



July 2019
Quarterly Magazine
3rd Issue

The Communicator

What if God “Retired”?

by Lyn G. Derenski

What if God had chosen to retire and didn't take the time to instruct Noah to build the ark? Would there have been a chosen people? What if God had chosen to retire before calling Moses to bring the Israelites out of Egypt to the promise land? Even worse, what if God had chosen to retire before He sent His son to reconcile us to Him?

Surprisingly, you may ask “Why would I even ask the question?”. Well, guess what the most common answer our Nativity Pastor, Council and Ministry Chairs receive when they ask members to help or serve in some capacity? That answer is “I’m retired.”

From a personal stand point, I remember in my 20's through my 50's I often looked forward to being able to do all those “special projects” when I retired. Yes, I served on council, building and mortgage reduction campaigns, taught Sunday School and Confirmation classes, worked rummage sales and church dinners.

But this was all while working full-time and raising a daughter who was involved in a multitude of activities.

We are quick to ask God for His help. Are we as quick to do the same for God? When God needs someone to be a greeter, usher, assisting minister, serve as a chairperson or council member, do we step up and take care of His house? In addition, God also asks us to care for our brothers and sisters. Do we volunteer to visit the sick, work in the food pantry or serve on the hospitality committee?

The old adage I have heard is that “20% of a congregation does 80% of the work”. But I think our congregation is much better than that. I look at the 66+ ministries, the office assistants, chairpersons, the Ministry Area Leaders, Deacons and council members and know that there is such a variety of ways to serve that surely there is something for everyone.

Sunday Worship Services
8:30 & 11:00 AM

Adult Forum 9:45 to 10:45 AM
Children's Sunday School begins Aug. 25th



PASTOR'S PASSION

by Rev. G. Mattei

It is fascinating to make eye contact with babies. Smile or make faces at them and watch them try to repeat the same expressions. Discovered in the early 1990s by Italian scientists, mirror neurons are a type of brain cell that tends to replicate an action observed in another individual. We learn new behaviors through observation and mimicry. The study of mirror neurons helps us explain not only how and why we tend to repeat an action we see performed (a smile or a yawn) but also how and why we feel attuned to other people's minds and even feel empathy for them. The researchers are convinced that the study of "mirror neurons might help explain not only empathy but also autism and even the evolution of language." We learn by imitating.

During his last meal with the disciples, Jesus, in his farewell speech, introduces a ritual that children or slaves did for house guests: the washing of his disciples' feet. It was proof of his love for them, an example of service they were to follow (John 13:1-15).

We look at Jesus and his sacrificial love for us, and if our (spiritual) sight is not impaired, we repeat what we see. He leads as the Good Shepherd he is, and we, the sheep of his fold, mimic him by following in his footsteps. He loves the last, the least and the lost, and filled with his Spirit, we do the same. He climbs on a cross for love of us and we do the same for the sake of the world.

He looks at us and sees a Child of God. Then he smiles and we are pleased. We smile back and, in his eyes, we see ourselves reflected in a tender expression. Could it be that he is crazy about us? In his eyes we see an image of us. Do we see what he sees? Do we see mercy, compassion and deep love in those eyes? Are we able and willing to do the same to ourselves? To others?

***Let us love one another as he has loved us...
until the end.***

The 2020 Passion Play in Bavaria Germany



In 1633 the Oberammergau villagers promised to perform a play about the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ every tenth year if God would spare their Bavarian village from the plague that was ravaging Europe. Their prayer was answered and the play has been staged by the villagers every decade since, with exceptions during the two World Wars.

A group from Nativity lead by Rev. Dr. Carlan Helegeson will be attending the performance as part of a tour in July of 2020. They met in March to discuss the play, food, accommodations and even learn some German.

by Lyn G. Derenski

4 AREAS OF MINISTRY

To accomplish our mission, we organize our ministry teams into four areas.

