the promise of his lifetime, and the recognition, love, and sure hope of an eternal future that would be better than anything he knew he deserved or could ever have imagined, but what he had always needed and wanted, whether he realized it or not.

I don’t know about you, but even though I may not be a hardened criminal, I am just as undeserving as that thief was. I know that I don’t stand a chance on my own merit,

questions, I also have hope, based on a true promise that is strong and informs and infuses everything else in my life. It means with Jesus, there is a beautiful future beyond my wildest imagining. Brilliant beyond anything we have ever tasted here.

And the promise keeps going; that there will be justice and all things will be put right—redeemed in Christ the Redeemer’s hands. One of the things I love most about Jesus is that he knows how to redeem every broken, tragic, messed up thing in life. This knowledge, when I begin to grasp it, gives me exactly what I need; this isn’t all that there is. That death, dying, and grief are not the final word.

God’s promises are true, He hears my prayers, and He is answering them, even when I can’t see those answers yet. I can be joyful, free to laugh, and I can see beauty in the world. Perhaps most importantly I can have hope, even in the midst of the chaos and darkness of this world and that I can hold out hope to others, just like the wonderful Christian, dental hygienist from Lebanon did on Tuesday morning. I can let others know that the ache and longing they have, the need for so much more, for a lasting home, perfect love will only ever be fully met by God’s greatest gift of love expressed in his son Jesus Christ and experienced daily through the work of His Spirit in us.

What will Paradise be? It will be spending eternity with the lover of our souls, the only one who totally understands us and is far more for us than we are for ourselves. No one will ever love you like Jesus. This promise is for you, my friend. Don’t turn away from it and don’t lose the impact of its life-changing power in every detail you face today.

On Tuesday morning, as the drill in the dentist’s hand seemed to whine on and on, and the music that was supposed to help drown it out played on, I tried to pray and focus on something else. And for a few fleeting seconds I saw in my mind’s eye, my friend dancing to the music of heaven, something she hadn’t been able to do for a very long time. But now she was completely free to move, fully and gracefully in the presence of her Savior.

We only see it all dimly now, in small glimpses, but we can know that it is coming and even start to taste it here. “Christ in you, IS the hope of glory.” Let the promise that Jesus made to the thief on the cross—that he would be with him in Paradise—in glory, be the truth that resurrects, sustains, and frees your life today, and that the Paradise Jesus speaks of actually begin to infiltrate



## “Woman, Behold Your Son” By Cindy Loverin

“Near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.<sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.”<sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.”

In 1989, I traveled to Israel with a group from Nativity. I remember the April morning when we walked along the Via Dolorosa, the Way of the Cross. It was cool that morning, but by noon the temperature was near 100 degrees. It was pretty much the same kind of day when Jesus walked along the streets of Jerusalem carrying His cross. As I think of these events, I remember Mary as she followed her son on the way to Golgotha and to His death.

In the early 90’s, my son was a college student and a member of the National Guard. His unit was activated during the first Gulf War. He had to drop out of college, write his will, and give me his power of attorney. As I said goodbye to him there was a real possibility that he would not come home. In some ways I felt much like Mary, but she knew that her son would die.

Scripture does not tell us where Mary was living then. Joseph had probably died by then. As the first-born son, Jesus was expected to care for Mary so that she would not be begging in the street. She

She may have come to Jerusalem with relatives for the Passover celebration.

I wonder what Mary was thinking about on that terrible day. Maybe she remembered the words spoken by the angel who told her that she would give birth to the Son of God. Unbelievable. The shepherd came to greet the baby, and the song of angels filled the air. The wisemen came bringing gifts for the King. The gift of gold helped support the family as they fled to Egypt. When she and Joseph returned to Nazareth, Jesus worked with Joseph learning a carpenter’s trade. Those were wonderful happy days.

I think about the words of a song we hear at Christmas time. “Mary, did you know that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man? Mary, did you know that your baby boy will calm the storm with his hand? Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod? When you kiss your little baby, you kiss the face of God.”

