

NATIVITY NEWS

DECEMBER- 2013



Pastor's Ponderings

Wow, December is here. Based on the television commercials, one would think Christmas is tomorrow. I find it irritating that merchants insist on rushing Christmas. Part of my angst is the length of time I have to listen to the really bad singing of Michael Bolton. Even if I was in the market for a new Honda, I wouldn't buy one because the commercials are horrible. Another part of my irritation is that Advent is completely lost to most. We run straight to the manger and forget the journey leading there. Consequently, the magnificence of that night in Bethlehem is diminished. Whatever am I talking about? Perhaps the best illustration is the Gospel reading for the first Sunday in Advent. Jesus' words are simply terrifying. The Son of Man will come when no one is expecting him and there will be hell to pay, literally. The time is unknown, the coming sure, and there is no way to avoid it. The only hope is to be among the "elect" who are gathered by God from the four winds. Questions abound, most importantly, how do I get to be among the elect? No answer is given and so we are forced to wait, to look, to hope for a savior from God's terrible wrath. In the Gospel readings assigned for the next three Sundays, John the Baptist and Mary help by pointing to the coming savior. They proclaim a promise that all is not lost and forgiveness is coming but still we wait. So you see, Advent is a period of hopeful waiting characterized by fear of judgment. Thus, it is as a time of law putting us in our place with a "not so fast" word to our attempts to forget the reason Jesus was born in the first place. God's word to us in Advent is you are lost, you are a sinner, you are under the judgment and wrath of God, and you are dead but I'm going to fix it and he does. The savior, the forgiveness of sin, is born in a stable. Finally, Jesus, the only hope of glory is here! If you have listened aright, you still should have the nagging question, how do I get to be among the elect that Jesus was talking about in that first reading? The answer is a preacher is sent among you to do God's electing in the present by giving you this Jesus and the forgiveness of sin he brings. The preacher's tools are words combined with water, wine and bread. Through these means you are saved from sin, the devil and death. So, finally, Advent gives way to Christmas, law gives way to gospel because, you see, it was FOR YOU that God inhabited a stable.

Merry Christmas

Scott



TAKE AN ANGEL, BE AN ANGEL...

this Christmas to a child that has received shelter and services during this calendar year from the Center for Violence Protection (CVP). As you know, many of the women and children come to the center with only the clothes on their backs. As the shelter helps these women start their lives anew, without violence, they need a little help from our Nativity angels. Many of the mothers of these children are either currently at the

shelter or have received shelter and services from CVP this calendar year. These mothers have been trained, if necessary, for employment, and have been assisted in finding a job. The shelter also helps these mothers set up a home for themselves and their children. As angels, we help these moms at Christmas time, an emotional time, and a time when they want to make Christmas special for their children but may not have the resources to do so.

Please take an angel, two or three, and sign your name next to the number of the angel/s you took from the tree on the "Angel Ornament Sign-up Sheet" located next to the Angel tree. Also, clearly mark your gift with your Angel number. Last, please bring your gift, unwrapped, with wrap, bows, tags, and tape to Nativity no later than SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15TH. You may place your gifts in the Nativity library against the back wall. Thank you and bless you.



LIVE NATIVITY

Celebrating its twenty-second year in 2013 as a community tradition, Nativity Lutheran Church's Live Nativity Scene will be staged on Saturday, December 7th, from 6 to 9 p.m. and on Sunday, December 8th, from 6 to 8:30p.m. The scene contains all the traditional figures: Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, shepherds, and the wise men. Live stable animals include a cow, donkey, sheep, goats and even one of the wise men's camels. Each year the scene is accompanied by narration describing the events that took place over 2000 years ago.

Preparations for the scene begin in the summer when the ladies of the church check, repair and renew the costumes. Then the weekend before Thanksgiving the church men set up the stable and hang the lights for the star. The youth help the morning of the scene filling the luminaries with sand, setting them out and lighting them as evening approaches. Finally the animals arrive and the scene is set for the annual event. In the glow of 300 luminaries the scene is located in front of the church at the corner of Crossgates Blvd. and Old Brandon Road.

Visitors are invited to drive by or park and walk up and begin the month by remembering the true meaning of the season. Refreshments will be served in the fellowship hall.

Sign-up sheets for the Live Nativity are on the table in the narthex. Volunteers are needed for cast members, costumes, set up, tear down, and to prepare and serve refreshments.

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Nativity's annual party for **Harbor House** is Saturday, December 14th, from 10:00 to 1:00. Join their ladies for a morning of fellowship and crafts followed by a delicious lunch. Please sign up in the narthex to help brighten the holiday season for those who are struggling with difficult times in their lives.



MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICES START

DECEMBER 4th. Suppers are at 6 PM and services are at 7 PM. We need volunteers to sign up for the meals which are usually soup and sandwiches. A sign-up sheet for the meals is posted in narthex.

The service will feature the Holden Evening Prayer as we have done in the past. Please make plans to attend.

2014 Stewardship Packets - please review the material in the packets, complete your "Opportunities to Serve" forms and/or Pledge form and return on or before December 22nd.

A special thank you to

Stephen and Cindy Braatz for the very kind and generous donation of an ice maker to Nativity. Your generosity will make an immediate difference to all brothers and sisters of Nativity Church. *The Fellowship committee.*

\$\$\$\$ Consider Contributions of Appreciated Stock to Nativity

- One way to boost your offerings is to give shares of appreciated stock instead of cash. You deduct the shares' fair market value and avoid income tax on the capital gain. Nativity then sells the shares and has the money to use to proclaim the Gospel. You may electronically transfer ownership of stock to Nativity's account by contacting Ann Starr, 601-942-3369. To transfer stock ownership electronically, the DTC number and Nativity's account number will be needed.



It is time to order poinsettias for Christmas.

The last day to order is December 15. Order Blanks are in the narthex and pews for pick up.



SUPPORT **NATIVITY YOUTH**

Nativity youth are selling calendars. We will have a booth set up every Sunday in the Fellowship Hall. Thanks for your support! *Nativity Youth*



We still have copies of our excellent new cookbook: "TASTE AND SEE." This would be a great gift idea for the office Christmas gift exchange or a special gift for Great Aunt Edith who collects cookbooks. See any one of the cookbook committee members to purchase. Be sure and ask about our "bundle special"! *Sylvia Walston*

Evangelism Report for November

New poster with added pictures of Nativity membership has been completed and is displayed in the Narthex. Thanks to all members who were willing to share their smiling faces with us!

The council held a vote regarding getting a new front church sign over two consecutive Sunday's in November. Almost three quarters of the congregation (72.4% vs 27.6%) pretty decisively said we need a new sign. Many members prefer that the council not start on the project until funds are in hand, so the next (and imminent) step will be to launch a series of fund raising events. These will be announced shortly. We currently have about \$2300 on hand and will need about \$3000 additional. Target date for completed installation will be in the Spring.

Several members expressed a preference for other projects instead of a new sign. The parking lot was frequently mentioned as an example. While there will always be valid alternative demands for our limited resources, the council (and apparently the wide majority of the congregation) believes that an important aspect of our mission is to reach out to potential new members. The proposed new sign will be an important step in that direction. It is also, based on evaluating many possible alternatives to promoting our church (newspaper advertising, mailers, bill-boards, grocery cart ads, retail posters, etc.) the most cost-effective method of reaching many people in the Brandon/Pearl community of potential Nativity Lutherans. Regarding the parking lot repairs, we surveyed that project three years ago. The cost to properly resurface the lot would cost approximately \$27,000 (based on three contractor bids). It would also require the removal of several of the large trees surrounding the parking lot.

We believe that the sign at about \$5000 will serve the Church by bringing Nativity more new members than the \$27,000 parking lot fix. *The Evangelism Committee*

TREASURER'S REPORT AS OF 10-31-2012

Planned YTD Budgeted Tithes & Offerings (excl. special funds)	\$125,739
Received YTD Budgeted Tithes & Offerings (excl. special funds)	<u>\$127,757</u>
Difference	\$ 2,018



December & January Birthdays

Anniversaries

Charlie Mills	12/03
Ruth Burgess	12/06
Kenzie Seward	12/07
Alex Weisser	12/09
Dorothy Leavell	12/11
Hack Walston	12/16
Cindy Braatz	12/19
Lauri Gregory	12/20
Claudia Sendelweck	12/22
Chuck Gallagher	12/27
Charlie Thatch	12/29
Pat Anderson	12/31
Kyle Voong	01/01
Ned Balsley	01/04
Debi Poole	01/04
Christopher Ketchum	01/11
Jake Koch	01/12
Dan Behringer	01/13
Mark Gregory	01/17
Samantha Gregory	01/17
John Halverson	01/20
Lauren Edwards	01/21
Larry McClellan	01/24

Charlie & Cathy Mills	12/09
Tony & Sue Caldwell	12/12
Jake & Carly Koch	12/18
Walt & Marie Weysham	01/26

If you wish to participate, please look for the sign-up sheet on the table in the narthex and provide your birthday and/or anniversary **month & day only** by your name so we can **wish you a Happy Day!**

Happy Birthday & Anniversary to All !!!!



