



## The Nativity Scene

### OUR WORSHIP SERVICES

#### Weekly

#### Sundays

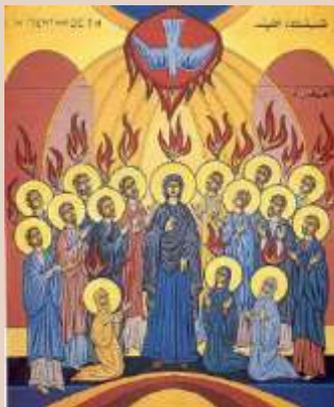
7:45 AM

Holy Eucharist

10:00 AM

Holy Eucharist  
with Sunday School  
and Nursery Care

#### Wednesdays

12pm Noonday Prayer and  
Holy Eucharist

*"When you strip it of everything else, Pentecost stands for power and life. That's what came into the church when the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost."*

David Wilkerson,  
*The Cross and the Switchblade*



*Embraced  
Equipped  
Empowered*

### FROM PASTOR CHAD'S DESK

Greetings Nativity Family!

Happy Birthday! How is your soul? Folks, this is the month of Pentecost and I wanted to start out the celebrations of the birth of the church and outpouring of the Holy Spirit with that most important question. This is probably one of my favorite quotes attributed to the famed Anglican priest and founder of Methodism John Wesley. I draw deep inspiration from much of his work and wisdom in ministry, especially during times such as these. I mean, here we are, OVER a month into our social distancing and gathering "virtually" for worship, and here we are, still thriving and being the church! I want to thank everyone who has helped to keep us connected as the body of Christ during these times, our volunteers who deliver the sacraments and worship bulletins, the Vestry who are making phone calls to the folks who call Nativity home, the musicians who are leading us in sacred song on Tuesday nights with our Tiny Desk Concerts, Jenny Otto leading JAM Club on Sunday mornings, Larry for helping with video and sound, Glen for bringing live music on the organ for us Sunday mornings and all of the other folks working hard behind the scenes. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

As you all are aware, I have been ministering at the Soldiers Home in Holyoke and your prayers have been a blessing that has uplifted me. Day in and day out I watch as our National Guardsmen tirelessly serve our veterans and minister to them in their own ways. The veterans and soldiers have been so appreciative of us chaplains and how we are serving them and bringing them the hope of Christ in the midst of this storm. Thank you for your support and prayers.

Lastly, stay safe during this month please. The Bishop's and Governor's latest guidance has pushed in-person gatherings to at least May 18<sup>th</sup> and with this being the month that we would be celebrating together at Pentecost, we may have to continue gathering virtually. Don't forget that whether we are physically together or spiritually together we are still the church and called to be His people and light in the darkness and one great way to do that is by keeping ourselves and others safe from the spread of this virus.

You all are in our prayers and soon this pandemic will pass. God is in our midst.

Stay Holy, Stay Blessed, and Stay Safe,

# May

Lord, help us to be cheerful  
and make others happy  
to meet us.  
Help us to be so true to you  
that we are a strength to others.

Prayer of the month

Memorize  
ONE VERSE  
EACH MONTH

MAY 2020

**YOUR  
CHURCH  
NEEDS YOU!**

But Jesus looked at them and  
said, For "mortals it is impossible,  
but for God all things  
are possible."

(Matthew 19:26)

The building may be closed but we still have to pay the bills and prepare for the return of our ministries!

Please keep up with your pledges and donations. There are several ways you can still contribute during these uncertain times:

- Send a check
- Call our pledge treasurer to set up EFTs
- Go to our website, click on the "Give" menu item (top right of your screen) and choose the Paypal button. You can then give via your bank account or a major credit card.

