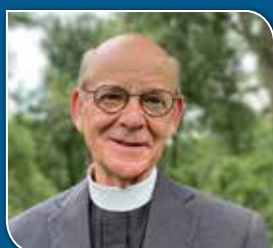


2023-2024

Nativity Newsletter



**Nativity
Lutheran Church**



Celebrating Community

Glenn Seefeldt
Senior Pastor

Dear Friends,

Nativity is growing—growing in faith, growing in service to neighbors, and growing in numbers. People of all ages are seeking Nativity's worship, faith formation, and service opportunities.

New households list the following reasons for why they have made Nativity a faith home:

- Children and Youth Programming
- Music and the Worship Experience
- Welcoming and Affirming Community

Life changed with the pandemic, and church life with it. Nonetheless, Nativity continues to

thrive, listening for God's guiding spirit and asking what it means to be church today.

Over the next two years, Nativity will build on its strengths: expanding faith-forming activities for people of all ages—especially children, youth, and their families; enhancing its worship and music offerings; and strategically partnering with our neighbors to break down barriers, foster trust, and bring hope.

Nativity is moving forward into the future, trusting that God's hand is leading and God's love supporting. The future is bright with hope, and I'm grateful to share the journey with you.

In Faith,

Pastor Glenn Seefeldt



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Nativity Comes Together As a Faith Community.

Members, guests, and visitors come to Nativity to hear the Word of God and to experience community, fellowship, and inspiration. We're grateful to have welcomed so many new individuals and families this past year, and we appreciate more than ever the opportunity to come together in worship.



"Nativity has offered us a church home that is accepting of all through their actions, words and services. We are so grateful to be a part of a community that wants to share the beauty of God's love with everyone."

Dan & Lana Clark
New Members 2023



"Joining our voices together with spirit-filled song is a great way to share trust and faith with each other. I believe this enriches the worship experience Nativity provides."

Lee Gilbertson
Choir Member

What Does Worship at Nativity Look Like?

2023 Worship Highlights

- Throughout the Advent and Christmas season, we imagined the call to "Go and See" the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love of Jesus being born in our lives and how we are being called to share those gifts with the world.
- This January we enjoyed a weekend of energy and inspiration as Nativity honored MLK Weekend with the uplifting music of the beloved Agape service.
- Throughout Lent, we explored the invitation of call stories, hearing from lay leaders how they came to their personal ministries and discerning our own vocations in following the ways of Jesus.
- At Easter we dared the question, "Could It Be Real?" in message and song, affirming that God enters our world in ways that offer us steadying,

even joyful, assurance in the midst of fear. In this and every season, we experience the unfailing love of God and the Easter promise of eternal hope.

Celebrating Hospitality

We come together as a community in worship and fellowship. More than ever, we value the simple but profound gifts of sharing meals and enjoying hospitality.

Music Ministry

Nativity has a rich and long-standing tradition of excellence in our Music Ministry. We're grateful to our Adult Choir, Handbell Choir, and Children's Choir, as well as to our worship singers and instrumentalists for sharing their gifts and dedication with our community.



JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

IN PERSON: Attend Saturdays at 5:30 pm or Sundays at 9:00 & 10:30 am.



ONLINE: Follow the QR code or go to NativityChurch.org/Worship.

GROW IN YOUR FAITH

[NATIVITYCHURCH.ORG/LEARN-AND-GROW/ADULT-MINISTRIES/](https://NativityChurch.org/Learn-And-Grow/Adult-Ministries/)



Nativity Grows in Lifelong Faith.

At Nativity we recognize the spiritual invitations of learning and inquiry, and we support one another in lifelong faith formation. We grow spiritually as we connect, challenge, and care for one another.

“God is big, and I needed a church that did not try to put Him in a small box.”

Phyllis Bigbee
New Member 2023

Study Groups

Gifts and Passions Class 1-2 times a year | Nativity

Gain a deeper understanding of your unique personality, gifts, and values.

Tuesday Book Group 9:30-10:30 am | Zoom

Book topics covering social justice issues and spiritual inquiry.

Wednesday Bible Study 10:00-11:30 am | Nativity & Zoom

Bible study for adults 60-100+ discussing scripture, sharing personal faith, and examining spiritual questions.

