

First and Nativity Lutheran Churches



News and Views

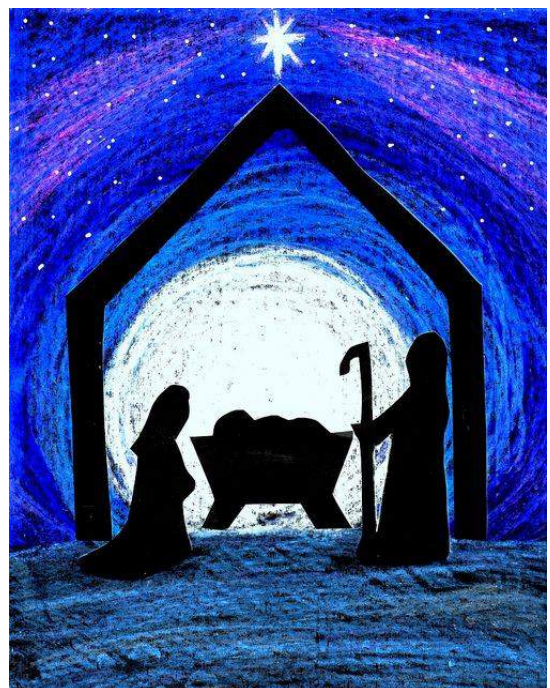
December, 2017 - January, 2018



Dates to Remember.....

- 12/3 Hanging of the Greens at First following Sunday worship
- 12/10 Hanging of the Greens at Nativity following Sunday worship
- 12/17 9 a.m. Sunday School Christmas Program at First Lutheran
- 12/24 5 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship at Nativity; 7p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship at First
- 12/25 Christmas Day Worship: 10 a.m. at First Lutheran
- 12/30 2:00 p.m. Christmas Concert at Nativity
- 12/30-31 Healing Service at all services
- 1/21-22 New Member Weekend
- 1/28 Nativity Annual Meeting following worship
- 2/4 First Annual Meeting following Sunday worship

“ADVENT” MEANS “COMING,” of course, and the promise of Advent is that what is coming is an unimaginable invasion. The mythology of our age has to do with flying saucers and invasions from outer space, and that is unimaginable enough. But what is upon us now is even more so — a close encounter not of the third kind but of a different kind altogether. An invasion of holiness. That is what Advent is about.





Dear Disciples of Christ,

“Hate evil, love good.” – Amos 5:15

These are not subjective terms. Only God is good; evil is not treating our neighbors as image of God.

If we take seriously the creation story found in Genesis 1:27 then we know that all people have been created in God’s image. And if we take seriously the words of Jesus found in Mark 10:18 then we know that only God is good.

So, according to Amos, we are to love God and hate the thing that would remove us from being in relationship with one another in the same way that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit model perfect union with one another and are in relationship with us.

As we enter this Advent season this is our hope and expectation: That the Savior of the whole world dwells with us, is in relationship with us, and experiences life right by our side.

It is through this relationship with God and with one another that we can bring about justice in the world. It is in seeing the image of God in our neighbors that reminds us that everyone is equal in the eyes of God – and so we are called to bring about justice, right relationship, with one another.

However, sin, separation from God and one another, seeps in and seeks to confuse what is evil and what is good. Recently in the news cycle we have seen allegation after allegation of sexual abuse. Even more recently we have seen defenses to an alleged sexual abuse by using the biblical text – and in this Christmas season, Mary and Joseph, no less.

Hate what is evil. This is what Amos tells us. Ancient culture does not excuse our behaviors today. For those who look at their neighbor – whether male, female, gay, straight, white, black, American, foreigner, saint, sinner, abuser, abused, disabled, sick, and every other spectrum under the sun – and see anything less than the image of God are not bringing about the gift – the torrent of waters – of God's justice.

I will be the first to raise my hand and confess I fail at this every day. Every day I look through the lens of white privilege, through the lens of a male in the United States. Every day I fail to remember that God has knitted together every person in their mother's womb in God's very image.

Every day my own sinfulness seeks to separate myself from those who need the gift of God's justice. In this Advent season the Savior we patiently wait for is one who will literally and figuratively turn the tables upside down.

