



Episcopal Church of the Nativity



The Messenger



Summer 2023

Ordinary Time: Summer at Nativity

As of June 11, we are in the phase of the church calendar called Ordinary Time, that large section of green on your church year guides and calendars. On June 21st, the Earth's northern hemisphere reached its maximum tilt towards the sun, now beginning the slow but sure descent into earlier sunsets and later sunrises, shorter days and longer nights until we finally reach that purple part of the calendar called Advent. By all means, "*Sumer is icumen in.*"



“Where do you get that living water?”

- John 4:11



In past summers, this valley we call home has endured heat waves and being completely engulfed by wildfire smoke to the point of not being able to see the hills, all stressing the sheer reliance on access to water and its life-giving purpose for us who are lucky enough to have a large, clean supply of it.

This particular year, water has been ever-more at the forefront of the community's mind, stemming from the incident on January 18th when the City of Lewiston's water reservoir ruptured and released around 3 million gallons of water along 16th Ave. in a massive flood.

For our church and other Normal Hill residents, this event necessitated a Boil Water Order for a period of a couple weeks while the water was tested for drinking safety.

If you remember, our sister parish in Moscow at St. Mark's Episcopal gathered a donation of several cases of bottled water that was delivered personally from them. We offer our sincerest thanks for this most generous act.

As fate would have it, the Boil Water Order would be lifted only a couple days later. The surplus bottled water was shared graciously with patrons of the Tuesday Food Pantry.

The effects of the reservoir breach would of course extend further from the Boil Water into extended irrigation restrictions city-wide. Our lawn, along with many others, had their normal supply of water shut off from the sprinklers. If only there was a “before and after” aerial view, or a shot from space of Lewiston during this time.



And so, just like with the Boil Water Order, Nativity did what it often does best and came together during a challenging time. Clean water was shared, and a currently active team of watering volunteers was organized for the plants and lawn around the church, especially for the new Nativity Garden that is currently abounding with new produce. Our sincerest thanks we give to this group of volunteers for organizing and taking this on.

This year, in facing the unexpected challenges of water usage, it is nice to be reminded of the sacredness and sheer importance of this resource, how fleeting its availability can become in time of disaster or crisis, and how in its disturbance we can learn again how to come together in love to find a way for us to all utilize this basic necessity. One may be brought to think of areas elsewhere, where issues regarding the sanity of water has not been an issue for a two week Boil Order but for years of crisis, as well as areas that simply do not have access to water, let alone clean water. In the end, let us give thanks for the reminder given these past two months leading into Summer about how as Christians, we are baptized into faith with water, and continually blessed, nourished, and reminded of God’s sheer wonder in creation from its presence in our lives.



Maxine Hubbell conducting prep-work on Sloppy Joes that were served at our Saturday Supper on June 24th. Thank you to her and all who help with the suppers!

Congregant Spotlight: Johnette Moore

The following is transcribed from a conversation that took place and was recorded at Nativity on Thursday, June 27th.

How did you find the Episcopal church and eventually Church of the Nativity?

Richard and his siblings grew up on a military base, and when it came time that their parents decided to have them baptized, there happened to be an Anglican/Episcopalian chaplain on the post, and so they spoke to them and he baptized them into the Episcopal church there. They attended the church at the post there, and they moved to another base where the church was Episcopal. Richard and his sister, the parents too, all worked for the Episcopal church. And so, when I married Richard, he was of course Episcopalian and I was



Methodist and my Methodist church was saying, "We have the papers here, the addresses in Canada for all of you who want to send your kids to Canada so they don't have to fight in that awful Vietnam war." At this point I was very upset and cried, my mother saying to me "I'm tired of seeing you like this each Sunday, I think you should find something new to do on a Sunday. What [denomination] is Richard?" And she said that there was an Episcopal church a few blocks away from her house that they should try.

Jason was six months old and Richard had gone to Vietnam for the second time by this point. We went into that church the first morning, sitting at the back pew since Jason was still a little fussy and wanting to make noise. It felt very comfortable, and I remember hearing some of the phrases that we still say that got stuck in my head and thought "these are beautiful." After the service the priest came up to me and Jason, thanking us for coming that morning. I began to apologize for Jason making all the noise during the service and he said, "My dear, my dear, you reminded us this morning that today is the Feast of the Holy Innocence!" I said that I wasn't sure if they had a nursery and the priest said they did and called someone over to show it to me and introduce me around. And so, we continued to go to that church after that for several weeks until Richard came back from Vietnam.

