

# Glad Tidings

Easter/Pentecost

May 2008

The Church of the Nativity, Cedarcroft

419 Cedarcroft Road  
Baltimore, MD 21212  
Phone: (410)-433-4811  
Fax: (410)-433-1558

nativity.rector@verizon.net  
nativity.secretary@verizon.net  
www.nativitycedarcroft.org/

## *Vestry*

### CLASS OF 2008

Jo Ann Brooks  
Margaret Dowding  
Vincent Monti

### CLASS OF 2009

Neal Baroody  
Lee Smith  
Priscilla K. Vaughan

### CLASS OF 2010

Sarah Knowles  
Nancy Monti  
Deborah Tupper

## *Officers*

Douglas E. Vaughan  
*Senior Warden/Treasurer*

Doug Knowles

*Junior Warden*

Margaret Elseroad

*Registrar*

George T. Tyler III

*Chancellor*

John T. Starr

*Senior Warden Emeritus, In Memoriam*

## *Staff*

The Rev. Thomas B. Carter  
*Rector*

The Rev. Anthony Hollis  
*Priest Associate*

Wallington Hankerson, Jr.  
*Director of Music*

Patricia Moore-Ott  
*Administrative Assistant*

Llewellyn E. Jones III  
*Christian Education Director*

On the 11th of May we will celebrate Pentecost. At Pentecost we celebrate the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the church. The Holy Spirit is that part of the Trinity that stirs within us. It is through the Holy Spirit that God makes God's self known to us, that we feel the very presence of God.

It has been thrilling to watch the Holy Spirit at work through the people of the Church of the Nativity over the past few months. At the beginning of the year the vestry approved a budget that included a deficit of over \$7,000. When we announced to the congregation that, in spite of increased pledges, we would have this deficit, we asked everyone to think of creative ways that we might balance our budget. My friends, what has happened since is nothing less than a miracle. We have seen God's Holy Spirit stirring the hearts of parishioners, and we are on the way to erasing the deficit. I am not the treasurer. So, I am not reporting to you about the fiscal matters of the church. What genuinely excites me is the spiritual growth that I see taking place as people lovingly offer their time and their talents to their church.

Let me share just a few examples of how the Holy Spirit is stirring this wonderful church in Cedarcroft. Vince Monti said to the vestry, "I think we should have a spaghetti dinner to raise money for the church." But he didn't stop there. Recognizing the fact that regulations now require that in order to operate our kitchen for dinners we needed to have a SafeServ Kitchen Manager, Vince offered himself for that position, went for the training at his own expense, and then went about recruiting others to help him get our kitchen up to code so that we could host the dinner. Then planning began to have a spaghetti dinner on April 12th. Vince and others told the congregation that if we wanted this dinner to be a success, it would require all of our best efforts, we would all have to invite our friends and neighbors, and we would all need to volunteer to help make it happen. Well, happen it did! It was a tremendous success. Over \$1,700 was raised. But of even greater importance was how everyone who was here could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. It was indeed a joyous occasion.

Following that, Sam and Margaret Dowding hosted a couple of what I will call "Dowdings' Delectable Deficit Defeating Dinners." There was wonderful food and the fellowship was unbeatable. Over \$500 was raised. God's Holy Spirit inspired and infused these events.

At the same time, others have felt called to make gifts toward the deficit reduction. I have no idea where we stand in regards to the deficit in our budget. But I do know that we are richer spiritually than we were a few months ago. All of us have dared to offer our selves, the various gifts that make us who we are, to the glory of God. On the day of Pentecost, Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit!" Jesus has also breathed the Holy Spirit on the wonderful people of the Church of the Nativity. Wow!

Tom+

## The Gift of Sabbatical *by the Rev. Amy Richter*

*The Sabbatical of a Priest is a great gift—not just for the priest, but for the whole parish as well. Why it may be a gift for your rector to take time to be refreshed and renewed may not need much explaining. But I hope why Tom’s sabbatical is also a gift to you will become clear by the end of this article. What I’m writing here is not a reflection on Tom personally. What I’m sharing with you comes from the research and reflection I have done before and since my own sabbatical a few years ago.*

**A sabbatical is time “away from.”** A weekly Sabbath day is important for our spiritual well-being—so important, in fact, that God actually commands it and made it one of the Big Ten. An extended period of Sabbath time, a sabbatical, is also helpful, even critical to our vitality, especially when our vocation involves long hours and often 6-day work weeks (I would say sometimes even 7, but clergy aren’t supposed to think they get a pass on one of the Ten Commandments). Think of a piece of land. Farmers know that if the land is not allowed to lie fallow from time to time, it will cease to be productive. All the nutrients in the soil get used up, and the life that is supposed to take root and grow there cannot. Letting a field spend a season unplanted means that the earth can be restored so it can continue to produce the goodness it is meant to.

