



Happenings at NLC

July 2024

Monthly Newsletter

“With the birth of Jesus in our hearts,
we carry light and love to the world.”

Sunday Worship Service: 9:30am

Reverend Giuseppe Mattei



Upcoming Events

July 4 - Office Closed
August 24 - W.O.N. Bible Study

Please visit our website at www.nlcww.org to view the NLC calendar, submit requests for dates/events, download sermons, among other things.



6363 Commercial Way, Weeki
Wachee, FL 34613 • 352-597-1456 •
www.nlcww.org

SPIRITUAL LIFE

DWELLING IN THE WORD also known by its Latin name, *Lectio Divina*, is a Bible based prayer. *Lectio Divina*, literally meaning “divine reading,” is an ancient practice of praying the Scriptures. During *Lectio Divina*, the practitioner listens to the text of the Bible with the “ear of the heart,” as if he or she is in conversation with God, and God is suggesting the topics for discussion. *Lectio Divina* is a participatory, active practice that uses thoughts, images and insights to enter into a conversation with God.

There are four steps to this prayer practice. 1) Reading (*Lectio*): Read a Scripture passage listening with the “ear of your heart.” What word or phrase captures your attention? 2) Reflecting (*Meditatio*): Reflect on and relish the words. Be attentive to what speaks to your heart. 3) Responding (*Oratio*): As listening deepens, allow responses to arise spontaneously — praise, thanksgiving, questions, petitions. 4) Resting in (*Contemplatio*): Simply “be with” God’s presence as you open to deeper meanings of the Word of God for you.

Come for this restoring mid-week prayer on Wednesdays at 11:00AM in our Sanctuary.

ANNOUNCING: If you are interested in deepening your prayer life, Pr. Giuseppe will lead a 7 week class on prayer on Wednesdays at 11:00 o'clock starting on August 7 and ending on September 25 based on Martin Laird's "Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation." If you want to, you may purchase the book and read it prior to the class. Look for more information in the weeks leading to the class.

ALTAR GUILD. The Altar Guild committee will be off for the summer. **Our next meeting is September 23, 2024, 10:00AM.** We invite anyone (male or female) to attend one of our meetings which is held on the 4th Monday of each month at 10:00AM, to find out what we do and how we do it. If you have any questions you would like answered before that please, call Suzanne Chelf at 352-684-7329.

ALTAR FLOWERS. If you would like to purchase flowers for the altar in honor or memory of a loved one or event, there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex on the kiosk. You can also call the office at 352-597-1456. Cost is \$25.00 per arrangement. For those people who have purchased bouquets, the Altar Guild will have them ready for you to pick up after the 9:30AM service. PLEASE, do not remove flowers from the altar. Members from the Altar Guild will remove them for you.

CHRIST IN OUR HOME - We have received our copies of the July/Aug/Sept issue of *Christ in Our Home*. If you would like a copy they are available in the narthex, or stop by the office between 9:00AM and 12PM. A small donation would be appreciated to offset the costs of the devotionals. You can use a green pew card and mark it "devotionals". If you have any questions, or want to make sure copies are still available, please call the office at 352-597-1456.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE 2024 SYNOD ASSEMBLY - MAY 31 - JUNE 2.

Reflections by Pr. Giuseppe Mattei.

The Assembly was well attended with over 400 delegates. The opening service, presided over by our Bishop, the Reverend Pedro Suarez, was ecumenical and diverse. In attendance was a Presbyterian priest, Carlos Ham, who, born and raised in Cuba, is now one of Bp. Suarez's Mission Directors (the other one is Derik Hoven). The other ecumenical presence was the Episcopal Bishop Douglas Scharf. He affirmed our collaboration.

Deacon Michelle Mehan was the Assembly chaplain, and she offered powerful prayers at scheduled intervals. Several workshops were offered and pre-recorded Ministry Moments presentations were projected. We voted on the Synod spending plan, which passed unanimously, and one resolution on Palestinian advocacy which passed with the majority of votes.

At one point, Bp. Suarez invited the church delegates who were given a nametag with a Gold Star ribbon to stand. Those were churches that had fulfilled their Mission Support promise in full. Then those with a Super Star ribbon were asked to stand. We stood together with other churches and then the Assembly was informed that the churches standing went beyond their promise. That was a proud moment for Nativity.