Richard received his Master's in Fresno, and thereafter we went to Tucson where he was in the doctoral program. And it was just like Providence sent us. We had earlier been to Tucson and found this little condominium they were building. Richard had a G.I. loan and we were able to purchase it. Less than a mile away was a beautiful, old, Adobe Episcopal church built in the Pueblo style with wood and so forth. The first Sunday we were in Tucson, I wondered if we should give it a try, and so we went in and the music was simply beautiful. It was very different from anything I had seen in Fresno. There was so much [incense] smoke, you could barely see the altar! There was chanting, there were two connected organs that the organist was able to control, each from either console, and there was this great choir...I eventually said to Richard, "I think we're in a Catholic church!" to which he replied by pointing to the sign that indeed said Episcopal. And so we continued to go.

Eventually, in their bulletin it said "Urgently need a school bus driver, please speak to Fr. Fowler after mass or make an appointment." I told him after the service that I was interested, to which he said that he'd like to see me the next morning! I had no idea what I was getting into but wanted to help. I had to get a chauffeur's driver's license. I got the book from the Motor Vehicle Dept., studied and passed the test, and so I was now the official bus driver for St. Michael's, which I did for four years. I was also a substitute teacher there. One day, the art teacher left and I became the art teacher at St. Michael's.

So when we came here to Lewiston, we already knew that there was an Episcopal church and were looking forward to being a part of it. Father May was the priest at the time.

And so the church sort of brought you to teaching, then?

That's right. Well, I had taught for one year in California, a fourth and fifth grade combo, which again I was interviewed for just before the position began and I did not have a teaching credential, which I applied for and got within hours. It was provisional and they were desperate so I was able to do that. It was a little school in the country about fifteen to twenty miles outside of Fresno, surrounded by vineyards.

What year was it then that you ended up in Lewiston?

It was '78. We were in Tucson from '72-'78. I was confirmed at St. Michael's in Tucson, actually. I was baptized in the Methodist church, but I had to have a special something or other where the Episcopal church accepted my Methodist baptism, but I needed more to move forward, and so I attended classes on the Catechism that Fr. Fowler taught there. Then I was confirmed. It was in May of '73, the year after we moved there.

What keeps you coming back to Nativity and what do you like about the service?

I love the openness of Nativity. It's especially wonderful about Nativity that we have this close, warm and loving community. I like the interesting people that come and the camaraderie between people. People step in and do things. I love the fact that our motto is "Feeding mind, body, and spirit." We do all of those. We have a garden. We have the outreach from various organizations that feel welcome to come and use our church. I love the fact that we have the food bank. St. Michael's had a soup kitchen, the first one in Tucson. There were some parents that were upset that we had the school there while offering free lunch to anyone in Tucson who may have been down and out. Some of the parents didn't want their children rubbing elbows with some of the, "vagrants," as they called them, if you will. At this point, it seemed contrary to the thinking, from all of the parades for gay rights and banners we held up for those in need, saying St. Michael's on them, I had done all that, and it seemed to me that "This is what the Episcopal church does!" And some of the priests we had obviously didn't lend themselves to that too well, but most of them had and have. It feels good to be a part of that and tell people about it. When people ask me "Do you have a church?" I say "Nativity Episcopal. It's the best! You should try it!"

I too am proud to say Nativity!

Yes! And we have a wonderful choir, and a fabulous organist, as well as his sister before him!

Well thank you!

I mean, we've always had great music here. It may be on a smaller size scale than St. Michael's, but it's still the essence of the Anglican Episcopal church, where there's this openness to people. I don't like that my Catholic friends have to abide by these strict rules that come from the Vatican that just aren't open in the same way, and it's sad.

What do you think the future holds/could hold for Nativity?