Nativity Prayer List

Please pray for:

Pastor David Mancuso, Trieu Lam, Ann Schultz, Alan Fos, Carol Tucker, Linda Terry, Casey Pace, Annabeth Davis, Richard Schnell, Fay Miller, Brian Johnson, Ann Wood and Kirby & Gary Langham.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 1	8:00 & 10:30 AM Services with Holy Communion 9:15 AM Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 11:30 AM Service of Healing and Anointing with Oil Choir practice immediately following this service
December 4	12 Noon – AI-non 6:00 PM Advent Light Supper/7:00 PM Service
December 7	10:00 AM Preparation for Live Nativity 5:00 PM Workers to light luminaries, set up food, etc. 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM Live Nativity
December 8	8:00 & 10:30 AM Services with Holy Communion 9:15 AM Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 11:30 AM choir practice 5:00 PM Workers to light luminaries, set up food, etc. 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM Live Nativity
December 11	12 Noon – AI-non 6:00 PM Advent Light Supper/7:00 PM Service
December 14	10:00 AM Harbor House Ladies Luncheon
December 15	8:00 & 10:30 AM Services with Holy Communion 9:15 AM Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 11:30 AM choir practice Angel Tree gifts due/ Last day to order a Poinsettia
December 18	12 Noon – AI-non 6:00 PM Advent Light Supper/7:00 PM Service
December 22	8:00 & 10:30 AM Services with Holy Communion 9:15 AM Adult Bible Study Return Stewardship commitment envelopes
December 24	7PM Christmas Eve Candle light Service
December 28	8:30 AM Brewed Awakening @ Cups
December 29	8:00 & 10:30 AM Services with Holy Communion 9:15 AM Adult Bible Study
December 30	7:00 PM Church Council

NLC December, 2013 Volunteer List – 10:30 Service

December 1

Greeters – Renate Hunt
Ambassador – Clyde Hatten
Pew Buddy - Meade Entrekin
Ushers – Tony Caldwell & Kathy Peters
Lector – Joe Hunt
Comm. Asst. – Joe Hunt
Nursery – Lynn & Haley Templeton
Counters – Alton & Kathy Lewis
Acolyte – Savannah Stevens
Altar Care – Joe & Renate Hunt

December 15

Greeters – Bettiga Family
Ambassador – Ruth Burgess
Pew Buddy - Mitch Leavell
Ushers – John Schnell & Renate Hunt
Lector – Ellen Noble
Comm. Asst. – Ellen Noble
Nursery – S. Caldwell & O. Halverson
Counters – Hack Walston & Kathy Peters
Acolyte – Eli Bettiga
Altar Care – Joe & Renate Hunt

December 24

Greeters – Clyde & Marlyn Hatten
Ambassador – Dorothy Leavell
Pew Buddy - Clyde Hatten
Ushers – Tony Caldwell & Kathy Peters
Lector – Hack Walston
Comm. Asst. – Hack Walston
Nursery – Lynn & Matthew Templeton
Counters – None
Acolyte – Katie Mae Rials
Altar Care – Joe & Renate Hunt

December 8

Greeter – Linda Tucker
Ambassador – Joe Hunt
Pew Buddy – Ann Starr
Ushers – T. Templeton & K. Anderson
Lector – Rick Schultz
Comm. Asst. – Rick Schultz
Nursery – Pamela Kirby & Haley Templeton
Counters – K. Anderson & Bud Weisser
Acolyte – Alexandra Tucker
Altar Care – Joe & Renate Hunt

December 22

Greeter – Debi Poole
Ambassador – Ellen Noble
Pew Buddy - Susan Landrum
Ushers – Bettiga Family
Lector – Alex Weisser
Comm. Asst. – Alex Weisser
Nursery – Ann Starr
Counters – Mitch Leavell & Boyde Bergum
Acolyte – Wade Caldwell
Altar Care – Joe & Renate Hunt

December 29

Greeter – Ellen Noble
Ambassador – Linda Tucker
Pew Buddy - Joe Hunt
Ushers – John Halverson & Hack Walston
Lector – Marcia Weaver
Comm. Asst. – Marcia Weaver
Nursery – R. Burgess & Savannah Stevens
Counters – Sue Caldwell & Pat Schnell
Acolyte – Haley Templeton
Altar Care – Joe & Renate Hunt

If you cannot serve on the dates shown, please try to swap with someone and let the office know of the change. Thanks.

There will not be a January, 2014 newsletter published.
Please read announcements in the worship guides for news/activities in January.
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!