

# ...from the Heart



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## **Thanks Grandpa**

My grandfather, Gerlando Bonfiglio built in the basement of his home in Brooklyn, a miniature town – the Town of Bethlehem. It was not like the little model towns many purchase and set up during Christmas. No, my grandfather made every home, barn, fence, mountain, water fall etc. by hand and his model town was 10 feet deep and 12 feet long (at least that is how it appears in my memory). It was a labor of love for the infant Jesus. In the middle of his “presepi” just to the right of center was the Nativity scene.

The nativity originated in Italy in the 1200’s when St. Francis of Assisi asked Giovanni Vellita to create a manger scene. St. Francis then used it to speak of and teach about Christmas and the birth of Christ.

The nativity scene that most Americans think of consists of a few characters Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, the three wise men, a shepherd or two, an angel and a few animals. In Italy the nativity is called a presepio (manger scene). The presepio contains large numbers of people from every day life.

During the 17th and 18th century Naples turned the nativity into an art form. The presepi included the nativity scene but also represented life in Naples at the time. That is what my grandfather created in his Brooklyn basement, not just a nativity, but also a whole town. Of course his town resembled Italy more than Bethlehem, since Italy was much more familiar to him than Israel which he had never visited.

Whenever we would visit my grandparents, grandpa would always take me and my sisters downstairs to see the presepi. It had running water, moving parts and special lighting to make it look like dawn, day, and evening. It was so big and had so many parts that it seemed like each time we saw it we would discover something new.

At some point grandpa would tell us to be very quiet. He would shut off all the sounds of the busy day in Bethlehem, he’d adjust the lights so that it was dark and all in the town were

asleep under a moon lit and starry sky. And then... the dark was broken by a light that went on and made the Nativity scene come to life. At that point all you would focus on was the scene of the birth of Christ. No other time was this more meaningful than at Christmas.



When I was real young grandpa presented me with a nativity scene that he made. He had taken some rags, painted them and fashioned them to look like a cave. Then he took me to places in Brooklyn and New York City to purchase statues of Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, the three wise men, a shepherd or two, an angel and a few animals.

I still have that Nativity grandpa made and for many years it has been a tradition for me to set it up under our Christmas tree. Growing up I knew that Christmas and the nativity was about the birth of Christ. I got that and yet I really didn't get it. I knew about Jesus Christ and His birth, I just didn't know that Jesus wanted to have a personal, intimate relationship with me and live in me.

Forty years ago in November of 1976 I finally got it. What is "it"? I got that although I knew about Jesus, I lived like He didn't really matter. I lived as I pleased, not as He pleased. I knelt and prayed asking Jesus to forgive me and save me and told Him I wanted to live as He wanted me to live. Something incredible happened that night - the dark was broken by a light that went on and I knew I was different – I had come to life.

Of all the years of setting up my nativity none was more meaningful than the Christmas of 1976... and since.

May your Christmas be blessed by the message that ... today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ (Messiah) the Lord. - Luke 2:11

And that's...

F.T.H.

Pastor Jerry



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# The Lamb, Yahweh

A number of years ago I heard Jimmy DeYoung, an outstanding news commentator and Bible teacher, make a presentation at a Bible prophecy conference. Since it was during the Christmas season, he was teaching about the birth of Jesus in the first chapter of Luke. He read to us Luke 2:8–12:

*In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. And the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger.'*

Dr. DeYoung then asked the audience a surprising question: “Did you ever wonder why this was a sign?” This left us all speechless. I had to admit to myself that I had never even questioned it. Why was it a sign? Dr. DeYoung had us turn to the book of Micah. We were all familiar with Micah 5:2, which prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, but many of us were not familiar with Micah 4:8, which prophesied that He would be announced at the tower of the flock (Migdal Eder). Dr. DeYoung, who had lived in Jerusalem for a number of years, told us that Migdal Eder was a two-story tower that had been built in a pasture outside Bethlehem. The remains of the tower had recently been discovered.



Dr. DeYoung explained that the shepherds in the field had not all been the lowly shepherds that we had always assumed. They were actually priests from the temple who were doing shepherding work to assist in the birthing of the sacrificial lambs so that they would be unblemished for sacrifice.

