



# Shared Life

## Nativity Lutheran Church

Established 1966

August 2020

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Caring, Witnessing, Serving

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### “An Act of Kindness”

A young man tells the following story: One day, when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all of his books. I thought to myself, "Why would anyone bring home all his books on a Friday? He must really be a nerd." I had quite a weekend planned (parties and a football game with my friends tomorrow afternoon), so I shrugged my shoulders and went on.

As I was walking, I saw a bunch of kids running toward him. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him. He looked up and I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes. My heart went out to him. So, I jogged over to him and as he crawled around looking for his glasses, I saw a tear in his eye. As I handed him his glasses, I said, "Those guys are jerks." They really should get lives."

He looked at me and said, "Hey thanks!" There was a big smile on his face. It was one of those smiles that showed real gratitude. I helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to private school before now. We talked all the way home, and I carried some of his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid.

I asked him if he wanted to play a little football with my friends. He said yes. We hung out all weekend and the more I got to know Kyle, the more I liked him, and my friends thought the same of him. Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors, we began to think about college. Kyle decided on Georgetown, and I was going to Duke.

I knew that we would always be friends, that the miles would never be a problem. He was going to be a doctor, and I was going for business on a football scholarship. Kyle was valedictorian of our class. I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn't me having to get up there and speak. Graduation day, I saw Kyle. He looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself during high school. He had more dates than I had and all the girls loved him. Boy, sometimes I was jealous! Today was one of those days. I could see that he was nervous about his speech. So, I smacked him on the back and said, "Hey, big guy, you'll be great!" He looked at me with one of those looks (the really grateful one) and smiled. "Thanks," he said.

As he started his speech, he cleared his throat, and began. "Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years: your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach...but mostly your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story." I just looked at my friend with disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so his Mom wouldn't have to do it later and was carrying his stuff home.

He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile. "Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable." I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment. I saw his Mom and Dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize its depth."

Never underestimate the power of your actions! With one small gesture you can change a person's life. For better or for worse God puts us all in each other's lives to impact one another in some way. Look for God in others. . . "Friends are angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly." **You can never tell the effect that one of your actions can have on another individual!**

. . . Pastor Kirk Bish

# Thank You

Kantor Page August 2020

Dear Nativity Lutheran Church:

Thank you for the generous Scholarship awarded to me from the Endowment Committee. I really appreciate all the love and support you have given me throughout my life. You all have helped me grow closer to God and I love you all for that. Thank you for everything.

Love, Charles Brandt

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Dear Nativity Family:

Thank you for the generous scholarship awarded from the Endowment Committee. I do not know what will come next in life, but I know God will be there with me. All of you have taught me several valuable lessons and for that I am thankful.

Love, Andrew Brandt

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Dear Nativity Family:

Thank you so much for the generous Scholarship awarded from the Endowment Committee to me. You guys have been there for me my whole life, and I couldn't be more thankful. I don't know where the future will take me, but I know I will always have you guys to be there and support me along my journey.

Love, Erin Brandt

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## A Word of Thanks

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to all those who have assisted with our virtual Sunday worship: those who have served as the worship assistant – Ken Saunders, Cheryl Kilbert, Kim Brandt, Tom Beecher, Pastor James Dollhopf, and Dr, Heather Johnson -, and to Mary Lynne Bennett and Pastor Cyril Hurnyak for providing the musical sections of our service, to Merlinda Bisese for having the sanctuary prepared for the service, and to Carol Huffman for coordinating these services. A very special thank you is expressed to Quentin Romero Lauro for producing, directing, and filming these services!

. . . Pastor Kirk Bish

The last several months during this pandemic, I have suggested using hymns as the basis of sustaining and nurturing our Faith. Perhaps, you even have an ELW or even an LBW in your home to do so. If not, I am sure you could arrange to pick one up at the church, just call ahead and it can be left at a safe place with a post note bearing your name. I could get one for you. My E-mail is [Revvcyril@aol.com](mailto:Revvcyril@aol.com) and my phone is 724-733-5470. I am most often at Nativity Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings.

The hymn this month is equally timely for all of us in this pandemic. It is ELW Hymn 488 “Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness” *Schumucke Dich*. The Hymn Text is written by Johann Franck and the Tune by Johann Cruger, respectively. I picked it because one of the powerful images in scripture is the comparison of Christ the Bridegroom coming for His Bride, the Church.

Here are the first two stanzas of the text:

*Soul, adorn yourself with gladness, leave the gloomy haunts of sadness  
Come into the daylight's splendor, there with joy your praises render.  
Bless the one whose grace unbounded this amazing banquet founded;  
Christ, though heav'nly, high, and holy, deigns to dwell with you most lowly  
Hasten as a bride to meet him, eagerly and gladly greet him,  
There he stands already knocking: quickly, how, your gate unlocking  
Open wide the fast closed portal, saying to the Lord immortal;  
“Come, and leave your love one never; dwell within my heart forever.”*

Particularly the text invites us, as the Church, to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Bridegroom. This period of isolation and social distancing can serve us well. We are in a period of preparation. Down through the centuries the Church has often resorted to “fasting” as a form of preparation to receive Christ.

It seems like we have been painfully confronted with a “Eucharistic Fast.” But our fast has been imposed by the State, and even though we have received guidance from our Bishop, we have an

opportunity to look at our worship, particularly our “Eucharistic Fast” through the special eyes of Faith. But like any kind of fasting, this can be an opportunity for spiritual growth. It can intensify our desire for Christ. Here is a prayer offered from the Roman Catholic tradition when a faithful Christian cannot, for one reason or another, receive communion.

*My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen*

Jesus himself affirmed in Luke 5:35 that after his death, fasting would be appropriate for his followers: "The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days."

Our Fasting is almost a “Spiritual Fasting” In which because of social distancing and lack of physical contact we cannot assemble for the fear of spreading the virus. But we have the eyes of Faith to see that in the providence of God’s plan, we can even use this time wisely. Clearly our “Spiritual Eucharistic Fast” has a place and a purpose for God’s people today.

Fasting is to be done with the object of seeking to know God in a deeper experience (Isa. 58; Zech. 7:5). Fasting can be a time of seeking a deeper prayer experience and drawing near to God in prevailing prayer. When the Early Church wanted to know the mind of God, there was a time of prayer and fasting. During spiritual fasting, the believer’s focus is removed from the physical things of this world and intensely concentrated on God.

Put differently, our “Eucharistic Fasting” can direct our hunger toward God. It clears the mind and body of earthly attention and draws us closer to God. So, as we gain spiritual clarity of thought, it allows us to hear God’s voice more clearly. Fasting also demonstrates a profound need of God’s help and guidance through complete dependence on him.

When I was a little boy, Communion was not offered as frequently as it is now, every Sunday, as it should be. Maybe we only had it offered 4 times a year in the Slovak Lutheran Congregation, pastored by my father. Whenever it was, we had to

fast. So there was a connection between receiving communion and fasting. Just as the Early Church prepared to receive the Bridegroom, so we had to prepare by fasting. It was as if Fasting was a spiritual discipline, as I am sure it was, intended to enhance our participation in the Eucharist.

So in a special way, we find ourselves contemplating on the mystery of this Eucharistic Meal, which for the time being we can only think about spiritually. But can you picture the Joy we will all feel when it will be offered safely to us for the first time. At that time, we, the bride, will unite with the Bridegroom who will come to us in this Eucharistic Meal.

“Even So, Lord Jesus, quickly Come.” Right now we believe with all our hearts that “Absence does make the heart grow fonder.”

*Soul, adorn yourself with gladness, leave the gloomy haunts of sadness  
Hasten as a bride to meet him, eagerly and gladly greet him,  
There he stands already knocking: quickly, how, your gate unlocking  
Open wide the fast closed portal, saying to the Lord immortal;  
“Come, and leave your love one never; dwell within my heart forever.”*

Kantor Hurnyak

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### **Nativity Women of the ELCA News**

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the closing of our church building, the WELCA group has not had regular meetings since March. We have no plans to begin meetings until we have the “go-ahead” from Church Council. We are considering holding virtual Bible Studies on a ZOOM meeting platform. Please call or e-mail Ruth Kiefer to let her know if you would be interested in participating. We would use our “Gather” magazine Bible study.