The keynote speaker was the Rev. Dr. Rafael Malpica Padilla, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, former Bishop of the Caribbean Synod. His speech was titled Missional Engagement in a Time of Intense Uncertainty and Transition. Rev. Malpica reminded us that the unchurched people are growing by one million every year. He reminded us that God has created us in and for community, in relationship and for relationship.

The Church does not “have” a mission, something we claim to possess and to bring to others who are otherwise in great lack and in the dark. It is God, instead, who has a mission and calls the Church to be faithful and follow. From the ministry of Jesus all other ministries derive. So, it’s not that the Church of Jesus Christ has a mission, but the mission of Jesus Christ has a Church. The gift of the Spirit is to receive the mission. The locus for God’s action is where the Church is incarnated as God’s instrument for the liberation and reconciliation of creation. How can an institutional reality become an event again?

Fortunately, we can take notice of the resistance of the “Nones” to the Church directed to it having become an institution, a place where the message of Jesus is managed and protected. In an institution, life can easily be stifled. The “Jesus’ event” was a movement that bridged people together and reconciled them into community: “You cannot preach the gospel to those who are not willing to break bread together.”

For this purpose, we need to keep in mind the three “R.s” of Reconciliation: Repentance, Restoration, Recreation. We also need to deconstruct the narrative of the “other” (what we think and say about the other, the “othering” of the other,) and recover the memory, the humanity and dignity of the other.

Reflections by Robert Rios.

I got to meet many fellow Lutherans from all parts of Florida. Plus, I was happy to meet and hear from our bishop, Pedro Suarez, and I heard a moving keynote speech by the director of the ELCA Global Mission, Rafael Malpica Padilla. The synod assembly was enlightening, informative, and for me, it was a profoundly rewarding experience.

I learned a lot about the amazing and wonderful work being accomplished by Lutherans here, in the United States, and all around the world.

Please visit the Lutheran flagship website - [ELCA.ORG](https://www.elca.org). There you can take a look at the tremendous work that many Lutheran ministries are doing all around the world. It’s almost overwhelming! Plus, you can learn about the many resources available to all of us. I passionately invite all of you to visit [ELCA.ORG](https://www.elca.org) and spend some time browsing.

Reflections by Joree Jensen.

When I went to the Synod Assembly, I didn't know just how much fun I would have and how much I would learn and how often I would think about work. The Mission Moments showed us how much the church does for people on the international level (not just for our communities). I learned that the church is in communion with other denominations when Bishop Scharf of the Episcopal Church spoke. But, as a young-ish person, the thing that struck me most was the theme- Who Comes Up In Your Dreams? When I left my house to head for the assembly, I was thrilled that I would NOT even think about work or my coworkers but... After Bishop Scharf spoke about how many people say they are "spiritual (but) not religious", I started thinking about how one of my coworkers (and friend) and a couple of the managers bring up religion with me.

"I'm a Christian but I don't go to church". Rev. Dr. Malpica Padilla spoke about (the apostle) Paul having a vision and IMMEDIATELY leaving for Macedonia (Acts 15). Paul left for Macedonia (to announce the gospel) as soon as he could and I realized that we need to do the same thing here. I attended a workshop where I learned what other churches in the synod are doing to start outreach programs to build relationships with the community because it's not just the young people who are just "spiritual", it's a growing trend/reality. I also came to the realization that there is no "bad location" for a church because so many people know where Nativity is located-the best part about being on a major road. If the church has open arms and open doors people will come. I went to the Synod Assembly after several rough weeks at work and was ready to NOT think about work and God used the assembly to show me how much the people I know (both at work and at home) need God. I got to meet so many people at the Assembly and I came back spiritually refreshed, it is exactly what my soul needed.

NLC'S SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE - If you are traveling or unable to attend in person but have internet access, you may follow the service by clicking on the link made available on our web site (nlcww.org) or via email on Saturday, or watch a recording of the service during the week. Conversely, you may listen to Nativity Lutheran's Sunday Worship Service every Sunday night at 6pm. Tune in to WZEU-FM 102.9 on your radio for a broadcast of this week's Sunday Service.

OUTREACH

JULY MISSION OF THE MONTH - WEEKEND BLESSINGS (Backpacks-People Helping People) - Weekend Blessings is a program designed to feed preschool, elementary, and middle school children whose families qualify for the Federal Free/Reduced Price Meal program. On the last day of every school week kids participating in the Weekend Blessings program get bags filled with sufficient food for the weekend. If you would like to donate to this mission, make your check payable to Nativity Lutheran Church and indicate People Helping People(PHP)/Weekend Blessings on the memo line. If you would like further information regarding this ministry, please call Sue Vincent at 352-442-6177.