While the shepherds were keeping watch over the flock from the top floor of the tower, the shepherd-priests would bring the pregnant sheep in from

the field to the tower's bottom floor, where the sheep would give birth. As soon as a lamb was born, the priests would wrap it with strips of cloths made from old priestly undergarments.

This was done to keep the lamb from getting blemished. The priests would then place the lamb onto a manger to make sure it would not get trampled. *Wow!* So when these shepherd-priests went into Bethlehem and saw the baby Jesus wrapped in cloths, lying in a manger, they must have exclaimed, “There is the Lamb of God, prepared for sacrifice, unblemished!” They had to be excited beyond description, because they were the only ones who could have understood the sign. *It was just for them from God. It was personal!*



I presume that Jesus' swaddling cloths were from the same source as the lambs' cloths. Mary's cousin, Elizabeth, was married to the priest Zacharias. Elizabeth could have given her the cloths made from the priestly undergarments. It is highly probable that the first clothes that Jesus wore were the clothes of a priest. What a sign! I was so intrigued by this that I did some further research. These historical observations and parallels were confirmed by many messianic rabbis and the renowned historical writer Alfred Edersheim. I also sought out help from Bob Ibach, an experienced archaeologist, who had done some digs in Israel. He found the written account and pictures of the discovery of "the tower of the flock," *Migdal Eder*. This whole insight made the account of the announcement of Jesus' birth astounding and even more exciting!

More and more facts began to unfold in my research. I was talking further with David Schiller, my Jewish teacher and friend, about what I had learned about the shepherds and the lambs. He amazed me with some more historical insights. He explained that each Jewish family would put the family name around the neck of their lamb that they took to the Temple to be sacrificed. They did this to make sure they received their own lamb back for the Passover dinner. I wondered if there was any significance to this piece of trivia. As I was contemplating this, Schiller pointed out to me a particular object found in most of the paintings of Christ on the cross. There was a small sign at the top of the cross that looked like four letters: "INRI." I discovered that this was an abbreviation of the sign that Pontius Pilot placed on the cross as seen in John 19:19:

*Pilate also wrote an inscription, and put it on the cross. It was written, 'JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS.'*

I learned that the letters were the first letters of each of the nouns in the inscription in Latin. I contacted my daughter Ruth, who is very good with Latin, and asked her to show me the inscription in the Latin Vulgate. That confirmed it: "Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum" (INRI).

Then Schiller opened my eyes to an incredible observation. Since the inscription had been in three languages — Latin, Greek, and Hebrew — he transliterated it for me from Hebrew to English. I saw before me these words: "Y'Shua HaNatzri V'Melech HaYehudim." I was absolutely stunned when I took the first letters of each of these words. It spelled "YHWH," the Tetragrammaton form of the name of God! YHWH and YHWH can be used interchangeably. When this technique of abbreviating is used, the title on the cross in the actual Hebraic script undeniably reveals the name of God. In English, the name is pronounced "Yahweh!"

Just like the Jews put their family name on their lamb for sacrifice at the Temple, God put His name on His Lamb for His family, which includes you and me!

God gave us so many pictures in order that we could understand the magnitude of His loving grace!

- Excerpted from *Unlocking the Secrets of the Feasts*, by Michael Norten



## **In Sympathy ... but in hope**

Our dear friend and brother, Joe Castagna went to be with the Lord and with his beloved wife, Virginia. We are going to miss him very much. He was a good man.

Joe always liked electronics and in his early years worked for Emerson as a TV tester – he didn't mind letting you know that he was the one who gave the final approval.

Later he worked as a route driver for a bakery, that is, until one day he had to fill in making donuts and the owner discovered that he was really good at it, even better than the man who was making the donuts...who was the owner's son!

Eventually, Joe decided to open his own bakery. It was called, "Golden Loaf." And it was located on the south side of W. Main St. in Patchogue. Virginia worked with him as a cashier. Later Joe closed down his bakery and became a baker for Entenmann's, working for them for 25 years.

Joe had a strong faith. Living in Patchogue he and Virginia would often pass by the Church of the Nazarene. One day they decided to check us out. That was about 20 years ago. They were faithful members for those 20 years.

One day Jesus will return and there is going to be the greatest reunion ever. We will see those we love who have gone on before us, we will see them again. Can you just imagine how great it is going to be -- to be with Jesus -- and to see once again those we love... like Joe.

