



# The Voice of Nativity

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December 2008 January 2009

## A LOOK AT NATIVITY

The Nativity Church of Fargo is celebrating it's 48th year this Christmas Day. The first Mass was held in what is now the school gym with Fr. James Walsh as its first pastor. Nativity had 385 families registered at the time. Over the decades we have seen changes.

Decades	1960's	1980's	2000's
Baptisms	653	1529	537
Marriages	120	501	315
Funerals	55	174	202
Confirmation	636	797	908
1st Eucharist	768	941	407
Registered Households	Began with 385		1679

How are the members of Nativity sharing their talents?

## LITURGICAL SERVICE

A number of people regularly served in the following roles during the liturgy this past year:

Lectors: 26

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: 278

Ushers: 192

Accompanists: 8

Choir members: 75

Cantors (song leaders): 20

Altar Servers: 40

We celebrated 5 Masses each weekend with 260 Sunday liturgies per year having music. Thank you to those who go the extra mile to help us have wonderful liturgical celebrations.

## FAITH FORMATION

We have over 50 catechists and 7 youth volunteers helping with our faith formation. They are helping care for the education needs of 255 young people from kindergarten to high school which is approximately 25% of those attending non-catholic schools and attending parish religious education. We also help subsidize the educational needs of 305 students attending Catholic Schools.

## HOW DO WE SERVE THE NEEDS OF OUR

## SACRAMENTAL LIFE?

Throughout the year, we celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism at some of our liturgies. The current number of baptisms for Nativity (from October 2007 to October 2008) was 54 infants, 1 young child, and 1 adult. We celebrated the Sacrament of Anointing with 651 people receiving this sacrament.

## NATIVITY IS A VIBRANT PARISH

The life of Nativity is in the hands of its parishioners. We have many commissions and councils of people dedicating their time to help care for the needs of the parish community. We have those helping with the Mardi Gras, the Faith Festivals, the Fall Festival, the Spaghetti Feed, the RCIA process, marriage preparation, the Health Advisory breakfast events in the winter, the health fair, and much more. We share in caring for the charity and justice issues of our community and beyond. The question is not "Is there any thing I might enjoy participating in?", but which activities match my interests and talents. A greater emphasis is placed on the communication aspects of our parish.

## COMPUTER PLAYS A PART

Nativity has had an active website for many years, but each year, the staff works to improve the site to meet the needs of the parishioners. We have visitors to the site for the calendar, the registration forms, and the basics but now we have added more to the site. If you are viewing the website, [www.nativitycatholicchurch.net](http://www.nativitycatholicchurch.net), for the first time, you will see snap shots of life at Nativity. View the 3D virtual tour of our church. Find staff information.

We have begun Nativity News. The basics of new activities and parish needs are emailed weekly to those registered. To receive Nativity News, one must register by email or contact Kellie Bruckbauer (232-2414 ext 137).

Also a young adult's blog is in the pilot stages. Begun in October, the blog is being developed for those who want to explore their faith beliefs without having to leave the house. Young adults interested in this opportunity are always invited to participate. Contact the Adult Faith Life Office at 232-2414 ext. 127 if interested.

From Christmas Day in 1960 to this day, we have grown and evolved to bring God's message to our community and to those in our world.

## Nativity Church of Fargo

Office Hours 8:00 am to 4:30 pm  
Monday thru Friday

Website:

[www.nativitycatholicchurch.net](http://www.nativitycatholicchurch.net)

Parish Office 232.2414  
[office@nativitycatholicchurch.net](mailto:office@nativitycatholicchurch.net)

### Church Staff

Fr. Kevin Boucher, pastor  
Fr. Gary Luiten, associate pastor  
Sr. Juliana Wisnewski,  
pastoral minister  
Judy Schwinghammer, parish nurse  
Abby Rheault, liturgy & music  
Lynn Stasch & Kellie Bruckbauer,  
youth ministry  
Chris Steffan, adult faith life  
Kathy Bourdon, faith formation  
Cathy Schwinden, social justice  
Duane Koble, administration  
Frank LaLonde, office manager  
Bev Nesler, secretary  
Renelda Hushka, bookkeeper

### Nativity School

School Office 232.7461  
Cindy Hutchins, principal  
Sue Thoreson, secretary

### Pastoral Council

Meets fourth Tuesday of the month  
Terri Dahl, Bev Nesler, Betty Hund,  
Leon Senn, Bonnie Faller  
Marilyn Bjoralt, Kevin Wolf,  
Ken Jablonsky, Joel Simons,  
Greg Schmalz, Jason Schwengler  
Fr. Kevin Boucher, Fr. Gary Luiten,  
Duane Koble,  
Brenda Lang-recording secretary  
Jean Hannig-Deanery Representative  
Cindy Hutchins, Staff Representative  
Chenise Nesler—Youth Representative  
Joe Miranowski—Member at large

### Voice Editorial Staff

Chris Steffan, Sandy Pearce  
Frank Lalonde

The mission of the Voice flows from the mission of Nativity: to promote acceptance and growth within our community through education and evangelization. The Voice, therefore will publish articles that have as their purpose evangelization and education of Nativity. We strive to bring vision and voice to identify God in our midst.

## ARE YOU TOO BUSY? THE LEGEND OF LA BEFANA

BY CHRIS STEFFAN

La Befana, a traditional folk tale of Italy, is a story of an old woman who had a change of heart after meeting the Wise Men the night before they arrived at the manger.

The story goes like this:

The night before the Wise Men arrived at the manger, they were unsure of which direction to continue so they stopped at a shack. Inside was La Befana, who was busy with the day to day chores, sweeping, and cleaning. They asked her for directions and invited her along to see the child. She replied that she was too busy. So they left.

A shepherd also stopped. He asked her if she would like to join **him to see the baby. Again she said "no." She was too busy.**

As the night went on she began to reconsider. She saw a great light in the sky and decided to join the shepherd and the Wise Men. Bearing the gifts that had belonged to her child that died, La Befana headed in the same direction as those before her.

