



NATIVITY SCENE

Summer Edition Newsletter

Happy Summer Nativity

From Pastor Chad's Desk

Folks, Summer is in full effect as we speak. The temperature is increasing, the Cape and the mountains are calling, and everyone is making vacation plans to head out of town and revisit the world that they missed during last years COVID restrictions. I ask all of you to take this time to thoroughly enjoy what we have sacrificed in order to get to the place we are now, and to do it in a way that is safe. I will be away from Nativity from July 1st to the 15th on vacation, and July 31st to August 14th for Annual Training with National Guard.

While I am away Karen Zacher will be leading worship for us, thank you Karen for blessing us with your giftings.

This edition of the Newsletter will be the Summer edition, and will be the only one until September

I want to also say thank you to all the wonderful people who came out this years Annual Spring Clean Up, for Howie's leadership in gathering and directing our crew as we cleared brush, assembled the stage, beautified our campus, and in particular I want thank Patricia Weston, Yvonne Boutte, and all

the folks who spent so much time on restoring and rejuvenating our Memorial Garden. These folks went above and beyond in making it so lovely. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

With all the fun that Summer will offer us this year I want to encourage you to remember the joy that we find in the Lord and giving Him praise. This Summer we will continue with both the 8:30 and 10:00 A.M. services indoors and in person as well as with our Live Stream on Facebook Live at 10 A.M on Sunday mornings. I want to encourage all of you (after such a trying time as this pandemic has been) to make every effort to attend in person

or online, and as we approach the Fall (it will be here before you know it folks) to come and gather physically with the body of Christ. With so many of our siblings in Christ around the world forced to gather in secret under pain of arrest and persecution, we are blessed to have the opportunity to gather in person as believers. There is much to be gained gathering in person with fellow believers to praise and worship Our Mighty God.

Looking ahead towards the Fall, please start to pray and think about how you can serve in ministry as we reconnect with one another and

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PRAYER OPTIONS

Continued

the Greater Worcester Community.

We have sent out surveys and we ask you please fill them out as soon as possible so that we can plan for the upcoming year. If this pandemic has taught us anything it is that the world needs the church to boldly minister to it. With so much work to be done in the world, prayerfully discern how you can serve in ministry to *Carry the Light* and show forth the light of Christ. We will be planning ministry leaders' meetings and Community Gathering so we can come together and bless the world.

So, enjoy the Summer, have wonderful vacations, get out there and reacquaint yourself with the world and fellowman. God has a lot in store for us this year, let us be boldly go into this world in Jesus name! Stay holy, Stay blessed, and Stay safe.

In Christ,

- Pastor Chad McCabe

Did you know that there are many ways to ask for prayer at Nativity? The first is to share prayers, spoken or via Facebook, during the service on Sunday Mornings. To create a safe space for everyone, prayer needs expressed in this format or in any meeting at Nativity are considered confidential and not to be shared.

Ongoing prayer concerns are included in the worship bulletin each week. To add your prayer, need to this list notify the office by calling the Church Office at (508) 393-3146. Please be sure to update as your need changes.

Another option is our Prayer Chain. We have a

team of people willing to hold your need in prayer for a month. You can email your personal prayer request to prayerchain@churchthenativity.org and I will be happy to forward it on to the team. You can also call me on my cell phone (508) 330 - 4111.

However, you share your prayer request, be sure to also share when God answers so that we can give Him the glory and be encouraged by how He is moving among us.

Thanks,

- Lynn DeAngelis



MUSIC MIRACLE

We have been so blessed to have Judy back playing with us on Sunday mornings now that she is fully vaccinated! Before that it was memorex and not live performances during the 10 am service. With the service being outside, we needed to take her 225 pound piano down the steps and drag it through the grass every week (and then repeat the process after church to bring the instrument inside). Thank you to Dick, Pastor Chad, Binto, Howie and anyone else who may have helped with that difficult endeavor! After a few weeks of this, it was decided that Judy needed a lightweight portable keyboard for

the 10am service. Judy's research determined that a Casio Privia model piano would be the best for the needs of the church. Judy and I looked online for deals on used keyboards nearby and we found a few Privia keyboards for \$400-\$500 in central Massachusetts. Every day I looked on Craigslist searching for "piano" and "keyboard" and few listings were found. One day I searched for "Privia" and a \$200 listing in Shrewsbury for a mint condition Privia that had been up for many weeks. The seller forgot to include the word "piano" or "keyboard" and so it had not come up in previous searches. I sent email