And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

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**Join us this Christmas Season for our Advent Sermon Series:**

### **The Call of Christmas**

First Sunday of Advent: Zechariah: A Call to Prepare (Luke 1:1-25)

Second Sunday of Advent: Shepherds: A Call to Praise (Luke 2:1-20)

Third Sunday of Advent: Mary: A Call to Provide (Luke 1:26-38)

Fourth Sunday of Advent: Joseph: A Call to Protect (Matthew 1:18-25)

Christmas Day Service: The Call Interrupts (Isaiah 9:6-7)

**Each Sunday we will light our Advent Candles, sing a Christmas Carol, Worship Jesus and hear about The Call of Christmas.**



## **Schedule of Events**

### **Sunday**

10am - Service - Nursery available  
10:45am - Children's Sunday School  
Fellowship Hall  
10:45am - Teen Bible Study - HPYC Building  
First Sunday of the Month-  
Holy Communion  
Third Sunday of the month  
Children's Missionary Workshop

### **Monday**

7pm - First & Third Monday of the month  
September through June - M.E.N.  
(Men's Encouragement Network)  
Fellowship Hall

### **Tuesday**

7pm - Every Tuesday. Ladies - In - Touch at  
Mary Ann Malcolm's Home.

### **Wednesday**

7pm - Every Wednesday - Fellowship & Games  
HPYC Building - For all ages  
7pm - Second and Fourth Wednesday each  
month - East End Bible Study - Mercurio home .  
7:30pm - First & Third Wednesday each month  
Kairos - Young Adult Bible Study  
Fellowship Hall

### **Thursday**

10am-12noon - Every Thursday - Ladies Prayer  
& Bible Study Group-  
HPYC Building  
7pm - Second Thursday each month  
September through June  
Ladies Sewing Circle - HPYC Building

### **Saturday**

8am - First Saturday of each month  
September through June - M.E.N.'s Breakfast - Fellowship Hall.  
7pm - First Saturday of each month  
September through June - Good News Bowlers at Bowl Long Island Patchogue.

### **Christmas Schedule:**

December 18<sup>th</sup> - 10am The Choir ministers to us through the  
*Christmas Cantata* - Invite a Guest

December 24<sup>th</sup> - 5pm Christmas Eve Service - Invite a Guest

December 25<sup>th</sup> - 10am Christmas Day Worship Service



## Glimpse of Glory



Have you ever lived or visited someplace for a season and **every time** you think about it your heart pulls, plunges, skips a beat? A piece of my heart remains in Richfield Springs. The Lord is an awesome creator. Through the beauty of terrain, waterfalls, and rivers, sunrises and sunsets, He spoke to me. He is a masterful Artist who wove a beautiful tapestry to remind me (and **all who behold it**) of His love and glory. **This** is my emotional response when I think about my old home, Richfield Springs; one of **my** most beautiful experiences.

One winter morning (getting into my car for work), the sun was rising over the hill that faced our house. There was a playful breeze that blew ice and snow delicately, as though they were petals falling softly from trees. Before the overwhelming light from the east overtook the dawn, the sky was a soft pink. Imagine, a gentle scene aglow and painted with ice particles that reflected the intense emergence of sunlight. As an amateur photographer, I would love to have captured that **scene** on camera, but I couldn't. The total experience was too much to behold and a photograph would not have done it justice. That is just a fragment of the Lord's beauty, a piece of His glory. That is what makes my heart ache and it is the reason longing settles in. That's when I know **this longing** is not just for a location, but a home promised beyond the grave: eternity. It is why We celebrate Christmas and retrace the steps He took during His ministry here on earth. We praise and glorify Jesus for this reason. He bore the most excruciating burden so that one day, beyond the grave, we will be reunited with our Father. We will partake in His glory and gladly worship Him in joyful adoration. His love and power is what made him emerge and over take the dawn on the third day! Hebrews 1:3 "The Son is the radiance of God's Glory" ...

*Liz Duffy*



Richfield Springs is a village located in the Town of Richfield on the north central border of Otsego County in New York State.



## Child Dedications

Aydin Gardner                      September 18, 2016  
Eva Loreene Holland              October 21, 2016



## Baby Dedication

Louis Anthony Marra              October 9, 2016

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## ***Welcome to the World***

Patrick Norman Barker Jr.

