



Happenings at NLC

December 2024

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

Sunday Worship Service: 9:30am

Reverend Giuseppe Mattei

**Congregational Meeting for
Budget & Elections**

12/1 @ 10:45AM

Christmas Cantata

12/15 @ 9:30AM

Christmas Eve Service

12/24 @ 6:00PM

Christmas Day 12/25 - OFFICE CLOSED



Upcoming Events

December 7- W.O.N. Christmas Luncheon

December 8- Weeki Wachee Winds Concert

December 14-Angel Tree Party

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

Do We Honor the Saints in the Lutheran Church? If So, In Which Way?

Martin Luther was a “fan” of the saints. During his early years, he had been taught not only the names of countless saints, but their life stories as well. Reading books on the lives of the saints became a significant part of his personal devotional life. In a revealing comment, Luther stated that “next to the Holy Scripture there certainly is no more useful book for Christendom than that of the lives of the saints.”

Luther made certain that each of the children born to him and his wife, Katherine, were named for one of the great saints of the past. His own name, *Martin*, had come to him directly from the saint’s day on which he had been baptized, Nov. 11, when St. Martin of Tours, a fourth-century French bishop, was remembered by the Church. His affection for the saints is reflected in a sermon he delivered in 1537, when he said: “Thus I praise and laud the true saints, people graced and gifted with an understanding of Holy Scripture and with many fine, splendid endowments of the Holy Spirit, gifts which they also use for the improvement and encouragement of Christendom.”

There are many Lutheran parishes that commemorate the names of saints (St. Laurence, St. Ambrose, and St. Athanasius). Yet, extensive celebrations of the lives and deeds of the saints in Lutheran congregations are not very common in 21st-century America. Are we in some way “shorting” ourselves by not remembering the saints as fully as we might?

Going back to the basics in learning about the saints may help us recover some of the faith-uplifting power that the stories of these devoted people supplied to previous generations.

A fundamental Lutheran document, The Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1530), clearly states the following: “We do not deny in our Confession that the saints should be honored. This may be done in three ways: first, by thanking God for showing us examples of his grace in the lives of the saints, and for supplying the church with teachers and other gifts. Now as these gifts are great, we should highly esteem them and praise the saints who made good use of them, as Christ in the Gospel praised the faithful servants, Matt. 25:21,23.

The second mode of honoring the saints is to strengthen our faith by their example. Thus, for instance, when we see that through the rich grace of God Peter's sin was forgiven, when he had denied Christ, our hearts receive strength to believe that grace abounds much more than sin, Rom. 5:20.

In the third place we honor the saints, by following, according to our several vocations, the example of their faith, love, and patience.” (Article XXI(4-9): Of the Invocation of Saints)

The Lutheran Church is certainly not “short on saints” for, in the wider sense, we are all saints together by God’s grace through the working of the Holy Spirit. In the *Apostles’ Creed* we confess to our belief in “the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.”

Saints are certainly not mediators. Lutheranism teaches that believers, through Jesus Christ, can approach God directly in confession and through prayers. Saints can be examples of holy life.

The Calendar of Saints in the Lutheran Church suggests commemoration almost on a daily basis.

In December, we remember the following saints:

Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, died 1552. Tuesday, December 3, 2024. A native of the Basque region of Spain, Xavier became a missionary to India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Philippines. He also helped to found the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter, died around 749. Wednesday, December 4, 2024. A monk in an abbey near Jerusalem, John wrote many hymns as well as theological works. One of his works, The Fount of Wisdom, remained influential for centuries.

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342. Friday, December 6, 2024. Little is known about Nicholas, except that he was a bishop in present-day Turkey. According to legend, he was famous for his giving to the poor, and so has become a symbol of anonymous gift-giving.

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, died 397. Saturday, December 7, 2024. While a governor of northern Italy, Ambrose was elected bishop of Milan on the same day he was baptized. He was a famous preacher, a writer of hymns we still sing today, and helped lead St. Augustine to faith.

John of the Cross, renewer of the church, died 1591. Saturday, December 14, 2024, John was a member of the Carmelite monastic order, and worked to reform it. His writings reflect a deep interest in mystical thought and meditation.

Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church, died 1552. Friday, December 20, 2024. Born to an impoverished nobleman, Katie eventually took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. Six children were born to Katie and Martin.

