

Church of the Nativity



Annual Meeting 2021



January 31, 2021 ✦ Year B ✦ Epiphany 4

AGENDA

Church of the Nativity 2021 Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 31, 2021

1. Opening Prayer
2. Minutes from 2020 meeting
3. Budget Presentation
4. Recognition of Outgoing Leaders: Joe Azbell and Tom Montgomery
5. Election and Commissioning of New Vestry Members
7. Awarding of the 2020 Nativity Cross
8. Closing Prayer

COMMISSIONING OF NEW VESTRY MEMBERS

Congregation: **We present to you these candidates for the ministry of lay leadership at Church of the Nativity.**

Antiphon (priest): The Lord gives wisdom; God stores up sound wisdom for the upright; the Lord is a shield to those who walk in integrity.

V. (*new lay leaders*) I am your servant; grant me understanding;
R. (*congregation*) **That I may know your decrees.**

Let us pray: O Eternal God, the foundation of all wisdom and the source of all courage: Enlighten with your grace the vestry and wardens of this congregation, and so rule their minds, and guide their counsels, that in all things they may seek your glory and promote the mission of your Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

In the Name of God and of this congregation, I commission you as lay leaders in the vestry of Church of the Nativity. And may God's blessing: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you now and remain with you always. *Amen.*



ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 26, 2020

Rev. Jan opened with prayer and Rev. Nature called the meeting to order.

Minutes from the 2019 Annual Meeting were reviewed. Harriet Stephens moved to approve the minutes as written; the motion was seconded by Rick Beauheim and passed with no discussion.

Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget: Brian Wiseman, Senior Warden, thanked the congregation for a positive response to concerns over the low pledge results mentioned at the recent budget hearing. Several more pledges have come in, bringing pledged amounts much closer to projected income. He feels that the FY2020 budget is now very attainable and much more realistic. The vestry eliminated the allocation for rector search expenses, choosing instead to draw from the Sabbatical Savings Fund when expenses arise. The savings fund will continue to be funded as before, and will be available to the next rector. Diocesan and Regional Assessments and Outreach will stay at FY2019 levels. The vestry approved the budget on January 23 with the changes noted. John Neste pointed out that the FY2020 budget is essentially the same as FY 2019's, putting Nativity a bit behind on the 5-year Financial Plan that is intended to bring the budget fully into the black. Brian responded that the intention is to return to the 5-year plan with FY2021, and urges the

parish to support that goal with their financial support.

Ministry Report - Peace & Justice Ministry, Jay Mashburn: Jay introduced Nativity's newest ministry, which will offer opportunities for parishioners to participate in social justice activities. The national church and diocese have been active in the social justice arena for a long time, but few local churches have followed their example. Jay feels that support for a peace and justice ministry has bubbled up from within the parish and is a way to follow Jesus in addressing social justice problems. He provided an immediate opportunity for anyone who would be willing to write letters to the managers of local City Market stores calling on them to adopt protections for ag workers as outlined by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' (CIW) Fair Food Program.

Recognition of outgoing leaders: Harriet Stephens and John Neste: Rev. Nature commended John Neste on the completion of his 3-year term on vestry, saying "when John speaks, everybody listens." Rev. Nature also thanked Harriet for her service as Treasurer, which she willingly extended another year beyond her own vestry term.

2019 Nativity Cross: Rev. Nature praised Jay and Rebecca Mashburn for their leadership and hard work with the Outreach committee and everything mission-related, saying "they've given Outreach legs in the Grand Valley, not just checks." At the same time, Dodie Rogers was re-awarded the Nativity Cross, which is now inscribed "P and D Rogers." Dodie was not present, but will receive her cross at a later date.

Commissioning of the new vestry members: Lynnnda Ebright and Charlie Ashton were received by the congregation and duly commissioned. Their terms will

conclude in January 2023. Charlie has also agreed to serve as Treasurer.

Rev. Nature concluded her remarks with recognition of Cindy Belsky, whose behind-the-scenes work as head of Altar Guild is vital to Nativity's worship. Cindy received a bouquet of roses.

Janet Azbell moved to adjourn. David Dancy seconded the motion, which passed on a voice vote. The meeting concluded with prayer at 11:20 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Christie Frank, Parish Administrator



PRIEST-IN-CHARGE'S COMMENTS

Rev. Lauren RE Larkin



Rev. Lauren prepares for her first worship service as Nativity's Priest-in-Charge on November 29, 2020.

It's been two months since I've stepped into being your priest in charge. It's evident to me that the Church of the Nativity is a special church steeped in the love of God and well oriented toward the love of neighbor. I've

enjoyed getting to know so many of you over the past few weeks; I look forward to meeting more of you and meeting in person when it is safe to do so.

Because I'm so new here, I've little to say about what has transpired—everything I've seen thus far is excellent, indicative of the good and faithful leadership of Rev. Nature. Mostly, what I can comment on is the vision that seems to be presenting itself as I learn more, listen more, and understand more. One of the things that made an indelible mark on me is Nativity's ability to create a space for belonging. The way you've embraced me and my family is both profound and moving. One of the visions that has presented itself

to me is the longing in our society for places of belonging such as this; I see Nativity uniquely set up to be a place of belonging for those who are craving depth of community.

With that said, one of the ways I'd love to engage this congregation is by means of intentional self-reflection and self-reckoning. (Better said: building off of the good foundation that is already here in and among you.) A recurring theme I've seen in my opportunities to teach both in classroom and sanctuary, is the real need for people of substance in the world. People who stand and speak where they are, and when they do, you feel their presence and their confidence. Our world is fracturing, being thrown into chaos, being pulled apart this way and that. I truly believe the only way for Christians to be of any earthly good at this time is to be people who can stand on their own two feet knowing what they believe and why they believe it, realizing they are always coming into self-actualization, and aware that learning can be difficult and scary but worth it.