In Jesus Christ we have a Savior that will upend anything that seeks to bring others down in order to prop themselves up. In Jesus Christ we have a God who literally dwells with us – as one of us – in order that we can be reconciled to God the Father. In Jesus Christ we have the ultimate example of what it means to be a disciple.

Jesus lifted up the poor, brought down the rich; raised up the forsaken, tore down the righteous; healed the sick regardless of tradition and ritual – because Jesus sought what was good – God.

And in every person we find the very image of God. So, during this season of Advent we prepare our hearts and minds for an unexpected Savior – one who will upend systems of oppression and injustice.

For this is our calling: To hate what is evil and to seek what is good. To stand with those who have been silenced and shout God's justice from the mountaintops. For God's justice is a torrent of water that cleanses, that clears the threshing floor, that levels mountains and lifts valleys.

Hate evil, love good. This Advent season we pray for the strength and courage to do so.

Peace,
Pastor Bryant

**TUESDAY MORNING
BIBLE CLASS
AT FIRST LUTHERAN**

During December we will be finishing our study of the book of ROMANS. We will then study first and second PETER. We have NO class on December 26th or January 2nd. On January 16th we will meet at John's apartment for our Christmas lesson followed by lunch at Green Tea Garden. All are welcome to join us in the Fireside Room from 10:00-11:00am each Tuesday. John Bennethum is our Teacher.



THE CHURCH SUNDAY YEAR

The church year is winding down. Saturday, November 25th @ 5:30 p.m., and Sunday, November 26th at 9:00 a.m., we will celebrate CHRIST THE KING weekend, the last weekend of the church calendar. The altar color for that weekend is white. December brings the season of ADVENT (altar color of blue for the season of Hope or second coming) with Advent I being Dec. 3rd. Advent II is Dec. 10, and Advent III is Dec. 17 (Sunday School Christmas program). Advent IV falls on Dec. 24th this year, which is also Christmas Eve. Christmas Day is Monday, December 25th (altar color white). Sunday, December 31st is the first Sunday of CHRISTMAS season. Just an FYI - Ash Wednesday falls on February 14th

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Every Sunday the children gather up front to hear Pastor Bakkum's children's sermon and receive a special blessing.

Our Fall 2017 Sunday School theme this year was The Lord's Prayer and The Ten Commandments. Each lesson included a Bible focus and a lesson from the Bible. The children are learning the Lord's Prayer with the help of the "Lord's Prayer Action Song" as well as learning songs that will be presented at the Christmas Program in December. Sunday School is offered every Sunday at First Lutheran except Dec. 24th and 31st.

If anyone is interested in teaching Sunday School please contact the Church office.

Sunday School Staff: Lori Marquez, Linda Grulke and Greta Plicka

Come one, come all!
Worship with our children
on
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH
at 9:00 a.m.
as they present:
**THE SYMBOLS
OF CHRISTMAS**



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

We'll be welcoming our new members during services the weekend of January 20 and 21st. Be sure to join us for coffee *before* the Saturday service, and *after* the Sunday services to introduce yourself and welcome new members.

Christmas Opportunities



CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Saturday, December 30th, 2:00 p.m.

Beautiful, Traditional Music of the Season

Susan Platt – Soprano

Dennis Jon Wolfgang – Organ

Special Guest: Carla Ullerich - Narrator

Come Sing Your Favorite Christmas Carols

Premiere of Two Works for Organ and Narrator,
“A Carol Nativity” by Alfred V. Fedak

Special Story Time for Children with Miss Carla
“Why the Chimes Rang” with Music by Robin Dinda

A Medley of Bing Crosby’s Most Popular
Christmas Tunes

Special event parking will be allowed on both sides
of Bluemound by the Wauwatosa Police Dept.

Wheel chair ramp to the front door.

The concert is free but donations will be received
for Nativity’s Organ Fund. A reception will follow.

Come and relax after the rush of Christmas,
and enjoy the beautiful music .

Tell all of your friends!

WEST ALLIS CHRISTMAS MARKET

New to West Allis this year will be a Christmas Market at the Farmer’s Market grounds. Come shop on Fri., Dec. 1, from 4:30 until 9 p.m., and Sat., Dec. 2, from 1-9 p.m. Over 60 vendors will offer gourmet food, jewelry, candy, spices, ornaments and other specialty gifts, and enjoy live music, carolers, craft beers, hot chocolate and mulled wine. Cozy fire pits will offer a chance to warm up and enjoy conversation with others.