and heard nothing back. A few days later I sent another email with my phone number, just to see if my previous response went to spam. Within minutes I got a text that the piano was available and that he could deliver the piano to the church within the hour! The seller delivered the keyboard and helped us reassemble the stand that comes with the piano. Judy and I were so excited to get such a great deal! Then a few minutes after the seller left, I realized one of the accessories wasn't there. I texted him and he responded that he had it in the back of his car and that he would be right back. When he delivered the part, he

handed me back the money and said he couldn't accept it! He had decided to give the piano as a donation to the church. I asked for his name and address so the church could send him a donation receipt, but he refused and asked only that we keep his family in our prayers. I never caught the name of this kind gentleman, but he is surely an angel for the music ministry at Nativity. Judy and I have been so happy with the great sound of the new piano and we hope you are blessed by it as well.

Senior Warden

- Deb Hesek



Loreal K. Drayton

Fitchburg State University

Bachelor of Science in Human Services
with a minor in Criminal Justice



Michael Loverin

Santa Maria College

Masters in Criminal Justice with a
Certificate of Leadership

2021 GRADUATES



Alyssa Olsen

Boston University

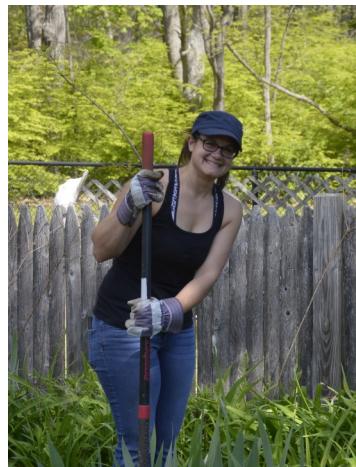
Masters in Arts Management