Thursday Book Group 9:30-11:00 am | Nativity & Zoom

Book topics that challenge and encourage us as followers of Jesus.

Saturday Book Group 9:00-10:00 am | Zoom

Book topics exploring social justice movements and contemporary issues facing the church.

We Support You In Your Spiritual Journey.

Adult Faith Formation

At Nativity, we draw closer to God through community connection, spiritual enrichment, and faith formation. Adult faith formation programs are held several times throughout the year and have included offerings on spiritual gifts & passions, scripture reading, the traditions of Advent, a history of Lent, generosity as a faith habit, and a prayer practice series. Look for new opportunities to come throughout this year!

During the year, Nativity's Bible study and book groups explore scriptural readings, spiritual questions, and social justice topics. Individual support for the different seasons of our faith journeys is available with one-on-one spiritual coaching sessions with the congregation's spiritual directors.

Pastoral Care and Vital Aging Ministry

Nativity Church also has a thriving Vital Aging Ministry that encourages and affirms our community's elders ages 60-100+. We connect through Bible studies, pastoral care, intergenerational events, and service opportunities.

Nativity offers Visitation Ministry as well as printed monthly sermon packets, worship CDs/DVDs, a Senior Connections Newsletter, Christmas cards, and other at-home resources to support the spiritual care of all in our congregation.

Staff and “Caring Visitors” connect with Nativity's homebound members on the phone or in person and provide communion. The Nativity's Prayer Shawl Ministry knits prayer shawls and prays over each person they're given to.



“The prayer shawl has special meaning because someone knit it for me, and it shows that someone really cares.”

Ramona Morell

Nativity Supports Our Children and Families.

Nativity offers year-round activities for children and youth, including Sunday faith formation classes, music groups, summer programs, service & learning trips, confirmation, and more.

A Note to Families:

"In our programming, we strive to offer a loving community where kids and their families can practice faith habits like prayer, worship, Bible study, giving and service to others. Nativity partners with parents to nurture faith by encouraging kids to love God and love our neighbor. We're so thankful for all our youth and families! Celebrating milestones, exploring God's great stories, and growing together in faith, fun and friendship is such a blessing!"

Renee Hoffman, Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries

Opportunities for Children

Children's Faith Formation

We're grateful to welcome so many new and returning families to faith formation this year! Nativity offers both in-person and online classes for ages 0-Kindergarten, Grades 1-4, and Grades 5-6 (Club 56). Children and youth can join at any point in the year, including summer.

Children's Music Ministry

During the school year, our Children's Choirs (ages 4-grade 6) practice on Wednesday evenings, building community and preparing music for worship—including two fun musicals each year!

Children's Summer Programming

Day Camps, Summer Faith Formation Classes, and Luther Park Camp fill our summer with fun, friendship, service, and learning.

"My favorite thing about faith formation is that my kids are so excited to go each week because of the great staff and activities."

Amber May
Parent



"The crafts in our faith formation class are the best!"

Mara, Age 7

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY REGISTRATION

CONTACT: Renee Hoffman, Director of CYF Ministries
Renee@NativityChurch.org | NativityChurch.org/Learn-and-Grow/Childrens-Ministries/



Middle School Chicago Trip

Opportunities for Teens

Our middle and high schoolers develop leadership, grow in faith, and are part of a supportive community that has a lot of fun together!

Confirmation

The confirmation process in grades 7-10 offers young people at Nativity regular, intentional, and supported opportunities to discern their own identity as a Child of God as well as their calling in the church and to the world.

SALT

SALT is a Student Leadership Team for 10th-12th grade students that gathers for campfires, social events, and service projects throughout the year.

Summer Stretch Day Camp

Each summer Nativity's middle school youth "stretch" their hearts, minds and bodies with a fun week of service projects, field trips, and more!

Service and Learning Trips 2023

We're celebrating another summer of meaningful service and learning experiences in Chicago and Sarasota, FL. Thank you, Nativity, for supporting our youth! Your generosity makes these life-changing experiences possible.