Proud parents are Kasha Marie and Patrick Barker



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## ***Wedding Bells***

***Three Happy Couples tied the knot in October.***

10/8/16      *Angela Castagna and Daniel Dempsey*

10/8/16      *Daniela Olsen and Jason Koontz*

10/22/16     *Jennifer Henry and Bryan Holland*



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## **Stay Connected to Your Forever Family!**

Pastor Jerry sends out a daily email which includes updates and announcements regarding church activities, prayer requests, a devotional, jokes, (of course) *quotes, trivia, news, and so much more!* To begin receiving "Good Morning", send your email address to: [pastor.jerry@verizon.net](mailto:pastor.jerry@verizon.net). You will be added to the distribution list. Check out our website at [www.patchnaz.net](http://www.patchnaz.net) for Sermons, Bible Studies and other Church activities.





## WOMEN'S MINISTRY

It has been a beautiful autumn, the election is over and the holiday season is upon us....life is good! More importantly, God is sovereign and has His watchful eyes upon us so we can have peace in our hearts, joy in our lives and hope for our future.

The ladies now have two prayer/study groups to be a part of. Tuesday night our In-Touch continues to meet in my home and Thursday mornings we have a new group of ladies that meet at His Place Youth Center. In both groups, we have a time of prayer, study and fellowship. The book we are going through is entitled **Living a Chocolate Life by Deb Burma** and is all about savoring God's sweet grace. Living a chocolate life means sampling everything from bitter nuggets of pain to sweet morsels of joy knowing that we are wrapped in the forgiveness and grace of our Savior. All ladies are welcome to attend either study. Even if you can only come once in a while, we would love to have you join us.

We will be having our annual Operation Christmas Child collection on Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> preceded by our packing party on Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm. Through the generosity of our congregation, I believe we will have enough items to pack 100 shoeboxes at this year's party. That number does not include the many shoeboxes that individuals and families will be packing up to add to the collection. I am very excited about the prospect that this might be our biggest year ever because of the items/cash that have been donated. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!

On Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm, we will be having our annual gathering to make a Christmas craft. Corinne has picked out a few options for us to do and I have encouraged her to make sure to keep it simple! The ladies always have a fun time as we work on our creations. Perfect or not, they are all beautiful! We will meet at His Place Youth Center and, of course, refreshments will be served.

As we enter into the beautiful Christmas season, my prayer is that amid all the hustle and bustle we will not lose sight of the reason for our celebration. "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you, he is Christ the Lord" Luke 2:11.

Peace and blessings,  
MaryAnn





I wonder if your phone rings off the hook as mine does with callers offering unbelievable business opportunities. Of course these days most Americans under the age of 40 have eschewed their landlines, choosing to go with cells as their primary phone. Meaning there is no hook or holder for the phone to ring off of. Instead cells buzz, beep, chime or play selected tunes but that doesn't make the harassing callers any less annoying. Some of you might even remember a time when home phones could be *unlisted* for privacy? Privacy, there's a word that's quickly fading into the sunset of our culture. Whether it's by phone, text, mail, computer or TV we're constantly bombarded by "deals too good to pass up."

What if you were offered prime land featuring rolling hills and a lake view for pennies on the acre? A once in a life time deal but only if you move quickly to close the deal, sight unseen? If you think that offer has the *ring tone* of a scam you're right. P.T. Barnum coined the expression, "There's a sucker born every minute."

Let me give you another *what if* scenario. A close relative comes to you in serious trouble asking for your help. They're swimming in debt and about to lose everything, but you can help. There's this piece of land that's been in the family for generations. She doesn't want to sell it to a stranger but if you, a close cousin would buy it, it would save her from the collectors and at the same time, keep the land a family possession. The only problem is the land is not in America it's in Afghanistan under the control of the Taliban.

As crazy as that situation sounds its almost identical to what God asked the prophet Jeremiah to do. God told Jeremiah, who was under house arrest, that his cousin would be coming to him to ask him to purchase family property and that he was to buy it. It wasn't long before Jeremiah's near relative come knocking with that exact request. It was a terrible investment for Jeremiah because the land in question was already under the control of foreign occupiers making it worthless to any Jew. In spite of that he forked over 17 pieces of silver, a considerable amount of money, in exchange for two copies of the deed. Jeremiah would later second guess himself, wondering if he had really heard from God or just lost his mind.

