

The Episcopal Church of the Nativity

*Feeding body, mind and soul,
welcoming all, open and affirming*



Our Covenant

As members of the Episcopal Church of the Nativity, we covenant with God and each other to:

- + Faithfully come together to worship God
- + Encourage ourselves and others to regularly participate in all the church has to offer
- + Actively use our gifts of time, talent and treasure to support and participate in the work of God in the Church and community
- + Listen to each other in discernment of God's gifts for service, and support others in their service
- + Pray with and for each other, offering care and support in joy and sorrow
- + Study, explore and incorporate Christ's teaching in our lives
- + Welcome, respect and include all people as beloved children of God

We faithfully come together to worship God.

We praise God with organ, choir, piano, handbells, brass, hand-held percussion and voice, all organized and implemented by our music minister and organist. We use the *Book of Common Prayer* and *The Revised Common Lectionary*, hymnody from *The Hymnal 1982*, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, *Wonder, Love and Praise* and our supplemental resources.

While our building is beautiful and historic to the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley, the COVID-19 pandemic reminded us that church is "not the building, but the people." Nativity stepped up to the challenge and, since the Spring of 2020, we have been streaming our Sunday services through our Facebook page.

Our Sunday services of worship include 8 a.m. (spoken) and 10:30 a.m. (music, with choir), 7 a.m. Wednesdays Healing Eucharist, 9 a.m. summer services (no choir) and Mass on the Grass. After the COVID shutdown, we provided curbside communion for parishioners in their cars. We offer special services such as Blessing of the Animals, Compline and various prayer vigils as necessary. Our sanctuary includes elevator access. We are returning to in-person coffee hours.



We encourage ourselves and others to regularly participate in all the church has to offer.

Nativity has been able to maintain our mission statement, “Feeding Mind, Body, and Soul” during this difficult pandemic by adjusting to the circumstances. We have five teams (which include most of the congregation) that prepare and serve hearty meals in cardboard boxes for our twice monthly Saturday Suppers.

Approximately 140 meals are served each month.

Our Food Pantry offers pre-prepared sacks of food and meat products by request, while observing social distancing, mask wearing, and washing of hands protocol required by the pandemic. The Food Pantry is open 8:45 a.m. to noon every Tuesday with a wide array of canned, packaged, frozen, and fresh food. On average we serve more than 800 people every month.

A group, led by Nativity parishioners, is part of a community rotation that prepares and serves a wholesome meal once a month at Lewiston’s Salvation Army and cleans after the meal.

We actively use our gifts of time, talent and treasure to support and participate in the work of God in the Church and community.

Our Baptized For Life committee has taken time in their busy lives to meet the COVID challenge. They have consulted with the Episcopal Initiative for BFL, taken surveys and organized small group gatherings during Lent: Friday Morning Prayer, Wednesday morning Bible study via Zoom, and Thursday evening small group discussions. We see the continuation after Lent of our small group gatherings and gatherings as a result of those who used their gifts of time to do an end-run around a once-in-a life-time pandemic that restricted our larger gatherings and our physical embracing of each other.



We listen to each other in discernment of God’s gifts for service, and support others in their service.

After the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane lifted some restrictions, we returned to worship in our church nave. Eucharistic Ministers and Ushers are in place. Chancel Guild and Altar Guild are again functioning. Baptized for Life ministry marches on. We, indeed, are listening to and talking with each other.

However, some of our elderly congregants were not comfortable with Zoom or Facebook offerings. Our energy and morale levels remain high in our outreach programs, but, according to the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT), our interactions with each other – low.

In October 2016, the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane elected our rector Gretchen Rehberg as bishop. In December 2017, we called a new rector. A year and a half later, Nativity and our rector came to the agreement that we were not a good fit. Through the difficult time of transitioning and the pandemic, we see the importance of listening to each other in the discernment of God. Our Vestry has discussed ways to remedy the low morale/energy situation. They have taken intentional steps of reconciliation. Vestry members have divided the congregation into eight groups and each member is assigned eight to nine congregants with whom to make contact and develop relations. The Vestry is looking closely at our processes of communication and is discussing ways to improve them.