Madeline Pelek

Montachusett Regional High School

Madeline will attend Westfield State
College in the fall



Church Cleanup Day



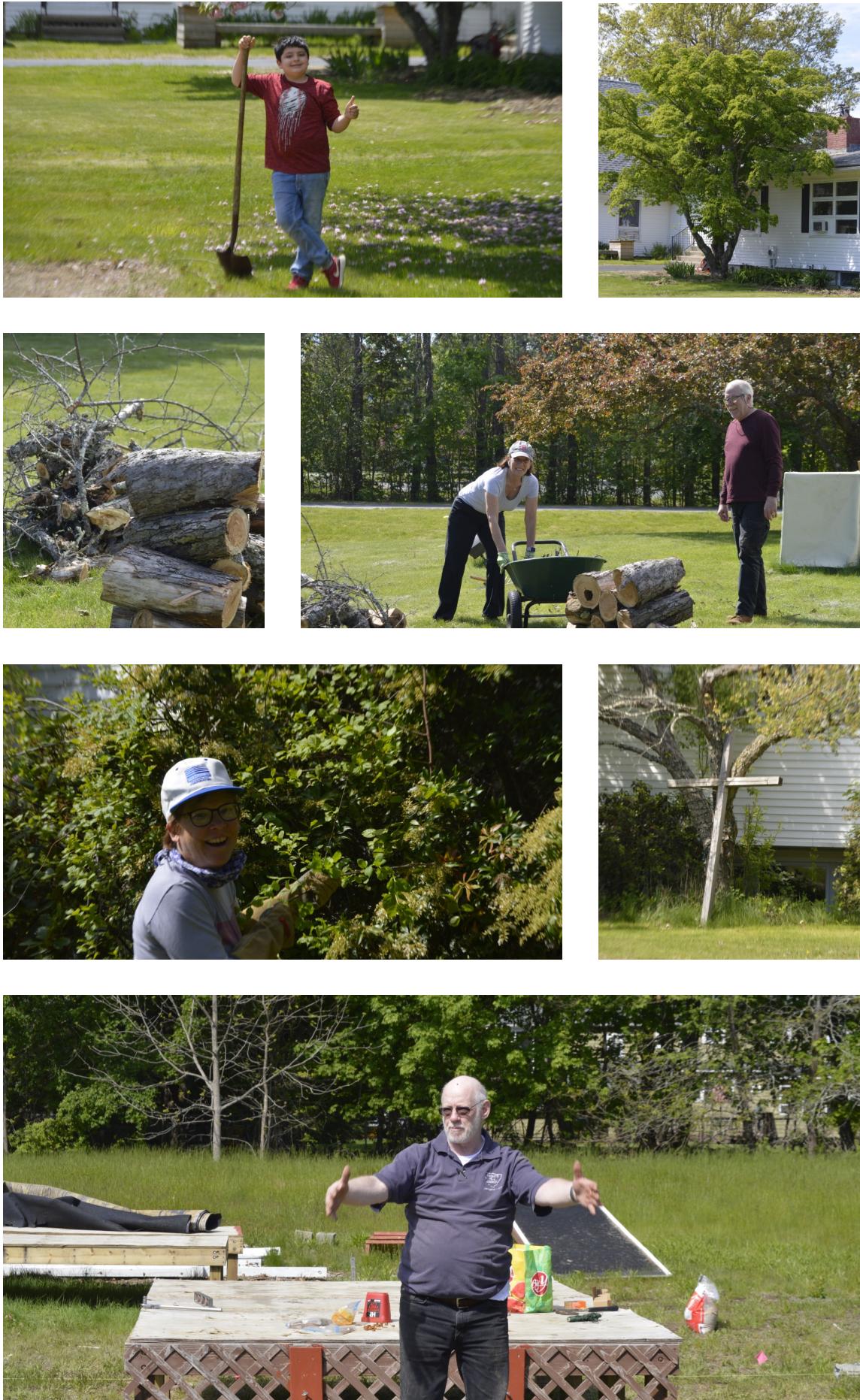




2021 Spring Cleanup Day - Thank You, Volunteers!

Chad McCabe
Karen McCabe
Ethan McCabe
Howie Gelles
Paul Morin
Tom McDonald
Larry Engholm
James Rawstron
Tom Frasco
Tyler Frasco
Isabella Dellecese
Jeannie Hebert
Deb Hesek
Rick Hesek
Cathy Terwedow
Henry Terwedow
Yvonne Boutte & Mom Pat
Kathy Reilly
Bruce Reilly
Brad Nutting
Sue Roche
Norma Brandt
Beckie Mangus
Nancy Kimball
Ted Flanagan
Kevan Flanagan

Scoutmaster
Arnold Oyola
Donald Chase





That's a wrap!

Nativity Preschool ended our out of the ordinary school year with a beach themed day followed by our first ever outdoor graduation! It was wonderful to end the year being able to have our families come together for the first and only time.

We learned a lot this year, and have many new things that we will carry on into the future, but are very much looking forward to the thought of being closer to normal in the fall!

I would like to thank the Nativity Church community for

granting us the flexibility to recreate some outdoor space and utilize the Godly Play room in order to help us navigate state Covid guidelines.

We currently have a few slots available in our youngest Tuesday/Thursday classroom for the fall if you know anyone looking.

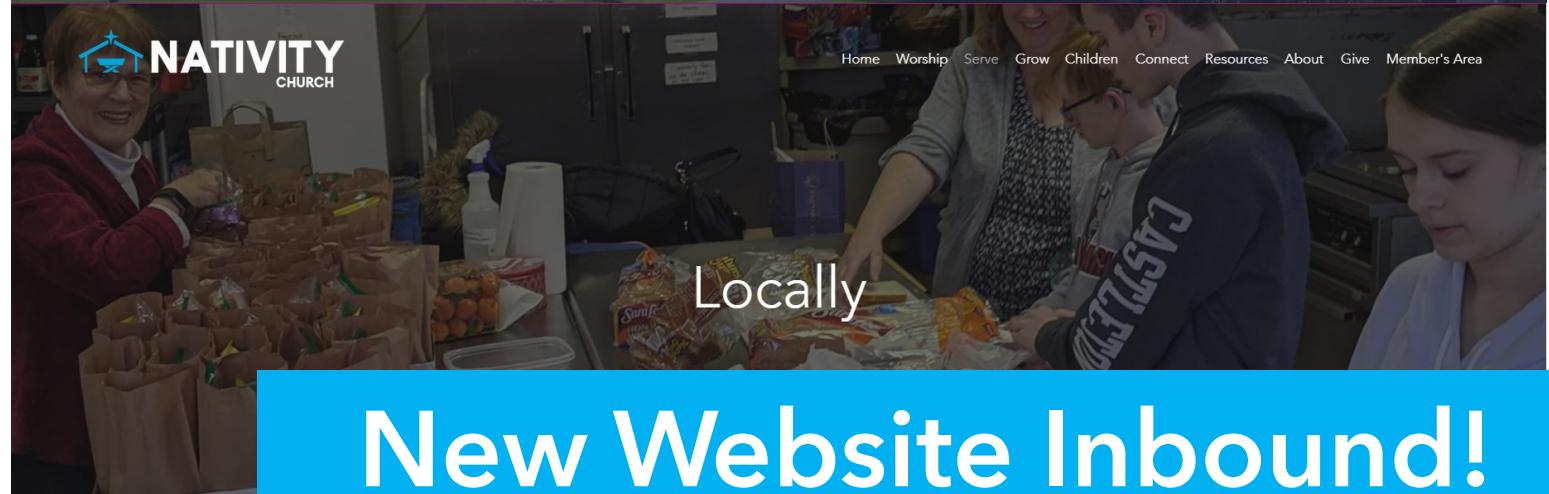
Have a wonderful summer! We will see you in September!