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr. Thursday, December 26, 2024. Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

John, Apostle and Evangelist. Friday, December 27, 2024. The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs. Saturday, December 28, 2024. This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.

December 13 - Santa Lucia: A symbol of hope and light.

In Scandinavia, Lucia symbolizes hope and the return of light to the world. Against the harsh landscape of a dark winter, she signifies a more contemplative atmosphere, with a glow of warmth from the candles that she carries.

Prior to being honored in the Nordic countries as a carrier of light and warmth, the tradition of Santa Lucia speaks of martyrdom in the early Church.

Lucia was born in the year 283 in the Sicilian city of Siracusa, Italy. She was of noble birth and came from a prosperous family. With a name derived from the Latin lux (light), Lucia was a Christian during the reign of Emperor Diocletian, who sent forth an edict to eradicate Christianity.

According to tradition, Santa Lucia carried food at night to the Christians hiding during the persecution. Since her hands were full, leaving her unable to carry a light, she wore a candlelit wreath on her head to light her way in the dark.

It is said that Lucia refused to marry a young pagan to whom she was betrothed. Her furious husband-to-be denounced her to the Governor of Syracuse. She was sentenced to live out her days in a brothel, but when the guards came to take her, she wouldn't budge. It was said that the Roman guards tried to drag her to the brothel by attaching her to a cart drawn by oxen. When this didn't work, the guards tried to set her on fire, but the flames wouldn't catch. This still wasn't the end. Finally, her eyes were gouged out and she was stabbed in the neck. Her death occurred in 304.

Many Renaissance paintings depict Santa Lucia carrying her eyes in a tray. The traditional red sash tied around the waist of a girl representing Santa Lucia in a church celebration is symbolic of the blood shed from her violent death.

ELCA congregations in the United States celebrate Santa Lucia Day as one that carries a message of the light and hope of Christ.

We will remember Santa Lucia during the December 15 worship service.

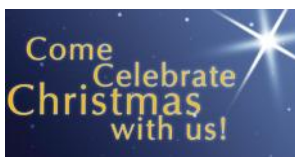


THE FIRST ADVENT IN PALESTINE, A BIBLE STUDY

Our Christian faith teaches us of a pregnant couple's arduous trip, angels, shepherds, a comet, magi welcoming the birth of the Savior. The message of that birth in the Bible is not a seasonal message about decked walls, hanging lights, Christmas trees, eggnog and familiar carols. The first advent was about the arrival of God in a world of woe, and ever since we are invited to grapple with what that birth means for our times.

Come for a three-session study of the story as told from Mary's and Joseph's perspective on December 4, 11, and 18 from 10:00 to 11:30 in the library.

CHRISTMAS CANTATA AND BRUNCH SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15TH - Nativity Chancel Choir will be offering a beautiful Christmas Cantata, *The Heart of Christmas*, at the 9:30am service. After the service the Fellowship Committee will be hosting our Christmas Brunch. It is complimentary so all you have to do is make sure you sign up in the narthex. Look for the big poster and the sign up sheet will be there. If you have any questions about anything, please give me a call at 352-797-9682. ~PATTI COTTER



CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - December 24, 2024, at 6:00PM. Join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Savior of the World.

ALTAR FLOWERS. NO ALTAR FLOWERS 12/22 & 12/29. If you would like to purchase flowers starting up again in January 2025 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 Jan/Feb/Mar 2025 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.

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.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SUNDAY SCHOOL - Every Sunday, children will start the worship service with their guardians, and will be dismissed at 9:45AM until communion time. New children can join Sunday School at any time. Register by calling the church office (352-597-1456). Any questions please call Noel Prettyman at 352-515-3345.

BIBLE STUDY EVERY SUNDAY - at 11:00 AM. Age 12 and up. Themes of the Old Testament (Creation stories, God's Promises, God's faithfulness) not just for personal knowledge and curiosity but for spiritual growth and transformation.

Christmas Poinsettias

Order your Poinsettia to adorn our sanctuary for the Christmas Eve service for \$10.00 each. The poinsettias are large 3 stem red plants FRESH from Knox Nursery of Winter Garden, FL. With proper care they will last weeks after Christmas.

Send your check to the office or use the order envelopes located in the Narthex and identify your memorial. You may pick up your poinsettia following the Christmas Eve service or beginning Thursday, Dec. 26.

