

# NATIVITY NEWS

The newsletter of the Episcopal Church of the Nativity and St. Stephen  
Newport and Thompsontown, PA

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FEBRUARY 2011

From the Rector...

After the de-greening of the church, we left the creche up for one more week so that we could observe the arrival (from the eastern windowsill) of the three kings at Epiphany. That Sunday following the service, as I began to pack up the barn and wrap the figures, someone from the Altar Guild had a great idea. Why don't we leave the wise men out for the whole season of Epiphany and keep before us the search for Jesus, the following of the light and the bringing of our gifts to Christ-in-one-another?

Terrific! So that's what we're doing! I took the beautiful stained glass star (made by Kerry J.) down from my window, borrowed a banana hanger from Sue B, and now we have a holy reminder of our individual and corporate journeys towards God incarnate. It will be there on the altar shelf until Lent. As Epiphany unfolds through the month of February until the beginning of March (Ash Wednesday is March 9!), we will be hearing some of the most difficult and troubling of Jesus' teachings. From the Beatitudes ("Blessed are those who mourn") to hard sayings about divorce and loving our enemies, we will be thankful for the witness of our 3 kings!

In the midst of challenges to our faith, we always should have before us the truth that we are on a search, always remember that God is revealed to us little by little, through our own explorations, our own confrontations with the Herods of this age. It is not always a safe trip. It is not always cut and dry. Wrestling with our questions, our doubts, our lostness and our prejudice is part of the journey. Doing it *together* allows us the comfort of fellow travelers and reassures us that all the answers will not be given in this life...and that's ok.

Consider your baptismal call to grow as a disciple of Christ, to learn more and walk more seriously with God through the life of parish worship, learning and mission. Join the search, follow the star and exercise your gifts!

Peace,

**FEBRUARY****BIRTHDAYS**

5	Benjamin Klauer Irene VanBuskirk
11	Marion Fluchere
15	William T. Warne IV
16	Shannon Burns
17	Fran Johnston
24	Francis Warne
26	Fran Warne
27	Harry Brownfield

**HONAMAN HOUSE**

6	Ray Bramm, Jr.
12	Richard Hastings
13	Maggie Mae Rexroth

**COMMONS**

8	Dorothy Campbell
16	Connie Geedy
18	Ruth Gantt Elizabeth Cook

**SERVICE PARTICIPANTS****February 6**

Greeters: Roger & Anne Chappelka  
 Lector: Kate Chescattie  
 Prayers: Ed Chescattie  
 Acolyte: Madison Murphy  
 Eucharistic Minister: Lynne Mitchell  
 Altar Guild: Group 1  
 Refreshments: Marion Fluchere/Joanne Pinaire

**February 13**

Greeters: Mary & Lisa Davis  
 Lector: Wendy Day  
 Prayers: Mary Davis  
 Acolyte: Bill Rohm  
 Eucharistic Minister: Bill Rohm  
 Altar Guild: Group 2  
 Refreshments: Sue Beamer/Darlene Amsler

**February 20**

Greeters: Ed & Kate Chescattie  
 Lector: Kate Chescattie  
 Prayers of the People: Dick Price  
 Acolyte: Rachel Amsler  
 Eucharistic Minister: Darlene Amsler  
 Altar Guild: Group 3  
 Refreshments: Gail Shull/Pat Szabo

**February 27**

Greeters: Dick & Mary Price  
 Lector: Kay Cramer  
 Prayers: John Cramer  
 Acolyte: Sue Beamer  
 Eucharistic Minister: Sue Beamer  
 Altar Guild: Group 4  
 Refreshments: Mary/Debbie/Jackie

**DATES TO REMEMBER:**

**February 16** – The Vestry will meet in the Conference Room of the Parish House at 6:30 PM

**GODLY PLAY & SUNDAY SCHOOL** will take place on Sunday, February 13 and Sunday, February 27.

**Senior Warden Corner  
Bill Rohm**

I sit looking out our great room windows this morning toward the barn and beyond it, the garden. The rising sun glistens off the overnight new fallen snow. This provides quite a contrast to the red barn and tall evergreen trees. All is quiet except for the chirping of the variety of birds at the feeders that I can hear softly through the large glass windows. The garden is at rest, sleeping and rejuvenating under the blanket of snow. It is a time for reflection.

Since I began this writing project on my retirement last July, metaphors connecting spirituality and gardening came to mind at an ever increasing rate. It got so I'd see something that I'd previously considered common place and immediately the Holy Spirit would pop a whole new take on it into my mind. I had a lot of "Ah Ha" moments in the garden last summer and fall. I grew spiritually. I really did.

Most of this growth came in the area of stewardship. I'm referring to stewardship of the land, the garden, the crops, and the sharing of the fruits of my labor. There was real joy in all of this as well as hard yet satisfying work. I can now better see that God is truly involved in the everyday events of this world.