What did she know? What did she believe? Did she know that He would live again? How could He care for her? As He gasped for breath, He was not thinking of Himself.

As I think of this scene, I am reminded of the more than 550,000 victims of covid who also died struggling to breathe. Like Mary their families watched their loved ones die, unable to help.

Jesus’ thoughts were for Mary. He struggled to speak “woman here is your son” and to John, “here is your mother.” After that John took her into his home. This part of His job was done.



“Woman, here is your son.”

John 19:26-27

**“My God, My God,  
Why Have You Forsaken Me?”  
By Karen Zacher**

E'lo-i, E'lo-i, la'ma sabach-tha'ni!!!  
My God, My God!!! Why have you forsaken me?

This is horrible!!! This is scandalous!! How could Jesus yell this at the most awful moment of his life? Surely God did not abandon him!! If God could abandon Jesus, what about me?

John tells us that, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. “ He also tells us, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” That Word was Jesus.

Jesus was one with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit for ALL eternity...before time even began... God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were in constant communion with each other...He was NEVER alone.

Jesus, The Word, became flesh and made his dwelling among us. But, although that communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit was different, it still remained. We see this in Jesus as a 12-year-old, staying behind at the temple, ‘Did you not know I had to be in my Father’s House?’”

We see it in His baptism and temptation. We see it as he walks through crowds of people intent on stoning him, without being seen. In his ministry of healing and casting

he walks on water.

We see it when he separates himself for some quiet time with His Father. We see it in the Transfiguration, when the disciples witness him in his Glory!!! We see it in his prayers and his response in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Through eternity, He was Never without that communion with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Eternity.

But. The wages of sin go beyond physical death. As believers, we still die to this physical life.

God, in His mercy, sends rain and sunshine on the saved and unsaved alike. Both see and know beauty and love. Both experience God, even if they don’t believe or know him. But the penalty for sin is separation from God. Separation from all that is good, loving, kind, beautiful. Separation from our own internal touch of God in our soul.

Jesus, who had spent eternity in communion with the Father and Holy Spirit, allows ALL our sins, throughout the history of humankind, to be heaped upon him. He goes to the cross carrying that weight. And he pays the price worthy of all our sin...a price that only He can pay... while dying a horrible, painful death on the cross; after eternity in communion; he experiences the Silence of God. Alone. Seemingly Abandoned.

He paid this price, so that we will not have to.

E'lo-i, E'lo-i, la'ma sabach-tha'ni!!!

My God, My God!!! Why have you forsaken me?

It is finished.



**“I am Thirsty”  
By Fr. Chad McCabe**

For what are you thirsting?

Humans are made up of 60%, and some even 75%, of water. You don't realize how important hydration is until you come to the place where your body cries out for it; until you've been removed from the source of the font.

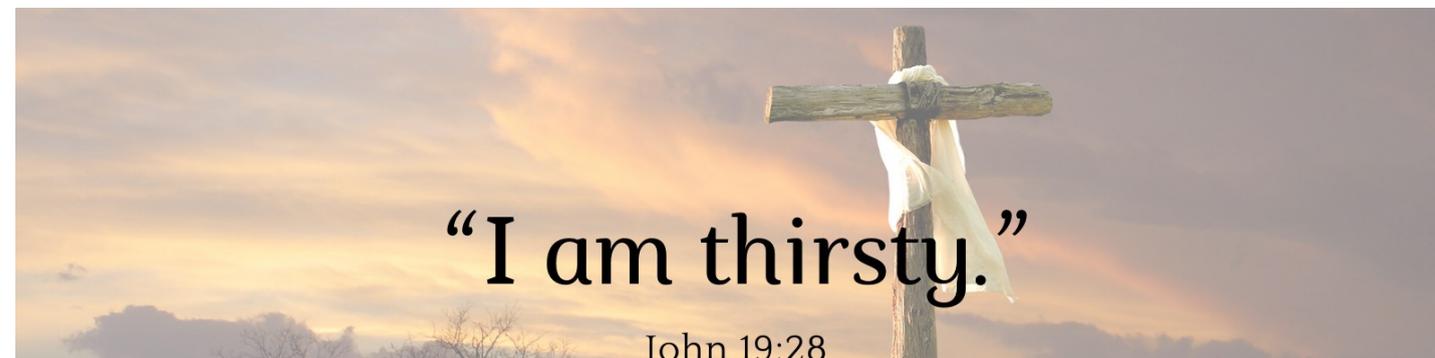
Thirst is uncomfortable. It's unpleasant and, if we do not take care of it, it is fatal to our human condition. The Lord Jesus, there on the cross, fully human, fully divine, is so dehydrated. So removed from the source of replenishment. We find Jesus now, here, at the end of his life. He is not the baby in swaddling clothes or the 12-year-old forgotten at the temple. He is not the young man who took over his step-father's business. And he is not the man who turned water into wine.