We will start taking orders on **Sunday, December 1**. Last day to order will be December 18. Special envelopes will be available in the narthex by the poinsettia display.

We also have available 6 large white poinsettias with red foil. They will cost \$25.00 each, and are on a first-come first-serve basis. You may purchase these through Linda at the church office.

FOOD PANTRY TIDBITS

SHOPPING CART DONATION FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER IS:

Spaghetti (1 lb. box) and shampoo (18-22 oz. bottle) buy shampoo at Dollar Tree for best price.

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

OUTREACH

DECEMBER MISSION OF THE MONTH - LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED AND BLIND. This organization started in 1983. There are almost 27,000 visually impaired people living in Pasco, Hernando, and Citrus Counties. Rehabilitation programs are provided at no cost thanks to the generosity of donors. Lighthouse has programs for all age groups: birth to 5 years, children 5-13, teens 14-22, and adults and seniors 23+. These training programs and services are to help people meet the challenge of vision loss and lead safe, independent and productive lives for oneself and their family. To learn more about ways to help visit: www.lvib.org/get-involved/ways-to-give/

TROMPETER FUND GRANT FORMS AVAILABLE - Applications for 2025 grants from the David Trompeter and Dorothy Marie Trompeter Endowment Fund are now available in the church office. The applications must be returned to the church by December 31, 2024. Trompeter Fund grants are made to supplement “worthwhile ministries of Nativity Lutheran Church” and may not be used for ongoing budgeted programs or building programs of the church. The guideline rankings used for determining a grant include meeting human needs for food, water, and shelter; alleviating human trauma; religious education; and enriching the quality of life. Applications may be picked up in the church office or requested to be sent by mail by calling the office at 352-597-1456.

For questions about the grant process, please contact Carlan Helgeson of the Mission Endowment Committee at cdhelgeson@gmail.com.

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.

MARY JOY BIBLE STUDY - DECEMBER 4TH. All Women of Nativity are invited to join our bible study on December 4th at 9:45AM. For more information, please call Elva Posewitz at 352-584-9362.

DAYS FOR GIRLS - our next meeting will be TUESDAY, December 3rd and 17th at 9:00AM in Al Lien Hall. Days for Girls is a non-profit organization formed to help girls in developing countries stay in school. Through the Trompeter Fund and Thrivent Financial, WON (Women of Nativity) has been able to participate in this life changing mission. For more information, contact Jill Helgeson at 352-410-0226.

CARDS R US, DEC 2nd and 9th. The ministry is offering a different style of handmade Christmas card, thanks to a neighbor in the community who has donated 132 of her beautiful cards. She wishes to give to the needy without any public announcement. The cards will be displayed on the table in the admin. building hallway. Suggested donation is \$2 each or 3 for \$5. You may leave your donation in the cash box on the card kiosk. We will be extending our time to a full 3 hours, from 9:30am-12:30pm. Everyone is welcome to join us. Proceeds are given to Pastor's Discretionary Fund to help those in need. For further information, call Susan Nordstrom at 352-428-1918.

CLUB 75 LUNCHEON - DECEMBER 17. The only criteria to be part of this fellowship group is that you must be 75 years old or older! More details coming. You can also call Vicki Page with any questions (352-210-8407). A sign-up sheet will be in the narthex.

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.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE will not be meeting in December due to everyone's busy schedule, including the many events at Nativity. Circle members and non-members, you are encouraged to join in the Women of Nativity's Christmas party on Saturday, December 7. Any woman who attends Nativity is automatically a "woman of Nativity". Signup will be at 11:00am in the narthex, with entertainment at 11:30am in the sanctuary. Luncheon follows in Winemiller Hall. Attendees are asked to bring a dozen cookies, which will be served on dessert trays. Cost is \$10. Tickets are on sale before and after service in the narthex.

SARAH CIRCLE, DECEMBER 19 @ 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.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1. Our annual **Congregational Meeting for Budget and Elections** will be held after Sunday service. The purpose is to propose and adopt a budget and a program of ministry for the following fiscal year, to hold annual elections, and transact any other business that may be necessary. Copies of the budget will be available in the narthex. You may also stop by the office (or call 352-597-1456) to request a copy.

CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS DUE DECEMBER 15th.