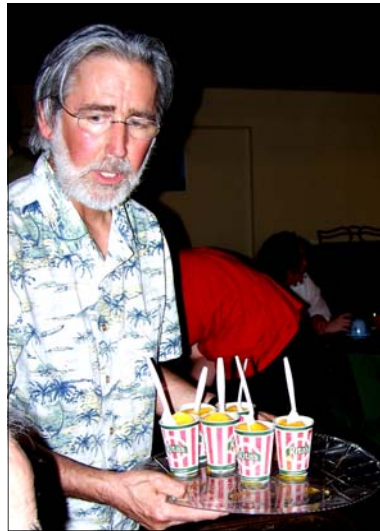
Humans aren’t that different, in a way. We all need times of rest, for refreshment and renewal. It is not a sign of weakness and not a luxury to get to rest. It is dangerous and counterproductive not to. But, more than that, it is also a powerful witness that God is God, and we are not. When we intentionally step away from our routines, our productivity, our “shoulds” and “musts” and “ought to’s” (even if these are things we take great delight in), and just rest into God’s love and care for us, we are reminded and remind others that God’s grace is not just a nice idea but a reality. Sabbatical is a time for a priest to practice what we preach—that we are all beloved children of God. God loves us just because we are, not for what we do. What we do is supposed to flow out of our knowledge of that love. But sometimes, we just need to rest into that love and intentionally take time to open ourselves up to God’s renewing, refreshing presence. Sabbatical is time away from responsibilities and routines so that we don’t confuse a healthy sense of responsibility with the unhealthy idea that we are indispensable or that the parish should revolve around clergy rather than God and God’s mission for all of us.

**A sabbatical is time “away for.”** The amazing thing is that when we have a period to set aside even the things we love in our day-to-day life, we discover new energy for our ministries. “Musts” and “shoulds” turn back to “get to’s.” “I have to” gets replaced by “what if . . . ?” With rest comes the realization of new possibilities, new excitement for engagement. Someone has said that the best way to spell love is T-I-M-E. Sabbatical is time for Tom to reconnect with God’s love for him, and his love for God. It is time for seeing if one needs realignment with God’s perspective, God’s purposes, the really big picture for Tom as God’s beloved child, and as your rector. Gaining that kind of perspective takes time—often more than one has or takes, even if one is really good about remembering that taking weekly Sabbath time isn’t a suggestion, it’s a commandment.

**So what about you?** Tom’s taking sabbatical gives all of us a chance to do three things:

- **Look at our own Sabbath-keeping.** Do you take regular times of rest with God? Beyond Sunday worship, do you take time when you just allow yourself to delight in God and God’s world, and to connect with God’s absolute delight in you? Do you stop producing and going and doing long enough each week to remember that God loves you, and that you cannot earn or deserve that love, no matter how full your calendar is? What habits of rest and delight, of play and “wasting time with God” would be helpful to your spiritual life?
- **Ask: Do you need a sabbatical?** Even if taking time away from your place of employment is not an option for you, are there other things you can take an extended break from in order to get some refreshment and renewal?
- **Remember the truth that you already know, but now you get to practice in a different way: The ministry of a parish is a shared ministry.** You will have priestly care and participation while your rector is away. But are there ways to engage the ministry you were called into through your baptism? Are there areas where maybe you are used to the rector taking care of things that it would be appropriate to become more shared ministries? Are there ways you can participate more fully in the body of Christ?

This sabbatical time is a gift. Unwrap it. Find the wonderful surprises you hadn’t anticipated. Immerse yourself fully in the experience of it. And like all good gifts, you may find that it is one that keeps on giving.



**Church of the Nativity, Cedarcroft**



## “Green Thumb Day”

In recognition of Rogation Sunday, a hardy crew of 11 parishioners worked together on the garden beds that run along the York Road side of our church building. Equipped with a myriad of tools, Debby and Larry Tucker, Sarah and Doug Knowles, Patricia and Jess Brain, Gina Monti, Ted Hendricks, Lee Smith, Tom Carter, and myself delicately thinned and shaped the beautiful specimen evergreens. We had rakes, ladders, pole saws, power saws, and hand saws. We had pruners with long blades, pruners with anvil blades, and pruners on a stick to help us remove dead wood and reach tall branches. Some of us slipped behind the hollies to thin from within, while others shaped the outside growth and one of us got a ribbing for lying down and pruning!