*We pray with and for each other, offering care
and support in joy and sorrow*

“All are welcome in this place” is the opening line of our Nativity Hymn. We are blessed by the presence of every person’s age, ability, race, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation. We have a Pastoral Committee which meets monthly to discuss cares of the congregation. We have licensed Eucharistic Visitors who provide communion for those at home. We have a columbarium where we support each other in times of sorrow. Our music program fills us with joy; we pray and sing with and for each other. We believe in scripture, tradition and reason and recognize that, as individuals, we don’t have all the answers.

*Study, explore and incorporate Christ’s
teaching in our lives*

In May 2020, Nativity Church was awarded a \$25K grant from the Lilly Foundation extending over two years for the purpose of developing and promoting small group ministries. Since we received this grant, we have sponsored small groups on Zoom and face-to-face, studying Derek Olsen’s *Inwardly Digest*, John Stott’s *Basic Christianity*, and the National Church’s curriculum for racial reconciliation, *Sacred Ground*. We will be continuing with a new *Sacred Ground* group this summer and an ALPHA group in Fall 2021. Additional activities to be funded by the BFL Grant are to include a complete renovation of the church library, training of small group leaders, and partnership with the local ELCA congregation, Grace Lutheran Church. The Fellowship Hall will have the audio-video system renovated so that we can use this space to show films and DVDs for discussion. It will be a centerpiece of that part of our small group ministries that focuses on outreach to the community.

*We welcome, respect and include all people as
beloved children of God.*

The Nativity hymn, sung to "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," by Mendelssohn, is the vision to which we aspire:

All are welcome in this place – young and old of every race. In these sacred halls we meet, join together at Christ’s feet. See the light from heav’n above, blessings from our God of love. Judgment here you shall not find. God called good all humankind.

*All creation finds its worth
in the gift of Jesus’ birth.*

Here we offer in Your will, all our mem’ry, reason, skill. May our prayer never cease, in our worship we find peace. In the silence and the stillness, come, O Christ, your spirit fill us.

Seeking wisdom, from your Word,
truth for all the world is heard.

*All creation finds its worth
in the gift of Jesus’ birth.*

Trapped by all our doubts and fears, you speak freedom to our ears. Cast down by the world’s harsh sin, find forgiveness here within, Lifting up our hands in love, take the Body and the Blood. God within us pleased to dwell, sending on Good News to tell.

*All creation finds its worth
in the gift of Jesus’ birth.*

All creation’s pain He feels, sends us out, the world to heal. Let us be Your hands and feet; love and hope to all we meet. Helping others near and far, following that guiding star. Feeding body, mind and soul, giving thanks when spirits grow.

*All creation finds its worth
in the gift of Jesus’ birth.*

Christmas 2016



Our future Priest-in-Charge

We seek a Priest-in-Charge who will:

- + Lead and equip us in sharing Christ's love to our community through the gifts of Anglican spirituality.
- + Commit to social justice.
- + Have been trained in reconciliation.
- + Provide skilled pastoral care.
- + Uphold scholarly as well as “down-to-earth” work.
- + Use effective and intentional communication.
- + Be technologically proficient and maintain an organized office and consistent schedule.

(This list comes from the congregational self-study process lead by the Profile Committee.)



Our Blessings

We are blessed by the traditional land of the Niimípuu Nation. We honor and pay respect to all Niimípuu citizens, past and present, and their continuing relationship to their ancestral lands. Our blessings include the historic beauty of our church, our spacious rectory, wonderful music leadership, small group work in Bible study, book groups and morning prayer/communion. We are blessed with strong outreach programs with participation by many of the congregation to provide food, companionship and welcome to others in the broader community. We are blessed with youthful members who have filled necessary roles. We are blessed by the leadership of our current bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, who was rector at Nativity for 11 years. We are blessed by generous giving. Finally, we are blessed by the presence and healing care given by Vicar Beverly Hosea.