All ministry teams and committees are asked to turn in an annual report to the church office by December 15. Any questions, please call the church office at 352-597-1456.

ATTENTION ALL THRIVENT MEMBERS

The end of the year is almost upon us. If you don't know if you might have Choice Dollars left to designate to an organization or Nativity, please call Thrivent at 1-800-847-4836 and ask. If you have not utilized your Action Team Project or projects, contact: Tim Cotter @ 352-797-9682, or Ernie Horeis @ 352-600-5908. Here are some suggestions:

1. Nativity Food Pantry
2. Angel Tree
3. Lighthouse for the Blind
4. Friendship Circle
5. Homeless
6. Days for Girls
7. Crafty Ladies

PATTER FROM PATTI

Fellowship,

Can we believe we are almost to Christmas, such a happy time. Here is what you have coming till Spring:

12/1 Sunday, after the service help to put up the tree in the Winemiller Hall.

12/3 Tuesday, decorate the 12 foot tree so that it will be ready for all events scheduled for the month, sure could use some tall guys to help, gals too.

December 15th, Christmas Cantata, followed by a complementary brunch. It is important that you sign up for all of the family in advance, we welcome all, we need to know how many guests to prepare for. As it is free, free, free, we used Thrivent to help pay for it. Thrivent is something that can be used for so many things. Talk to Ernie or Tim if you want info.

January, Tuesday 1/28 Mystery Dinner. It is a fairly local location, We'll start taking sign ins on Sunday January 12th.

Other things coming up for the rest of the year:

Saturday 2/22, February

A party remembering the 50s, most of us remembering those years well.

March, Saturday 15th, Hamarama Talent Show

We accept 10 acts, so if you want to perform you can tell me soon, Of course we have the big Ham Dinner we have been having for years. More info later.

April Mystery Dinner

May event Memorial Day Cookout after service

So you can see my Fellowship Committee made big plans, for the rest of our season, of course we would welcome any new member, gals and guys.

Have a wonderful Christmas Season, don't forget the Cantata.

~Patti Cotter

FROM NATIVITY'S FINANCIAL SECRETARY OCTOBER 2024

2024 Income and Expenses (Through October)



* 2023 income and expenses do not include \$52,051.60 in storm damages.

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.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



We are always looking for volunteers for various church duties. Volunteers are what help keep our church going and growing. If anything interests you please call the church office at 352-597-1456. THANK YOU!

USHERS NEEDED. We need 2 ushers for our 9:30AM service. There is a sign-up sheet on the kiosk in the narthex listing the Sunday service dates. Please sign up for whatever date(s) fits your schedule. Your time is greatly appreciated.

ACOLYTE AND CRUCIFER NEEDED. We are seeking individuals who would like to light the candles and/or carry the cross during our Sunday service. Please contact the office (352-597-1456) if you are interested. A short training is all that is needed. Your time is greatly appreciated.

NURSERY HELP NEEDED FOR SUNDAYS. If you have signed up and are registered for helping out in the nursery, we need 2 people to monitor the nursery. Sign-up sheet is available in the nursery or you may call the office at 352-597-1456 to schedule day(s) you are willing to help out.

MEMBER UPDATES:

New address: Kristin Hope Morrow
1942 Palo Alto Ave.
Lady Lake, FL 32159

December Birthdays

Will Schantl	12/3
Lyn Derenski	12/4
Johnny Mullins	12/5
Dan Derenski	12/8
Scott Henkel	12/8
Crystal Burchardt	12/9
Gayle Howland	12/9
Ann Kopp	12/9
Nancy Siegert	12/9
James Nelson	12/10
Joree Jensen	12/10
Suzanne Chelf	12/12



Brenda Mullins	12/15
Desiree Mattei	12/16
John Kunoo	12/20
Janet DeVico	12/21
Karen Napoli	12/23
Gene Kortier	12/24
Scott LaFranca	12/24

December Wedding Anniversaries

Royale & Tom Pugh	12/06
Candice & William Kochounian	12/08
Joan & Gil Herr	12/21
Janet & Michael Jones	12/26
Libby & John Capell	12/27



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 **December** newsletter, please submit it to the office or via email to nativitylutheran63@gmail.com by **November 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

Working as a supportive family of faith to extend God's gracious welcome through worship, community service, and spiritual growth opportunities.

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)