Our goals were to distinguish the holly trees from each other and restore them to a more conical shape. We also endeavored to elevate the skirts of the boxwood, yew, and holly foliage a wee bit without ruining their natural shape and to, in general, prune in order to direct future growth away from the building.

We learned that thinning crossed and congested branching rather than shearing plants allows more light and airflow into the center of the plants. Pruning to thin, instead of shearing, is a good way to maintain a healthy plant while keeping it within the planting space of the garden. We succeeded on all the goals and were able to finish around noontime!

Two great ideas that helped save us significant time and energy both came from the Knowles. Sarah, working with Jess and me from within the Chinese holly, suggested that we leave a good amount of prickly, sharp leaves and pokey holly branches on the ground behind and under the trees.

Everyone agreed this would be a fine idea. Leaving our cuttings where they drop made a nasty “ground cover” that will deter the wild bears and other animals of Cedarcroft from playing hide-n-seek too close to our building. The other insight came from Doug who brought his trailer and allowed most of the cuttings we didn’t leave behind to be stacked and strapped down for a trip to the dump. This was a generous solution for which we were all grateful. The rest we bagged, and a few of us even took home a bag—sharing the hauling duties.

It was truly a team effort with great community spirit, and I thank everyone for helping. We look forward to pruning the next section of Nativity’s foundation plantings and welcome everyone to join us.

Amanda Cunningham

## A Passing Comment

For those friends and members of the Nativity family who did not have the opportunity to attend the spaghetti dinner on Saturday, April 12, 2008, you missed a great time. For well over three hours, Nativity’s Great Hall resonated with sounds of background music, tempered with the excitement and joy of many people having a wonderful time in an environment of love. One quick scan of the participants was truly reason enough to know that we made the right decision indeed to install the elevator because everybody who wanted to attend was there.

Obviously, an event like this takes a lot of people-effort, and our workers certainly rose to the occasion. From the servers to the dish washers, our family performed and people had fun. Most importantly, the idea, planning, organization, and even the cooking for this event were the concept and undertaking of the Vincent Monti Family. A task well done.

As most of you know, during the past two decades we have lost many members of the Nativity family who have either gone home to be with our maker or others who have elected to worship elsewhere. With the declining membership, our resources have also started to dry up, and we need to find ways to increase our numbers. Like any other entity, there is a business side to running a Church, and it cannot be ignored. There is also an old adage in business that you either go up or go down depending on your plan or lack thereof.

The reason for mentioning the above is to highlight the need for some kind of action plan now in order to avoid something unpleasant later. Nativity needs to grow; we need to find reasons or events why others would want to join Nativity, and we need to be financially solvent.

This writer believes that one person like Vince Monti has shown all of us what putting on the thinking hat can do. With the strategic leadership, motivation, and commitment of all, this task can be done.

God Bless,

L. W. Willett

## Dowdings' Deficit Dinners



The attached shot shows part of those dining, 8 guests plus Margaret and me. The shot shown below is of the wonderful dessert that Margaret prepared. Last night's menu was inspired by meals prepared in Margaret's and my native country of Guyana: first, a carrot/beef soup with hints of coconut milk and cumin; second, a tropical salad highlighted by mango and orange; and third, the entree comprised baked salmon and shrimp marinated in coconut milk, over yellow rice in a coconut/red pepper sauce. The dessert was a coconut mousse in chocolate cups. As you can see, a common thread woven throughout the menu was coconut, which forms a major part of our diet in Guyana.

The dinners this year continue the concept of the Forward in Faith Fellowship Dinners held in 2005 and 2007. Some people who joined us last year asked me in February whether we planned to do dinners this year, and so Margaret and I decided that in view of the conclusion of the Forward in Faith campaign, we could do these to continue to promote fellowship among Nativity-ites, but with a different financial objective, that is, to contribute to decreasing and eliminating our Nativity budget deficit. Two dinners have been held so far (April 1 and April 20), but we may decide later on to hold other events with the same objective but possibly a different format.

Financial contributions made by the diners are fully paid into the Nativity collections. Margaret and I are very happy to contribute the materials, our time, and home to create an ambience that promotes better knowledge and understanding of each other and our life experiences, thereby improving the quality of fellowship among us.



Blessings and Love, Sam

## Rogation Rogues

(or "Green Thumb Day"—another take)

Everything is beautiful, ... so the song says. Nativity is truly beautiful inside and outside. Saturday's pruning event was a fun time in the sun. Our rogation rogues came prepared with work gloves, trash bags, long- and short-handled loppers, saws, and clipping shears. Amanda Cunningham blessed us with her expert guidance on how and where to prune the bushes and trees on the York Road side of church. Many helping hands kept our task fun and done by 11:30. You're not sure what we did? Great! It means we didn't cut too much. Doug hauled away a full wagon load of branches and several lawn bags bursting with clippings to the dump.