He is now at the cross. He has already been scourged. His flesh torn from his body; he's carried his cross through the streets. It's become hard for Jesus now, at this point, to even breathe. And there, at the cross, as he is hanging there, he has to use whatever energy he has left to exert himself and all of his faculties each time that he even wants to breathe. His body and muscles on fire, and he thirsts.

of our own human needs. What is it you thirst for? As we go through the deserts of this life. Is it fame? Is it followers on social media? Is it fortune? Is it ego? Or is it righteousness?

We are made up of water for a reason. For what are you thirsting?

It is finished.



## **“It is finished” by Jim Baker**

I am Jim Baker and I am addressing the Sixth set of words from Jesus as He hung on the cross on Good Friday. We know from John 19:30 that He said this just after being cruelly ridiculed with vinegar on a Roman rag serving as fake water. With just these three words, Jesus is communicating some of His most important lessons for us. Please join me in considering what these words mean to us two thousand years later.

I. What did He refer to when He referenced the “IT” - or better said, what is the “IT” that was finished? I believe there are several answers on several levels. The most obvious one is ... IT is His earthly life that will soon be finished. Or said another way, IT is his 33 years of life since He was an infant in the arms of his mother Mary. We know during that period He was once discussing theological questions with elders of the Temple at around the age of 12 when He got separated from mom and dad. But His most visible time was the three years of His public ministry - the last three years of His earthly life when He taught us from the Sermon on the Mount, when He attended the wedding at Cana performing the miracle of changing water into wine, when He performed so many other miracles and told us so many stories for our learning and understanding!!! So answer number one is that IT refers to His earthly life.

II. A second sense of what IT is equals the pain, suffering, humiliation as represented by the gift of vinegar from the Roman soldier, plus ultimately the devastation that comes from dying a lonely death on a cross. I have heard the analysis that says crucifixion is THE most horrific way to die. Think of it! To counter the weight of your entire dangling body just to catch a breath that will keep you alive has to be excruciating torture. Then to try to pull your muscles up again just to get your next breath. And again. And again. And again. How many breaths do you take in a single minute? And on. And on. And on. Well that torturous process is almost over or “finished” and He knows it. He is approaching earthly death. So number two, then, is the pain, suffering, whipping, etc. endured in this world.

III. Now add onto those physical demands the accumulated suffering, pain, and SINS of every believing human being past, present, and future. Yours, mine, your children's, your grandchildren's, everyone's sins in today's world PLUS all past beings, PLUS all generations yet to come as well. Jesus is carrying them all to his earthly

our individual and corporate salvation. Further instructions needed? That, too, is ending on the cross. Had He more to say or do, it is clear to me that He would have been able to extend His time on earth somehow but for what? Six more months? Six more years? No, He was declaring “class dismissed.” I can just hear him saying “you who have been hearing me and watching me have had your instruction. Class is over. The bell is ringing.”