As soon as the new website is published you will have access to the newly updated Nativity Community Preschool Page (as well as the nursery). All contact information will be on the pages as well.

Director
- Stacey Paradise

Welcome to Nativity

[Visit Us](#)[About Us](#)

New Website Inbound!

A new Nativity website has been in the works for the last couple of months. We have been editing and modifying as much as we can to bring you, the Nativity congregation, a clean, organized, and user friendly experience when you visit the site. We want to make sure you have as much information as possible.

On the site you will have access to various resources such as the service liturgy, the book of common

prayer, vestry contact information and so much more.

You will also have access to previous sermons that were streamed on Facebook Live, as well as the Nativity Scene, calendar and gallery to view our past and upcoming events. With the calendar in mind, the website is linked to Breeze so you will have access to the Breeze Calendar. A point of interest is the core groups page under the Connect

tab, where you will find men's, women's, senior's, and events pages. All these pages will have contact information so you can get in touch with the people involved with the ministries so you can stay connected to the congregation.

Another point of interest is the Member's Area that will give you access to Breeze, our church management system. Last point of interest is the Serve tab, where you will find information about

how to help out and serve within Worcester County and the great beyond.

With that said we hope you will look forward to and enjoy the new look and everything it has to offer.

All the best,
-Raul Quispe

Veterans Jeff Neipp, left, and John Kelley, center, with the Rev. Christopher Carlisle in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Photo: Heather Beasley Doyle



In Western Massachusetts, ministry brings veterans together for food, camaraderie

By Heather Beasley Doyle

John Kelley wasn't comfortable talking about Vietnam with a non-veteran in the room. He said so, directly, from the end of a large conference table, the emotion in his voice quieting everyone else. He's tall, at least 6 feet, with long white hair and a white beard that brushes against his chest. A cloth mask patterned with American flags covered much of his face and beard, drawing attention to his eyes.

Kelley, 75, is a husband and father. He's also an Army

veteran who served 15½ months in Vietnam. When he returned from the war to Northampton, Massachusetts, he eventually started his own trucking business, choosing to be alone most of the time – not for a year or a decade, but for 50 years, until he retired four years ago. As his schedule became less demanding, memories of the war came back to him more frequently; he could no longer avoid the past. "I'm an easygoing guy, but when it comes to Vietnam, it's hard for me," he told Episcopal

News Service in March. For decades, he didn't tell people he served in Vietnam, but he's comfortable talking about it with other veterans. And from the time that he retired until the pandemic, he got together with several dozen of them every Wednesday at the local Building Bridges lunch.

A community ministry of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, Building Bridges hosts regular lunches for veterans in towns around the diocese. The pandemic has shifted meals from

sit-down comfort food to grab-and-go bags; it has not impacted the ministry's planned expansion into the neighboring Diocese of Massachusetts and possibly New Hampshire. With all veterans eligible for the vaccine and a tent at the ready, the first eastern Massachusetts site should launch in Swansea next month.

In 2012, Western Massachusetts Bishop Douglas Fisher contacted the Rev. Christopher Carlisle about starting a housing ministry for female veterans.

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Veterans having lunch before the pandemic at Building Bridges in Leominster, Massachusetts.

Photo courtesy of Chad Wright

Fisher's time as a U.S. Military Academy chaplain had connected him with veterans, and he knew that while men leaving the military could access transitional housing, females had limited or no access to the same transitional services. He asked Carlisle, who had founded Cathedral in the Night, a Northampton street church serving homeless people, to lead the effort. When that idea failed, Carlisle and Steve Connor, then a Veterans Affairs officer, decided on a ministry with a simple premise: offer a free lunch at

the World War II Club to local veterans and an optional guest, no expectations, no strings attached.

"For the first three months or so, we'd get one veteran, three veterans, two veterans, and it wasn't looking terribly promising," Carlisle said. Three months in, about 25 veterans began showing up each week. "And then it really took off" in 2013, Carlisle said. By early 2020, 60 to 70 people gathered regularly for the Northampton lunch. In all, about 300 gathered for lunch across Building

Bridges' five weekly sites, while up to 200 gathered monthly in four other towns.