Stroll through our gardens this Sunday and rediscover the beauty and peace available when you take a moment to sit on one of our benches. Bursting buds, glowing tulips, new leaves, and birds singing provide the best surround sound system you can enjoy.

A heart-felt thank you to all our caretakers of God's gardens. This can be our "Green Thumb" ministry. Yes, we plan another Green Day in the fall. Plan to join us.

Did you know that our new bishop-elect, the Rev. Canon Eugene Sutton, said that he wants to be known as the "Green Bishop"? He also treasures our earth and our responsibility to care for it.

See you in the gardens on Sunday.

Enjoy today, Sarah

## Spring Trivia Challenge Night



The Monti Family will host the Spring version of our Trivia Challenge Night

**Saturday, May 10, at 7:00 p.m.**

in the Great Hall. Snacks and sodas are welcome. We are hoping for more than three teams this time around. As always, the prizes for the top three teams will be something homemade by Nancy. Understand, the Spaghetti Sauce will not be one of the choices.

We look forward to an evening of fun and fellowship, and you just might learn something along the way.

Vince, Nancy, & Gina

## Parish Annual Meeting May 4, 2008



Your presence is requested for a short while after the 10:30 a.m. service for the election of the Vestry Class of 2011 and conduct of important parish business.

Three-year Vestry nominations received by April 30th are

- Justin Dowding
- Vincent Monti
- Louis Willett

We still need someone for a 1-year term to replace Betsy Smith. Come, join us as we plan for Nativity's future!

## Thanks!

A big "THANK YOU" to everyone who pitched in to help make our first Spaghetti Dinner a success! From Set Up to Clean Up, it was wonderful to see new friends and old lend a hand whenever and wherever it was needed. The final amount we made was **\$1,728.94** on this first dinner.

We are planning another one for Saturday, October 11, 2008. (We needed to check Navy's home football schedule first before setting the date.)

Thanks, again!

Vince, Nancy, & Gina Monti

## Peace Service

May 22, 2008—7:30 p.m.

St. John's Episcopal Church,  
Kingsville, MD 21087

(Corner of Jerusalem Road  
and Bel Air Road)

## Splinters from the Board

YOUR VESTRY ... working together with you

Nativity's 653<sup>rd</sup> vestry meeting was convened on April 14<sup>th</sup>. We began our Vestry meeting with a prayer for each of us, for our sick, and for those serving in harm's way. The night's agenda was full of news and events in the life of our parish. The Rev. Eugene Sutton was our newly elected 14th Bishop of Maryland. (Jessica says he was wonderful during his visit to Virginia Seminary. She got a hug and warm welcome from her new bishop.)

We discussed and will welcome suggestions for summer activities, cutting costs, or future fundraisers. *Small changes can make a difference*; for example, we will be picking up our altar flower arrangements to save delivery costs; we have been replacing burned out light bulbs with cost-efficient fluorescent bulbs. Our outreach programs (BIHN, CARES, Ascension Homes, GEDCO) continue to meet the needs of our community through our faithful support and efforts. The renegotiated building loan for \$100,000 was approved at 4.25% (interest rate to be reviewed annually). The 2007 parish account records were examined and found by the audit committee to be in compliance with the rules and principles of Canon 7 (g) of the Diocese.

A multigenerational committee is needed for planning a new relative Christian Formation class. Share your ideas about what you would like in **your Christian Formation** class. We can look through teaching materials at the Diocesan Center next to St. Bede's bookstore at the Cathedral. Learning to follow Christ is a life-long lesson plan.

Vestry shouts a big "**Thank You**" to each parishioner for their many helping hands with the Spaghetti Dinner, new door bells, new light switches, janitors' supply closet, furniture, hand-washing station, and kitchen improvements. Our Church Family knows how to work together and have fun doing it.

If you see visitors at Nativity, please ask their name and welcome them with one of our take home **Welcome Bags** (kept in the front office). Ushers are encouraged to spot any newcomers and give them a big, warm "Hello" and a Nativity Bag. Nativity **Trifolds** are mailed each month to new neighbors who have bought homes in nearby neighborhoods. Let us know if you have a new neighbor on your street. You can take a Hospitality Bag to them and invite them to visit us at Nativity for prayer, coffee, and good times.