And I think while we are still enduring our season of solitude unable to gather for worship, we should use this time to self-reflect and self-reckon, to use these longer and darker nights to ask those harder and more revealing questions, and to discern the divine movement in our lives moving us into the world (individually and corporately). We need to ask with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Who is Christ for us today?"

This is my prayer for you; this is my prayer for myself, too—I'm not exempt from regular and intentional self-reflection and self-reckoning. So, we're all in this together through faith in Christ, made one by the power of the Holy Spirit, unified in God. I'm excited for what's to come and to journey with you.

You are the beloved of God, dearly loved.

Humbly yours, Rev. Lauren

FIRESIDE CHATS AND COVID-ERA MINISTRY

Rev. Jan Head

In-person services were suspended at Nativity in March and the clergy team of Father Emil, Mother Jan, and Deacon Teri began brainstorming creative ways to continue to provide meaningful spiritual experiences for the congregation.

With the help of volunteers from the congregation, 37 "Triduum Kits" were distributed to Nativity families during Holy Week in April. The kits contained a short service for each day of the Triduum, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Day. To enhance the home worship experience the kits included a candle, homemade bread, and an original piece of art by Deacon Teri. And thanks to the hard work and creativity of our Prayers and Squares team, face masks for members of each household were included too!

As the extent of the pandemic became apparent, the clergy team searched for other ways to bring an element of love and Christian formation into the homes of the congregation on a regular

basis. Because there were many options for on line worship from churches across the country, we decided to do something different. Nativity

Fireside chats made their debut on April 7, 2020.

Each week the three of us would gather to

discuss one of the lectionary texts for the week. Members of the congregation were recruited to provide video recordings of the readings and Linda Jenks recorded hymns appropriate to the selected theme. Mother



Linda Jenks shared Musical Moments on YouTube to keep up our spirits during the shutdown.

Jan was responsible for doing the video editing to create the final product which was published

The Reverends Jan, Teri, and Emil shared worship, teaching, and laughter in their weekly Fireside Chats.



on Facebook and YouTube. During this time Linda Jenks and Noelle Smith also recorded Musical Moments which were shared on Facebook and YouTube.

Between April 7 and November 22, 2020, the team released 30 Fireside Chats. These 30 recordings were viewed almost 1,300 times, averaging over 40 views per week. On November 29, 2020 our new Priest in Charge, the Rev. Lauren Larkin, began live streaming services from Nativity and the Fireside Chats went into retirement.



SENIOR WARDEN'S & VESTRY REPORT

Brian Wiseman

Where to begin? 2020 has been an eventful year for all of us, and Church of the Nativity is no exception. I am sure for many of us there are a lot of things we would rather forget, but for Nativity it will be a year that we can remember for many great things.

We entered the year facing two major challenges. One was to organize and conduct a search for a Priest-in-Charge to fill the void left by Mother Nature as she left us January 31st to begin her well-deserved retirement. Our second challenge was to begin the renovation project on our building to ensure it will continue to serve us well into the future. Little did we know...

At the annual meeting in January we celebrated the contributions of both John Neste as his term on the vestry ended and Harriet Stephens who served as Treasurer

for a number of years. We welcomed Lynnda Ebright and Charlie Ashton to the vestry. Charlie accepted the role of Treasurer. The Nativity Cross for 2020 was awarded to Jay and Rebecca Mashburn. We all said farewell to Mother Nature Johnston as she ended her tenure with us at Nativity.

In February Father Emil Belsky, Mother Jan Head and Deacon Teri Shecter began serving Nativity as supply priests as we began the search process for our new Priest-in-Charge. We continued having discussions with the architect regarding renderings of possible design changes to the exterior of the building.

March presented us with COVID and reshaped our lives at Nativity for 2020. We began learning how to navigate a world with virtual meetings and services. For Holy Week in April our clergy team of Father Emil, Mother Jan and Deacon Teri put together Triduum kits that were distributed to parish members at their homes. On April 7th they began presenting weekly Fireside Chats keeping us all connected in the virtual world as the rest of our world felt unsteady. Linda Jenks provided service music for the Fireside Chats along with occasional guest appearances by other Nativity musicians.

Through the summer and fall the ministries of Nativity adapted and continued to have an impact in our community and our world. The Prayers and Squares group shifted from making quilts to producing hundreds of masks. Kathy Lyn kept Women Rowing North together and organized monthly Zoom gatherings. The Outreach committee continued to meet via Zoom, carrying forward the mission of Nativity of giving to others in need. Rev. Brenda hosted Veterans' gatherings outside at her home as we were not able to use the building. Numerous members have regularly been calling or writing fellow parishioners to help keep them connected

as a community. I know there are others who have continued to do things that support the mission of Nativity that I am not even aware of. To each of you, thank you very much.

In July the vestry and search committee were presented with candidates to interview for Priest-in-Charge. From August through October we interviewed five candidates. In October the position was offered to Rev. Lauren R.E. Larkin and she accepted the call to Nativity. We are very excited to have Lauren and her family become part of our Nativity family. With her guidance we look forward to navigating the months and years to come.

Everyone should be very proud of how, over the last 10 months of uncertainty, we have continued to support Nativity with our tithes, talents and time. As we look to 2021 and the prospects of an end to the pandemic, we are looking ahead to a bright future for Nativity.