After the transaction, God instructed him to put the deeds into a pottery jar that would preserve them over a long stretch of time. What was this all about? God is a master planner, a chess player without parallel, not only because He is brilliant in everything He does but because He sees time from its beginning to its end. The nation of Israel, was about to be conquered and its people taken to Babylon as slaves. Jeremiah's obedience worked to illustrate God's personal guarantee to His people. No one buys land they can't take possession of, unless they know something no one else does. God knew the Israelis would eventually return

to their home land. Jeremiah's stored away deed was God's way of comforting and assuring His chosen people that it was not over for them that they would one day return and take possession of the land He had promised to them. One point that the Bible makes from Genesis to Revelation is that God is faithful. We, like the people of ancient Israel, might fail in our faithfulness to Him but He will never fail in His faithfulness to us.

The next time your life seems to be spinning out of control and ready to explode, remind yourself who God is and how He always keeps His promise. *For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.* Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) It's important that we, like Jeremiah, record and store away those moments when God is being God in our life, we will need them for a future date. If it's been awhile since you've gone to that safe place of promise and assurance, today might be the opportune time.

Serving Him Together,

*John Mercurio*

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## GOOD NEWS BOWLERS



Our Church Bowling League meets the first Saturday of the month. This year we have only six teams and a total of twenty bowlers. Most of them are members of the same family or related in one way or another. Oftentimes bowlers are absent and teams join together to bowl for the evening creating a new family of sorts. This is much like our church family. Individual families come together to make up the church body. Each family is a unit and can function on its own but how much better is it when we all come together and enjoy a fellowship of God's bigger family united in Christ. "Christianity," writes Oklahoma City pastor, Jeremy Basset, "was never intended to be a solo walk with God. A conversion to Christianity is also incorporation in the body of Christ, the church."

We are only 20 people but united we have been able to contribute to several outreach projects throughout our bowling seasons each year. This November we were able to purchase a turkey and contribute canned goods to this year's Annual Thanksgiving outreach to the community. In December we will once again be collecting mittens, gloves, and socks to donate to the Lighthouse Mission. The Good News Bowlers are spreading the "Good News" through Fun, Fellowship and Faith – John 14:6



## MISSIONS



There is so much going on with missions, it is so exciting to see God at work.

We are collecting clothes, blankets, and crisis care kits for Haiti. As of the latest count, we have 8 banana boxes of crisis care kits – that is 48 kits that you wonderful people have donated towards the Haiti relief project. And, we have 18 bags of clothes - boys, girls, women's, men's and infants clothes – along with blankets, sheets and towels. Praise the Lord for the faithfulness of his people in donating to the Haiti relief project.

There will also be a mission's trip to Haiti coming up. We would like to go to Haiti in January to continue work on the church rebuilding project. There would be two teams, one for each week - of [January 13th to the 20th](#) and [the 20th to the 27th](#). The first team wants to focus on helping with repair from the hurricane, the second continuing the church rebuilding.

Any one interest in going on the trip to Haiti please let me know.

Our Children's Church is very excited to be learning about Africa this year. Each month on Missionary Sunday, we learn about a different country in Africa, about the people, the culture, resources, and the missionaries that go there to spread the gospel. Last month, we learned about Cabo Verde. The story in the lesson was about Eugenio Duarte, a Cabo Verdean, who became a Christian as a child, received his call to preach when a missionary visited his home church. He became a pastor; a missionary, a regional director, and eventually a general superintendent of The Church of the Nazarene.

In our Children's Missionary Workshop, the children have also made prayer journals that we write in every month – along with praying for the missionary in the countries that we learn about, they are also praying for their families and friends.

Children's Missionary Church is also sponsoring a child from Compassion International. Our child is from Pakistan – a persecuted church country. The children collect their change during the month, and when we meet we collect the change and send it to Compassion, so that Mical, who is now 6, can get support for his medical, education, and learn about God. We write letters to Mical, and he writes back and sends us pictures.