Of Massachusetts' nearly 7 million residents, 323,253 were veterans in 2017. In 2019, an estimated 19 million Americans, or nearly 6% of the population, had served in the military. Most served during the Gulf War (7.6 million) or the Vietnam War (6.3 million), while fewer than half a million World War II veterans were still alive. Women comprise about 10% of veterans, a percentage reflected at Building

Bridges' lunches.

Kelley feels comfortable and safe at Building Bridges, where "people feel like your brothers and sisters," even among generations of peers, including post-9/11 veterans he's met who served more tours in Afghanistan than he did in Vietnam. Connor, now director of Central Hampshire Veterans' Services, said that younger veterans are equally, if not more, protective of their Vietnam War, Korean War and World War II elders.

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John Paradis with CNN's Anderson Cooper at a forward operating base near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in 2006.

Photo courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Veterans face "distinctive health issues related to their military service and are more likely to suffer from trauma-related injuries, substance abuse and mental health disorders than people who have never served in the armed services," according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Transitioning from the military back to civilian life can make things harder.

"There's an adjustment, no matter who you are, leaving military culture and coming into the civilian culture," said

Connor, who has cooked for Building Bridges and promoted the program. "It's a shock, as big of a shock as boot camp was taking you out of the old culture."

Connor served on an aircraft carrier from 1977 to 1979. He left the Navy two years early, after surviving a sexual assault involving a colleague, something he first talked about 12 years ago. Many veterans don't address the emotional effects of their military experiences, Connor noted. "People who didn't face it or didn't work

through it – for instance, me – it comes back," he said.

Every few weeks, Building Bridges features a speaker or program specific to veterans' mental and physical health needs, and while it is a diocesan offering, only two lunch sites are churches. Carlisle, who isn't a veteran, has learned that many feel judged or dismissed by organized religion. Attendees appreciate his subtle pastoral presence. "It's really just bringing people together," Fisher said. "It's Eucharistic, right?" That simplicity has

yielded profound effects; it's common for veterans to say that the ministry saves lives. Connor and other veterans interviewed for this story talked about the social isolation felt by many veterans; studies show that veterans, even noncombatants, are at a higher risk of suicide than the general U.S. population.

"I can't count how many times I've had veterans come up to me and say they wish Building Bridges was nationwide," said Associate Director Chad Wright. "Food

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Veteran Richard Rice in his Northampton, Massachusetts, studio.

Photo: Heather Beasley Doyle

gets them in the door. Camaraderie keeps them coming back."

Like others, Northampton resident Richard Rice initially went to Building Bridges for the food. The Vietnam War veteran and sculptor spoke to ENS in his studio, where fine white dust covered everything. At 80, he still practices psychiatry part time, but estimates that he spends 70% of his days alone, sculpting. Five years ago, Rice planned to get a lunch to-go from Building Bridges; he said he didn't "feel worthy" of joining the other

veterans. After completing medical school, he'd spent two years in the Army doing research at a military hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. "Some of those guys were fighting for their lives," Rice said of the other lunch-goers. "All I did was kill frogs and do experiments on their eyes."

According to Wright, who served two years of active duty in the National Guard during the Gulf War and six years in the reserves, anyone who has served one day in any branch of the military is welcome at Building

Bridges. Rice couldn't imagine feeling comfortable there, but people invited him to join them. They were friendly and smart – and they didn't judge him. Building Bridges provides two meals, Rice said: the food on the table and the people around it, "and they're both nourishing." Since that first lunch, Rice has reflected on his shame as a noncombatant Vietnam veteran; he felt tainted. He's beginning to understand that his feelings aren't unusual. "I'm starting to see that that just may not be me," he said. "It might just

be what it's like."

It initially surprised Rice that a church would host veterans, asking for nothing in return, with little or no religious elements to the meal. John Paradis, who served in the Air Force from 1989 until 2009, said that though one might not attend an Episcopal church service, the sense of belonging veterans get at Building Bridges is powerful enough to restore their faith in humanity after serving and then seeking their place in American society upon return. "There's true

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From left to right, Chad Wright, Renee Yannutz-Robinson and Robert Mott at the Building Bridges lunch in Greenfield, Massachusetts. Photo courtesy of Chad Wright

spirituality that goes with that," he said. "It can be magical."