V. Yet ... ever the generous provider, teacher, and savior, Jesus left behind his Holy Spirit and his Holy Word through his disciples, their experiences, and their writings (or Gospels) plus scriptures of the period and throughout history. They can all help future generations learn what it means to be a follower of Jesus and in turn receive the gift of everlasting salvation. Interesting to me is that in the period after His death and resurrection there were no —ISMs. No Catholicism. No Anglicanism. No Episcopalianism. No Methodism, No Evangelism. No Baptistism. And so on. There simply were just Followers of the Way - His Way. A question for today follows: Is His Way Our Way? Please think and pray about that while we continue.

So, in summary, Jesus had been on the earth for 33 years, 30 of which He experienced all the usual, normal, pedestrian things of life like learning a craft, caring for aging parents, finding food and drink, and then eating and drinking it. Then He spent three more years teaching what God the Father revealed to Him and what life had taught Him as a simple man.

So here is my conclusion:  
Might I be so bold as to say that “IT” in this quotation is His infinite knowledge to be shared with us and which He expects us to carry as a light in the wilderness of today and tomorrow for others to learn and participate in.

Next, please picture this if you will: As He hangs there almost dead, Jesus senses that there is not anything else He can do or say and that time is running out. Instead, He knows it is time to rejoin the Father in Heaven when He tells the Father that He is committing His Spirit back to Heaven with the seventh set of Last words, which you will hear next.

In conclusion, I humbly thank you for this opportunity to share some of my thoughts on the phrase IT IS FINISHED. God bless us all.



IT IS  
FINISHED

**“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit”  
by Deb Heseck**

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last. Luke 23:46

**The Death of Jesus**

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, “Certainly this man was innocent!” And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things. Luke 23:44-49

Can you imagine what it would have felt like witnessing the crucifixion of Jesus? Watching Him suffer. At Noon when the sky went black and the sun's light failed for three hours, this alone would be enough to put fear in your heart. Now as we look on, we add to all that our understanding that Jesus is doing it all out of love, love for you and me. Jesus took on our sin so that we could be

of bones. This curtain was as thick as the palm of a man's hand. This could only be done by the hand of God. Now through Jesus we have access to the Father.

Jesus had suffered betrayal, humiliation, torture, and then finally was nailed to the cross to die. Even in the midst of his suffering, Jesus is comforted to recite a prayer that he would have prayed as a child each night, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. Just as a child I would pray each night, “Now I lay me down to sleep I pray the Lord my soul to keep,” in Jesus' day little Jewish children would pray the words of Psalm 31:5 “Into your hands I commit my spirit.” On the cross this was a prayer of Intimacy with his Father; Jesus prayed to Him as he had done throughout his ministry. He knows the Father is present with him. It is as a prayer of Trust that Jesus entrusts his spirit to his loving father, knowing that He will care for him. A prayer of Surrender that Jesus is letting go of his human life to be reunited with the father.

So how do I receive the gift of the cross? Jesus opened the door for me to have that intimate relationship with God; have I received it fully? Do I always, and in everything, put my trust in God as Jesus trusted the Father? Do I surrender my life fully to God as Jesus did being obedient even to death? No, I fall short every day; it is the desire of my heart to do all these things but in the busyness of life I tend to go ahead forgetting to include God. So today it is my prayer along with Jesus, Father into your hands I commit my spirit.



Father,  
into your  
hands  
I commend  
my spirit.  
Luke 23:46



to an end. But we are so thankful to all the musicians who dedicated so much time and effort to these concerts on week after week, especially Binto John, Judy Yauckoes, Glen Campbell, Dick Hummel, and Kim Gentry-Meyer and her special guests, Chad and Karen Meyer. Thank you, also, to everyone who supported the music team during this Covid year. Now, stay tuned to Nativity's Facebook page for an occasional music video!



**Tiny Desk Concert : Rachel Manley and Binto John**

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**May 2021**

<b>5/09:</b>	<b>Mother's Day</b>
<b>5/15:</b>	<b>Church clean-up!</b>
<b>5/23:</b>	<b>Pentecost</b>
<b>5/31:</b>	<b>Memorial Day</b>