POINSETTIA ORDERS

It’s time to sign up for poinsettias at both churches to decorate for Christmas. The deadline for sign-up at First Lutheran is Sun., Dec. 3rd. The deadline for sign-up at Nativity Lutheran is Sun., Dec. 17th. The sign-up sheets are in the narthex at each church. Poinsettias can be picked up following the Christmas Eve worship service at Nativity, and the Christmas Day worship service at First. Let’s make the sanctuaries beautiful for Christmas Eve and Christmas!



FAIR TRADE SHOPPING

The Third World Handcraft Shop, a mission of Capitol Drive Lutheran , 5305 W. Capitol Dr., has special hours for the Christmas 2017 season. The Shop will be open most Wednesdays and Saturdays beginning November 22. The Shop features fair-trade items from almost 40 developing countries.



A RETURN TO GRACE

To help celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, join us Sun., Dec. 3, after the service for a movie (and popcorn).

A Return to Grace paints a rich and striking picture of Luther's role in the Reformation and the events that unfolded. Filmed in eastern European castles, monasteries, and villages, the cinematography beautifully captures the scenery of the 16th century. All of Luther's dialogue in the movie is taken directly from his writings and sermons. Scholars worked on set to ensure the film's historical accuracy.



THE BENCH THAT BOTTLE CAPS MADE

The Nativity Church Women are again collecting plastic bottle caps for another bench. The picture is of the larger bench that was recently completed and donated to Our Lady of Angels, located at 92nd and Howard. This bench took 500,000 bottle caps to complete, weighed 300 pounds, and needed to be picked up from the factory (which converts the bottle tops into usable things like benches) in the southern USA. Our Lady of Angels liked this one so much, that they are asking for a second smaller bench. Please think of Nativity when you drink that bottle of water or open your carton of juice. You can place your bottle cap donations in the container in the narthex.



THE MITTEN TREE IS UP!

The Nativity mitten tree is up now, and ready for decoration. Please bring your donations of mittens, scarves, hats and gloves to deck the tree before the donations are sent to

Good Samaritan in mid-December this year.

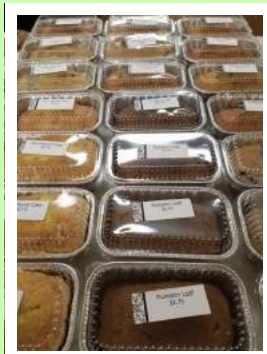
NATIVITY ANNUAL MEETING AND COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Nativity annual meeting and council elections will be held January 28, 2018, immediately following the regular Sunday service. Please mark your calendars now to hear about how our church is doing.



HANGING OF THE GREENS

Join us Sunday, December 10, immediately after the service, to "Deck the Halls" at Nativity and get a head-start on the upcoming Christmas season. Hope to you see there!



Nativity had a great selection of treats at their rummage sale this fall —along with lots of great bargains!



A “SPOOKTACULAR” SUCCESS!

A huge thank you to everyone who worked to make the October Spooktacular concert a success – to everyone who baked and organized the reception, and tidied up before and after, to all the performers and the “ladies of the opera”. A special thank you is due to Kelly Kuhl, the guest organist from Martin Luther Lutheran Church, who also performed on the program. Some the concert-goers from Nativity were also able to attend the program that Martin Luther Lutheran Church held following the Spooktacular concert, enjoying the special service that Martin Luther Lutheran Church presented in honor of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.



FOOD PANTRY

As we reflect back over the year, we'd like to say "Thank you" to our awesome dedicated volunteers and donors who help us feed the hungry in the West Allis area. On any given Friday there are about 25 volunteers present to do God's work and help set up, cook, serve food and beverages, pack and hand out bags and clean up. We could not be successful without you! Each week we hear "thank you" from grateful families, young adults, seniors and the homeless needing help to make ends meet. We especially want to thank our cooks this year: Peggy, Glenn, Chris, Kevin and Mike, friends of First Lutheran, who make a delicious lunch for us to serve to about 100 people a week. We'd also like to thank our shoppers Mike and Greta Plicka, John Hrovat, Natalie Jaeger, Patt and Mike Temke and David Wegener for getting food to First so it can be bagged, stocked or cooked. We are so grateful for the resources that God provides this ministry. Our visitors are grateful that Pastor Bryant is here to comfort those who need comfort, pray for their family or friends in need, share the week's lessons and spread the "good tidings" of God.

MANY, MANY THANKS!

to St. Luke's in Greendale, Luther Memorial and Holy Trinity in West Allis, Panera Bread and General Mitchell Grade School for their generous support of our Food Pantry. The donations from other churches and our community help our pantry *immensely!*

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WHAT IS YOUR NEW YEARS RESOLUTION?

We need more volunteers to greet food pantry visitors and check them in so they can receive food on Friday mornings. Training is provided and you will always work with an experienced person. It is great to "give back" in 2018.



OUTSIDE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We have recently become affiliated with an organization called Just One More Ministries (JOMM) near 64th and State St. in Wauwatosa. The organization makes daily collections of cooked and fresh food from restaurants and stores and repackages it into frozen meals. Once a month we receive pans of meats, vegetables and potatoes, which we heat and serve for lunch in our food pantry. As part of our participation, the Just One More Meal organization requests that we provide volunteers to help collect and package the food, clean up and various other duties. If you have an interest in helping hungry families but are unavailable on Friday's for our pantry, perhaps you'd be interested in helping JOMM. You can work an hour or two each week or as often as you are able. You will be representing First Lutheran Church Food Pantry.



SHARE CHRISTMAS CHEER

We'll be visiting, delivering cookies and sharing a little holiday cheer with our home-bound members. We are asking for donations of cookies to be brought to church the weekend of Nov 25th. Cookies will be packaged and available for delivery on Nov. 29th.



SEND YOUR CHRISTMAS WISHES TO A VETERAN

In December, we'll be delivering the Christmas cards we have on hand to the VA Hospital to be given to veterans. Everyone was so generous with donating cards these past couple years, we have plenty left! We'll be signing those cards during coffee at services during November.

CHRISTMAS POSTCARD MAILING

We're reaching out to our neighbors with a mass mailing of a fabulous winter-themed postcard that invites all to "Join us in celebrating the Christmas Connection through families, the laughter of children, the love around us and by joining together with hearts, hope and supporting those in need." We offer the opportunity for people to volunteer or donate to the food pantry, using our new online portal <http://firstlutheranelca.org/on-going-events/food-pantry/> on our webpage. We hope to greet many new visitors for Christmas this year!

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6



Join us after worship on Sunday, Dec. 3rd., as we decorate the church for the Christmas season.

REMEMBER SENIORS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Interfaith Older Adult Programs is collecting gifts for individuals who will be alone during the holiday. Items such as coffee, tea, bath soap, large print crosswords & word searches, stationery and Pick 'n Save gift cards are some of the items needed. Donations can be taken to 1236 S. 115th St., West Allis, by Mon., Dec. 12th. They're also always in need of volunteers to work with seniors. Call 414-774-1747 for more information.





OPERATION CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Operation Christmas Stocking is First Lutheran's annual holiday outreach remembering those in need in our church, community and Synod. Throughout the month of December we will be distributing decorated Christmas Mugs with hot cocoa packets and sweets, gift totes for the men and women that visit our food pantry and decorated children's Christmas Stocking. We will also deliver men's totes to the ELCA Synod Serenity Inn.

We would like to thank the community and congregation members at First Lutheran and Nativity Lutheran for your donations of money and items that fill our holiday gift packages. We also could not do this special project without the people that help sew and decorate our children's stockings, as well as the people who knit hats, mittens and scarves. Thank you Matt Grulke for knitting for us again this year. Linda Grulke's co-workers always go above and beyond to help us fill the Christmas Stockings. The tables will be decorated with holiday picture frames made and donated by Colleen Siarnicki.



Meet our Members...