**A big thank you**

**to Howie Gelles for a  
brand new, stronger  
and more visible  
Nativity mailbox!!**



*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*



### Good Friday and Easter

By Cindy Loverin

*As I came to the hilltop that morning,  
The valley below spoke of suffering and death.  
Mist hung like a shroud in the colorless world  
Robbing each living thing of its breath.*

*Gray was the mist, and gray was the snow.  
Darker gray were the columns of smoke.  
I approached the gray village  
with grief in my heart.  
In gray silence the village awoke.*

*It was then that the miracle happened.  
One single, life-giving beam broke through.  
The gray haze was transformed to a golden glow,  
And the valley shone pink, green, and blue.*

*On Friday He died;  
The universe cried.  
On Sunday morn  
New hope was born.  
He is not dead!  
"I am the Light," He said.*

*At daybreak the sun comes into the world  
Bestowing new color and life.  
The Master is the Light of the World  
Giving peace to replace the strife.*

## Extraordinary People

This month's #Extraordinary life of the month is Ethan McCabe. Ethan has become our newest acolyte assisting his father in leading worship with grace and confidence. We won't be able to thank him in person but maybe we can send him a thank you note to brighten his day. THANK YOU ETHAN!





*Pastor Chad, National Guard Chaplain, deployed at the Holyoke Vets Hospital*

“If you’d like to nominate a church member as an unsung hero, please contact the church.”)

In no particular order:

- Fr. Chad (National Guard, deployed)
- Jeannie Hebert (visor manufacturing)
- Ted Flanagan (EMT)
- Tom & Kim McDonald (Police Officer and Dispatcher)
- Martha Hawley (mask manufacturing)
- Neil Heseck (National Guard, deployed)
- Diane Cofer (school lunch overseeing)
- All teachers, students and parents among us



# DUTY CALLS

HONORING HEROES AMONG US

## **Volunteers** **Keeping us connected**

While our church building is closed, we at Nativity are keeping our Church community connected in new in innovative ways: from participating in worship via Facebook live, watching a tiny desk concert on Facebook, chatting during a Zoom coffee hour, participating in a Zoom J.A.M. Sunday school class, listening to a story read by Pastor Chad and Ethan, continuing our Bible studies online or just reaching out to each other in this difficult time of social distancing. In order to do all this we have a wonderful group of volunteers making it all happen. I want to thank them all for giving their time and talents to bring us together sharing the light of Christ in these uncharted times.

## **Worship**

Chad  
Ethan  
Karen  
Larry

## **Music**

Glen  
Kim  
Judy  
Cara  
Norma  
Rachel  
Binto

## **Packet Delivery**

Cathy  
Henry  
Janet

Mark  
Deb  
Cathy  
Kathy  
Bruce

## **Bible study**

Rachel

## **Vestry**

Deb  
Howie  
Janet  
Cathy  
Aaron  
Sean  
Ted  
Cindee  
Sally

**A Word to the Church  
The Easter Season A.D. 2020**

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**“What Would Love Do?”  
(excerpts)**

*Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult  
of our life's wild, restless sea,  
day by day his clear voice soundeth,  
saying, "Christian, follow me"*

Text of Hymn 549, verse 1 – Cecil Frances Alexander  
(1818-95), alt.

Throughout the Book of Common Prayer there are rubrics, those small or italicized words that don't always catch our eye, that provide direction and guidance for how a liturgy or service is to be conducted. Rubrics tell us what must be done and what may be done. They limit us and they give us freedom. They require us to exercise our judgment. And when we are at our best, we exercise this judgment under God's rubric of love.

Jesus tells us things like: *Love your enemies; Bless those who curse you; Do unto others as you would have them do unto you; As you did to the least of these who are members of my family you have done to me; Father, forgive; Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength. This is the first and great commandment and the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* Jesus makes it abundantly clear that the way of unselfish, sacrificial love – love that seeks the good and the well-being of others as well as the self – that love is the rubric of the Christian life.

This rubric of love is seen no more clearly than in the twenty-first chapter of the Gospel according to John.

*[read John 21:15-19]*

The death of Jesus had left his followers disoriented, uncertain, and confused, afraid of what they knew and anxious about what they did not know. Thinking that the movement was probably dead, the disciples went back to what they knew. They tried to go back to normal. They went fishing.

They fished all night but didn't catch a thing. Normal would not return. When the morning came, Jesus showed up on the beach, alive, risen from the dead. He asked them, “Children, have you any fish?” They answered, “No.” Then he told them to cast the net on the other side of the boat. They did and caught more fish than they could handle. And then, Jesus invited them to breakfast.

