

NATIVITY NEWS

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

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From the Rector...

We are becoming a bird-condo developer. There seem to be nests everywhere. To our great dismay, the one over the conference room door blew down, but in 2 days the robin family had rebuilt one on the opposite side of the transom. Meanwhile, another couple constructed one in the virburnum over the undercroft door and still another is now newly finished in the forsythia just outside my office window.

Somehow, these birds sense that this is a welcoming place. Somehow they pick up the vibes of hospitality that you and I subliminally send out. Do they know that our foundations are strong and that this place is as safe as we can make it? Do they know that we care about this church property and want to share its beauty with others? Do they know that their presence is treasured and valued by God and by us?

We often welcome newcomers and visitors as we did so fully on Easter Day. I hope that you know the importance of our words and attitudes. They reflect something very holy and quite unique. It's pretty much the same way that God welcomes us fully. We too are, in a way, visitors to this life, relative newcomers to this world. We're invited to take advantage of the firm foundation of this place, of this life of faith through which we participate with God in the work of redeeming and healing.

May this Eastertide be a time of renewed settling in, revitalized reaching out and re-energized welcoming, giving thanks to God for the blessing of all who make Nativity their spiritual home.

Peace,
Daphne+

HARRISBURG SPRING CONVOCATION

The Harrisburg Convocation will meet at St. John's Church in Carlisle on Thursday, May 12th at 7 PM. Light refreshments will be served. All delegates and participants in Diocesan Convention are invited to attend.

SENIOR WARDEN'S CORNER - Bill Rohm

If the weather would just stop being so contrary, I'd go out to the garden and get started. But alas, we go from snow to rain to refreezing the ground and now out of nowhere today, extreme thunderstorms and 80 degrees. It is almost Easter and all I've accomplished is buying some spring onion bulbs and clearing some of the raised beds of last year's debris.

Actually, that's not quite all I've done. We've also done a lot of planning. What vegetables will we grow this year and where will we place them? How should we reenergize the soil without introducing a lot of chemical fertilizers? With all this unpredictable weather, what's the best time for planting what?

A couple of thoughts popped into my head as I was starting to straighten out the garden beds last week. The first is that my achy joints and popping knees caution me that gardening may be a bit more difficult this year. In this respect, gardening is a linear thing and I must adapt as time marches on.

On the other hand, I have seen one full cycle of life during the year I've been writing these reflections. From preparing the soil to planting the crops to harvesting to resting the soil and back to preparing again. In this respect, gardening is a circular event.

So now I have a dichotomy. Which is gardening, a circle of life or a line from

birth to death? Perhaps it is both, a spiral like the slinky we played with as children, going round and round yet stretching ever forward – or backward.

Nativity is like that too. We go round and round every year through the liturgy of the Church Year from Christmas to Easter and on around to Christmas again. And yet we go forward, completing one worthwhile project and beginning another. Recently, from furnishing apartments for the needy we moved forward gracing our altar with food for the food bank, then on to road clean up and socks for Japan.

To paraphrase our Lord, "Whatever you have done for the least of these, you have done it unto me." Amen.

SPECIAL THANKS

Many thanks to Kay and Julie & Maria for the beautiful flower arrangements in the church on Easter morning, to Maud for glorious music during the service and to Sue B. for her work all week preparing the church and grounds for Easter morning and we enjoyed so much the gift of trumpet music from little Dominic's grandpa, Howie.

Thanks too, to Moriah and Bob and Edna for packing all the socks for shipment to those in Japan. Great job all of you!

CONGRATULATIONS RACHEL!!

Rachel will graduate from Newport High School next month. We'll have a chance to offer our love and congratulations on Sunday, June 12th.

Pete G., our former intern, will be graduating from his CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) at Gettysburg Hospital on Monday, May 2. This is a grueling and challenging program and

quite an accomplishment for our good friend Pete.

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE May 29

A reminder that we will be celebrating our regular 9:30 AM Sunday Eucharist at St. Stephen's Church in Thompsonstown. All are invited.

ST. BARNABAS CENTER FOR MINISTRY

We will participate in the 2nd Annual Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community on Saturday, May 14th at 9 AM. For more information contact Linda Cummings at dalkcummings@comcast.net or 717-957-2629

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Eli is completely recovered from his near fatal car accident and has made a decision to be an example to under class students by giving of his time to help them see who Jesus is in His life. Help them to love as he loves, help them to put trust in Christ and look at their life and make right decisions instead of harmful ones.

WELCOME BACK

We welcome Sue B. back to the organist's bench full time. She'll play 3 Sundays a month while Maud and Andrea will step in once a month. Thanks to Sue for offering her gifts to this ministry at Nativity.

HONORING MAUD'S MINISTRY

We plan to celebrate the musical blessing of Maud's 5 ½ years of playing the organ, on Sunday, June 5, with a

special thanksgiving coffee hour in her honor

YOGA CLASSES

Due to popular requests, yoga classes are being contemplated for 2 Saturday mornings a month. Please let Daphne know if you are interested.

ADULT EDUCATION

Throughout May, we will continue our study of Islam using the Great Course series as offered by Professor John Esposito on DVD.

Sunday, June 5, we will stop our study in order to take one of our Sunday morning sessions to discuss what people would like to "offer" in the fall. Many of you have special interests, from Health Care to Kenya, Salvation Theology (Atonement and more) to local ministry (Safe House, Salvation Army, literacy, teenage development). We have people interested in art as an expression of faith and also environment and creation care as an expression of Christian Stewardship. Between now and June 5th, think about what you would like to lead for one-to-three weeks!

What we hope to accomplish is a complete fall schedule that will focus on parishioners and participants providing the leadership for what is offered. Hope to see you Sunday mornings following coffee hour in the parlor!

SPRING CLEAN UP

We need help!!!!!! Anyone interested in helping with our outside clean up is urged to come to the church on Saturday, May 7 at 8:30 AM or shortly thereafter. Bring your clippers, gloves and rakes. We can use all the help we can get!!!!

MARK YOUR JUNE CALENDAR

ANNUAL PARISH PICNIC

will be held at the Landis Farm on Sunday, June 26. More details will follow in the next newsletter.

ANNUAL YARD SALE

Start cleaning out those basements, attics and closets for the annual yard sale this summer. Please make sure your donations are clean and if possible priced when you drop them off. A tentative date has been set but we'll let you know for sure via the Sunday bulletin and webpage.