TREASURER'S REPORT

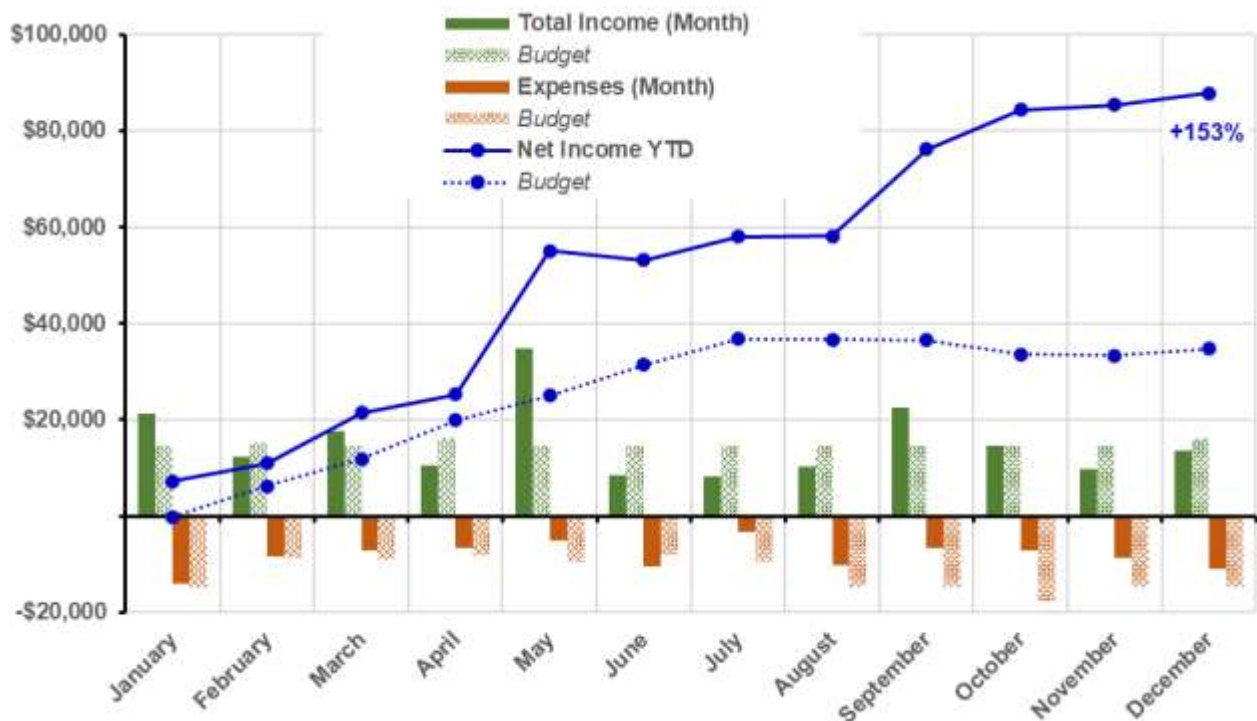
Charlie Ashton

In July 2020, we welcomed Micaela Folsom as our new bookkeeper, following Lynne Habberfield's departure. Micaela, who runs Arete Bookkeeping in Grand Junction, has extensive experience with accounting practices for non-profits such as churches.

Thanks to strong financial support from our members despite the uncertainties of 2020, **our total income of \$185,948 was 4% over budget.**

This income includes \$3,118 received in May as a COVID-related Small Business Association Payroll Protection Program loan, which was subsequently forgiven and therefore did not have to be repaid.

Because it took longer than expected to add our new Priest-in-Charge to the payroll, while operational costs were reduced by the pause in services due to COVID, **total expenses of \$98,053 were 32% under budget.**



With income up and expenses down, **our net income of \$87,895 for 2020 was 153% over budget** and we finished the year in a healthy cash position, with \$93,561 in our General Fund account. We also have approximately \$235,000 in donations for the building renovation project, which is now all held in cash accounts since CD interest rates are close to zero.

In 2020, we made several changes to our financial processes, some prompted by an independent review, in order to cut costs, improve efficiency and minimize errors, all while maintaining appropriate checks and balances within the system. Most of our regular bills are now paid automatically and electronically, while all transfers between our fund accounts are performed online.

At the start of 2021, we discontinued the use of Servant Keeper software for tracking donations, consolidating that function into our QuickBooks accounting system. This eliminates costs and potential errors associated with entering data into two separate systems. **Starting in April, quarterly giving statements will have a**

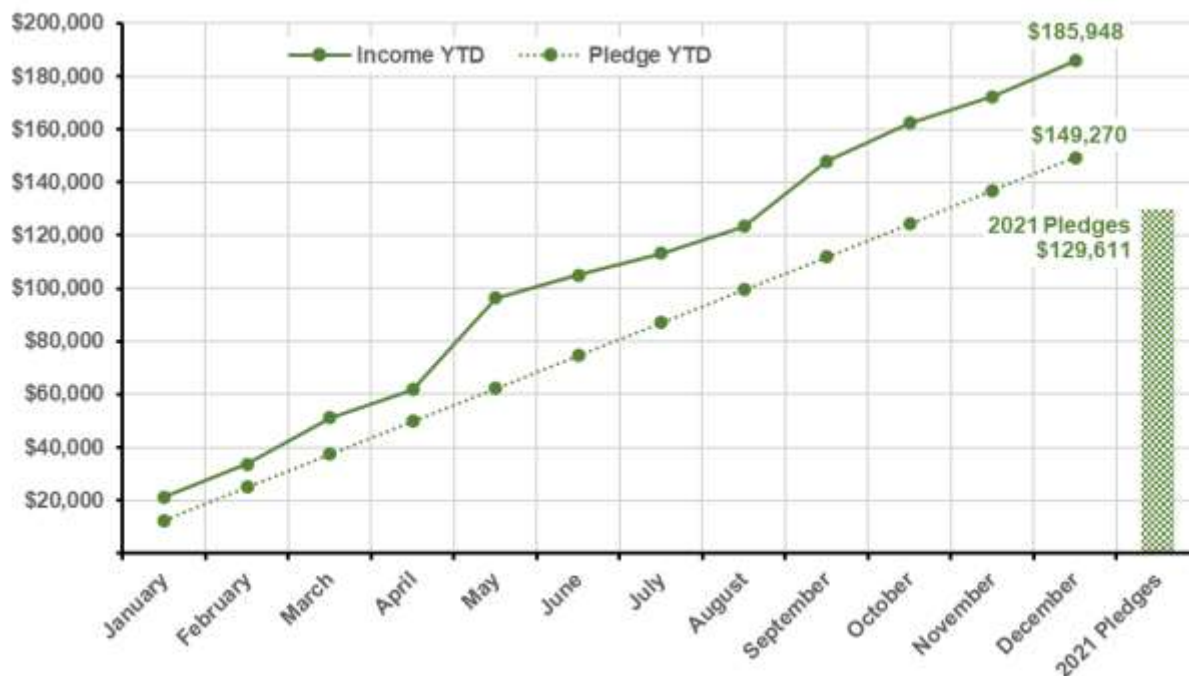
new appearance but contain the same information.

With sustained, generous donations from our members throughout the year, **our income in 2020 was 25% above the \$149,270 pledged for the General Fund.**

So far, members have pledged \$129,611 for 2021, which is 87% of the amount pledged for 2020. ***And if you haven't already made your pledge, it's not too late....***

While we start 2021 in a strong cash position, our annual expenses are projected to be close to 2019 levels, so on-going donations will be critical to achieving a surplus this year and preserving our cash.

Thank you for your generous, sustained support through the challenges of 2020 and for your kind pledges for 2021.



FINANCIAL REVIEWS (AUDITS) **IN 2020**

Charlie Ashton

During 2020, we conducted two reviews of the Church's financial processes and records. One was focused on our procedures and internal controls, while the other comprised a review of our financial statements for 2019.

The first review was performed by Jim Feldhake, CPA. The scope of this review included:

- Our processes for handling money that comes into the church;
- Our processes for spending money;
- Our processes for approving and managing payroll;
- Exploring whether the right people have visibility into transactions, pledges, donations and expenses.

After reviewing our processes, Mr. Feldhake provided a number of recommendations which we have implemented, such as:

- Producing a monthly balance sheet;
- Providing the Treasurer with on-going visibility into contributions received;
- Various improvements to our pledge accounting system and our process for resolving discrepancies in quarterly giving statements;
- Checks and balances around reporting Sunday collection count totals;
- Approval of payroll reports by the Treasurer;
- Installation of a locking mailbox to guarantee the security of contributions received by mail.

Mr. Feldhake summarized by saying "In general, the accounting and

control procedures are good and strive to provide a system of checks and balances with separation of duties to the extent possible in an organization of this size."

The second review, required by the Diocese, was performed by Soronen, Donley and Patterson, CPAs. This was a formal review of our financial statements and records for 2019, in line with the *Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services defined by the Accounting Review Services Committee of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (ASICA)*.

This review resulted in a few recommendations for minor adjustments in accounting journal entries made during 2019, relating to "donor restrictions" applied to specific donations. We implemented these adjustments in line with the recommendations and re-issued the applicable statements.

Soronen, Donley and Patterson summarized their report as follows: "Based on our review, we are not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the accompanying financial statements in order for them to be in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the USA."

We provided this report to the Diocese per their requirements.



PARISH LIFE: 2020

January

1/5: Paws for a Blessing
1/12: Annual budget hearing. Discussion about decrease in number of pledges.
1/25: Community reception for Rev. Nature
1/26: Final service with Rev. Nature. Annual meeting. Jay and Rebecca Mashburn receive the 2019 Nativity Cross. Potluck celebration and farewell for Rev. Nature. Executive responsibilities pass from Rector to Sr. Warden, Brian Wiseman.

Rev. Nature receives a farewell Prayers & Squares quilt after the Annual Meeting.



February

2/2: Paws for a Blessing
2/2, 2/9, 2/16, and 2/23: Fr. Emil, Mtr. Jan, Deacon Teri conduct regular services.
2/23: Cajun Cookoff; Search process begins for Priest-in-Charge

March

3/1: Paws for a Blessing
3/5: first COVID-19 case diagnosed in Colorado
3/8: Visit and meeting with Rev. Canon Vanessa Glass. Last in-person service
3/15: Diocese cancels all services and activities indefinitely.
3/21: first positive COVID-19 case in Mesa County
3/26: Vestry holds its first virtual meeting.

A sign of the times as Nativity entered a season of shutdown.



April

4/1: Prayers & Squares becomes the "Nativity Maskateers," making masks for Triduum kits and KidsAid Backpack Program.
4/8: Triduum kits distributed to parishioners
4/12: Clergy team pioneers Nativity's first virtual worship experience for Easter.
4/7: Clergy team launches the "Fireside Chat" series of worship videos.
4/27: Nativity mourns the passing of Bill Conklin
* Outreach Committee creates a calling tree to keep parishioners connected; also donated \$1700 to Karis and \$500 to Friends of Patan Hospital. Monthly Outreach meetings moved to Zoom.