Paradis' last role in the Air Force was as a public affairs officer. His family moved nine times in 20 years. He struggled when he retired from active duty, which was also hard on his wife and children. Referencing Sebastian Junger's book "Tribe," Paradis highlighted the clash between, on one hand, military units' sense of purpose, community and interdependence and, on the other, the isolation and independence of civilian

American culture, in which veterans are often pigeonholed as either broken or superhuman. "It's really important to give veterans an opportunity to tell their stories," he said.

During the pandemic, veterans have continued to pick up bagged lunches or have them delivered. They catch up outside or in open garages, including Kelley's, as Carlisle plans for the future: The World War II Club closed for good, prompting a search for a post-pandemic venue. He's also working to secure enough

funding to sustain the program's administration long term, as Building Bridges' website and social media presence become more robust. The hope is increased communication with veterans, but Carlisle isn't sure how many people will use it. "Word of mouth among veterans is huge," he said.

Awareness has already spread elsewhere in the state. The Diocese of Massachusetts plans to launch its first Building Bridges site later this spring at Christ Church, Swansea. The

diocese's missioner for networking and formation, Martha Gardner, is planning the debut with the Rev. Alan Hesse, rector, and Christ Church parishioner Dave McCarthy. McCarthy is a Vietnam veteran connected with the eastern Massachusetts veteran community, in part through Vet to Vet. Christ Church will invite veterans and their families to a Saturday morning breakfast prepared by parishioners.

As Building Bridges expands, Carlisle sees a specific dynamic as

the key to the ministry's success. "The critical element that inspires a healthy Building Bridges culture is gratitude," he said. Americans who have had little contact with veterans, he added, need to let go of "historical prejudices and notions that veterans aren't part of my life, and realize they are – and have to be."



Veteran David Hill playing the bugle during a pre-pandemic Building Bridges lunch in Greenfield, Massachusetts. Photo courtesy of Chad Wright

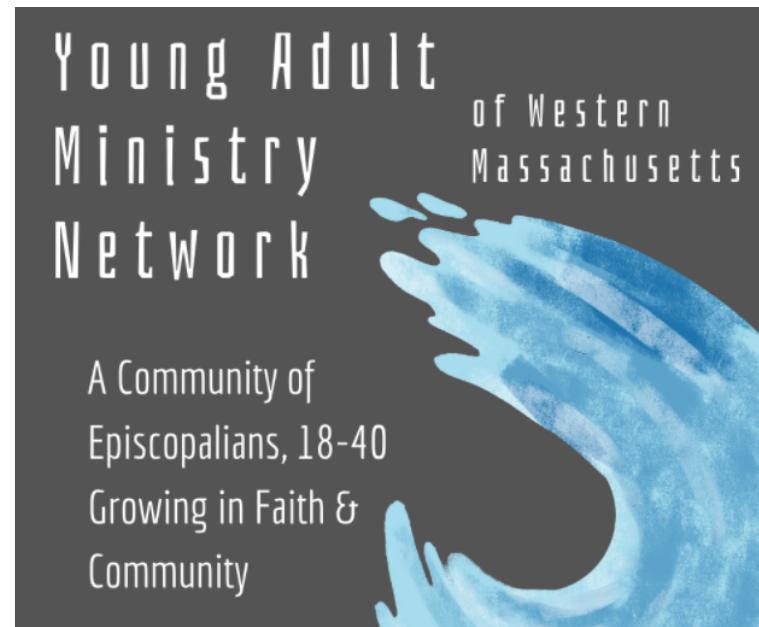
What is YAMN?

The Young Adult Ministry Network (YAMN) in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts is a collaboration of young adults 18-40 and those who minister with them in Western Massachusetts.

We are a ministry of the Episcopal Church and seek to provide faithful fellowship that is both rooted in our mainline-Protestant affinity and also friendly and collaborative in ecumenical and interfaith cooperation and connection.

We do this work by connecting campus ministries, parish

young adult ministries, ministry outreach centers, and the Lawrence House Episcopal Service Corps in a cross-diocesan network, and in holding and publicizing worship events, sharing resources and job opportunities, and providing spiritual and social fellowship.



How to get involved!

Email our network organizer Will at william.harron@gmail.com and he will connect you to be able to:

- Join our Discord server! We share prayer requests, small group connections, job opportunities, and chat about our lives! Email Will for the link.
- Attend a network event – announced on diocesan media and through our partner ministries.
- Join our monthly ministry meeting – this is where people who minister to young adults in the diocese, as well folks who want to plan YAMN events, can connect, share ministry updates, and build our ministry together.