After having fed his disciples, Jesus turned to Peter and three times asked him, “Do you love me?” Three times Peter said, “Yes.” And Jesus said, “Feed my lambs,” “Tend my sheep,” “Feed my sheep.” In this, Jesus told Peter what love looks like. Love God by loving your neighbors, all of them. Love your enemies. Feed the hun-

gry. Bless folk. Forgive them. And be gentle with yourself. Follow me. You may make mistakes, you may not do it perfectly. But whatever you do, do it with love. The truth is, Jesus gave Peter a rubric for the *new normal* – God's rubric of love.

Today, like Peter and the disciples, we must discern a new normal. COVID-19 has left us disoriented, uncertain, and confused, afraid of what we know and anxious about what we do not know. Our old normal has been upended, and we hunger for its return.

I do not say this from a lofty perch. I get it. There is a big part of me that wants to go back to January 2020 when I had never heard of COVID-19, and when I only thought of “Contagion” as a movie. Looking back through what I know are glasses darkened by loss, I find myself remembering January 2020 as a “golden age.”

But of course, January 2020 wasn't perfect, not even close. And anyway, I can't go back. None of us can go back. We must move forward. But we don't know for sure what the new normal will be. Fortunately, God's rubric of love shows us the way.....

Kingdom of God thinking is already happening. God's rubric of love is already in action. I've been watching bishops, priests, deacons, and lay people of our church following Jesus in the practices that make up his way of love and doing things we never imagined. The creativity and the risk-taking – done with love – is amazing.

We've been trying, making mistakes, learning, regrouping, trying anew. I've seen it. Holy Week and Easter happened in ways that none of us dreamed possible. I've quietly read Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline online with you. I've seen soup kitchens, pantries, and other feeding ministries carefully doing their work in safe and healthy ways. Zoom coffee hours, bible studies, and small discipleship groups. I've seen this church stand for the moral primacy of love. I've seen it, even when public health concerns supersede all other considerations, including in-person worship. *That is moral courage.* Who knows, but that love may demand more of us. But fear not, just remember what the old slaves use to say, walk together, children, and don't you get weary, because there is a great camp meeting in the Promised Land. Oh, I've seen us do what we never thought we would or could do, because we dared to do what Jesus tells us all to do.

As our seasons of life in the COVID-19 world continue to turn, we are called to continue to be creative, to risk, to love. We are called to ask, *What would unselfish, sacrificial love do?*

*What would love do?* Love is the community praying together, in ways old and new. Love finds a path in this new normal to build church communities around being in relationship with God. Love supports Christians in spiritual practices. Prayer, meditation, study. Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, Rest. (*continued on page 7*)



*Sunday Coffee Hour on Zoom!*



*Getting ready to bless and dispatch the bulletins/ communion packets*



*Wednesday Story Time on Facebook!*

*Easter Parade*



*Palm Sunday Give-A way!*





### "Tiny Desk Concerts"



(continued from page 5)

*What would love do?* Love calls us to care for our neighbors, for our enemies. Love calls us to attend to those in prison, to those who are homeless, to those in poverty, to children, to immigrants and refugees. Love calls us to be in relationship with those with whom we disagree.

*What would love do?* Love calls us to be gentle with ourselves, to forgive our own mistakes, to take seriously the Sabbath. Love calls us to *be* in love with God, to cultivate a loving relationship with God, to spend time with God, to be still and know that God is God.

Jesus says, *Simon, son of John, do you love me?* Jesus says, *Michael, son of Dorothy and Kenneth, do you love me?* Jesus says, *Do you love me?*

Jesus says, *Follow me, and take the risk to live the question, What would love do?*

This, my friends, is God's rubric of love. This, my friends, is God's very way of life.

*In our joys and in our sorrows,  
days of toil and hours of ease,  
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,  
"Christian, love me more than these."  
Jesus calls us! By thy mercies,  
Savior, may we hear thy call,  
give our hearts to thine obedience,  
serve and love thee best of all.*

Text of Hymn 549, verses 4 and 5 – Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-95), alt.

God love you. God bless you. And may God hold us all in those almighty hands of love. Amen.

+Michael

The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry  
Presiding Bishop and Primate  
The Episcopal Church



Palm Sunday



Good Friday



Easter Vigil



Easter!



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*We have been called  
together by God  
to be and to make  
faithful followers  
of our Lord Jesus Christ*

Check out our weekly News and Notes listing of  
announcements and events.



*The Nativity  
Scene*



**May 2020**

**05/31 PENTECOST**