Spiritual Life

Jack Page

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Ruth Ann Hoy

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Columbarium

Mercy Ministry

Communion
& Visitation
Grief Support
Prayer Chain

Pavers

Stewardship

Worship & Music

Acolytes & Crucifers
Altar Guild
Assisting Ministers
Audio-Video
Bulletin Folders
Choir
Greeters
Nativity Ringers
Nursery
Readers
Sanctuary Team
Ushers

* Under consideration

Outreach

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Backpack Ministry

Communication Team

Evangelism Team

Food Pantry

Fund Raisers*

Membership Team

Mission & Outreach

(Assist internal & external ministries)

Angel Tree
Global Missions - Haiti
Golden Rainbow
Ranch
Luther Springs
New Generation
People Helping
People
Resurrection House
World Hunger - ELCA
Mission Endowment
Thrivent Action Team

Christian Ed

Karen Crawford

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Adult Forum

(Sunday Bible Study)

Archives

Bible Study

Ceremonies

Baptism
- Cradle Roll
1st Communion
Confirmation
Funerals
Weddings
New Members Class

Children's Sunday

School

Library

Vacation Bible School

Youth Ministry

Luther League
Youth Advisory
Council

Community Life

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Book Club

Coffee Hour

Dinner for Eight

Fellowship

Finance Committee

Audit
Counters
Data Entry

Gardens

Golf

Hospitality

Lay Leadership

Memorial

Men's Group

Mutual Ministry

*Parish Nurse**

Property & Safety

Women of Nativity

(all women are members)

Cards R Us
Crafty Ladies
Days for Girls
Friendship Circle
Mary Joy Circle
Sarah Circle

Nativity Lutheran Church Website

nlcww.org

Community Life

by Susan Nordstrom

Crafty Ladies



Mary McDowall, Marge Spina, Terry Halgren, Joanne Johnson, Jill Helgeson (co-leader), and Albertha Brown

Nativity's Crafty Ladies, one of the Women of Nativity's (WON) circles, has been around for 30 years. Beginning in 1989, Crafty Ladies organized and began making quilts for Lutheran World Relief (LWR), as well as creating other crafts. For many years, they made beautiful favors for everyone attending the WON Christmas parties. In addition, Crafty Ladies was tasked with non-crafty duties, like folding the bulletins and pulling apart palm fronds for Palm Sundays.

No one has kept a record of the total number of quilts Crafty Ladies has made in these last 3 decades, but they exceeded 300 in at least one year. In 2018, 163 quilts were completed and shipped to LWR by Nativity's Crafty Ladies!

The quilts sent to Lutheran World Relief go to areas in Asia, East Africa, West Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. They are given to the people who need them, regardless of their religious creed. LWR partners with the UN Foundation, Starbucks, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Thrivent Financial, UNICEF, and other organizations to provide \$13 million worth of quilts and kits each year.

Crafty Ladies also has provided quilts to each of Hernando County's Drug and Mental Health Court

graduates for the past few years. Participating in Hernando County's court graduations is another WON mission project.

One memory the Crafty Ladies enjoy is when Rita Schwab brought her great grandchildren with her to make quilts. Another was of Joan Bellion, who told the quilters she was their union representative and, if they worked hard, she would get them a raise!

To help with their mission, Crafty Ladies would appreciate your donations of sergers, sewing machines, cotton and cotton/poly blend fabric and cash.

An average of 10-15 Crafty Ladies meets Friday mornings at 9:00 to cut, iron, design tops, sew, and tie the quilts. Jill and Lilo invite anyone interested in making quilts for this important cause to join them on a Friday morning and give it a try. It is a great place to get acquainted with other members. Remember, all women members of Nativity are automatically members of Women of Nativity.



Gunnell Perez, Brenda Mullins, Marilyn Henkel, and Lilo Horeis (co-leader)

Christian Education

by Lyn G. Derenski

DEACONS

Beginning with New Testament times through the centuries deacons served on behalf of the church. Their place and authority grew and waned. Most often they served among the marginalized. In recent decades churches have been rediscovering the role of the deacon, particularly the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, the global Anglican Community and the Lutheran World Federation. Deacons are helping the ELCA see how the church can be of service in numerous new ways.

ELCA deacons now serve in diverse ministries. For example: neighborhood organizing, congregation administration, disability ministries, college presidency, shared parish ministry with a pastor, Lutheran Social Services, Lutheran education, global leadership, hospital chaplaincy, urban education ministries, wellness, churchwide worship and music ministries.

We are blessed to have 3 members who have answered the call to be deacons. That sounds so easy: they just answered a call, as if they just picked up the phone and said “yes”. There is so much more involved, such as the time commitment taken from their family, their personal and social preferences. Then there is the studying, the Old and New

Testaments, the Reformation and theology. All of this is to serve with knowledge and understanding. In the case of the deacons of NLC, their years of preparation and time commitment to study now changes to embrace the needs of an entire congregation.