HOW THRIVENT MEMBERS CAN HELP

Thrivent offers a variety of ways that you and your family members together can make the most of all you've been given and amplify your impact on causes you care about. Consider the following resources.

Thrivent Action Teams: Gather your family and make an impact in your community. Learn more at thrivent.com/actionteam.

- Collect hygiene items - for Nativity's Food Pantry
- Purchase music - for Nativity's bell and church choirs
- Trunk & Treat - candy for children
- School supplies - for needy children
- A Crafty Christmas at NLC - food and beverage
- Nature Coast Humane Society - food for animals
- Lighthouse for the Blind - purchase food/equipment
- Angel Tree - xmas gifts/food for inmate children

Thrivent Choice: Eligible clients can direct Choice Dollars to qualifying churches, causes and organizations, influencing how Thrivent distributes some of the program's funding. You also can use Thrivent's online giving platform to make a donation to one of the more than 45,000 organizations enrolled in Thrivent Choice, including NLC. Contact Ernie Horeis @ 352-613-0589, or Tim Cotter @352-797-9682. Visit thrivent.com/choice.

FOOD PANTRY TIDBITS - JULY

In June, the pantry took its first delivery of milk to give away. We are scheduled to have between 30 and 40 half gallons of milk donated per week through the distributor for Winn Dixie. This has been an instant success and has “sold out” each week. We continue to look for other places to bring in fresh goods from – if you have any contacts, please reach out to us.

SHOPPING CART DONATION FOR THE MONTH OF JULY IS:

CANS OF SPAGHETTIOS W/MEATBALLS AND BAGS OF EGG NOODLES

While we will gladly accept any and all donations, we are going to highlight a couple of items each month that could help out.

TOUR TO THE GOLDEN RAINBOW RANCH IN JULY

The Nativity Mission Endowment Committee has arranged to tour the Golden Rainbow Ranch, a recipient of Trompeter Endowment Funds, and welcomes a **limited number** of congregation members to join us for the tour. The Golden Rainbow Ranch is a domestic animal rescue, native plant garden, and therapy ranch of 10 acres in rural Brooksville dedicated to reconnecting people with the great outdoors. The tour will be held on Thursday, July 25th, leaving the church at 1:15 p.m. If you would like to join the committee on the tour, please talk to Carlan Helgeson or email him at cdhelgeson@gmail.com to indicate your desire.

COMMUNITY LIFE

WOMEN OF NATIVITY

All women members of Nativity Lutheran Church are automatically members of W.O.N. and are welcome to participate in all sponsored activities of W.O.N.

WOMEN OF NATIVITY - SAVE THE DATE! The annual W.O.N. summer bible study will be held on Saturday, August 24 starting at 10:00AM. Watch announcements for further information. If you have any questions, please call Mae Haines at 727-863-4329.

CRAFTY LADIES - Fridays, 9:00AM - 11:00AM. We are a group of approximately 12 women, who meet every Friday morning at Nativity from 9:00AM until 12:00 noon. These dedicated ladies, iron, cut squares, pin and sew the quilts together, and tie a knot in every square. Please come and join us. Questions? Call Jill Helgeson at 352-410-0226.

DAYS FOR GIRLS - We will not be meeting during the months of July and August. Please consider joining us in September. Watch information sheets for start-up date and time. For more information, contact Jill Helgeson at 352-410-0226.

CARDS R US - Cards R Us will not be meeting this summer, July and August. Card kiosks will remain in the admin bldg. and in the narthex. Thank you, Nativity family, for your continued greeting card shopping at Nativity. All proceeds are given to Pastor's Discretionary Fund, to help those in need.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE. Friendship Circle will not be meeting this summer, July and August. We'll be back in the Fall for more socializing and devotions with our friends. And, we're always happy to make new friends. See you in the Fall!

SARAH CIRCLE, JULY 18 @ 10:00AM. Do you know someone who is undergoing a medical procedure, in need of comfort after a loss, desiring to increase their time of prayer or meditation, preparing for marriage, in the midst of an illness, recovering from surgery, or otherwise in need of prayer? ***Prayer shawls are always available. All you need to do is ask!*** When someone receives a prayer shawl, Sarah Circle (the women who sponsor the ministry and make the shawls) also prays for that recipient. If you enjoy crocheting or knitting, join Sarah Circle on the third Thursday of the month in the Youth Room at 10:00AM. Or, if you prefer, the prayer shawls can be made in your home. For information, call Peggy Sanders at 352-382-1781.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SUNDAY SCHOOL. Sunday school will start up again in September. Watch announcements for details.

MEMBER CHANGES

New Address: Dow & Carolyn Chamberlain
815 Maplewood Drive, #121
Harleysville, PA 19438

Ruth Ann Hoy
5061 N Highway A1A, Unit 501A
Fort Pierce, FL 34949

OFFICE VACATION SCHEDULE

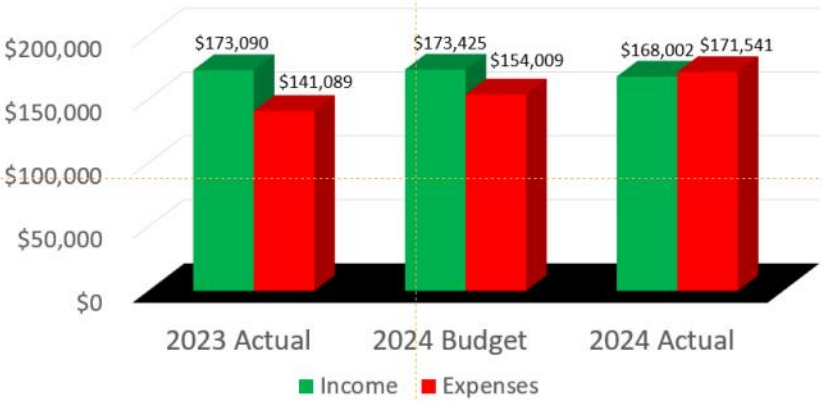
Linda Rizzo, Office Administrator, will be on vacation July 10 - 19. During that time, various members have volunteered to answer phones. THANK YOU. If anything urgent should come up you can contact Evelyn Galli at 516-909-3119, and she can assist you.

Pastor Mattei will be away on vacation from July 26 to August 3. Pr. Phil will preside and preach on Sunday, July 28. He will be back on Sunday, August 4.

FROM NATIVITY'S FINANCIAL SECRETARY

MAY 2024

2024 Income and Expenses (Through May)



If you have any questions, please contact Scott Henkel at scott.henkel@capgemini.com.

WAYS TO DONATE TO NATIVITY. Nativity has a Venmo account. You can send a donation to: @Nativity-LutheranChurch. Also, if you prefer, Nativity has a Zelle account. Send to: nativitylutheran63@gmail.com. Also available is the QR code (see code on right) that is specifically for Nativity donations. Just point your phone's camera at it and a website address will pop up.



A Crafty Christmas

How many of you have begun to plan for Christmas? (Good for You!) And So has Nativity Church!

Some of you may have heard that we are organizing an event called 'A *Crafty Christmas*'. This will be a community event sponsored by NLC and held here at our facilities - with vendors from all over the area selling handcrafted items. We will also have a variety of family activities, food and beverage sales and participation by Hernando County safety and service organizations, auction of baskets and other fun Christmas activities. All the money raised through vendor fees, food and beverage sales, auction and Christmas activities will be donated to charities within Hernando County. The designated areas are the handicapped, the aged and the homeless. Currently, we are in the process of selecting one organization in each category.

You know for an endeavor like this we need your help!

We have a variety of activities planned; including - Cookie Walk, Santa Room, Vendor Booths, Food & Beverage Sales, Sanctuary Tours, Auction of Baskets, Bloodmobile, Alzheimer's Trailer, Nativity Ambassadors, Music... and other Christmas activities.

You will see and hear this event advertised on social media, local and Christian radio, within local neighborhoods, and through printed magazines and flyers. We are currently advertising for vendors. We expect to have 45+ vendors selling handcrafted items. We have already accepted reservations for one-third of the spaces available. If you as an individual or you have a neighbor or friend or if you are part of a NLC group and you would like to sell your handcrafted items please email nativitycraftychristmas@gmail.com, or text 352-210-8407 or go to the Nativity website: WWW.NLCWWW.ORG to request an application.

Our goals for *A Crafty Christmas* are to provide a Christmas gift to the needy, emphasize the celebration of Christmas, provide an opportunity for crafters and artisans to earn money - and for us to build bonds with these people, enhance the recognition of NLC as an accepting and loving house of God, give the non-churched an opportunity to view and learn about our worship, provide the opportunity for us to meet and mingle with others and fellowship with each other.