La Befana got lost and never found the manger. Legend has it that she goes out each year on the 11th night of Christmas, bringing gifts to children in hopes of finding Baby Jesus. Italian children hang their stockings up on January 5 awaiting her visit. La Befana fills the stockings with toys and sweets if the children are good and lumps of coal if they are not.

## MAY YOUR LIFE NEVER BE SO BUSY THAT YOU DO NOT HAVE TIME TO SEARCH OUT AND FIND JESUS.



We all think we are invincible. Then comes the day the doctor **walks in and says, "You have cancer."** The doctor continues to talk. You know that because you see his mouth moving, but time has stopped for you and all you are hearing is blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. You now are forced to face your mortality. It is in that moment your life and the lives of your family are changed forever.

In January 2004, during an annual physical, a mass in my mesentery (the mesentery anchors the small intestine to the back of the abdominal wall) was discovered. The doctors were certain it would be benign and scheduled surgery to remove it. During surgery the mass was biopsied and diagnosed as leiomyosarcoma, a very rare and aggressive cancer. The surgery went well and a follow up PET scan showed no more cancer cells. The oncologists were very concerned and told us there is no cure for this cancer and it would come back. Once it metastasized I would be looking at six months. I had CT scans every three months and things were going great. Then in August 2006 my scans showed the cancer was back and had metastasized to my liver and there were other tumors under my skin. It was stage IV. I remember my oncologist looking **pale and saying, "I can't believe this is happening to you."** Now the fight of my life begins.

We were immediately sent to Mayo in Rochester and were told my liver was inoperable. They suggested an aggressive round of infusion chemo, but stated chemo does not work on this cancer so we should get our affairs in order.

The next 2 1/2 years have been a roller coaster ride. I have gone through two different types of aggressive infusion chemo, and seven different types of oral chemo, as well as a few surgeries to remove tumors, all of which have failed. We have been to Dana Farber in Boston and have consulted with Dr. Anderson in Houston. Each doctor would say, **"By the looks of your scans you should not be living."** Now I am in a phase III study that requires us to travel to Omaha, NE every three weeks to get an infusion chemo. Since it is not an approved drug, we have to go to the facility conducting the study.

When this journey started I was shocked, in denial, terrified, absolutely panicked. All I could think of was **"I cannot leave my family."** I kept asking the doctors, **"What about my kids, is this hereditary?"** They all assured me this type of cancer was not. Thank the Lord!

I knew that I was a Christian, but I did not feel that I was ready to face the Lord. The treatments are tough mentally and physically so I leaned on my friends and family to do the praying. I was afraid to pray and it was hard to go to church on my good days. I did not want God to think that I was ready. My father-in-law, Andy Kraft, was a true Christian in his belief and how he lived his life. He knew I was struggling and could see I needed to find peace in my faith. He would always tell me, **"Cheryl, we have to go to the cross for this one and it is not easy."** He prayed so hard for me and with me. Tragically, we lost Andy in November, 2006 from complications from an elective surgery. I was devastated. He had **been my "rock."** My family assured me that he was now in a better position to work on my

healing.

The next fall we were at a remembrance mass for Andy and others in his parish that had passed. I have to admit I did not really pay attention to the mass because I was praying the entire time for God to listen to Andy. (I was scheduled for a surgery the next day that the doctors said could end up being pretty invasive. I was scared.) That night I had a dream about Andy. Andy came up to me and said, **"Cheryl, how are you?"** I said, **"I don't know."** He answered, **"It will be ok."** He started fading away and I said, **"Wait Andy, how are you and what's it like there?"** He came toward me again and said, **"I'm good."** Then he was gone. I did not wake up after the dream and did not recall it until I was up the next day. I remember how vivid and beautiful the colors were; his flesh, his shirt, his hair. (My surgery that next day could not have gone any better.) It was at that moment I became calm and accepting of my fate. I do believe I had received the Holy Spirit. It was time for me to turn this fight over to the Lord.

**I have never once asked, "why me?" I do know that God did not put this illness on me—the devil would do that—there is no illness in heaven.** Whenever I am struggling physically or mentally I put my faith in God and know that he will take care of me. He is **"The Great Physician."** I have found it to be a place of quiet retreat. As I continue through this journey I have come to understand that faith and belief **open doors to God's faithfulness and love.**

(cont. page 4)

(The Journey, Cont. from page 3)

Patience keeps the door open **until God's answer is fulfilled.** Perseverance is possible because **of God's love and calming peace.**

What can I do with this fate?  
**I can share God's message of** love and our love relationship with him through the cross. If it happens to others I can help them through the journey. I have had many people come up to me **and say, "How do you do it? I** could have never gotten through my treatment without your **inspiration." A way for me to share God's Word is about as** fulfilling as it gets.

Once after some bad news, my daughter came up to me **emotionally and said, "Mom, aren't you scared?"**

I told her I was not because I have received the Holy Spirit and **God's Word says that I will be** healed. I saw some calmness come upon her.

My tumors continue to grow, however my labs continue to improve. The doctors have no medical explanation. I do believe it is the Lord working on my healing. My legacy for my family is not to pass on the china or that special piece of furniture, but rather make sure they know the Savior, my Lord, believe his Word, and live their lives accordingly. I have found strength through scripture in Romans 5: 3-5.

We have been blessed with great doctors, prayers and deeds of friends, family, co-workers and each of you fellow parishioners. We remain hopeful. Thank you all.

My legacy is not to pass on the China. . . But rather make sure they know the Savior, my Lord, believe His Word, and live their lives accordingly.

## THE POWER OF PRAYER: AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRAYER CHAIN FROM MIKE & THERESIA LUDWIG

To the Church of the Nativity prayer Chain

In October of 2007 my wife Theresia was diagnosed with cancer while on vacation in Seattle. Our daughter-in-law put her immediately on your prayer chain. After 22 days of testing and concerns, doctors allowed Theresia to fly home to be treated in Fargo with her own doctors. After the chemo treatments, the answers to all the prayers came as a positive report from doctors. The cancer was controlled and Theresia was gaining strength and weight. Not to be left out, I developed negative reactions to medications I was taking and I was also placed on the Nativity prayer chain soon after Theresia was taken off the prayer chain. I too can be thankful to you for your prayers as I am feeling MUCH better. It is very comforting to have a faith family that comes to the aid of those in need. God truly is working all around us. He does answer prayer. Thank you again for your support through your prayers. God is Good.