Let the Junior Warden know of any needed repairs or improvement **suggestions**. You can e-mail Doug at [dpknowlessr@verizon.net](mailto:dpknowlessr@verizon.net). A thank you for usable furniture donations.

Check your **Church Calendar** for coming events: Sunday service, Bible study, the Convention on May 2nd and 3rd (Doug Vaughn and Jack Windsor will be attending), the Annual Parish Meeting, the June Fair, the church Picnic at Claggett, and the Fall dinner.

We end our meeting in thanksgiving for our Church family and pray for each of us to open ourselves to hear God's will and bless our calls to ministry.

"Vestry Splinters" submitted by Sarah Knowles



Jack and Doris Webb are sponsoring a candy sale booth. Jack is working with a store for the candy at a discount but would like someone else to purchase lemons.

Jack Windsor is making arrangements to secure our booths but needs some strong muscle power to assemble and return these.

Doug and Sarah Knowles are working on our breakfast table but could certainly use some extra hands in the serving.

Dave and Joan Drebing have volunteered to work their magic on our traditional grilled lunch. If someone wanted to purchase the hotdogs, ice, or chips, that would be a great help.

Chuck Dunn is offering his services at an "Appraisal" table which is new for our Fair.

Of course, there's the huge Flee Market that needs to be chaired, set up, priced, and manned during the day. Many, many hands are needed to bring this together. Would anyone like to chair a Bake Sale or a Plant Sale? Sue Brookman is certainly going to need help with the many books we acquire every year to sell.

During this whole month of May we will be collecting sodas and juice boxes anyone wants to volunteer as refreshments for sale at breakfast and lunch. There are plenty of areas where everyone can help.

If you have something you would like to contribute for the success of the Fair, please call the church office or Pati Carter at 443-552-0091.

## Outreach

**GEDCO.** At the Volunteer Recognition Dinner, April 24th, Fr. Tom Carter, Ted Hendricks, and Debby Tupper, on behalf of the Church of the Nativity, received the "Caring Award" and a citation from Governor O'Malley for our annual Christmas party for the residents of Ascension Homes.

**BIHN.** Regular meetings of the coordinators of the various congregations continue so that we may be informed while BIHN is on sabbatical from direct services to families. Contact [d.tupper@verizon.net](mailto:d.tupper@verizon.net) if you would like a monthly BIHN e-mail newsletter.

## Be a June Fair Patron!

Pat Kimmel will be accepting your donations after the 10:30 a.m. service each Sunday. Or, fill your Patron envelope from your May packet and put it in the offering plate. Again this year, it is a real bargain:

**\$3.00 per person  
or \$5.00 per family**

More generous donations are more than welcome.

## Diocesan News

- **Church Club Bus Tour** of 5 Historic Churches, May 10th. Call Jim Wollon at 410-879-6748.
- **Province III Synod Conference** on how to minister to the military and their families, Martinsburg, WV, May 18-20.
- **Ember Day:** The Presence of God, Claggett, May 24.
- **UTO Spring Ingathering,** St. Stephen's Church, Severn, May 28.
- **Two Young Adult Conferences,** May 30-June 1, Claggett.

## Baptism



Claire Essig was baptized on April 20, 2008. She is the daughter of Jim and Alyssia Essig and younger sister of Madelyn. Claire was born March 15, 2007, at GBMC and is shown wearing a special dress from Korea. We welcome her into Christ's flock.

## Nativity Book Club



*Loving Frank*

By Nancy Horan

**Sunday, May 18,  
2008  
2:30 p.m.**

Home of Doug and Sarah Knowles

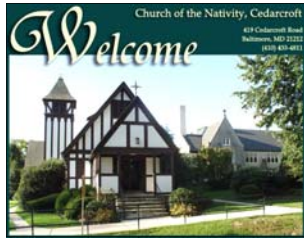
Amy Norwood, Presenter

Everyone Welcome!

## Nativity's YACs



Laura Elseroad, Gina Monti, and Kathleen Van de Wille are shown singing with Fr. Carter during a YAC-sponsored karaoke evening for the parish. Photography by Doug Knowles.



**T**he mission of the Church of the Nativity is to faithfully love and serve Jesus Christ by embracing all people through worship, outreach, and fellowship in His name.

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**Easter/Pentecost  
May 2008**

*In This Issue . . .*

- ***June Fair Plans***
- ***“Green Thumb Day”***
- ***The Gift of Sabbatical***
- ***Parish Annual Meeting***
- ***Splinters from the Board***
- ***Dowdings’ Deficit Dinners***

THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, CEDARCROFT  
419 CEDARCROFT ROAD  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21212-2599

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED