



THE BT TIMES

We are Better Together

Upcoming Events

November 17
**Brunch and
Annual Meeting**

November 24
**Stewardship
Celebration with
Potluck Lunch**

December 13
**Ensemble Galiei
Holiday Concert**

December 22
**Children's Play
Ascension Homes
Lunch**

December 24
**5:00 pm
Christmas Eve
Service**

December 25
**10:00 am
Christmas Day
Service**

Kindness

Someone declared November 13th as World Kindness Day (as if Jesus didn't declare every day Kindness Day...). Then someone made the connection to my favorite theologian and babysitter, Mr. Rogers and called November 13th Cardigan Day. Hence the picture of those of us in cardigans!

Jesus modeled a life of kindness to those we love and those who challenge us. Polite, generous, caring, compassionate, empathetic, grateful, supportive. Sometimes we need to be kind to ourselves as well. Even Jesus took time out to rest and gather his thoughts before getting back to work. In March, I will have been serving this great community for seven years. My time here has been the highlight of my life and ministry. But my Letter of Agreement provides for a sabbatical now, and Doug and I are ready for a little break. So, on December 29th we'll fly to Australia to ring in the New Year with a terrific vacation.

Then I'll be home hanging out with our dogs, catching up on home improvement projects, reading, visiting family, and simply being still. That's a challenge for me, you know, so it will not be easy to disconnect from the life of this community I love so much. I'll take a retreat with some seminary classmates to Holy Cross Monastery. I'll go to California for coaching classes to help when I consult with other congregations doing the kind of work we have done here. I'll also indulge in some cooking classes at the Culinary Institute of America there, and finally join my third Habitat for Humanity Global Village build in Chiapas, Mexico!

I'm grateful to the Church Council, and especially Jeff Valentine, who have been supportive in this planning process. He's tried to answer some of the questions you may have about carrying on the rest of the work of the congregation in my absence. I'm confident in and grateful for a small subgroup who has already met to take on some more leadership roles. This is an exciting time for you all to have some fun, listen to each other and the community, and get a break from me! You are in excellent hands with Pastor Don, Tony and Linda, Carolyn, David and some excellent guest preachers. I'll be back on the Sunday before Palm Sunday to journey through Holy Week with you. I couldn't do that alone. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving, and remember to be kind to each other and yourselves.

Stewart+



Sabbatical Q & A

from Council Vice President Jeff Valentine

I hear that Pastor Stewart is going on a leave of absence, something called a Sabbatical. What gives?

That's right. Under the employment agreement he signed when he first arrived at what was then the Church of the Nativity, Cedarcroft in March 2013, Stewart is entitled to two weeks of Sabbatical leave for each year of service to the church. The Church Council has approved his accumulated leave beginning December 26, 2019, returning for services on March 29, 2020, in time for Holy Week.

Is such a Sabbatical leave unusual?

No. In fact, both the Lutheran and Episcopal churches encourage member parishes to periodically provide a time when their Pastor is released from normal duties to devote time for renewal, travel and study. We recognize that shepherding an active, evolving congregation like Nativity-Holy Comforter can be exhausting, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Why is it called a Sabbatical?

The term Sabbatical comes from the word "sabbath," which means seven or seventh. A sabbatical year is the seventh year and it provides a period of rest and a break from work. A sabbatical leave is seen as an integral and important part of an overall strategy for enhancing the mission of the congregation through pastoral renewal, development, and growth.

What happens while Pastor Stewart is away?

Life will go on! While we certainly will miss Stewart, we will be in excellent hands during his absence. Pastor Don Burggraf, our Pastoral Associate, has agreed to extend his working hours to oversee our worship, Christian education and spiritual needs. We are fortunate to have Deacon Linda Hollis; Tony Hollis, our wise retired Episcopal Priest; and Music Director David Neff to help out as well. We also plan to host several guest preachers during this period, including Bishop Bill Gohl of the DE-MD Lutheran Synod.

But, how about all of the other things Pastor Stewart does to keep our church operating?

Day-to-day church operations and our numerous programs and ministries will be managed by church staff, especially our parish administrator Carolyn Surrick, as well as other lay leaders on the Church Council. We also urge all of you, as members of the congregation, to step up and fill in as needed. We will need your prayers, support and volunteer service to ensure that the "business" of the congregation continues to function well.

I assume we're continuing to pay Stewart during his absence. Can we afford this?

Yes. Pastor Stewart will continue to receive his full pay and benefits during the time that he is away. And, of course, Pastor Don will receive additional compensation for the three months in which his weekly hours are doubled. We also will pay a modest honorarium and expenses to our guest preachers. We have applied for a grant from a church-related organization to help offset some of these costs. Nevertheless, the Church Council has identified the funding needed to cover any additional costs that we may encounter.

Will we see Pastor Stewart at all during his Sabbatical?

With the exception of an outright emergency, the intent is that we won't see Stewart during this period of leave. We expect that he will worship elsewhere. We expect that he will be traveling during much of his time away. This is essential if he is to take full advantage of this time for renewal and refreshment.

Church Council Nominees

At the November 17, 2019 Annual Meeting, the congregation will elect three members to the Church Council for three-year terms. The Church Council approved this slate presented by the Nominating Committee headed up by Dick Perry. We give thanks for those members finishing their service on the Church Council: Sue Fowler, Dick Perry, Ellie Sharkey.

Amanda Eversley grew up in the Midwest, and moved to Baltimore in 2005. She was confirmed Lutheran, and married an Episcopalian, so our current church mash up is a great fit. It took a long time to find a church home, but it was the Nativity June Fair with a bounce house that sealed the deal with little 3 year old Rachel. Amanda has a Bachelors in Elementary Education from Minnesota State University Moorhead, and a Masters from Johns Hopkins in School Supervision and Administration. She currently works part-time at CCBC overseeing a child care grant and at Harford Heights Child Care (before and after school programs) in three area private schools.



Amanda enjoys craft nights with friends and fun adventures around the city with the family. She likes to volunteer with The Teacher Supply Swap, ShareBaby and children's hospitals. Throughout college, Amanda was very active in churches serving as a Youth Group Coordinator, teaching Sunday School and being on various event planning committees. It is because of Rachel, Cameron and the youth at church that Amanda feels a call to be on a part of the Church Council.

Judy Jones has been a member of Nativity since she was two years old! Her parents were married at Holy Comforter and she was baptized there. When it was time for my brother, who was five years older, to go to Sunday School, my father wanted to return to the Episcopal church. My Mom taught Sunday School, and I was in the children's choir. As an adult, I became a Sunday School teacher and my brother became a Lay reader, Lay Eucharistic Minister and Sunday School Superintendent. My Father was ordained to the Diaconate and served Nativity for many years.



Judy is retired from her "day" job as a fingerprint examiner for The Baltimore County Police and now keeps busy with her Real Estate License. She spends a lot of time with the 3 youngest grandchildren and eagerly anticipates another in the Spring! Judy's other passion is animal welfare, and she support organizations that rescue injured/abused animals.

In previous years, Judy has served two terms on the Nativity Vestry. She writes "It's a responsibility to be a trusted Church leader. I am happy to serve in that position again. When God calls, the answer is yes!"

Margaret Raymond had been a lifelong Lutheran until becoming a “Lutherpalian.” She was born in Kansas City, Missouri but left for college and law school, the latter in Boston, Massachusetts. Upon graduation, she stayed in the Boston area for the next 30 years, working at a private law firm, the government, and ultimately a financial services firm. She got married and had a beautiful son, Simon (now 22). Sadly, the marriage came to an end, and Margaret raised Simon as a single mother.



Margaret came to Baltimore to start a job as in-house counsel at T. Rowe Price, bringing her then 15-year-old son with me. They lived in the Lutherville-Timonium area and attended a variety of Lutheran and Episcopal churches trying to find a church home. She writes “When I read about Holy Comforter and Nativity’s combination, I was intrigued and came for a visit. I was impressed by the congregation’s rejection of the racial separation that persists in a number of churches even today, and its obvious dedication to making something new out of two distinct traditions. I am now happy to call Nativity and Holy Comforter my church home.”

The Church Council has approved this Operating Budget for 2020 and presents it to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting. If you would like a detailed 2019 Profit and Loss to date or an entire 2020 budget, please contact Treasurer Justin Dowding or email the church office.

INCOME		<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
41000 · Pledges and Offerings	\$	224,500.00	\$ 228,500.00
41240 · Other Flowers, Fuel Inc, 6112 York Road Insur. Reim.	\$	8,000.00	\$ 5,500.00
41300 · Fund Raising	\$	6,500.00	\$ 7,000.00
41500 · Investment Income	\$	34,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
41550 · Music Fund	\$	5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
41700 · Building Use	\$	<u>83,596.00</u>	<u>\$ 86,343.00</u>
Total Income	\$	361,596.00	\$372,343.00
EXPENSES			
60200 · Worship & Music	\$	37,040.00	\$ 38,219.50
60800 · Building and Grounds	\$	80,400.00	\$ 81,900.00
61400 · Christian Education	\$	2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
62400 · Diocese & Synod Giving	\$	36,364.00	\$ 31,665.00
63800 · Fellowship	\$	3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
65200 · Outreach	\$	8,500.00	\$ 8,500.00
68100 · Administration	\$	85,855.00	\$ 90,641.40
69000 · Clergy	\$	<u>134,634.00</u>	<u>\$ 136,620.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$	388,293.00	\$ 393,045.90
Net Income	\$	(26,697.00)	\$ (20,702.90)

Sandwich Making

Each month we team up with the good people of St. John's in Mt. Washington to make sandwiches for the Salvation Army van that goes out through the city on Tuesday evenings. **We will meet at 5:15pm at Springwell Retirement Community in Mt. Washington on December 9.** Ask Deacon Linda for more details.

Thank You!