## WHAT WE CAN DO FOR THOSE WHO HAVE HAD ABORTIONS

By Fr. Gary Luiten

We may ask what we can do for a woman who has had an abortion or the father, friend, or relative of an aborted child. Our church has **done well in naming the sin, but hasn't always done well in helping to** bring about inner healing.

One good effect of the anti-life culture we are in has been the development of the tools on how to begin the healing plan. I have been blest to assist with such a healing process and see such courageous women (and men) come to grips with and deal with the pain and the wounds that abortion has inflicted on them. It is good to know that we finally have an avenue that helps those who have had abortions to finally begin the process of healing. Many of us have **undoubtedly heard of Rachel's Vineyard and Project Rachel. These are** ways of helping to come to terms with the spiritual wound of abortion and how to grow even stronger in our faith.

Maybe you or someone you know has suffered from such an experience. I recently attended a conference by the founder of **Rachel's Vineyard, and have discovered that many who have allowed** themselves to become victimized in this way have suffered post-traumatic stress disorder and many other problems. They can be plagued with grief, depression, anxiety, guilt, anger, isolation, and psychological numbing. Moreover, the pain caused by involvement with abortion is often not recognized by society. But the experience **and knowledge of God's forgiveness and all-accepting love** is a significant part of the healing process. We want those people to be at peace with themselves and God.

Please, if you or someone you know has suffered such an experience, let them know there is help, there is hope, and there is healing. There is a life after an abortion or abortions. For more information, please contact me at the parish office, or, if you wish to remain anonymous, please contact Project Rachel at 1-800-450-5158. All counseling is confidential.

# A STORY OF HEALING: RACHEL'S VINEYARD

BY PAM APPEL

Imagine yourself in a roomful of people, but you are not seen or heard. Imagine yourself in the dark without being able to see any light at the end of the tunnel and it gets darker and darker by the second. Now imagine you live like this for 17 years. This is how I lived suffering from the after affects of an abortion that I had 17 years ago.

I was 19 when I was in a crisis pregnancy. I prided myself in not being a smoker or a drinker or a druggie in high school or college. How could I have gotten myself into this situation? I realized that I was pregnant just before Christmas and told my boyfriend at the time. He told me that we would have an abortion and hide the fact that we were ever going to have a baby. I stupidly agreed, not knowing how it would negatively affect the rest of my life. A large part of my heart and soul died the day I had the abortion.

The night after my procedure we went to his company Christmas party. We acted like there was nothing wrong. During the party I can **remember thinking 'Let me drink all the booze in the place and let me die. At least I would be with my baby that I killed.'** From that day on I became emotionally closed toward my boyfriend, toward anyone I encountered. I lied to everyone about my feelings, became indecisive and powerless. For a very long time, I "stuffed the pain."

Many life changing events happened. I married, had 2 beautiful babies, one living in heaven and one here with me. Many people close to me died,

my father, my grandmother and my mother almost died. I slipped into sadness and depression. I was unhealthy, unhappy, and then divorced.

One of my deepest hurts came in April of 2001 when my mother died. I had never told my mom about the abortion, though I know she knew it deep **down in her soul. I can't change** the past, but I wonder if I had, would I have listened to her advice? Would Gabriel still be with me today?



Life started to change for me. In December of 2001 I married my best friend. In 2002, I had another precious baby. Following that pregnancy, I slipped into a deep post-partum depression. During that time, I thought of all the sadness in my life, including my abortion. In the depths of despair, I attempted to take my life. Then, I began the struggle to return to a healthy life. Abortion was at the center of the hurt. It was the secret I kept that ate at my soul.

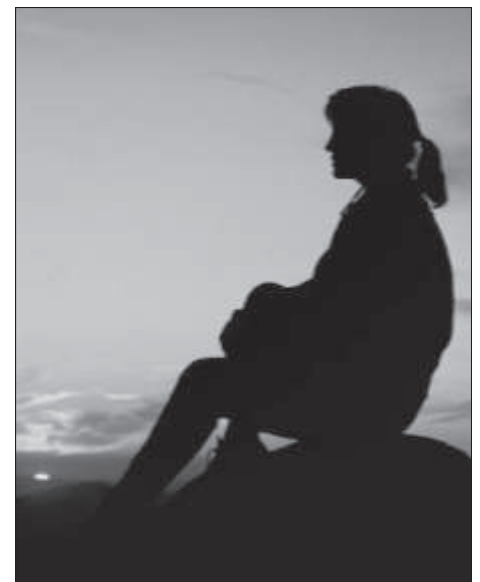
I began to think there had to be some way to end the pain. In January of 2005, we started going to the Catholic Church. I wanted our marriage blessed, but to do that I would have to have my previous marriage annulled and face my deepest

and darkest secret. I told the Priest about the abortion and he **suggested that I attend Rachel's Vineyard retreat.**

I attended one in St. Paul. This was the beginning of an incredible healing process and journey. I thought I had dealt with some of the pain and suffering from the abortion, but soon came to realize that I had not even come close to scratching the surface. By the end of the retreat, I was able to grieve for my child. A memorial service was held for the children who were aborted. We offered our children to God.

After the memorial service, I was able to break free from the pain that held me prisoner, light a candle in the darkness of **despair. Rachel's Vineyard was a** rewarding experience, a step forward in healing the pain. Its Christ centered weekend has given me the start to reclaiming my life.

The next retreat will be held in March.