To learn more about our deacons Ruth Ann Hoy, Clyde Rosten and Jack Page go to our website at nlcww.org and read their bios. Better yet, talk to them about their journeys and make sure to thank them for all they bring to our congregation!



Clyde Rosten, Ruth Ann Hoy, Jack Page



Material included in The Communicator for Nativity is gathered from Committee Reports. If you would like material included in the publication, please submit your Committee Report to your ministry area leader (MAL).

CHURCH COUNCIL

by Ed Lewis, Congregation Council President

Congregational Change

I recently heard about a bumper sticker that said: “Whoever said change is inevitable, clearly never bought a Snickers from this vending machine.” Nativity Lutheran Church is not a vending machine and many in leadership roles are trying to introduce some interesting changes. Do we need to change or are we ok just as we are?

In his book “Leading Change in the Congregation,” Gilbert R. Rendle states: “We are in a cultural shift from a time of honoring ‘sameness’ to a time of honoring ‘difference’.” He points out that most of us, who are of a certain age, grew up during a time when our church congregations were structured and behaved the same way as other congregations of our faith tradition. We lived in a culture of reinforced sameness. When I was growing up, everyone in our town had the same basic telephone. The only difference was whether your family had a private line or a party line. In either



case, the phone was black, heavy, and had a wire attaching it to the wall. They were all the same. Churches were the same. I grew up in a Methodist tradition. We worshiped like all other

Methodists in our area; had the same administrative groups; and had meetings on the same weekday evenings. We lived in a world that seemed to say one-size fits all.

But we don’t live in that culture anymore. If you want a new phone, you have a variety of choices. You can still get a black phone that is attached to the wall with a wire. Or you can look at a wide variety of cell phones.

Our church needs to recognize that we live in a world where people have choices and what we did yesterday might not work in this new culture. The young people of today are bombarded by a fast-paced society that includes a variety of stimuli. They have grown up with television, computers, smartphones, and tablets. Though they see a radio in a car, most have no idea what a transistor radio was. We must think of how they learn concepts today and translate that into what we provide for spiritual opportunities. A flannel board with a cut-out Mary and Joseph with the baby Jesus probably isn’t appropriate anymore.



Two fears often arise when change is on the horizon. The fear of too much change and the fear of too little change. Our leadership has the challenge to find ways to move from the culture of sameness (the status quo) to the culture of difference. It might mean that leadership may not get “it” exactly right because there really isn’t an “it” to get right. As we promote change, we might not always find the right answer, but we must be agile enough to find the right next step. Our leaders need to not feel like they are trying to steer a parked car nor trying to win a NASCAR race.

As you hear of proposed changes for our church, realize that your church leadership – the Pastor, the Congregation Council, various committees, and organizations -- are looking toward the future and trying to make Nativity Lutheran Church a place that is faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and relevant in a world of difference.

DINNER FOR 8

Community Life Ministry

by Jane Henkel

“A way to get to know people at Nativity.”

“A chance to visit new areas around Florida with new friends.”

“Sharing more than my faith with others at Nativity.”

“I don’t have family in the area and want to make connections in the Nativity community.”



Susan Lee, Carolyn Chamberlain, Evelyn Galli,
Jill Helgeson, Dow Chamberlain

Thai Restaurant with dessert at Ev's



Ann and Richard Wright's with Nancy Vangilder,
Marilyn Henkel, Dennis and Pam (not pictured) Rogers
Dinner at the Wright's

Pastor Phil Schroeder shared the beginnings of this ministry: the idea formed in February 2010 and was implemented by Bob & Jean Drach, the Rostens, the Schroeders and others. Bulletin announcements and inserts announced its yearly formation. Couples and singles joined with some years having upwards of 40 people divided into groups of 8.

The groups usually met once monthly from January through April at a pre-designated restaurant or home. An activity would sometimes follow—those in the past 9 years have included boating excursions, museum visits or table games. A 2020 Dinner for Eight is being planned. Be on the lookout for details in the Fall announcements and newsletter.

Current and previous Dinner for Eight participants shared the above reasons why they have participated. But all felt this was an opportunity to make new Nativity friends by socializing in small groups.



Dan Derenski, Johnny & Brenda Mullins, Pam & Larry Anderson,
Libby & John Capell, Lyn Derenski

Red Mule Tavern & Ghost tour at the Museum



Rosie & Clyde Rosten, Jane & Scott Henkel,
Laura & Larry Fortner and Marilyn Henkel (guess)

Homosassa Cruise on the Henkel's boat

Spiritual Life

by Lyn G. Derenski

Audio/Visual



Christ's message to the community and to those unable to attend services. The aid for enhanced hearing is also a by-product of the A/V system.

Another factor is providing formats and methods that will enrich and make options available as well as adding variety to worship services. The ability to have hymns, announcements, service scripts, readings or spiritual music and images that can be seen with greater ease are made possible.

Art is always looking for additional team members to join this very important ministry. Art assures me if you can operate a TV remote and have good hearing, you qualify to be on the A/V team. If you might be interested, see Art at the A/V console following most services.

Art Alt and his team of Guy Peeters, Sean Patterson, Mark Major and Tim Cotter have begun to develop an Audio/Visual system that will allow for expansion and future equipment upgrades. The major components requiring consideration for an A/V system are to reach out by delivering Christ message to the greater community and the second is to expand the worship experience.

In 2017 NLC began to broadcast our Sunday worship service on WZEU-FM 102.9 every Sunday at 6PM. The services are also video recorded and available for viewing on the nlcww.org website. Additionally, available on the website are the Pastor's sermons in a text format to be read or printed out. These media bring





OUTREACH

Mission & Outreach

Sacrificial giving is the act of giving beyond what has been pledged to support the congregation for the benefit of others in worship and devotion to God.



by Lyn G. Derenski

A NEW GENERATION

Is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization providing One-on-One Confidential Peer Counseling services at no cost. This organization offers programs, classes and counseling for family and parenting, healthy life choices, pregnancy services and men's programs. This article's focus is on these last two, pregnancy services and men's programs.

The following is a list of pregnancy services:

- Free Pregnancy Testing
- Medical Referral
- Ultrasound for Pregnancy Verification
- Baby Boutique
- Adoption Education & Support

Pregnancy, as we all know, is life changing and can be met with great anxiety, especially if finances are tight. The ability to get testing promptly, without the delay or cost worries, allows the individual or couple to focus on the next phase of decision-making. Options, guidance and support can make an enormous difference in all the lives involved.

The programs for men are an area often overlooked. Many of today's young men don't have a father or mentor to assist them, either by example or as a resource for exploring options. men's programs offered by A New Generation are:

- Fatherhood Programs
- Man-to-Man Mentoring

Nativity assisted in making these services available by raising \$1,158.74 during our 2019 Monthly Mission Program for A New Generation.

GOLDEN RAINBOW RANCH

Golden Rainbow Ranch is a non-profit organization offering hands-on farm and nature activities on a beautiful 10-acre farm in Brooksville. Owners Ali and Dave Baylor taught for many years but Dave was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2001. Unfortunately the tumor returned after being surgically removed. The couple then moved to a country environment hoping it would help Dave to heal, or at least live out his time in a beautiful setting. David's tumor began shrinking and his symptoms abated. The couple decided to share the healing country environment with as many kids (and animals) as possible. They opened the ranch up to families, youth groups, field trips, summer camps for autistic/special needs children and members of Big Brothers Big Sisters. They also serve the Runaway Alternatives Project, developmentally disabled adults, "Mom's groups", and anyone else who wants to visit. Golden Rainbow Ranch offers 2 - 6 hour programs tailored to individual group needs.

Research has shown that children and adults, especially those with disabilities, display a more "positive mood" in a rural environment. Learning improves with the boosting of listening skills and attentiveness when in a different than normal setting. Empathy for an animal can translate to empathy towards other humans and improve social behaviors. It has also been proven to lower heart rate and blood pressure when interacting with animals.

Through our 2019 Monthly Mission Program, Nativity raised \$930 in cash donations and supplies in support of the Golden Rainbow Ranch.



Mutual Ministries

Community Life Ministry

by Lyn G. Derenski

How does a church resolve differences with a pastor, staff members, leadership, programs, music, ministries or anything? Our first step should be to ask “How does God want us to resolve the issue?” So where do we begin? Try these 6 steps:

A. Initially do nothing, except breathe and pray for guidance. Matthew 18:15-20.

B. Exhibit self-control. Angry responses do not honor Christ and may cause the rift to grow.

C. Evaluate your own attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses. If the outcome does not matter in the long run, is it worth the time and effort?

D. Define the problem as *you* see it, assimilate facts, and clearly state issues, research thoroughly.

E. Ask questions for clarification. How does the other person see the issue? Listen, pay attention to the needs behind the words.

F. Look for things on which you do agree. Compile a list. Then evaluate the big picture—how does this situation affect the ministry? The church? Brainstorm possible solutions that will result in mutual benefits. What does the greatest good and is in line with our Christian values?

If you need help, seek the assistance of the Mutual Ministry Committee.

The Mutual Ministry Committee is charged with the responsibility of strengthening the overall ministry of our congregation. The committee has 5 areas of concentration:



1. To encourage conversation among the members and staff and serve as a sounding board for ideas and concerns of both.



2. To promote open conversation between program staff and support staff.



3. To ensure all staff members (paid & unpaid) have a current job description and receive an annual review. Assist in the establishment and evaluation of goals and continuing education.



4. To prepare research and standards as a guide for the Finance Committee and Council to determine annual compensation for all staff members.



5. To join with the staff to envision the ministry for the congregation.

This Ministry represents the congregation and works with the Pastor, Staff, Council and Financial committee. The Ministry is available to assist in resolving concerns, differences and reviews misconduct. With the exception of sexual misconduct, members and staff are encouraged to address concerns or differences with the affected party or their immediate supervisor. If an agreement cannot be reached, the Mutual Ministry provides an arbitration forum for resolution. In regard to a sexual misconduct issue, Mutual Ministry works with the Office of the Bishop, investigates in confidence, reports and recommends appropriate action to Council.

The committee interviews all staff members (paid & unpaid) to ensure all positions have an updated job description and has received an annual review. In addition, each individual's goals and appropriate continuing education are discussed.

Committee members serve staggered terms of 3 years, with 2 members appointed each year and may serve no more than 2 consecutive terms. Appointments are made by the Pastor and Council President. Brian Wagner is acting interim chairperson. The committee members are Meredith Wozniak (serving through Dec. 2019), Nancy and Martin Salzbach (serving through 2020), Laura Fortner and Clarence Crawford (serving through 2021).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Brian Wagner at 352-799-8577 or email him at eagle10626@gmail.com

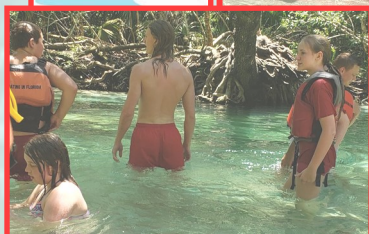


YOUTH

by Lorrie DeFrancesco



A special thank you to the congregation for supporting Nativity Lutheran's youth by sending flocks to friends and family and enjoying the fellowship at the Easter breakfast given by the youth. We could not have done it without you and our adult helpers who are very much appreciated.



Noe's Notes from Paraguay

I'm alive and well in Paraguay! Thanks again for your support before and after my trip! This is the first time I've been able to use a wifi connection, this one at a group-mate's home near mine.

I'm still in training here - for a total of about three months. There are 40 of us trainees who are all living with Paraguayan host families in communities close to the brand-new training center. We're the first group to use it!

My host family consists of a madre, padre, 15-year-old daughter and 9-year-old son. I have not had a chance to get the blog web page completely set up yet. I'll tell you when that happens. I haven't even had time to figure out what items I miss from the USA. Until next time. Love to all. Tim



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Mon. - Fri. Hours

Office - 9AM—2PM

Food Pantry - 9:30AM—1PM

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!!

Jodi Fell - USF Saint Petersburg, Bachelors in Education, now teaching at JD Floyd Elementary School in Hernando.

Jared Gould - Hernando High School, now attending Florida State majoring in landscape architecture.

Giacomo Mattei - University of Tampa, Bachelors of Arts, moving to DC and attending George Washington University to get his PhD in Political Science.

Simone Mattei - graduated high school while earning his AA from St. Petersburg College, now attending USF getting his Bachelors in Public Relations.

Amber Oliver - Nature Coast High School, now attending college to pursue a nursing degree.

The Communicator

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**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