May

- Maskateers and Friends create masks for the Navajo Nation and KidsAid
- Payroll Protection Program (PPP) Loan approved
- Outreach raises \$300 for hygiene kits for Underdog to distribute on Navajo Nation at a July spay/neuter/vaccine clinic
- Parish Profile and Community Portfolio submitted to diocese to be posted on Office of Transitional Ministry website.

June

- Maskateers & Friends masks totaled 1150 for KidsAid and 350 for Navajo Nation
- Women Rowing North (WRN) begins monthly virtual meetings, facilitated by Kathy Lyn
- Paws for a Blessing holds virtual meeting via YouTube (first meeting since March)
- Outreach gives \$600 to Adopt-a-Native-Elder Program and \$1440 to Riverside Education Center to purchase 6 personal Wi-Fi hotspots for students without internet at home. Also observes 8 minute 46 second kneel in honor of George Floyd
- Financial review conducted by Soronen, Donley and Patterson, CPAs
- 6/25: Nativity mourns the passing of Pauline Elliott

July

- Meeting with Canon Vanessa Glass to meet Priest-in-Charge candidates.
- Fireside Chats continue.
- Priest-in-charge search continues with the first round of candidate interviews in the second week of August.
- Pine Gulch Fire starts
- Maskateers & Friends make 225 masks for Underdog's spay/neuter/vaccine clinic

August

- Fireside Chats continue.
- Priest-in-charge search continues with interviews mid-month
- Grizzly Creek Fire starts 8/11; I-70 closed until 8/23
- Paws for a Blessing meets at Eagle Rim Park
- Outreach writes notes of encouragement to congregation members

September

- Fireside Chats continue.
- Interviews for Priest-in-Charge continue

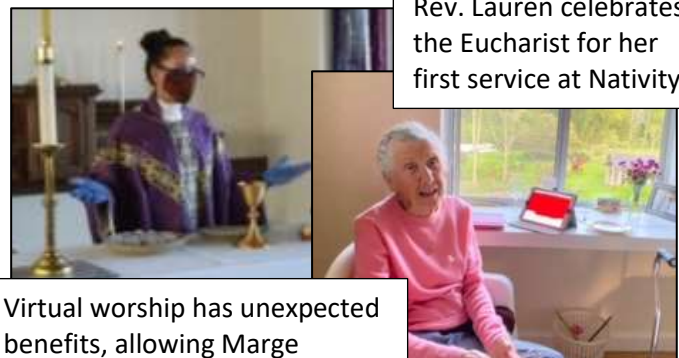
- First Regathering service planned for 9/27, but cancelled on 9/26 due to spike in COVID cases
- Outreach donates \$1000 to Latimer House for Men in Heels (no Nativity team this year)

October

- Fireside Chats continue.
- First in-person service since March, with 21 in attendance
- Rev. Lauren Larkin accepts call to become Nativity's Priest-in-Charge
- Outreach's Zoom meeting includes Cathy Donahoe from SAMS Ministry (Dominican Republic); the group votes to continue funding 2 scholarships there
- An early snow on the 25th damages 10,000 trees across Grand Junction
- Caring for All Creation participates in Hit the Trail for Harmony Acres fundraiser. Two Nativity Teams (The Rodeo Rabbits and The Knee Braces) raise \$1900

November

- November 29th- Rev. Lauren begins her ministry at Nativity with a Zoom service. Consecrated Communion kits are made available to pick up at church
- Paws for a Blessing conducts semi-annual memorial service in-person at church
- PPP Loan is converted to a grant.



Rev. Lauren celebrates the Eucharist for her first service at Nativity.

Virtual worship has unexpected benefits, allowing Marge Ebright to join in worship from her home in Colombia.

December

- 12/14: Sandy Hook memorial vigil conducted by Outreach via Zoom (6 attend)
- Outreach votes to split \$4300 among Karis, Project Cure, Adopt-a-Native-Elder, Food Bank of the Rockies, KidsAid, Salvation Army, Catholic Outreach, and Homeward Bound
- 12/16: first COVID vaccine arrives in Mesa County
- 12/17: Nativity mourns the passing of Tom Montgomery
- 12/22: Nativity mourns the passing of Taft Moore
- 12/24: Rev. Lauren leads a Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols celebration via Zoom (around 50 attend)



ADULT EDUCATION

Rev. Emil Belsky

Because of the pandemic, in 2020 Nativity's Sunday morning adult study featured only a single adult spiritual formation offering: Beyond Belief: A Marcus Borg Retrospective, a six session DVD study featuring favorite moments, core teachings and extensive never-before seen material of Marcus Borg from the Living the Questions archives, plus commentary from Marcus's widow, The Rev. Marianne Borg.



ALTAR GUILD

Cindy Belsky

As you already know, church services were cancelled from mid-March of 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although things are not exactly the same as they were before (an understatement!), Altar Guild members have proven to be flexible and creative. Since we have been allowed to resume in-person services in a

very limited way for live-streaming, Guild members have risen to take up their ministry once again. It was especially great to get back and decorate for the services of Lessons & Carols and Christmas. The members of the Altar Guild include Cindy Belsky, Lynnda Ebright, Audrey Heermans, Betsy Martin, Sandy Martin, Marti Rogers, and Robyn Wischmann. We take turns with altar duty, so we only have to cover once every 6th week. If you are interested in this special ministry, please talk to any of the members. We would be happy to train you.



CENTERING PRAYER

Karen Sjoberg

Pre-COVID, a group of us gathered every Tuesday in the sanctuary for Centering Prayer before the pandemic temporarily closed the church. Although we don't gather physically during this time, we continue to gather spiritually. After all, we don't need a building to experience the presence of God and the spirit of our neighbors.