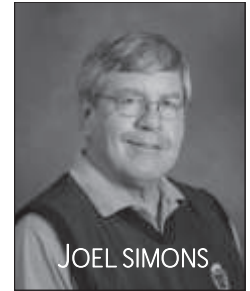
# A LOOK AT OUR COUNCILS AND COMMISSIONS

## PASTORAL COUNCIL

### WHY DO YOU BELIEVE BEING ON THE PARISH COUNCIL HAS BEEN A MEANINGFUL PART OF YOUR LIFE?



Sharing a skill I already have, has gone beyond just taking minutes for the Pastoral Council. It opened my eyes to the many ways Nativity serves, more than I had ever taken time from my own busy schedule to notice before. Watching the leaders of this church serve the needs of this parish also gave me the nudge to step up as a Proclaimer and Eucharistic Minister. Who would have **thought saying "yes" to taking minutes would make a difference** in my own spiritual journey? Brenda Lang



JOEL SIMONS



I felt a calling to be more involved with our church community. By becoming a member of the Parish Council, this has brought me closer to the Nativity Parish.  
Ken Jablonsky



Being part of the Pastoral Council has helped me to better discern what my current priorities in life actually are.  
Jason Schwengler



As we open our Pastoral Council meetings, it is great to open with scripture and sharing how God is present in our lives. Being able to serve Nativity Parish and Minister to the needs of others is a very special experience.  
Joe Miranowski



Parish Council gives me the opportunity to serve our parish and parishioners as Nativity continues to grow and expand. Being involved in Parish Council also gives me the opportunity to meet people in the parish and be involved in a number of additional ways. I enjoy being one part of many parts that make Nativity a fine parish.  
Leon Senn



Being a member of the Parish Council and involved in parish details, helps foster a commitment **to be an active "Pew Person."** My Nativity family is a large part of my life.  
Betty Hund



As a member of the Pastoral Council, I have learned much about the various ministries we have at Nativity and all the opportunities we have to grow in our faith.  
Terri Dahl



It has been a chance for me to speak for others in the parish. It has given me a chance to see the church in a whole different light.  
Bev Nesler, Youth Liaison



Being on the council is a meaningful part of my life because I, first of all, strongly believe in the Nativity Mission. The membership on this council provides me the opportunity to **respond to God's many gifts by giving back my time and talent.**  
Greg Schmalz

# THOUGHTS ON BEING STEWARDS IN OUR COMMUNITY



**I think it's been a meaningful part of my life because I think I can better appreciate what takes place in the church because I see all the processes it must go through. I also feel like I am part of the inner working of the church.**  
Chenise Nesler, Youth Liaison



The faith and dedication of others had been a real inspiration and motivation for me in my life. Fr. Gary Luiten



It is a blessing in being in the presence of dedicated, caring people who desire to serve the people of Nativity Church of Fargo.  
Cindy Hutchins, Parish Staff Liaison



The Pastoral Council has sometimes been described as "the eyes and the ears" of the parish. This body of people helps me as pastor to see and hear the needs of our parish thus enabling me to make good pastoral decisions based on the collaboration of many hearts and voices.  
Fr. Kevin Boucher



I find the purpose of the Pastoral Council is to serve the entire Nativity Community by providing pastoral guidance and vision using prayer, discernment and shared wisdom, which is a great part of my life.  
Also for me, the Council is not meant to be a legislative body nor a model of an **efficient business organization. Rather, it's function is to work for a unified vision** (consensus) and to help the whole parish to meet the challenge of being Church in the modern world today.  
I very much enjoy being with leaders in our community as we continue to model our parish mission statement for the entire assembly. These leaders give me energy to do the work of the parish community each day. Duane Koble

Not Shown: Bonnie Faller, Marilyn Bjoralt, Jean Hannig, Kevin Wolf

## Spotlighting the Youth Liaison—Teen position

**Being the youngest member of Nativity's Pastoral Council, I think it is very eye-opening to learn what the inner-workings of Nativity Church actually are.** It truly is where the decisions are made. The Council is made up of people from all areas of the church and who meet once a month to report on what has happened at their last meeting. My area is representing the youth of the parish. I mainly report from our youth groups, but I report from our youth and high school choirs too. I find it extremely interesting and I **feel very thankful for being given the opportunity to be on this council. The people on Nativity's Pastoral Council** are all very welcoming and inviting, and there is not a person there that does not care about what you have to say. I personally very much enjoy the experience that being on this council has given me, and I thank Nativity for it.

Written by Chenise Nesler

## THE POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE: REFLECTIONS ON THE PERU MISSION TRIP

Many people say that when they return from a mission trip, it has changed their lives, but for me it was even more than that. Before this trip, I had no idea what I wanted to do for college or what I wanted to major in and as an incoming senior, it was time for me to decide. This trip showed me how much I love speaking Spanish, no matter how rusty I am, and that one of my main interests is helping others. Seeing how Father Jack and Sister Peggy have dedicated their lives to the Mission was very moving. They care so much for the people in Chimbote and they have really made a difference in the community. I think everyone in the group would agree that we wanted to help the people in need as much as possible but Father Jack assured us that anything, small or big, helped immensely. He spoke to us a lot about how just being there was the most important part. Our "presence" was the part that impacted the Peruvians the most because they saw that there are people who want to help and that care about them. As I said, this trip inspired me to change my future plans. I am now going to continue my Spanish education into college and I am looking forward to joining the Peace Corps after I graduate. This trip changed me so much and I met many new people, from our parish and from Peru. I formed special bonds with everyone in our group that I will always cherish.

By Alex Rheault

My experience in Peru is beyond words, it was the trip of a lifetime. As soon as we stepped off the bus in Chimbote we were greeted warmly with hugs and kisses. They were all grateful that we were there to see them, and so appreciative that we were trying to have a better understanding of their everyday lives.

Personally I enjoyed the early morning and night masses. I really liked how the little kids would come and sit by us, and how all of them would give hugs and kisses to show how much they cared for us. We were also given the great opportunity to rebuild walls for families in very great need of help. While doing this I was able to see the selflessness that they have. I remember the neighbors of one of the families thanking us so much because they knew how much their neighbor needed our help. Although this family was in need, they put the family in greater need before themselves.

There were so many spiritual and emotional experiences on this trip. They showed so much love and so much kindness that leaving Chimbote was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. Seeing how much Father Jack and Sister Peggy do for the people of Chimbote is truly beyond words.