All Fall Cluster meetings as well as the Fall Women’s Retreat at Lutherlyn (previously scheduled for Sept. 18-20) HAVE BEEN CANCELED! However, a SYNOD-WIDE, VIRTUAL CLUSTER MEETING will be held on SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 AT 10:00 A.M. VIA ZOOM. If you wish to participate, send your e-mail to Ruth Kiefer to forward to the synodical group. You will

then receive an e-mail with the Zoom link for you to use on your smart phone or computer. Information will be sent to individual churches for those unable to attend virtually. The meeting ID is 930 0930 9968 The Meeting Pass Code is 646-876-9923. The "call in" phone number is 646-876-9923.

Due to the shut-down of most of our synodical WELCA events this spring and summer, the Synodical Board has decided to keep BLESSED BUNDLES as our designated outreach organization until December, 2021. The need for diapers and baby and toddler items continues. Donations can be sent to Donna Petrell, our Synod Board Treasurer (724-433-2034.)

During these difficult times, you can still support the ministries of our SWPA Synodical Women's Group, our Designated Outreach and our Calendar of Causes. Please consider sending your OFFERING by check to our treasurer, Judy Beecher, so that she can send checks to the causes that we support. Or you may send a check with your church name, address, cluster #2, and the designation for your gift to Synodical WELCA treasurer, Donna Petrell (110 Bashford Drive, Moon Township, PA 15108.)

I encourage all WELCA members to keep in touch until we can meet in person again. God Bless You!

Ruth Kiefer, President

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### FUTURE OF FLOWER BEDS AND HEDGES

The Congregational Council is considering removing the majority of the flower beds and hedges that surround the church building. The Memorial Garden flower beds, in particular, would remain intact. We were already struggling to maintain these plantings, and this difficult year has demonstrated clearly that we no longer have the resources to keep them attractive. We may try to find a simpler plan; comments to Joanne Smith are welcome.

Thanks Joanne

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### SOCIAL MINISTRY NEWS

Please continue to remember in your prayers our following members:

Wilma & Mike Johnson  
Jean Carter  
Pat Brick  
Pastor Cyril Hurnyak

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**NHCO Food Pantry** is currently in need of cereal, oatmeal, peanut butter, pasta and sauce, canned vegetables and fruit, and chunky style soups. Summer is usually a time of less donations. Therefore all donations are especially welcome. If you need any assistance in getting a donation to NHCO, please contact Jim Kiefer.

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### NHCO Limited Donation Days/Hours

NHCO has returned to limited donation days and hour. The hours are again Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Grocery donations are to be placed in shopping carts by the pantry. Please wear a mask when there. If you would like to have items taken to NHCO, please contact Jim Kiefer.

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### NHCO School Supply Collection

NHCO is collecting School supplies now through August 7. Items being sought include backpacks, binders, notebooks, 24 pack crayons, loose-leaf paper, packet folders, pencils and pens, pencil boxes and cases, highlighters, markers, rulers, glue sticks, scissors, erasers, and calculators (used OK). Donations can be dropped off at NHCO, 1875 Ferguson Rd., 15101, from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM. If you would like your donations delivered, contact Jim Kiefer.

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**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS**

Denise Britenbaugh	2
Rev. Kirk Bish	3
Jonathan Chantz	7
Nicole Schmitz	7
Allison Stover	7
Nan Shuey	10
Jerry J. Sever	11
Mark Ambill	14
Darryl Fabian	15
Carol Banks	19
Keith Huffman	21
Rev. Cyril Hurnyak	22
James Zaffuto	23
Chad Fabian	30



**OUR ON-GOING PRAYER LIST**

Kenny Shoemaker - Friend of Henne  
 David & Karol Emmert – Cousins of Severs.  
 Mary Meisner - Friend of Joanne Smith  
 Ella Weisbiord - Friend of Jean King  
 Mary Katherine Russell - Friend of the Halcoussis  
 Jeremiah Bennett - Member