Jackie Bayer says she literally married the 'boy next door'. Werner's family moved in next door after high school and they dated for several months before he went into the service. Jackie started coming to First before they were married. They were married in Germany in April, 1957 and spent a month honeymooning in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. They have three children, seven grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. Jackie & Werner were charter members of the Couples Club at First, and were very active with the youth group. They owned a ski resort with Werner's brother, Ralph, and hosted ski weekends there, as well as taking the youth backpacking and to Isle Royale. They worked with the kids to raise money for these trips.

Jackie is a nurse who has worked at the county hospital, West Allis Hospital and has been a home health nurse. She finally retired four years ago. After graduation from high school, Werner worked as a mason apprentice. He returned to that work after leaving the service, and in 1959, he and his brother Ralph bought their uncle's business. In the early 1970's, Werner and Ralph built the fireplace in the Fireside room. Werner worked as a mason until he retired at age 70.

Werner has belonged to First Lutheran since he was 9 years old. He was very active in Luther League. He was drafted in 1955, leaving from the church at 73rd & Orchard, and when he came home after his tour of service he came home to the present church. Jackie joined the church when they got married in 1957. She was the second woman elected to the church council after Marie LePage. Before that time, women could only act as secretary at council meetings. Werner has been on the church council at least once during every decade of his adult life.

Jackie has worked with Operation Christmas Stocking off and on for many years. OCS started in the 1970's and has had many changes in workers and in recipients. She is currently working with Greta Plicka on the program, with help from Werner when it's time to distribute gifts. We appreciate the kindness and energy they both bring to First Lutheran.

Oh, the weather outside is frightful!

In case of REALLY bad weather, check out TMJ4.com/closings., or watch WTMJ Channel 4. If worship services or activities need to be cancelled because of the weather, you can find out at one of these sites.

**need pastoral care?
contact us!**



Please remember to notify the pastor or church office if you are ill or hospitalized so that we can offer prayer and support directly to you. If you have a pastoral emergency (hospitalization, death in the family, etc.) you can reach Pastor Bryant by calling him at **(414)768-3670**.



In honor of Veteran's Day, veterans at Nativity were each given a t-shirt and a pin by WELCA (Women of the ELCA). We thank all of our veterans for their service to our country.

On the Lighter Side



"At least they saved themselves a co-pay."

FIRST LUTHERAN FINANCES 2017			
Month	*Income	Expenses	Difference
October	*\$ 12,320.47	\$ 10,621.24	1,699.23
Year to Date	*\$ 126,348.65	\$ 117,927.74	8,420.91

*Income in Oct. includes a \$2,500.00 transfer from the Endowment Fund.

Your giving allows us to share God's love with more than 600 people a month. Thank you for these blessings.

God is the owner of all that is.... Psalm 89:11

*Budgeted Income	Budget to Date	Received to Date	Difference
General Fund	\$97,841.90	*\$84,800.26	-\$13,041.64
Benevolence	\$ 7,875.00	*\$6,737.00	-\$ 1,138.00

*Budgeted income includes only offerings and donations. It does not include transfers from savings or the Endowment Fund.

Nativity Lutheran Birthdays

- 12/4 Roger Reinert
- 12/5 Marcus DeBack
- 12/13 Maureen Jones
- 12/18 Wallace Buske
- 12/29 Joshua Avendano
- 12/31 Lorraine Kuchma
- 12/31 Lori Leiser
- 1/4 Gary Soerfass
- 1/5 Katie Bakkum
- 1/7 Alexander Leiser
- 1/21 Anna Sullivan



Winter Anniversaries!

First Lutheran

- 12/11 Carrie & Joseph Muffler
- 12/12 Garrett & Cindy Labadie
- 1/14 Wayne & Lucy Wagner

Nativity Lutheran

No December or January Anniversaries

First Lutheran Birthdays

- 12/1 Monica Bayer
- 12/2 Linda Kaehler
- 12/5 Jennifer Roesler
- 12/6 Kenneth Masch
- 12/12 Crystal Zehe
- 12/17 Gayle Falk
- 12/17 Crystal Wegener
- 12/18 Kathleen Santos
- 12/20 Jason Zehe
- 12/22 Maxx Jaeger
- 12/27 Michael Temke
- 12/28 Donald Moncher
- 12/29 Joy Dowd
- 12/29 Dorian Jaeger
- 1/1 Nancy Krizan
- 1/5 Katie Bakkum
- 1/6 Robert Laturi
- 1/9 Jill Petermann
- 1/11 Carla Ullerich
- 1/12 Christina Behmke
- 1/14 Timothy Wegener
- 1/15 Melissa Wallow
- 1/21 John Isaacson
- 1/30 Lois Taylor
- 1/31 Joshua Armstrong

BIBLE QUIZ...

After Mary learned she was pregnant with God's Son, what relative — also miraculously pregnant — did she go visit?

- A. Esther
- B. Elizabeth
- C. Anne
- D. Anna

Answer: (See Luke 1:39-40.)



PRAYER CAN HELP...

If serious illness or other life factors affect you or those you love, contact the church office and we will send your request through our prayer chain. We have people who will pray for your need. If you are interested in joining a prayer chain, contact the church office.

As a community we pray for those with immediate needs of healing and strength:

Gus Barnes, Elya Lam, Hildegard Mullarky, Lavone Reis, Jamie Schoberg, Marlene Smith, Kathy Stenzel and Nanette Steves.

For our homebound members & those with ongoing concerns:

From Nativity: Wally Buske, Don Brauch, Carol Garza, Ruby Horst, Dorothea Isermann, Peter Jones, Louise Kohn, Lorraine Kuchma, James Larson, Harriet Miller, Helen Peterson, Ken Reider and Juan Sifuentes

From First: Pastor Tim Benninghoff, Elsie Boese, Beverly Brunn, Marie Casto, Steve Clark, Shirley Cogan, Terry Favre, John Isaacson, Earl Junck, Elle Konetzki, Alfred Korth, Myra Shields, Dennis Schoberg, Sr., Joyce Staub, Carla Syut, Lois Taylor and Pat Zuback

For all those serving in the armed forces:

Sean Brown, Robert Chrzanowski, Jason Dowhie, Andrew Dowd, David MacDonald, Sam Rogers, Robert Simmer and Zach Tennison

First Lutheran Church
7400 W. Lapham St.
West Allis, WI 53214

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First and Nativity Lutheran Churches (ELCA)

Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 9am to 12pm

Office located at 7400 W. Lapham, West Allis

(414)476-4664

Worship With Us:

Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. First Lutheran

Sundays at 9:00 a.m. at First Lutheran

Sundays at 11:00 a.m. at Nativity Lutheran

*Sunday School is at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays
at First Lutheran*

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

7400 W. Lapham St.

West Allis, WI

www.firstlutheranelca.org

E-mail: firstlutheranelca@att.net

Phone: 414-476-4664

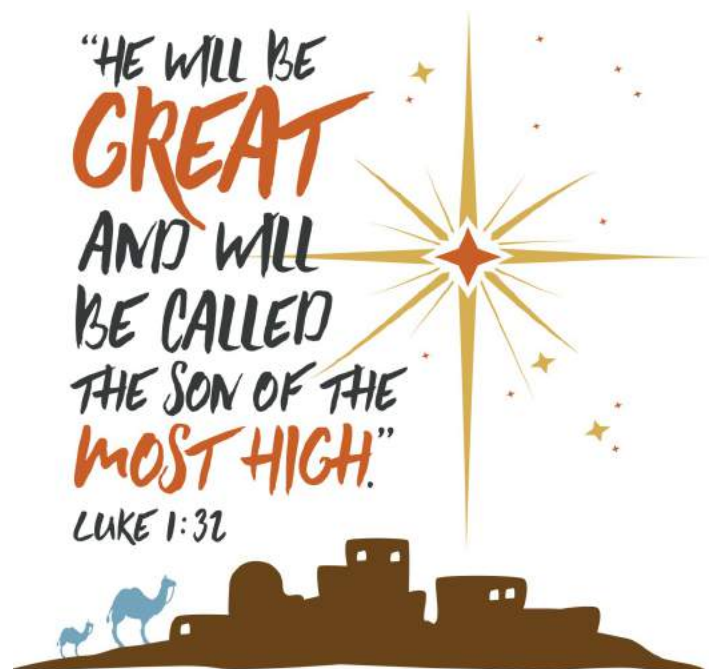
NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Nativity Phone: 414-476-1853



If you no longer wish to continue receiving this newsletter, please contact the church office.