Every Tuesday at 5:00 pm, we practice the silent meditation of Centering Prayer in our respective homes for twenty minutes. We connect by texting on our cell phones at the beginning and end of our short time together. This weekly spiritual gathering connects us in ways that can never be disrupted by COVID restrictions. You too are invited to pray with us. The spiritual practice of Centering helps to remind us that we are not alone as we weather the winter days.

For more information on how to join, along with the basics of the simple method of Centering Prayer, contact Karen Sjoberg, 970-242-1054, or email kpsjoberg@gmail.com



CARING FOR ALL CREATION

Rev. Teri Shecter

At the beginning of 2020 we were able to hold the January, February and March monthly Paws services. From the middle of March to the end of 2020 it's much easier to summarize the planned events we cancelled because of the Pandemic:

- Most of the PAWS for a Blessing monthly services
- All animal burial services
- The Animal Care Fair
- The Underdog spay/neuter trip to the Navajo Nation in November
- The Caring for Creation Lecture Series



Rev. Teri and Rev. Jan bless the memorial trees at Roice-Hurst.

We recorded a YouTube Paws service for April and were able to hold 2 other outdoor services, one in August and one in October.

In October Rev. Jan and I conducted on outdoor Blessing of the Trees at the Roice-Hurst Animal Shelter. These trees were planted as memorials.

In September, October and November two teams of Nativity volunteers hiked, biked and ran to raise money for Harmony Acres Equestrian Center in Loma. Harmony provides Equine Assisted Therapy to trauma victims in our community. Their facility is "home to many animals, not just horses. We have over 40 animals in our care, including alpacas, sheep, goats, rabbits, cats, and a donkey, to name just a few. We believe strongly that all animals have an important place, purpose and lesson to teach, and that the love we offer all in our care comes full circle to benefit all in our greater community."

Right: Gracie the Dog, Rev. Jan, and Rev. Teri (plus Brian and Susan Wiseman, not shown) were the Rodeo Rabbits



Left: Charlie and Janice Ashton (plus Bryn Brocklesby and Rev. Teri, not shown) were the Knee Braces



Our two teams "The Knee Braces" and the "Rodeo Rabbits" raised \$1,900.00 for Harmony Acres.

As the Pandemic subsides and vaccinations reach more and more of our population, we hope to accomplish the following in 2021:

- Resume monthly Paws for Blessing services and animal burials (when requested).
- Resume our plans to volunteer on the Navajo Nation with Underdog spay/neuter clinics. Explore how we might include volunteer work with the Adopt a Native Elder food distribution program.
- Renew our outreach in public education as we work with Defenders of Wildlife in protecting endangered species.

If you would like to become involved in Caring for All Creation please let me know.



ENDOWMENT AND FINANCE

Harriet Stephens

The charge of the Finance Committee is to oversee the annual audit and the annual budget preparation.

In 2020 instead of the usual internal audit we authorized a review of our financial records by a local CPA firm. This review was received by the vestry at their August

meeting. There were no significant adjustments and all adjustments have been made to our records.

We also authorized a review of our internal control procedures. This review was conducted by a retired CPA and was presented to the vestry at their June meeting. Again, no significant problems were noted and several minor adjustments have been made.

The budget for the year 2021 was prepared by the Treasurer, reviewed by the Finance Committee and presented to the vestry at their November meeting.

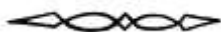
The Endowment Committee was not active in 2020 and no funds were withdrawn from the Endowment Fund. The balances of the fund were \$97,656 at 12/31/2019 and \$108,079 at 12/31/2020.



HOSPITALITY

Cindy Belsky & Tina Manchee

Since the COVID-19 restrictions began, one of the great things we sorely miss is being able to get together in person with the other members of our church family. An integral part of life at Nativity, our coffee hour after the service each Sunday was a wonderful time to welcome visitors, catch up with friends and celebrate special occasions. Some of our usual special events include Lessons & Carols, the Annual Meeting, the Cajun Cook-off, parishioners' birthdays and anniversaries. Sharing a cup of coffee, tea, or juice and a snack—or sometimes even a small meal makes our time together even more enjoyable. Hospitality is shared when everyone helps out by taking a turn at bringing treats. Please consider helping with this important ministry when we are able to resume in-person services.



MUSIC

Linda Jenks, DMA

As you may imagine, our in-person events at Nativity were almost nil during the year 2020. The upside to that was, we were observing important protocols to keep each other safe.

The Grand Junction Music Teachers' Association had one meeting in January, I think, and for a few weeks The Shining Stars Music Academy held their classes downstairs. Those activities were halted in March.

Happily, Rev. Jan, Rev. Teri and Rev. Emil then began to broadcast our series of weekly Fireside Chats. Jan advised me of the necessary music, I recorded same and emailed it to her, and she would work her magic, interweaving the music with beautiful photos of landscapes and people and animals to create a wonderfully enhanced online experience. Thanks to all of you Techno Pros who made that possible.

Over the summer, I recorded a series of Musical Moments, sent them to Jan, and she posted them on YouTube (international fame at last). We were also blessed with additional musical contributions from Jeri and Brian Hanly and Karin Lee Hughes.

Once Rev. Lauren began guiding our Sunday services, we returned to our familiar musical format, modified a little because of Zoom limitations. Also as a result of Lauren's enthusiasm and energy, we were able to produce an online Lessons and Carols Service for Christmas Eve. That service was especially inspiring, because we were able to draw on the musical talents of Karin Lee Hughes, her talented daughters Rachel and Laurel, the beauty of Noelle Goslee Smith's cello playing, and an ensemble Silent Night from Jack Larkin and Quinn Larkin. Lauren's entire family contributed recitation

assistance for that service, as they do for so many others.