A Note for Summer 2024: The ELCA Youth Gathering is in New Orleans, July 16-20, 2024, and Nativity will be there! Held every three years, the gathering is a national convention of the ELCA in America for high school youth focusing on forms of service. Look for more details to come about the Gathering and about the middle school service and learning trip.



Middle School youth sorted clothing donations to be distributed to people in need.



High school youth organized a "Sweets for Sharing" event in December. Over 450 treats were made and delivered to homebound Nativity members.



Nativity youth and their families served 900+ pancakes at their Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast to raise money for their summer trips.



Special Time with Family

Nativity reserves time each summer at Luther Park Camp for grandparents and families from our church community to relax and have fun together. Everyone can enjoy the beautiful setting, delicious meals, and family-oriented activities.

"I love Luther Park Family Camp as a time to get away from our busy daily lives and carve out special time to relax, set aside our lists of things to do, and spend time together with special focus on our family and our broader Nativity family."

Karen Jones
Parent

Nativity Serves the World.

At Nativity, we believe our personal journeys of faith are challenged and strengthened by responding to the world's needs and by committing ourselves to making a positive impact in the world.



Outreach continues to shine at Nativity

“At Nativity we strive to provide multigenerational service and learning opportunities in our work to house people, care for their mental health and well-being, and put our best, inclusive foot forward with our Pride and Racial Equity and Justice Ministries. This is all while we continue to feed people and support the environment, to name only a few ministry initiatives.

This coming year, we will look to increase impact by listening to our local community and working strategically with cross-sector partnerships. All are invited to explore, discover, and put their gifts and passions to good use while loving God and loving neighbor at Nativity and beyond!”

Kyle Soderberg, Deacon of Outreach and Organizational Development

Public Ministry

Nativity's Public Ministry supports our congregation's ongoing commitment to advocating for the marginalized—providing education on important social justice issues and creating opportunities for people to come together and make a difference.

Building Relationships

We continue to foster community and collaboration with Redeemer Lutheran Church in North Minneapolis.

Advocacy Library & Little Advocacy Library

Nativity's new Advocacy Library and Little Library (built by Nativity's Foster Quehl) provide resources on a range of social justice and spiritual care issues.

Growing Green Yoga

Nativity partnered with Growing Green Hearts for a special outdoor yoga program designed to connect individuals to nature, mindfulness, and spirituality.

Land Acknowledgement and Reparations Cohort

Nativity has taken the initiative to acknowledge the place we gather and worship as the ancestral land of the Dakota people. A collaboratively written Land Acknowledgement will be shared this year. Nativity volunteers will participate in a reparations cohort with area congregations.

Minneapolis Area Synod's Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices Cohort

Nativity's two-year commitment to the cohort supports our continuing growth in areas of social justice.



Yoga & Nature

Participants of the Growing Green Yoga event cultivated a green space at Nativity.



Outreach Ministry

Nativity is called by God to love courageously, give generously, and proclaim the Gospel through our actions.

Homelessness & Housing Ministry

Nativity volunteers helped advocate for Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative's rent support program Bring It Home, Minnesota—which passed during this legislative session! Members also took care of the yard and gardens at LSS Safe House, a shelter for teens experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the community raised nearly \$7000 for LSS Metro Homeless Youth during the annual Christmas fundraiser.

Pride Outreach Ministry

Nativity's Pride Outreach Team, along with staff and pastors, provided joyful Pride-themed worship, music, and activities supporting inclusion and allyship.

Global Outreach Ministries

More than 300 pounds of educational materials and story books were collected for a K-8 school at Kepcheptoror Village in western Kenya.

Hunger Outreach Ministry

The Nativity community donated \$7725 during Hunger Month and wrote 102 letters to U.S. legislators on behalf of Bread for the World. Fifty-six people packed meals at Feed My Starving Children. Nativity also has regular volunteers at Little Kitchen Food Shelf and 11 Meals on Wheels drivers.

Mental Health and Wellness

Nativity observed National Mental Health Awareness Month with stories from our members and senior staff, a guest preacher, and a Mental Health Connect navigator. NMHC will facilitate training for Nativity staff in effectively responding to mental health issues and inquiries.

