

NATIVITY NEWS

The newsletter of the Episcopal Church of the Nativity and St. Stephen
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From the Rector...

I am writing this on Memorial Day with the memory of yesterday's service still fresh in my mind. We were blessed by weather that wasn't too hot (yet) and a congregation of 30-some folks committed to honoring those military dead who are buried at St. Stephen's.

Because it was also Rogation Sunday, when we traditionally give thanks for the earthly resources of soil, sun and water, it was appropriate to take our walk outside and allow ourselves to be influenced by the gifts of the planet as well as the gifts of our veterans. With the ground still squishy from all the rain, we were guided from grave to grave by Wayne Rice, who lead us in prayer for and remembrance of each of those who served our country from the War of 1812 to WW II.

Bill Rohm offered a poignant adaptation of the Gettysburg address as a homily, Sue Beamer played that old pump organ and we gathered our prayers and faithfulness in a simple act of *eucharist*, another word for *thanksgiving*.

I'm glad we make this effort to move the whole Sunday morning liturgy out to Thompsontown this one time a year. It expresses the importance of re-membering, honoring our roots and recognizing honestly the blessings we share as the Church of the Nativity and St. Stephen.

We hung around in the shade for quite a while, refreshed with cool lemonade offered by the Prices and enjoyed one another's company. In the sharing of bread and wine, in the sharing of juice and doughnut holes, walking, praying, singing and chatting, the best of sacramental community comes to life. And God is present, opening hearts, challenging minds, comforting spirits. It is from this place of spiritual health and strength that we move out to minister in a world so in need of God's peace.

May that peace be always with you,

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES

Ben graduates from West Perry High School shortly, and, as announced previously, Rachel graduated from Newport High School. Ben will be attending Dickinson College and Rachel will go to LaRoche College in Pittsburgh this coming fall. We are so proud of both these gifted and accomplished young people...blessings to them both and to Darlene, Elizabeth & Mike for seeing them through.

Congratulations, too, to Madison, who received a Certificate of Achievement from Lewistown Middle School for her excellent academic work this past year. Great Job!

SENIOR WARDEN'S CORNER

I've begun digging in the soil again. The spring onions are in and the lone tulip in the onion patch I wrote about last summer is back. Actually this year the tulip is in the strawberry patch since I rotated the vegetables among the raised beds. Preparing the beds is difficult, lengthy, physical work giving my mind time to roam free. Today I got to thinking not only about how gardening has influenced my personal spiritual growth, but also how it has encompassed all of us in our journeys as children of God.

Our common spiritual story begins in a garden, the Garden of Eden. God gives this garden to us for eternity if only we will trust in Him. But human nature being what it is, we don't. So we are cast out and must till the soil. The garden of life has become a garden of death.

Our spiritual journey continues at another garden, Gethsemane, where Jesus goes to pray and where he is betrayed and led away to torture and death. It interests me that Jesus chose a garden for His prayers that night. He could have gone to the Temple, a local synagogue, or just stayed in the upper room. Yet on this most stressful of nights He chose a garden in which to pray.

Our spiritual story takes a miraculous leap forward in the garden of the empty tomb on Easter morning. Like the cycle of gardening

in the soil and seasons, the cycle of our spiritual story advances such that the garden of death becomes the garden of life. Thank you Lord, for gardens.

DIOCESAN CONVENTION

Thanks to our senior and junior wardens for participating in the Harrisburg Convocation Pre-convention meeting on behalf of our delegates, Ann and Tony. The convention will be held June 10 and 11 at Bucknell University. All the proceedings will be transmitted via video streaming! To know more, go the diocesan website:

www.diocesecpa.org

CHILDREN AND YOUTH DAY AT CONVENTION

On the second day of convention, Saturday, June 11, a celebration of/with all the young people in the diocese will take place at Bucknell. All are invited to attend the workshops beginning at 9:15 and the rousing eucharist planned for 10:30 AM in Rooke Chapel. A picnic-to-go is offered for those heading home after the service. For more info, go ahead to that same website and check it out!

WE FEED THE KIDS THE WEEK OF JULY 11TH – 15TH, at St. Barnabas Summer Rainbow program and will welcome your contributions of food and time. It is a rewarding ministry to support this Christian Day Camp at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Harrisburg where this program gives a healthy structure and educational experiences to the daily lives of kids who are our neighbors!

NEWPORT SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES

June 22 – "How to Get a Good Night's Sleep". This discussion will take a good look at the problem and give a wealth of practical, effective suggestions for better sleeping.

July 27 – "Hospice – The SUN Home Approach. Learn when hospice is

appropriate, what services and support SUN Home can offer patients and families and what to expect during this difficult time.

All programs are held at the Senior Center at 10 AM.

COME TO THE CLOISTER

We should probably not call it the rogues' gallery! But the wonderful collection of previous clergy of this parish has been mounted in the cloister. It warms up the space and calls us to re-member from whence we have come. Thanks to Wendy and Dick for arranging the copying and framing and thanks to Kevin and Joanne for creating the wall frame and artistically hanging the pictures...a beautiful job which enhances the church's and our own interiors!

EAGLE HOUSE DEDICATION

The newest effort of the Perry Hosing Partnership has opened for business! All but one apartment in this facility for homeless veterans are filled already and we are grateful for the work of so many who made this ministry possible. Cleaners, donors, furniture movers and kitchen suppliers...all who contributed have been a blessing to those who will find a home there. The Dedication is scheduled for Tuesday morning June 14th (Flag Day!) at 11:00 at the House just behind the Court House in New Bloomfield on North Carlisle St.. All are invited.

A MESSAGE FROM JAPAN

- > Dear Moriah-san,
- >
- > We know this is late, but...
- >
- > We received your package! We already sorted and distributed your socks with their letters, so you've already warmed feet and cheered hearts. Watch our pages for photos and updates:
- >
- > <http://socksforjapan.com>
- > <http://www.facebook.com/socksforjapan>
- >
- > and join our email list to stay informed as we hear back from survivors and others:
- >
- > <http://socksforjapan.com/list>
- >
- > Thank you so much!
- >
- > In solidarity for Japan,
- > Jason

Wow...we're not sure if this is a response to the first or second package we sent but, either way, it's great to hear back. Thanks again to Moriah, Edna and Bob for enabling this ministry!

VACATION TIME

Our parish secretary, will be away the first 2 weeks of June. Daphne will be in the office, sometimes at odd hours, through that time so... her cell phone # is 609-2054 for use in an emergency. Otherwise just call the church and leave a message. Thanks.