A technical leitmotif throughout the entire year has been the invaluable assistance from Charlie Ashton. He has helped me with all of my naive questions and has facilitated everything that has been accomplished, including teaching me how to organize Zoom meetings for our Music Committee, which is now up and running again.

The year 2020 was more challenging, for sure, but Nativity parishioners stepped up to the plate and continued to generate kindness and tolerance and love towards all. Thanks for letting me be a part of this work.



OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Jay & Rebecca Mashburn

The Church of the Nativity Outreach Committee continues to make compassionate and charitable distributions on your behalf with a focus on impacting local, national and international need. The Outreach Committee members believe that the amount of resource assistance provided this year is the most ever. The nine-member committee is honored to respond in the name of Christ on your behalf and we continue to encourage participation by any parish members who would care to join us. We thank you for the trust that you put in us. Monthly outreach meetings moved from in-person gatherings to virtual Zoom conferencing, but continued throughout the year. We are no longer able to create the ‘hands on’ opportunities to be involved as the serving hands

of Christ, but we are hoping to return to these sorts of activities sometime in 2021.

Accomplishments:

Local

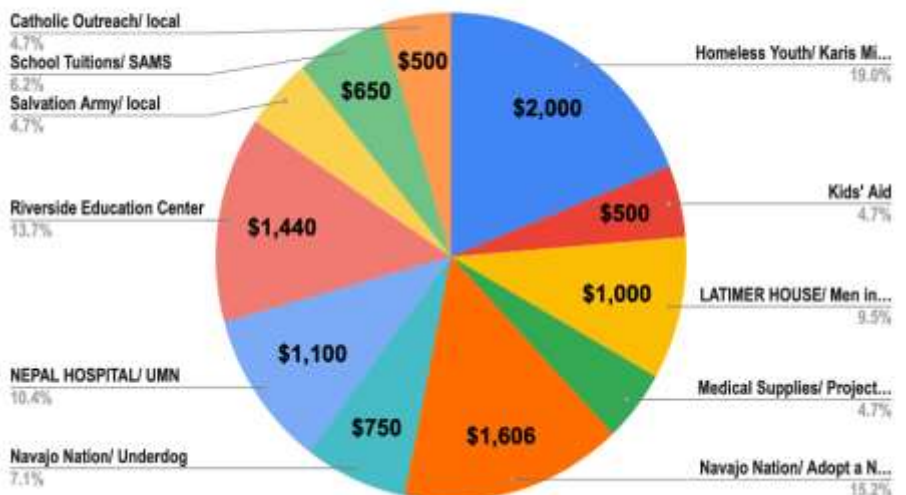
We were able to fund MiFi routers for District 51 students at Riverside Education Center (REC) to transition from classroom to virtual schooling. REC put out a request to directly assist students be able and continue their education as things quickly shifted in the spring.

We made contributions to Kids Aid, Catholic Outreach and Salvation Army food programs to assist area residents who experienced food insecurity. A special thanks to all of the volunteers who made masks that were distributed by Kids Aid.

We funded, but were not able to run in the Hilltop’s Men in Heels fundraising event for the Latimer House. Latimer House is our local domestic violence shelter. We are all looking forward to Daniel Larkin’s debut in high heels at the 2021 race.

We continue to support Karis Ministries with donations to their general program for The House, Bonnie’s House, etc... They operated six shelters for homeless youth, a drop-in program, and street outreach. We also contributed to the

Outreach Contributions \$10,546



new apartments and social services complex construction that was completed in October.

National

We participated in Adopt a Native Elder food assistance program on the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation was hit particularly hard by the pandemic and related food insecurity.

Nativity volunteers have worked Underdog to provide pet spay/neuter clinics along with basic hygiene and personal protective equipment (PPE) necessities distribution in the past. This year we did a donation drive for them and contributed to fund Underdog’s assistance work.

We were also able to work with Project CURE a Colorado based international medical equipment and supplies donator to get a truck load of medical supplies and PPE to a hospital on the Navajo Nation

International

Cathy Donahoe, the Society of Anglican Missionaries and Senders (SAMS) physical therapy instructor that we support in the Dominican Republic, has returned to Colorado. We were able to directly support primary and secondary students’ tuition through the relationships that she has built. We were able to continue support operations of Okhaldhunga Hospital by the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) in eastern Nepal. The hospital sent out an urgent funding plea because they suffered the loss of much of their operating funds during the pandemic.



PRAYER MINISTRY

Rev. Emil Belsky

Church of the Nativity’s prayer ministry consists of 12 parishioners who have committed themselves to pray daily in a manner of their own choosing for those individuals requesting it. Our prayer list is updated monthly with a provision for urgent, immediate requests. In 2020 we received prayer requests from individuals as far away as Arkansas, California, Illinois, Maryland, Nebraska, Texas, Utah, and Germany. All are welcome to participate in this ministry, the only requirements being 1) a promise to pray daily for those in need and 2) a promise to maintain strict confidentiality.