By Erica Holo

Please join us on Wednesday, January 21st for our ALL PARISH WALK ON. We will have our annual Spaghetti Dinner from 4:45-6:15pm. At 6:30pm we will have the youth and young adults from our parish give a presentation about the June 2008 Peru trip. Come see a DVD full of pictures and music, hear a recap of our trip, and learn more about Peru!

### READY TO PARTY?!

Nativity Youth will be hosting a Mardi Gras Party/Talent Show on Tuesday, February 24th! This is a PARISH-WIDE talent show...we would like participants of all ages! Each act will get up to 5 minutes to perform. It'll be a great way to see talent and humor all around. Last year was a huge success and we are very excited for the 2nd annual talent show. Please come to the gym from 6:30 -7:30 and we will have refreshments! The cost is free to enter but we will be passing a basket to help raise money for Nativity Youth. Please contact Kellie Bruckbauer (232-2414) or email [kellieb@nativitycatholicchurch.net](mailto:kellieb@nativitycatholicchurch.net) to sign up for your slot in the show!

# FOUNDATIONS OF A GRACE FILLED FAITH

BY KATHY BOURDON

## TUNE IN TO GOD

I have just watched, for at least the 10th time, the spirituality short film by Rob Bell entitled, "Rhythm". It is a thought provoking film on what really occurs throughout our day and how we see God.

I have found the words of Jim Merhaut to be very helpful as I try to "tune into God" during my Advent days of waiting.

**"In order to bring God into the daily life of your household, you will have to tune yourself into God's activity in your life each day. God is the source of everything good that happens to us and of every good thing that we do.**

These good things are as profound as giving birth to a child and as simple as taking a breath. God is also the source of our strength when we have to face difficulties and suffering. Each night before you fall asleep, take a minute to think about the goodness of your day, and thank God for all of it. Imagine that your past twenty-four hours have been recorded. Let the day rewind in your mind, event by event. **You'll be amazed at how much good has happened in the course of one day.** Whisper a quiet thank you for each of God's gifts as you rewind the day. Be sure to thank God for the challenging or difficult moments of the day as well, because they are opportunities to gain wisdom and peace if we allow God to guide us.

**The word Eucharist means "thanksgiving."** Sunday liturgy is our opportunity to thank God for all the goodness we receive each day. The evening before you attend Mass, take some time with your child to rewind the week in the same way you have practiced rewinding your days as described above. Tell your child that Sunday liturgy is the time to offer special thanks for those gifts in a public setting. Doing this regularly will help both you and your child develop a more grateful disposition. Gratitude is one of the keys to happiness."

## LIFE ITSELF IS GRACE

I discovered that if you really keep your eye peeled to it and your ears open, if you really pay attention to it, the life you are living may be opened up to extraordinary vistas.

Taking your children to school and kissing your wife or husband goodbye;  
eating lunch with a friend;  
**trying to do a decent day's work;**  
hearing the rain patter against the window.

There is no event so commonplace but that God is present within it, always hidden, always leaving you room to recognize him or not to recognize him.

Listen to your life.  
See it for the fathomless mystery that it is.  
In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness:

Touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it  
because in the last analysis all moments are key moments,  
and life itself is grace.

Fredrick Buechner

So that he could help the poor  
Living in despair."

## ST. NICHOLAS BASKETS ---

DECEMBER 3RD, 6:30 PM, AT NATIVITY CHURCH

Sing to the tune of Jolly Old St. Nicholas:

### "Thankful Bishop Nicholas

Friendly, good and wise.

When he could he helped the poor,  
Always by surprise

Rich men came to Nicholas  
With their wealth to share

Join us in our traditional All-Parish Advent Event as we assemble food baskets for the poor. Last year our generous parishioners contributed enough food items to make up over 150 baskets for those in need. Parishioners have contributed food to the church each and every Sunday during November. We will assemble the baskets on Wednesday, December 3 as we get closer to St. Nicholas Day. **(St. Nicholas' real feast day is December 6).**

# TURNING THE TIDE: PUSHING BACK GLOBAL POVERTY: A 2008 GLOBAL POVERTY EVENT

BY CATHY SCHWINDEN

**"Turning the Tide: Pushing Back Global Poverty" will be held** Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, at the NDSU Memorial Union Ballroom in Fargo. The workshop will share news of the progress that is being made to overcome extreme hunger, poverty and disease by working to meet the Millennium Development Goals, established by 189 countries through the United Nations in 2000. Breakout sessions include raising awareness on hunger and poverty, influencing members of Congress, using the web and social networking sites for anti - poverty action, climate change, rising food prices, child and maternal health, and causes of immigration.

According to Catholic News Service, Archbishop Celestino **Migliore, the Vatican's permanent** observer to the United Nations, recently addressed the U.N. General Assembly on the topic of the Millennium Development Goals, and stated that not meeting these goals , intended to **address the needs of the world's poorest countries , would be "a moral failure of the whole international community."** (as quoted from the National Catholic Rural Life Conference Bulletin).  
In spite of progress in many

areas, there is still much to be done. Pockets of deep poverty exist in every area, and the global food crisis has caused major setbacks.

Come, learn and be part of the solution. Then take action ideas back to your parish, your work place and your home. There is no cost for the workshop. Registration begins at 8:30am, with the opening session scheduled for 9:00am. There will be lunch at 12:30 at the University Lutheran Center for those wishing to network with workshop participants.

For more information, please contact Pastor Dan Forsberg at Peace Lutheran Church, 232-7166 or danforsberg@fargopeace.org., or Cathy Schwinden at Nativity Catholic Church - 232-2414 or cathys@nativitycatholicchurch.net.

## THE CHRISTMAS PLEDGE

Believing in the true spirit of Christmas, I commit myself to:  
Remember those people who truly need my gifts  
Express my love in more direct ways than gifts  
Examine my holiday activities in the light of my deepest values  
Be a peacemaker within my circle of family and friends  
Rededicate myself to my spiritual growth

Jo Robinson and Jen Coppock Staeheli

## THANKSGIVING DAY OFFERTORY COLLECTION

### This year's

Thanksgiving Day Offertory Collection will benefit Churches United for the Homeless. The economic problems facing so many Americans are especially severe there - with rising costs for food, health care and shelter impacting those who have the fewest resources. With winter approaching, we know that we need to keep the doors of Churches United open. If you will not be attending Mass on Thanksgiving Day and would like to support this effort, you may drop off your donation at the Nativity Office before Thanksgiving **and we'll include it** with our offertory collection.

# HIGHLIGHTING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY: CHURCHES UNITED FOR THE HOMELESS

BY JOANN E. PETERSON

Churches United for the Homeless opened its doors in 1987 in the old Bethesda Lutheran Church building at 203 S 6th St. in Moorhead with eight original member churches. Nativity Church joined this close knit group in 1988. Pat Winter and Joann E. Peterson represented Nativity Church.

Suffering from growing pains, in a building in need of repairs and a pressing need for more services, the old Plunketts building was purchased in 2002 with a move in date in 2004.

Expanded services were initiated in case management, transitional/permanent supportive housing program, nursing staff and supervisors according to space needs, clothing and furniture housed downstairs for those in need. Food baskets were distributed one a week. A Christmas store offers a place to shop for their

families. A Christmas party was provided for shelter guests, as well as the general public.

Churches United for the Homeless is in a financial crisis. A budget of \$45,000 a month is needed just to keep the doors open.

Many hardships have been **acknowledged in CUFH's attempt** to go back to the basics of operating as an emergency shelter. Licensed as a board and lodging facility in Minnesota we realize that stretching resources to meet needs can affect the original mission.

Shorter hours have been initiated, 8 am to 8pm. Staff hours are cut. Case management has been eliminated, with clients being referred to other support agencies. Nursing services will be used as a supervisor along with the distribution of medicines. The clothing and furniture room has

been cut back to a smaller scale and only provided for guests at the shelter.

Individuals staying their 45 days at the shelter may receive an extension of another 45 days with the stipulation that they provide four hours a day of service for the shelter.

The Supportive Housing Program for Transitional Housing itself is supported with grant money.

The Christmas store will again be in operation if it can be supervised totally by volunteers and their contributions collected.

Housed at the shelter are 22 men 12 women and 6 family rooms of which there are 22 children. There is a tremendous need for more family rooms.

God lies at the heart of what we do and is always our driving purpose.

## THE JOY OF GIVING

BY CATHY SCHWINDEN

Parents know from their own experience that the greatest joy associated with Christmas gifts is the giving rather than the receiving. Perhaps your family might like to look at some creative gift-giving this Christmas season.

My French students loved giving the gift of animals – as well as hope for future economic independence– through the Heifer International Project. They chose flocks of chicks and ducks (\$20) and goats (\$120 or a share for \$10). They were very impressed to see the math that showed how their gift would literally multiply and make a long-term difference in the lives of struggling families.

Go to [www.heifer.org/catalog](http://www.heifer.org/catalog) to see the many animals, bees and trees that can change lives. You can also call toll free 800-698-2511.

One of my favorite catalogues is from Church World Service. You purchase a gift based on the personality and preferences of the person you want to honor and the gift goes to someone in **one of the world's poorest** countries. Here are some examples: for a sports fan, a soccer ball for \$10, for someone warm and caring, two blankets for \$10. for a green thumb, seeds and tools for a family for \$15, for a lover of learning, two school kits for \$26, for an

environmentalist, a solar stove for \$62.

So many of these gifts have the potential to be life-changing for the recipients, enabling them to become more self-sufficient and in time to experience the joy of being gift-givers as well. Heifer International requires that those who receive animals must share some of the offspring with their neighbors.

There will be many opportunities to share the Christmas Spirit and to be generous in our own community – watch for more information in the weekly bulletin.

# AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR NATIVITY FAMILY

## CONSIDER GIVING THESE GIFTS BEFORE DEC. 31:

CASH GIFTS  
APPRECIATED PROPERTY  
AND GIFTS IN KIND  
LIFE INSURANCE  
REAL ESTATE

Dear Nativity Family In Christ:  
*Giving to your parish before  
December 31st, 2008 ...*

The Advent and Christmas season will soon be here and we will say goodbye to 2008 and start a new year with many resolutions about strengthening the things we value and care for the most. Before we take that final step into the New Year, many of us look at the opportunities for charitable gifting at year-end.

I would presume that the majority of our parishioners give to the parish and charities because they believe in the significant work accomplished – not because of tax deductions. But tax deductions do help us to give more depending on just how we have been financially blessed. It is the way the federal government helps in reducing the cost of making gifts to our favorite charities.

Over the years, changing laws have continued to affect you as a taxpayer and your ability to make gifts. In many cases, because of these changes, you may be able to give more, while still benefiting both you and your loved ones, as well the organizations near and dear to you.

When considering your year-end gifting plans, please remember what our parish community means to you and its impact on your life and our entire community. I welcome your continued support and encourage you to consider the following methods of support:

- ◆ Cash gifts
- ◆ Appreciated property such as real estate holdings, common stock, bonds or other securities
- ◆ Gifts in kind which are assets

have increased in value over the years. These would include antiques, art treasures, jewelry, manuscripts, livestock, crops, books, and other tangible personal property.

- ◆ Life Insurance gifts from a policy that is no longer needed for its original purpose
- ◆ Real estate wherein you might consider gifting your personal residence, vacation home, farm, business, developed property, etc; reserving the right of residency – usually the balance of your lifetime.

As your parish Director of Administration, I would be pleased to discuss these and other possibilities for gifting the parish before the end of 2008. It is very important that you seek the counsel of a professional financial planner or tax advisor in order to determine the most tax-wise methods of giving for you and those you love.

Please do remember that your parish welcomes and appreciates your financial support in order to help our community continue the important works of religion, education and charity.

May God bless you for giving this your serious attention in the coming days. Our legal parish name is Nativity Church of Fargo. Any questions please call 233-2414, extension 134, or e-mail at [duanek@nativitycatholicchurch.net](mailto:duanek@nativitycatholicchurch.net)

Sincerely Yours In Christ:  
NATIVITY CHURCH OF FARGO  
Duane J. Koble  
Director of Office of Parish  
Administration

# GREAT NEWS - EXTENSION OF IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER INCLUDED IN FINANCIAL RESCUE BILL!



Take advantage of this renewed giving opportunity!