Racial Equity & Justice Outreach Ministry (REJM)

REJM—with the support of Center for Leadership for Neighborhood Engagement (CLNE)—organized a churchwide Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). More than 100 Nativity members participated! Local performers and certified IDI Practitioners Joe Davis and Dave Scherer guided discussion on our community's results. This fall REJM will welcome back Joe and Dave to facilitate dialogue over proposed next steps.

LSS Circle (Lutheran Social Service)

LSS Circle tied blankets and sewed bean bags for Camp Noah, a camp for children dealing with trauma, and Hands & Voices, an organization providing support for parents and children who are deaf or very hard of hearing. The group also made Camp Noah birthday cards and May baskets for St. Anthony Care Center.



Bring It Home

Nativity volunteers helped secure rent support for low income families in Minnesota.



IDI Inventory

Joe Davis and Dave Scherer guided discussion and learning about racial reconciliation.

“Outreach builds a network of relationships in the community as we work together spreading God’s love. Outreach also allows members to learn and grow in faith as we make a difference in areas we are passionate about.”

Gail Bergsven

Nativity Mental Health Connect Ministry Team

FIND YOUR PLACE TO SERVE

OUTREACH MINISTRY: Kyle Soderberg, Deacon of Outreach & Organizational Development at Kyle@NativityChurch.org

PUBLIC MINISTRY: Dr. Kelly Sherman-Conroy, Director of Public Ministry at Kelly@NativityChurch.org

2023

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

God's Work. Our Hands.

- 6..... *10th Grade Confirmation Class
- 9-10 God's Work. Our Hands.
- 10..... Blessing of the Backpacks
- 13..... *Wed. Community Meals
*High School SALT Campfires
*Musikgarten
*Choir Rehearsal
- 17..... *Fall Faith Formation
- 24..... 3-Year-Old Bible Milestone
- 28..... Sacred Sites Tour

OCTOBER

Global Outreach

- 1..... Legacy Circle Luncheon
- 8..... 3rd Grade Bible Milestone
New Member Joining Sunday
- 11..... Elder Worship / Lunch
- 20-22 ... 10th Grade Confirmation Retreat
- 28..... Trunk or Treat
- 29..... Affirmation of Baptism

NOVEMBER

Homelessness & Housing Outreach

- 8..... *7th, 8th, 9th Confirmation Class
- 22..... Thanksgiving Eve Worship
- 23..... Thanksgiving Day

DECEMBER

Advent & Christmas

- 2-3 Election of Council / Budget Meeting
- 3..... Beginning of Advent
4-Year-Old Nativity Making
- 9-10 Children's Musical
- 24..... Christmas Eve Worship
3:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:00 pm
note: no morning worship
- 25..... Christmas Morning Worship
10:30 am (*only one worship*)
- 30-31 ... New Year's Eve Contemplative Worship

2024

JANUARY

Honoring MLK's Legacy

- 13-14.... MLK Weekend
Agape Worship
- 15..... MLK Day

FEBRUARY

REJM Outreach

- 10..... Annual Meeting | Dinner
- 14..... Ash Wednesday
- 17-18 Ash Wednesday Theme
Weekend Worship
- 21..... *Wednesday Lenten Worship
& Community Meals

MARCH

Hunger Outreach

- 24..... Palm Sunday
Pancake Breakfast
- 28..... Maundy Thursday
& First Communion
- 29..... Good Friday
- 30-31 ... Easter Worship

APRIL

Environment & Sustainability

- TBD Children's Musical
- 20-21 ... Earth Day Weekend Events
- 22..... Earth Day



MAY

Mental Wellness Outreach

- 28..... Pentecost Sunday
- TBD Mental Wellness Programming

JUNE

Pride Outreach

- 1-2 Graduate Weekend
- 9..... *Summer Faith Formation
- 23-28 ... Luther Park Summer Camp

JULY

Community Bridging

- 8-12..... Kids Create
- 12..... Neighborhood Extravaganza
- 16-20 ... ELCA Youth Gathering in
New Orleans

AUGUST

Community Bridging

- 2-3 VillageFest Parade & Tent
- TBD Middle School Trip
- 16-18.... Luther Park Family Camp

** First session of ongoing programming.*