Next month, December is Compassionate Ministries Month. During this time Nazarene churches come together to celebrate the way God is transforming lives through the church's ministry of compassion around the world. One of the ways we can transform lives is by Child Sponsorship. There are currently thousands of children waiting for a sponsor.

Just like the Children's Missionary Workshop is sponsoring Mical, you too can sponsor a child and partner with local Nazarenes' around the world to clothe, shelter, feed, heal, educate, and live in solidarity with those who suffer under oppression.

Barbara Brennan



# Jesus – Our Only Hope

***Luke 1:1-4 - Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples. Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write an accurate account for you, most honorable Theophilus, so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.***

So, Dr. Luke, a physician and Greek scholar did a careful investigation before writing his account to Theophilus, the governor at the time. He carefully investigated everything and this was his conclusion. He starts off with the story of the birth of Jesus.

With his careful investigation as a backdrop, he begins by saying that John the Baptist's birth was a miracle of God to old and barren parents. From there he moves on to an angel appearing to Mary to tell her she is favored by God and will give birth to His son. She can't believe her ears, but her conception would be by the Holy Spirit. God Himself would manifest His presence in her and she would bring forth a son of God. And it happened just as he said. This was a cause of fear and peace at the **same** time.

Whenever God appears on the scene, we instantly fear, because of His awesomeness, but He always tells people – Do Not Fear. So, we have peace in the midst of fear. This was not some hap-hazard occurrence. This was the plan of God being manifest among humanity.

And so, according to Luke's accurate report, Jesus was born as a baby just like us, and he grew up like a child just like us. Eventually, he became a man and went off on His own, just like us. However, His journey took Him to places we have never gone... He faced demons and cast them out; He faced diseases and healed the suffering; He came face to face with Satan and stood His ground and survived the attack. He debated with the teachers of the Law and held His ground, because He IS the Word of God.

He taught us great truths; He performed many miracles; He raised the dead and healed the sick; He delivered many in need of a divine touch. He confronted the Pharisees and Sadducees in His day, and He spoke words that would last forever, even to our current times.

Ultimately, He submitted to His calling, which was to lay down His life for us all. Nothing in all of history compares to this self-sacrifice. It wasn't giving His life for a cause. If that were so, He would have drifted off into the sunset with many other superficial heroes.

He died for us. Once and for all, He gave his life as a substitutionary offering for the forgiveness of our sin. He stated it. The Scriptures supported it. He did that for you and me.

***Isaiah 53:5-6 - But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.***

Merry Christmas – Find your place in Him,  
Pastor Nick & Corinne





## Follow... Your... Leader...

6:20 am. It was raining and still dark as I left home for the long drive upstate. Once on Nicolls Road, I became concerned about the fog and poor visibility. As I merged onto the LIE, I saw a tractor-trailer in the middle lane. "Perfect," I thought and moved into position a safe distance behind the truck. The bottom of the trailer had a row of dimly lit orange lights which I could see. Plus, the driver was maintaining a steady, safe speed. I hoped he would stay there for my entire trip to exit 31. I followed my 'leader', but it wasn't long before the lights I was depending on became obscured by the dense fog and mist being generated by his own tires, along with the drivers all around me creating more of it with theirs. It was getting harder to follow, having to concentrate so much, and I wished he had brighter lights and more of them. After a few miles, I saw another tractor-trailer merge onto the highway. This one was an empty flatbed trailer, and both the trailer and cab were lit up like a Christmas tree! I was certain this was God answering my need for help and sure enough, as I slowed down and made room for him, the driver moved into position between me and the first truck. Even in the dark, with the fog and rain, I could follow with no difficulty at all. What's more, the three of us maintained our exact position and speed, *all the way to the Cross Island Pkwy at exit 31.*

It was now 7:20 am and, although it was still raining, it was light enough for me to see. I exited, and my 'leaders' continued on their way, still in the same position. I believe the flatbed trailer was following the tractor trailer for the very same reason I had been, except he was more than able to, unlike me.

Exodus 13:21, John 14: 1-11

Oh yes, my prayer had been answered.

Willing to be a good follower is an important quality in living a life of faith. Not only does God ask us to follow Him, He asks us to follow those He has placed in positions of leadership, authority, over us. It can be hard to follow in the daylight, how much more when the way is dimly lit, obscure and unfamiliar. Trusting becomes harder, and we feel the urge to become our *own* authority, no matter how poorly equipped we are to do it.