I know Christmas seems a long way off – please start thinking of how you can be part of this exciting event. You can help by volunteering in the areas mentioned, you can help by posting flyers in your communities, stores, and restaurants, you can help by talking about *A Crafty Christmas* with your neighbors and friends, you can help by donating money, and everyone please help by praying that this event will bring honor to God and love to our community.

July Birthdays

Bonnie Kuester	7/1
Maryanne Stewart	7/1
Kathy Olson	7/7
Harold Reber	7/7
Carl Roa	7/7
Christopher Wright	7/7
Paul Chipko	7/12
Rhonda Nelson	7/14
Phan Squires	7/14
Christina Roa	7/15
Irmgard Timm	7/15
Carol Fleschner	7/16
Anna Hupp	7/16
Patricia Werner	7/17
Jessica Stephan	7/19
Jessica Miller	7/20
Elizabeth Capell	7/22
Bob Schneider	7/23



Nina Vaznelis	7/24
Gilbert Herr	7/25
Todd Holly	7/25
Lynn Cawley	7/26
Richard Posewitz	7/27
Jodi Fell	7/29
Mary Reber	7/30
Arthur Alt	7/31
Larry Barnes	7/31
Janet Jones	7/31

July Wedding Anniversaries

Janet & Todd Holly	7/6
Jane and Scott Henkel	7/11
Nancy and Walter Johnson	7/19
Lynne and Chestley Merritt	7/29



REMINDERS

OFFICE HOURS - Monday through Friday - 9AM-12N

INTERNET SERVICE - If you would like to connect to our internet when on campus look for **Nativity 2**, the password is **guest1234**.

MAILBOXES: When you come to church, please take a moment to check your mailbox in Winemiller Hall and see if anything was left for you.

NEWSLETTER: If you would like to have something included in the **July** newsletter, please submit it to the office or via email to nativitylutheran63@gmail.com by **June 15**.

WE WANT TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOU - We understand that not everybody is online and receives the church information through emails, Facebook, or our web-based calendar. If you know of anyone that has not been able to attend church for some time, you may be the only link between them and Nativity. We would appreciate it if you would keep them included in the happenings at Nativity so that they may not miss out on activities or schedule changes. In addition, please let us know as well so that we can work to keep them in the loop about things at NLC. In addition, should you have a change in your address, phone number and/or email address, please let the office know.

NLC CALENDAR: You can view it on the website, www.nlcww.org. If you do not have access to the website, please let us know, and we can arrange for you to receive a printed copy. In addition, on the website you can submit a request to schedule a meeting. We have many ministries scheduling meetings including non-NLC groups. If you need to reserve a room, please make sure you submit your request to the office. Submissions can be made using a form that can be obtained in the office, or via email to nativitylutheran63@gmail.com or via the form on the website. This will help resolve any conflicts that may arise.

MISSION STATEMENT

With the birth of Jesus in our hearts
we carry light and love to the world.

VISION STATEMENT

We seek to become people who live the nativity by...

Giving Worship and Praise to our God: Presenting ourselves before God as adoring servants, who, in loving God, recognize that it is no longer we who are at the center of the universe, but the One to whom we are singing our praises.

Intentionally giving ourselves as Christ's servants: Participating in his mission in the world, helping those who need our help, both in our church family and in the world beyond: recognizing that there can never really be any peace or joy for us until there is peace and joy for others.

Opening our doors and our hearts to all people: Welcoming all to our fellowship, caring for all in Christian love, and reaching out with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Encouraging each other to grow in faith: Growing our understanding of the scripture and God's leading in our lives through study of the Word, meditation, and prayer; knowing that learning is not just a matter of the mind, but also of the heart, and that raising questions is sometimes of more value than finding answers.

Being responsible to God through the creative use of our income, possessions, time and talent; recognizing that loving our neighbor is not so much a feeling as it is an act of will, and that sharing what we have on behalf of the Kingdom of God is only giving back what was already God's to being with.

Celebrating the gift of life together: Loving our neighbor, losing ourselves and then finding ourselves, having discovered that the Good News means that it is impossible not to feel joy in the presence of the Savior.

OUR VALUES STATEMENT

We recognize that we are not here by chance but are gathered together to be the church of God in Christ.

We recognize that God is making us, through grace, into a Fellowship that embodies and expresses the spirit of Christ. In this fellowship, there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of us are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). We, therefore, welcome equally all people, regardless of religious office, position, possessions, education, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental ability, physical ability or other distinctions. (Adopted 9/7/07)