On October 3, 2008, the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush. One of the last minute additions to the Senate version of the bill was an extension of the charitable IRA rollover provisions to distributions that expired at the end of 2007. The new legislation extends IRA rollover gift provisions of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 to make it applicable to gifts made in 2008 and 2009 retroactive to January 1, 2008.

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

The newly extended IRA rollover provision permits you to use your IRA to help accomplish your philanthropic goals with no federal tax impact. *If you are 70 ½ or older, you may make a gift or up to \$100,000 per year to Nativity Church of Fargo from your IRA with no federal income tax, impact and your gift will be counted toward your required minimum distribution. To obtain this benefit, you must instruct your IRA administrator to transfer funds directly to Nativity Church of Fargo in one of our many endowments. If you withdraw the funds from the IRA first and then contribute them to Nativity Church of Fargo you will lose the tax benefit.*

This charitable IRA rollover is only available this year and next. We urge you to act soon to take advantage of the 2008 opportunity in perpetuity.

Additional details: Unlike a cash withdrawal from your IRA, your direct contribution will be excluded from income for federal purposes and not taxed. It will not be eligible for a charitable tax deduction, but it will not count toward the annual percentage limitation on your other deductible gifts, nor will it reduce your other itemized deductions. Your direct contribution cannot be made to donor advised funds, supporting organizations, split-interest trusts or in exchange for gift annuities. Your qualified distribution may be includable in your income for state and local tax purposes, and an offsetting charitable deduction may not be available.

Remember your parish community has many excellent Endowments for your planning.

The parish community of Nativity has in place six endowment funds for our parish development planned giving opportunities.

### ◆ JIM LAVELLE MEMORIAL FUND ENDOWMENT:

Started in 1995, this fund is used by Nativity parish for the purchase of flowers or flower materials for the flowerbeds around the church campus.

### ◆ MAURICE MUELLER ENDOWMENT:

Begun in 2000, this fund is used for the education of persons involved in Liturgy and Social Justice.

### ◆ NATIVITY PARISH SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY FUND ENDOWMENT:

This endowment was started in 2004 to endow a staff position employed by Nativity to promote social justice.

### ◆ NATIVITY PARISH FAITH FORMATION SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT:

The fund started in 2006 provides financial scholarships for children of low-income Nativity members in the Nativity Elementary Faith Formation program, the Nativity Youth Faith Formation program or the Nativity Parish Sacramental program.

### ◆ NATIVITY CHURCH OF FARGO ENDOWMENT:

Started in 2008, this fund helps support the Church of the Nativity

### ◆ LAURA CHRISTENSON ESPEJO ENDOWMENT:

The fund started in 2000 for Social Justice Ministry for the parish, which includes education about social justice, social justice activity in the community relating to person who are homeless, or materially poor and **social justice activities related to the parish's connections in Peru.**

If you would like to donate to our endowments, we give the opportunity to do so online by visiting our parish web site [www.nativitycatholicchurch.net](http://www.nativitycatholicchurch.net) and then going to the link Stewardship/Financial Planning and click to donate on line. If you choose to give not on line, please submit the gift to the parish office and indicate the endowment on the memo line of your check. The Laura Christenson Espejo Endowment Fund is located at the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation. Any questions, please call my office at 232.2414 extension 134 or e-mail at [duanek@nativitycatholicchurch.net](mailto:duanek@nativitycatholicchurch.net)

Stewardship Blessings

Duane J. Koble, Director of Administration and Development

## THE RITE OF ACCEPTANCE AND WELCOMING

One of the wonderful elements concerning the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome is the symbolism it represents. The Lateran Basilica represents the unity of the Body of Christ, our identity as church. As we celebrated this day with the rest of the catholic family, Nativity Church of Fargo welcomed many to the journey of becoming members in full communion with the Catholic Church.

The universality of this process was made evident as the Rite of Welcoming and the Rite of Acceptance unfolded that Saturday evening, November 8. Children and young adults knocked on the doors, asking to be accepted into our catholic family. Sponsors stood to support each new catechumen as each answered **"What do you ask of the Church?"** The joy and excitement overflowed as our young people answered, **"Faith."** Seven people from different walks of life and different life experiences took another step in the process of preparing for baptism, confirmation and Eucharist.

Candidates also entered to this journey through the Rite of Welcoming. They asked to be welcomed as they continue to follow on their faith journeys. Nativity has four candidates and sponsors this fall who stated their desire to continue to learn about the catholic faith until one day they may choose to be received into the church.

As the blessings were received, it was very obvious that this was a time when choosing to be part of the Body of Christ was universal. We had young children, teens, young adults, older adults. Of those, some were born in the United States and some from



Kenya, the Congo and Burundi. Our interpreter that day was from Tanzania. The sponsors who stood in support were just as diverse. The universality of our church was very apparent. Being part of the Body of Christ is our unity even in diversity.

By Chris Steffan

## BRUNCH AND LEARN

BY JUDY SCHWINGHAMMER, PARISH NURSE

Plans are again being made for three **"Brunch and Learn"** events, sponsored by the Health Advisory Commission and to be held in January, February, and March, 2009. People are still **talking about last year's events** and we are confident that the **coming year's seminars will be** even more successful. The seminars unfold like this. On Sunday morning at 10 AM a healthy brunch is served in the Nativity Cafeteria, followed by a presentation by a guest speaker and then followed by a time for

**questions. This year's topics** will be on end of life issues, a topic and discussion we were always meaning to have with our loved ones but one that most of us never get around to.

On January 24, 2009, Father Dale Kinzler will speak on the **"Ethics of Care for the Sick and Dying, Advance Directives (Living Will) and a durable power of attorney for health care" or a combination of the two will be discussed. "Health Care Directive" is what North Dakota state law now calls any advance directive.**

February 28, 2009 the topic will be **"Compassionate End of Life Care and Support"** presented by three members of Hospice who are members of our parish: Becky Pfau, RN.; Joan Gronso, RN; and Cheryl Link, LSW.