We are called to pray earnestly for our leaders as they strive to help us move forward to reach the destination God has planned for us. We may not always comprehend the way they are going, but as long as our leaders are following *His* Lead, we can trust we are safe when following theirs.

Romans 13: 1-7

Sue Cerruto

Hospitality



# Operation Face Lift - Progress Report

The committee for OFL has broken the overall project into two phases for entry and sanctuary:



Phase 1 - Carpentry, painting and railing in

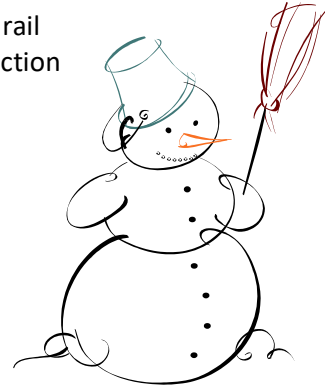
Phase II - New flooring and seating arrangements

## Progress for Phase I

1. Crying room replacement window installed
2. New doors installed for balcony entrance and underside of staircase
3. Overflow seating area has received new wainscoting, raised panels and chair rail
4. Matching casement trim installed over – doors, window and rear overflow section
5. Wainscoting and raised panels installed at balcony level
6. All new work painted

**Up next:** New stair case railing to be installed  
Entry and Sanctuary to be painted

☆ All work thus far has been done by Rich Fasano who attends our church.



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## Food Pantry News

Thank you for supporting our Thanksgiving food drive. We purchased 25 turkeys and made up 50 bags of trimmings. We will continue to give holiday themed food throughout the month of December. Please join me in praying for all those who come in need, may they feel the loving care of our Lord Jesus Christ.

MaryAnn Mavridis

"... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." Matthew 25: 35 (esv)



## ***Where does your church dollar go?***

Each year, at our Annual meeting, we vote on the year's upcoming budget. When planning the budget, we take into consideration our operational expenses as well as providing funds for the various church ministries leader's vision for the upcoming year. So, where does the money come from? You! You keep the lights on; you pay the Pastor's salary; Your money pays for all the programs that go on each week for the teens and the children, for the bagels and the coffee, and the cost of maintaining three church buildings (the church, the center/office building and the church parsonage), and our community outreach ....It all comes down to you. This is God's way. Your tithe (or 10% of your earnings) and offerings (any amount over your tithe that you feel God moving you to give) is what will make up the money for the proposed budget - it isn't there to spend until you put it there. God has been faithful in helping meet our budget needs for 2016, and we will soon be planning a budget for 2017.

In addition to paying our local obligations, we also send 12 cents of every dollar raised to the Metro NY District Office, where it is broken down into percentages used to support the needs of the District and the General Church, the World Evangelism Fund – supporting Nazarene efforts spreading the Gospel around the world, Pensions & Benefits Fund (for retired pastors and their families), and Nazarene Compassionate Ministries. We are also required to send another 1.5% to the World Evangelism Fund (besides the amount sent to the District office). These funds are raised through Faith Promise, Thanksgiving & Easter Offerings. The WEF & Alabaster funds (for building on the mission field) collected are sent directly to the General Treasurer for this purpose.

Periodically, we present various projects and needs to you as they arise. You don't have to feel like you need to give to all of them, but we wouldn't want you to miss the opportunity to giving to something that you feel passionate about and that God leads you to give to ☺. There is something for everyone: VBS, Christmas Shoeboxes, Thanksgiving Outreach, Child Sponsorship, Mission trips and Disaster relief.

Currently we have undertaken some building improvements, or what we are calling "Operation Facelift." Although the "church" isn't really a building, but rather God's people in it, it is nice to have a welcoming and inviting environment to pray, worship, fellowship and invite the community in. Funds for this undertaking are not included in our annual budget but will be funded from money included in our Building Fund, Savings, and special offerings made specifically towards the project. As you see the different aspects of the project underway know that the church board and building committee are committed to being wise stewards of the funds being spent. This is yet another opportunity to partner with us. Good things - God things - are happening in our church and you are a part of it.

Corinne Franco, Church Treasurer

*"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."* 2 Corinthians 9:7



# **Cheerful Givers**