Northern California Bishop Megan Traquair stands on a scissor lift on April 18, 2021, to bless recently installed solar panels at the Episcopal Church of St. Martin in Davis, California. Photo: Diocese of Northern California



Episcopal churches step up efforts to go solar to reach net-zero carbon emissions goals

By Tony Gutiérrez

When it came time to bless the solar panels at the Church of St. Martin in Davis, California, earlier this spring, Northern California Bishop Megan Traquair had to improvise – the Book of Common Prayer, so far, doesn't include a solar panel blessing.

After reading an abridged version of "A Song of Creation" from the Morning Prayer II lessons, Traquair stood on a scissor lift, sprinkled the panels with holy water, and prayed "that they may continue to capture the light

of God's beautiful creation, the thumb that he placed above us, and that its energy may go to help support the life of those that he has placed here in this community, in this country and in this world."

Episcopalians and other people of faith have increasingly become aware of climate change and its effects, particularly in places like California where wildfires burn millions of acres annually and force residents to evacuate.

"There's a justice aspect to our care for creation, making sure

the benefits of our creation care are available to all. Some people grow food in their own gardens to take to the food bank to care for the poor," Traquair told Episcopal News Service. "All of these are ways to care for creation and to love our neighbor."

St. Martin's began efforts to eliminate excess waste and protect the environment back in 2002, said Nick Buxton, a vestry member and primary coordinator for the solar project. The church began by replacing worn-out items with eco-friendly alternatives, and in

2018, the congregation decided to be more proactive and began converting utilities that had previously been powered by other sources, such as gas stoves or furnaces, to electric. By making sure everything was powered by electricity – which is sourced from solar energy – St. Martin's was able to become a zero-carbon campus, meaning it doesn't give off any carbon emissions.

"By doing it on the church property, you're modeling what can be done," Buxton said. "We know the cli-

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mate crisis is one of the biggest environmental crises humanity has faced and is going to require action at every level, and the church can speak with an even stronger moral voice if it puts into action."

Nationwide, churches' interest in converting to solar energy has increased over the past several years, Susan Stephenson, executive director of Interfaith Power & Light, told ENS. The organization, of which St. Martin's is a member, was founded in 1998 at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, California, as a coalition of Episcopal churches aggregated to purchase renewable energy. Over the years, it has expanded nationwide and now includes other faith partners. St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Weston, Massachusetts, is one church joining the interfaith movement on the East Coast.

"Over decades, religious leaders have been recognizing the threat to our environment posed by climate change, the moral cause that it is and the spiritual elements of this relationship that we have with our environment," Stephenson said. "I

think it's a wonderful thing to see it building and manifesting itself in churches going solar."

She noted the growing effort among dioceses to pool resources together, recalling California Bishop Marc Andrus' challenge to all California dioceses transitioning to solar energy.

The Rev. Colin Mathewson, co-vicar of St. Luke's Church in the North Park neighborhood of San Diego, California, with his wife, the Rev. Laurel Mathewson, described solar energy as a "unicorn" because it can be promoted from multiple perspectives. From a "conservative, financial risk management perspective," solar energy saves money; from a scientific perspective, "it is wonderful for the environment"; and, from a Christian perspective, it's "a wonderful way to express and honor God. It's our own form of praise and worship to care for the earth in this way."

Panel installation at St. Luke's was completed at the end of last year. The panels' visibility provide a "clear expression of our values," he said. God's plan for salvation takes place through the created material world,

On June 15, faith leaders from across the U.S., including Episcopalian Susan Stephenson, called on Congress to act on climate, justice and jobs.

he added, noting that the "heavenly Jerusalem" referred to in the Book of Revelation will be on Earth.

"To me it's pretty straightforward Christianity," Mathewson said. "People have different political views around how one cares for the world – and many of those are reasonable and important debates – but that we should care for and steward the world I hope isn't really up for debate, at least not for churches and theologies that take seriously the Incarnation."

St. Luke's was able to convert to solar energy thanks to a partnership initiated by the Diocese of San Diego. In 2018, churches asked the diocesan property committee about implementing solar energy, said Erika Morgan, the

diocese's clean energy consultant and a member of St. Paul's Cathedral, also in San Diego.

Individual churches

may not be able to afford solar panels, but by entering into a diocesan collective power purchase agreement, or PPA, parishes can afford them, she said.

"The bigger companies don't consider churches to be credit-worthy places. The faith community has had a very difficult time receiving the attention of the solar industry," said Morgan, who also serves on the cathedral's solar team. "By coming together and doing it at the diocesan level, we can just cut into that problem and bring resources to them in a way that works for them."