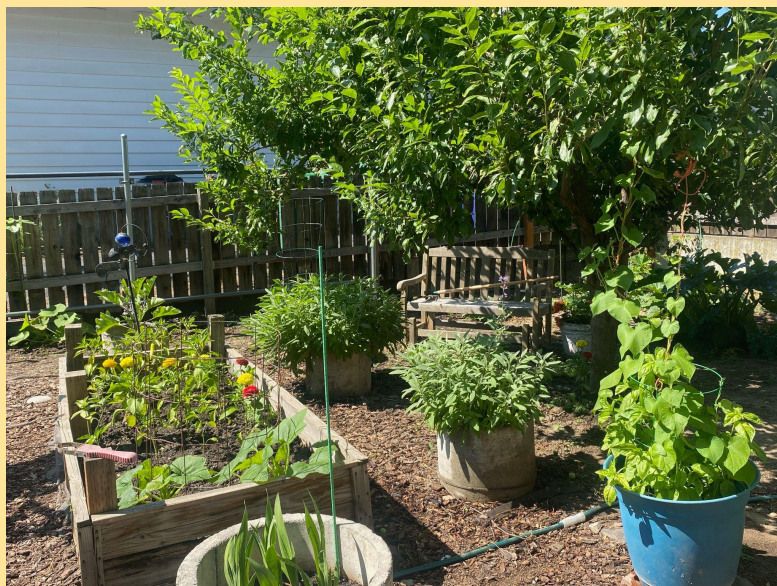
That frightens me, Thomas. Until recently, it seemed as if we were somewhat of a geriatric parish, especially with our older friends in the Parish passing as time goes by. Lately, it's like a new wind has blown through this Parish. I see younger people coming, I see younger faces in the choir. I see them coming back! And that's a wonderful feeling to see that. For a few years it felt like holding my breath out for the congregation because we were having to cut programs we were involved in, such as Habitat for Humanity, simply because there weren't enough people and not enough energy to put it together. It feels like with more people coming we can expand our outreach again. My granddaughter Greta was just here and was looking in the bulletin insert and made note of all the Al-Anon/A.A. groups we have here and said she didn't know that Nativity even did that...I said to keep reading and see all the other things that go on at the church during the week.

Any thoughts or ideas for Nativity?

Maybe bringing back/starting a Sunday Cinema program! You know, not all of us watch football. Or perhaps a summer picnic over at Pioneer Park, maybe even combining the two and having a movie shown somehow with our picnic! But of course, maybe on a cooler Sunday.

The Nativity Garden

The Nativity Garden group has been meeting regularly since the Spring to organize, plant, and manage a working garden that will supply a cornucopia of fresh produce for the church and for the Food Pantry. Not only meeting to discuss, there is someone out among the plants, watering and tending each and every day as the summer heat swells, ensuring the best care for our current and future crop.







After food from the Idaho Food Bank is picked up on Monday mornings, tables and food are put in place for the following morning's pantry. Thank you to Susan Pearson for setting up each Monday and to the many hands and hearty muscles that pick up the food each week!

Summer Reflections

As your pastor, I hope you will continue in the spiritual practices which feed your soul this summer. I've been wondering about a list of spiritual practices that might be worth our consideration. So, here is some food for spiritual thought:

Remember to pray daily - perhaps try a new way of praying like centering prayer and mediation.

Read or study your Bible often - maybe try Lectio Divina, or read *about* the Bible, the saints or theology.

Learn about mindfulness and simplicity.

Enjoy sitting with the Holy Spirit in nature.

Here too are some thoughts from Cheryl Johnson. Cheryl will be leading an adult formation option this Fall about using journaling and other writing practices to enhance our faith journey. So check this out and stay tuned.

Peace and blessings,

Kathy+

Summer's Abundance

by Cheryl Johnson

When long summer days stretch into night, folks hit the beach, a lake, or head for higher, cooler, country. Plants mature, fruit ripens. For the young, summer feels almost eternal, and then, school looms again, with expectation, but also sadness. What feels like the longest season comes to a close. How do long days and warm sun affect you? What grows in you now or is just beginning to?

Perhaps you go to the coast in the summers. Do you collect shells? This summer for our 56th wedding anniversary, we are going to Florence, Oregon. Having lived in Florida for ten years, I need a little ocean in the summer. I walk the beach and pick up shells. The world is my oyster.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went, and sold all that he had, and bought it.
--Matt 13: 45-46 KJV

What are things of this earth that remind you of the kingdom of heaven? Why is this so? Write about those as you notice them.

Think of summers past. What memories rise to visit you? Dwell on those memories. Why not write about a few of those—in poems, stories, letters, journal entries.

Then, go out and make new summer memories—watch the sunset, a grasshopper, a summer flower. Listen to the doves, crickets, and wind.

I'll share one of my own summer memories: On a summer afternoon, my grandma would change into pedal-pushers, a short-sleeved blouse, grab a pole and head for the Sanpoil River. Her housedress and apron flung to the bed, we rushed out the back door. She seemed twenty again. When Grandpa joined us, as heat waned, he fished the deep holes. Unlike Grandma, he'd let me swim where he fished! Grandma was bent on bringing home fish for the fry pan. Our next breakfast was trout, drenched in an egg wash and flour, fried crisp gold in bacon fat in her cast iron skillet.



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