Jesus spoke through scripture in parables. The Holy Spirit spoke to me in the garden in metaphors. So how does the metaphor of stewardship in the garden relate to the life of Nativity?

First, the fruits of our labor come to mind. The garden produced an abundance to nourish and share. Our stewardship at Nativity does likewise. For example think of the support we are giving for the education of a doctor through the Bishop Masereka Fund. Think about all the people's lives we will affect when the Doctor graduates and starts serving in the community. Or how about the Heifer Fund? The Salvation Army? I'm sure each of you can think of a bunch of examples.

Second, there is the joy I feel in being a steward of God's earth. That feeling is hard to describe, but it is the same as that I felt when I was playing Santa for orphans in Korea, or the year we took all the money we'd spend on Christmas and gave it to a young woman with cancer whose husband was out of work, or looking for the first time at a newborn grandchild.

This feeling is not happiness, its joy and it is impossible to explain, but you know it when you feel it. Feeling this joy both in the garden and in charitable acts convince me it is from the same source and therefore God sees both the stewardship of the earth as well as stewardship through the church as good. I pray mankind will come to realize this, so that all can share in this joy.

#### **Junior Warden Corner Sue Beamer**

During the months of January and February there is an increased need for donations to the Perry County Food Bank. I would ask that over the next several weeks, members of our Parish bring donations to church to help Nativity's neighbors in need...

#### **Daffodil Sunday, March 20**

Support the American Cancer Society. Cost for daffodils is – Bunch of 10 cut daffodils \$10 – Daffodils and vase \$15 – Miniature daffodil plant \$12. Check should be written to ECW or American Cancer Society.

**Orders due February 18.** Contact Lynne Mitchell at 834-5411 to order.

#### **THANKS FROM LYNNE MITCHELL**

I would like to extend my thanks to all the generous parishioners who provided for 18 families. All children received clothing and a toy/game/gift card and the family received a food card for Giant or Weis Markets.

Additional money was left from donations and was sent to Join Hands to use as needed. Again, thank you for your generosity

#### **Sideboard Search**

You may have noticed that the gray metal filing unit in the front hall of the Parish House has gone off to greener pastures. We are now looking for a piece of furniture to sit there, perhaps a sideboard or bench

...something that would have an open bottom since we should accommodate the baseboard heating. The space would fit a piece approx. 3'x3'. Used but in good shape would work. If you have such a thing that you'd like to suggest or donate, please let us know.

#### **First Church of God goes to Haiti**

Pastor Cheryl Dorman and some parishioners from the First Church of God, leave on February 14th for a week in Haiti. They will be helping with a Women's Mission Retreat in the northern part of the country and are collecting some items to take with them to distribute to the women and children who attend the event. If you would like to contribute any of the following, please bring your donation to church on Sunday morning Fe. 6 or Feb. 13 and we will pass it on.

hand/body lotion – trial/hotel size

band-aids – medium or larger

shampoo – trial/hotel size

small school supplies – pencils, hand sharpeners, erasers etc.

body wash – trial/hotel size

individually wrapped hard candy

#### **House Search**

A woman in the community is looking for a house to rent. She suffers from 'multi-chemical sensitivity' disease and must be very careful about exposure to any kind of environmental toxins. Therefore, the house must be freestanding, without any extermination having been done and without any typical cleaning solutions having been used. Hardwood floors are preferable and freedom from mold a necessity.

We have all experienced the difficulties in encountering heavy perfumes, leaf-burning smoke and other airborne pollution. For this neighbor, those difficulties are compounded exponentially. In order for her to be able to survive and function she needs a healthy place to live. If you have any ideas for helping find such a thing, please let Daphne know and she will pass on the information. Many thanks.

#### **Shippensburg Van update**

Our Epiphany gift to Jesus has taken the form of a \$3,000.00 donation to the Episcopal Home in Shippensburg to go toward the purchase of a new van for daily use by the residents there. Thanks to all who contributed. Our support of that

ministry is a blessing to all who live and work there.

### **Godly Play**

Our Godly Play coordinator, Marion Fluchere, has been studying the spiritual development of children through courses up at General Theological Seminary in New York City. We are the fortunate beneficiaries of her knowledge and experience as she continues to facilitate our Christian formation program for little ones. Please offer her your prayers and support as her ministry grows and leads us and the children forward in our journey to learn about God and love our neighbor.

### **The After-Coffee-Hour Adult Forum**

Beginning, Sunday, January 23, the Adult Forum will reconvene to finish the series called "Living the Questions." Other Adult Forum topics under consideration for this spring include a DVD titled "When Christians Get It Wrong" (an informational series helping people of faith confront misunderstanding); a short series on Islam; a book discussion of "Sabbath" by Wayne Muller; "Art in Lent: Spiritual Creativity" and a discussion of the implications of and interaction between Christian faith and national/local political policy.

The forum should allow for lively discussions that will stretch us and help us to grow in our ability to apply scripture and faith to the issues that confront us today.

Please join us in the Parlor following Coffee Hour!