Catherine Duffy, a postulant in the Diocese of Southern Ohio, noted that people who grew up learning about climate change, like she did, can now create change.

"We have all been talking about this since we were kids, and it's just taken that much time to move our culture to

the place where enough people want to act on it," said Duffy, a board member for the Center for Religion and Environment at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, and Christian care convener for Province V.

"We're not the Sierra Club. We are the church. We do what we do because we follow Jesus, and that's something we need to keep repeating," she added. "We're not just called just to action; we're called to formation."

Through its "Solarize Ohio" initiative, the Diocese of Southern Ohio is working with 14 parishes to introduce solar energy to their campuses, said the Rev. Craig Foster, a deacon at Trinity Episcopal Church in Columbus and a member of the diocese's Christian Care and Environmental Justice Task Force. While there is some resistance to transitioning to solar energy – particularly because coal mining is still a major industry in the region – most people are receptive, he said. "Now is the time. People are ready. Five to seven years ago, we had this strange conversation about wheth-

er we believed in climate change or not," said Foster. "We have these events like Hurricane Sandy. We have the event that Texas just experienced, which most likely is related to climate change."

The Rev. Steve Keplinger, rector of Grace St. Paul's in Tucson, Arizona, has spent the last 10 years preaching the interconnectedness of humanity and the natural world during the "Season of Creation," which has been added to the parish's liturgical calendar. It begins on the Sunday nearest the Oct. 4 Feast of St. Francis of Assisi and goes through just before the First Sunday of Advent.

"The entire liturgy is based on prayers and liturgical pieces that all talk about how we're connected to nature and what that relationship looks like," Keplinger said, adding that he continues to use the Gospel from the lectionary.

Grace St. Paul's installed solar panels five years ago through a PPA with Technicians for Sustainability. Without that partnership, the parish couldn't have afforded to install the panels, Keplinger said. Other creation

care measures implemented on the campus include using eco-friendly lightbulbs, maintaining a vegetable garden to support a food pantry and installing insulated windows. Currently, the solar panels are producing approximately 80% of the electricity the church uses.

"We don't have any real financial advantage for using solar panels now, and we won't for 15 years down the road," said Keplinger. "We thought it was important to do whether we had the money or not."

The Rev. Pam Hyde, the first canon for creation care in the Diocese of Arizona, is working to establish a collective PPA in the diocese.

"As I began talking to parishes around the diocese, a lot of them were asking me how do they switch to solar energy," Hyde said. "The churches are understanding this is something we do because we have a responsibility to take care of God's creation."

The diocesan initiative – "Harvesting the Sun," derived from St. Francis of Assisi's "Canticle of Brother Sun" – invites parishes to reach

out to the diocese's creation care ministry for help in assessing their needs and the feasibility of installing solar panels, she said.

"They're able to leverage investors by using federal solar investment tax credits. Because churches are nonprofit and don't file taxes, we can't take credit, but there are federal investment credits out there," she said. "We believe we can completely eliminate any requirements to provide capital for this upfront. That means they can pay for the cost of this over time after the solar is actually installed."

For its PPA, the Diocese of San Joaquin divided 12 sites into two phases. As previously reported in Episcopal News Service, the diocese started the process in 2019. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the first six sites just finished installing their panels, putting the diocese at more than 50% of cost-saving on renewable energy, solar consultant Cal Harling said. Once Phase 2 has been completed, diocesan officials hope to be at 90%.

The parishes have been "extremely posi-

tive about this and excited about the idea they're going to get solar," Harling said. "They constantly bug me about when projects are going to start. There's a lot of enthusiasm."

Caring for creation is a part of our baptismal call, said San Joaquin Bishop David Rice, noting that the baptismal covenant in

the Book of Common Prayer asks candidates to be aware of and serve their neighbors and to strive for justice for all people. Rice said he plans to visit each site and bless the new solar panels, as his counterpart in Northern California did.

"For the last year amid COVID, I've been talking about simultane-

ous pandemics – the virus, racial and ecological crises – and these pandemics require everyone to respond to this," the bishop said.

The climate crisis affects people on the margins, many of whom are people of color, he added, noting that healthy food is more expensive and less accessible for the

economically disadvantaged, and many don't have access to clean air or water.

"It's all connected. Whether we are using up or conserving, it's all related to the resources we've been gifted," Rice said. "And how we are giving care to all the aforementioned is what our faith is about."



Embraced–Equipped–Empowered