We are delighted to have received 56 responses to our assessment! We are so grateful for your input and will have the results back in a few weeks. We'll share those with the Church Council and YOU! Stay tuned as we embark on this journey of discovery and discernment together. Your Lead Team, Barbara Herron, Margaret Dowding, Kari Rudgers, Harold Hardinger, Diane Thornton & Pastor Stewart

All Saints Day Reflection

from Parish Administrator, Carolyn Surrick

There were tornado warnings until midnight last night, because, as can happen here, a powerful storm was headed our way. Yesterday, it was just too warm, too humid for a day in late October. Today, when I woke up and dressed before dawn, I was looking for my wooly socks, blue, knitted vest, and a winter coat.

Welcome All Saints'. Welcome the Day of the Dead. Welcome the Celtic tradition of Samhain.

I am struck by how perfect it was to have those high winds and thrashing rains blow through. It was so much like the process of saying goodbye to our beloveds. It's uncomfortable. It's dark, and frightening. There is no guarantee that it will all be okay when you wake up the next day, because in truth, it really is deeply, not okay.

But this morning, as I headed to my car, the stars were glittering overhead because the wind and rain had swept away the clouds. The heavens were there for me to see, and I was reminded of the grace that comes with the memories of the great loves that we have lost. And those loves, in that moment, were clearly not lost. All of the days, all of the nights, all of the adventures and shared life – all of the ways that those loves can live, rest somewhere inside of me. Inside of each of us.

In this season of remembrance, I hold tight to the way they lived, not the way they died. I hold tight to love.

Time

Time is like the wind
And with the wind it fly's
Leaving us with our memories
Of years gone by. Oh, the heart aches
The pain, the joys we've gained,
all are but lost from memories lane
so, like the tick of the enduring clock
our lives do pass as we gain more stock
and like the leaves of autumns rust
we too must die and turn to dust

By La-La. aka Larry E. Webb

*Do you have art or creative writing to share with your church family?
Email it to us so we can share or use it on the front cover of our bulletins!
office@nativitycomforter*

Chair Yoga

This class will help you build strength and endurance, increase flexibility, and improve your posture and balance. Special attention will be paid to bone health and preventing/reversing bone loss related to osteoporosis. It is designed for adults who may benefit from a slower pace and a recognition of age-related functional changes.

We will do seated chair poses and standing poses. Beginners are welcome. Wear comfortable clothing that you can easily move in and bring some water to stay hydrated. Suggested donation for the class is \$5.00. Please come join us for Chair Yoga in the Church. If you have any questions, please contact Linda McGill at laharte12@gmail.com.



Ascension Homes Christmas Party

Sunday December 22nd
12:30pm in Hart Hall
Help us welcome our neighbors for whom this holiday luncheon is a bright light in their Christmas season. These small group homes house developmentally challenged adults. The ministry is organized and overseen by GEDCO, a partnership of faith-based and community organizations that provides affordable housing, supportive services, and emergency assistance. Nativity and Holy Comforter were founders of GEDCO. Every year we throw party and this year, we will buy presents for them in addition to a little something for staff. Sign up if you can help!

Church of the Nativity & Holy Comforter



presents

Ensemble Galilei's

Winter Solstice / Christmas Concert

Friday, December 13th

7:30 pm

The Church is located at 419 Cedarcroft Road, B'more, MD.

General Admission: \$25; Students/Seniors: \$20
Tickets will be available at the door.

For information please call: 410/433-4811
or visit www.nativitycomforter.org.



On Reformation Sunday, the children posted their own "Theses" on the glass church doors after learning about Martin Luther in Sunday School. Thanks to all our great teachers and helpers. (left)

Many thanks to Harold Hardinger and Jeff Valentine for their help replacing the deck boards of our ramp. This is a work in progress... (right)



Wellness at Cedarcroft Center

There's something contagious about working toward transformation, spiritual and physical.

www.cedarcroftcenter.com

Sundays

Zumba 3:30 - 4:30 pm and 5:00 - 6:00 pm

Mondays

Therapeutic Yoga 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Tuesdays

Tai Chi 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Zumba 6:30 - 7:30 pm and 7:30 - 8:30 pm

Yoga 7:00 - 8:00pm (In Hart Hall)

Wednesdays

Zumba 6:30 - 7:30 pm and 7:30 - 8:30 pm

Synergy Dance 7:00 - 9:00 pm (In Hart Hall)

Saturdays

Zumba 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Yoga 10:15 am - 11:15 am

Forum on Faith

Sundays at 9:15 am

Dec 1 - Loneliness at Holiday Times - When everyone else is busy singing, attending parties, giving and receiving gifts, loneliness can hurt even more sharply. We will examine Holidays through the lens of loneliness, sharing stories of how we have coped and even thrived.

Dec 8 - Diocese of Jerusalem; Israel; Palestine. Pastor Stewart and Neal Baroody share updates.

Dec 15 - Christmas in other Countries. Lee Taylor presents. Come find out how other folks share this world-changing Holiday.

Dec 22 -Holiday Brunch with special activities provided by Sam Dowding

Dec 29 - No Forum. Come back for an interesting new season of classes in January!



The Church of the
Nativity & Holy Comforter
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