March 28, 2009 Julie Tweit will speak on the subject of funeral pre-planning. If any of you know Julie you know she has a way about her that makes this conversation enjoyable.



## SCRIPTURE READINGS

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### Readings for the Week of November 30, 2008

Sunday: Is 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7/1 Cor 1:3-9/Mk 13:33-37  
Monday: Is 2:1-5/Mt 8:5-11  
Tuesday: Is 11:1-10/Lk 10:21-24  
Wednesday: Is 25:6-10a/Mt 15:29-37  
Thursday: Is 26:1-6/Mt 7:21, 24-27  
Friday: Is 29:17-24/Mt 9:27-31  
Saturday: Is 30:19-21, 23-26/Mt 9:35---10:1, 5a, 6-8

### Readings for the Week of December 7, 2008

Sunday: Is 40:1-5, 9-11/2 Pt 3:8-14/Mk 1:1-8  
Monday: Gn 3:9-15, 20/Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38  
Tuesday: Is 40:1-11/Mt 18:12-14  
Wednesday: Is 40:25-31/Mt 11:28-30  
Thursday: Is 41:13-20/Mt 11:11-15  
Friday: Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab/Lk 1:26-38 or 1:39-47  
Saturday: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Mt 17:9a, 10-13

### Readings for the Week of December 14, 2008

Sunday: Is 61:1-2a, 10-11/1 Thes 5:16-24/Jn 1:6-8, 19-28  
Monday: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a/Mt 21:23-27  
Tuesday: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Mt 21:28-32  
Wednesday: Gn 49:2, 8-10/Mt 1:1-17  
Thursday: Jer 23:5-8/Mt 1:18-25  
Friday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Lk 1:5-25  
Saturday: Is 7:10-14/Lk 1:26-38

### Readings for the Week of December 21, 2008

Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38  
Monday: 1 Sm 1:24-28/Lk 1:46-56  
Tuesday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Lk 1:57-66  
Wednesday: Morning: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Lk 1:67-79  
Thursday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25  
Midnight: Is 9:1-6/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14  
Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20  
Day: Is 52:7-10/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14  
Friday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Mt 10:17-22  
Saturday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Jn 20:1a, 2-8

### Readings for the Week of December 28, 2008

Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19/Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40  
Monday: 1 Jn 2:3-11/Lk 2:22-35  
Tuesday: 1 Jn 2:12-17/Lk 2:36-40  
Wednesday: 1 Jn 2:18-21/Jn 1:1-18  
Thursday: Nm 6:22-27/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21  
Friday: 1 Jn 2:22-28/Jn 1:19-28  
Saturday: 1 Jn 2:29---3:6/Jn 1:29-34

### Readings for the Week of January 4, 2009

Sunday: Is 60:1-6/Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12  
Monday: 1 Jn 3:22---4:6/Mt 4:12-17, 23-25  
Tuesday: 1 Jn 4:7-10/Mk 6:34-44  
Wednesday: 1 Jn 4:11-18/Mk 6:45-52  
Thursday: 1 Jn 4:19---5:4/Lk 4:14-22a  
Friday: 1 Jn 5:5-13/Lk 5:12-16  
Saturday: 1 Jn 5:14-21/Jn 3:22-30

### Readings for the Week of January 11, 2009

Sunday: Is 42:1-4, 6-7 or Is 55:1-11/Acts 10:34-38 or 1 Jn 5:1-9/Mk 1:7-11  
Monday: Heb 1:1-6/Mk 1:14-20  
Tuesday: Heb 2:5-12/Mk 1:21-28  
Wednesday: Heb 2:14-18/Mk 1:29-39  
Thursday: Heb 3:7-14/Mk 1:40-45  
Friday: Heb 4:1-5, 11/Mk 2:1-12  
Saturday: Heb 4:12-16/Mk 2:13-17

### Readings for the Week of January 18, 2009

Sunday: 1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19/1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20/Jn 1:35-42  
Monday: Heb 5:1-10/Mk 2:18-22  
Tuesday: Heb 6:10-20/Mk 2:23-28  
Wednesday: Heb 7:1-3, 15-17/Mk 3:1-6  
Thursday: Heb 7:25---8:6/Mk 3:7-12  
Friday: Heb 8:6-13/Mk 3:13-19  
Saturday: Heb 9:2-3, 11-14/Mk 3:20-21

### Readings for the Week of January 25, 2009

Sunday: Jon 3:1-5, 10/1 Cor 7:29-31/Mk 1:14-20  
Monday: 2 Tm 1:1-8 or Ti 1:1-5/Mk 3:22-30  
Tuesday: Heb 10:1-10/Mk 3:31-35  
Wednesday: Heb 10:11-18/Mk 4:1-20  
Thursday: Heb 10:19-25/Mk 4:21-25  
Friday: Heb 10:32-39/Mk 4:26-34  
Saturday: Heb 11:1-2, 8-19/Mk 4:35-41

## CHRISTMAS LITURGY SCHEDULE

Our Christmas liturgy schedule is: 4:00 PM on Christmas Eve, beginning with a prelude of music at 3:15 PM; The late night liturgy will begin at 10:30 PM (replacing the Midnight Mass). A prelude of music and scripture for this liturgy will begin at 9:45 PM. The morning liturgies are at 9:15 and 10:45 AM on Christmas Day.

THE VOICE OF NATIVITY  
Nativity Church of Fargo  
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Fargo ND 58103

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WHAT TOMORROW MAY  
BRING. THE SAME  
LOVING GOD WHO  
CARES FOR YOU TODAY  
WILL TAKE CARE OF  
YOU TOMORROW AND  
EVERY DAY. GOD WILL  
EITHER SHIELD YOU  
FROM SUFFERING OR  
GIVE YOU UNFAILING  
STRENGTH TO BEAR IT.  
BE AT PEACE, THEN, AND  
PUT ASIDE ALL ANXIOUS  
THOUGHTS AND  
IMAGINATIONS.



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