PRAYERS AND SQUARES

Susan Wiseman

The Prayers and Squares ministry at Nativity is now in our 17th year! 2020 saw us change our focus considerably...in fact, the only quilt we made and blessed was the one given to Rev. Nature in honor of her retirement in January. Although we weren’t meeting together twice each month to design and create prayer quilts, the happy group was able to find a different outlet for our stitching energies. We became The Nativity Maskateers! Various members of the group helped a local quilt shop sew 5,000 masks for St. Mary’s Hospital and



Just a few of the hundreds of masks that were lovingly hand-crafted by the Nativity Maskateers.

over 500 masks for the VA Hospital. We made masks for our congregation that were included in the Triduum kits during Holy Week. And we jumped into a project in conjunction with some friends from a different local quilt shop to make hundreds of masks for KidsAid as well as hundreds more for the Navajo Nation. We are hopeful and prayerful that 2021 will allow us the opportunity to get back to making prayer quilts.

We welcome anyone interested in joining us in this special ministry . . . no experience or expertise needed!



PASTORAL CARE TEAM

Rev. Emil Belsky

Church of the Nativity's pastoral care team was formed in 2016 to ensure pastoral care through visitation and calls for Holy Communion to those in the parish recovering from surgery, in nursing home care, homebound, or otherwise isolated from our faith community. The team consists of the Reverends Teri Shecter, Emil Belsky, and Jan Head, as well as Licensed Eucharistic Visitors Lynnda Ebright, Kathy Lyn, Mickey Shanabarger, Sandy Martin, Marti Rogers, Cat Montgomery, and the late Tom Montgomery. Visitation suffered an abrupt halt in mid-March due to the pandemic and directives from the Office of the Bishop. Thereafter contact with parishioners was maintained largely by means of phone calls and the taped weekly Fireside Chats conducted by clergy team members.



SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY

Rev. Emil Belsky

The winter term of Church of the Nativity's Spiritual University featured Meister Eckhart: Master of the Encounter with God. Today Meister Eckhart (c.1260-1328) is recognized as one of Christianity's most significant spiritual writers and mystics. Yet his teaching is not always easy to understand and has at times been grossly misunderstood. Course topics included:

- Who is Meister Eckhart, Preacher and Teacher
- Eckhart's "Metaphysics of Flow"
- Saying and Unsayng: The Impoverishment of God Language
- Detachment: Eckhart's Abgeschiedenheit & Gelassenheit
- Living Without a Why
- The Birth of the Word in the Soul
- Theosis, or Union with God
- Beyond Condemnation: Eckhart's Lasting Legacy

This series began in early January and continued through early March, ending just before the pandemic curtailed meeting. There were 18 registrants for this winter term offering.



VETS, FRIENDS, AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Brenda Fhuere

We were only able to meet at the VA One Source Center for two weeks before it was closed again due to the pandemic.

The One Source Center is in the process of gaining a Five Star rating concerning the Covid-19 spread. If that happens or if the VA staff is allowed to transport veterans for social purposes and the Church of the Nativity is opened we will be able to resume weekly contact with the Vets . Until such time we are closed...

I continue to communicate with the Vets individually through phone calls and “thinking of you “ cards if I have an address or phone number. I am in contact with the VA staff on a regular basis.

Through a monetary gift from a former student nurse who has stayed in touch I was able to help one Veteran to purchase items he needed to move to a better location.

We look forward to the time when we will be able connect with each other in real time and continue to listen, love and laugh together!



The Nativity Cross is an award of distinction granted yearly to a member or members for exceptional leadership and service to the church. Founding priest Fr. Muzz Ebricht initiated the award and Deacon Teri Shecter designed the cross. It is granted by decision of the clergy.

Nativity Cross Recipients

- 2003 Alyse Wade
- 2004 Clara Schultz & David Sundal
- 2005 Phil Rogers & Dodie Rogers
- 2006 Susan Wiseman
- 2007 Reenie Neal
- 2008 Jo Culberson
- 2009 Tom Kucel
- 2010 Tom & Phyllis Clugston
- 2011 deese Dancy
- 2012 Jim Vaughn
- 2013 Rick Beauheim
- 2014 Jan Head
- 2015 Mickey Shanabarger
- 2016 Scott Wood & Cindy Belsky
- 2017 Brian Wiseman
- 2018 Ben Manchee
- 2019 Jay & Rebecca Mashburn
- 2020 ??????

The honoree for 2020 will be awarded at this year's Annual Meeting and featured in the 2022 Annual Report.

Nativity Cross 2019

Jay and Rebecca Mashburn were the recipients of the Nativity Cross for 2019. They have filled many roles in the life of the Church of the Nativity. These have included serving on the Strategic Planning Committee, the Vestry, heading up the Outreach Committee and being the driving force behind forming the Peace and Justice Ministry. They have organized our involvement in ShareFest, helping provide physical labor support to community members. They were early advocates for the young adult home Bonnie's House. There they worked tirelessly to help give homeless youth a new start. Serving others has been a mission of Jay and Rebecca's life.

The Mashburns met while serving as Peace Corps agriculture volunteers in Africa. They returned to the US, got married and both attend seminary. Rebecca started medical school the Monday following graduation. As class president she worked with faculty to establish a program for medical students to screen homeless shelter clients each week. She volunteered at summer clinics providing free medical care to rural working poor residents across the state. She gave birth to their children while completing medical school and a rural family practice residency. They then served as mission co-workers in eastern Nepal at a hydropower project and hospital. They moved to the Grand Valley as they returned to the States. They briefly returned to the hospital to provide respite for a Norwegian physician. This provided the opportunity to start our local Project CURE warehouse. They worked as house parents at a children's shelter. They worked at or ran church youth programs. They began attending the Church of the Nativity in 2008. They serve on the Nativity Outreach Committee and Peace & Justice Ministry.

Jay and Rebecca epitomize what a lot of us strive for, to live a life of service to others and to promote a world of justice and equality.