Service Personnel:  
 Sarah Foster

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**Happy Birthday!**

**AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES**

Edward & Judy Wetzel	1
Don & Carol Messner	4
Brad & Everlyn Rosenberger	8
Tom & Shari Richardson	10
Charles & Kim Brandt	14
Rev. James & Jane Dollhopf	14
Andrew & Linda Halcoussis	15
Jerry & Kathy Sever	16
Jessica & Oliver Kiefer	21
Carl & Donna Heyne	28



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**AUGUST BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES**



Sara Amstutz	Donna Heyne
Jeremiah Bennett	Braden Hoburg
Elizabeth Brandt	Patrick Hoburg
Kim Brandt	Rev. Ralph Kusserow
Jean Carter	Luca Romero Lauro
Darryl Fabian	Matthew Werner
Emily Chantz	Jacob Zaffuto
Andrew Halcoussis	Amanda Zelnis

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# August 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Pastor Bish's hours: Tues., Thurs., Fri. 10 am - 1 pm	Nancy Coon's hours Tues., Thurs., Fri. 10 am - 3 pm				1
2 9:15 am - Worship	3 8 pm- AA mtg.	4 7 pm - Worship & Music mtg.	5	6	7 6:30 pm- NA mtg.	8
9 9:15 am - Worship	10 8 pm- AA mtg.	11 7 pm - Council mtg.	12	13	14 6:30 pm- NA mtg.	15
16 9:15 am - Worship Newsletter Deadline	17 8 pm- AA mtg.	18	19	20	21 6:30 pm- NA mtg.	22
23 9:15 am - Worship	24 8 pm- AA mtg.	25	26	27	28 6:30 pm- NA mtg.	29
30 9:15 am - Worship	31 8 pm- AA mtg.					

**AUGUST 2** - 9:15 am - Assistant: Alisa Michael  
Lector:  
Acolyte:  
Crucifer:  
Ushers:  
Greeters:  
Altar Flowers: Jim & Jane Dollhopf - Carol & Don Messner  
Altar Guild: Carol Banks & Linda Ryan

Scriptures: Ninth Sunday after Pentecost (Green)  
First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-5; Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21;  
Second Reading: Romans 9:1-5; Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

**AUGUST 9** - 9:15 am - Assistant: Ken Saunders  
Lector:  
Acolyte:  
Crucifer:  
Ushers:  
Greeters:  
Altar Flowers:  
Altar Guild: Carol Banks & Linda Ryan

Scriptures: Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (Green)  
First Reading: 1 Kings 19:9-18; Psalm 85:8-13;  
Second Reading: Romans 10:5-15; Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

**AUGUST 16** - 9:15 am - Assistant: Cheryl Kilbert  
Lector:  
Acolyte:  
Crucifer:  
Ushers:  
Greeters:  
Altar Flowers: Charles & Kim Brandt –  
Brian & Mary Lynne Bennett  
Altar Guild: Carol Banks & Linda Ryan

Scriptures: Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (Green)  
First Reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8; Psalm 67;  
Second Reading: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32; Gospel: Matthew 15 (10-20) 21-28

**AUGUST 23** - 9:15 am - Assistant: Tom Beecher  
Lector:  
Acolyte:  
Crucifer:  
Ushers:  
Greeters:  
Altar Flowers: Andrew & Linda Halcoussis - Janet Werhnyak  
Altar Guild: Carol Banks & Linda Ryan

Scriptures: Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost (Green)  
First Reading: Isaiah 51:1-6; Psalm 138;  
Second Reading: Romans 12:1-8; Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

**AUGUST 30** - 9:15 AM - Assistant: Pastor Dollhopf  
Lector:  
Acolyte:  
Crucifer:  
Ushers:  
Greeters:  
Altar Flowers: Carl & Donna Heyne  
Altar Guild: Carol Banks & Linda Ryan

Scriptures: Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Green)  
First Reading: Jeremiah 15:15-21; Psalm 26:1-8;  
Second Reading: Romans 12:9-21; Gospel: Matthew 16:21-28

Offering Tellers for August: