

...from the Heart

*Published quarterly by the
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene Winter 2017-2018*



Joy to the World!

**"Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her king.
Let every heart prepare Him room and heaven and nature sing!"**

We all love to sing Christmas Carols every year. They are catchy and even majestic. Mostly, I love the ones that speak to us about Jesus as Messiah, the coming King, and God with us. One of the upbeat songs we sing every year is Joy to the World. When we sing these familiar carols do we ever really pay much attention to the words? Joy to the World is a very familiar song. We can sing it with our eyes closed. Look above at the words of the first verse. This God-inspired song tells a great story.

The world should rejoice because the Lord, God (Jesus) has come to us. He is our Messiah and more. He is our King – the king of a new Kingdom – a Kingdom that we all await. If we recognize who Jesus really is, then we will be part of the Heavenly Kingdom in His presence forever.

My prayer (and I hope the prayer of our church) is that every human heart in our community and everywhere will "prepare Him room." He came for all humankind. He does not distinguish people into categories (race, color, etc.). He came to save all of us. We need to catch this ancient vision and reach out to the world around us with the Love of Jesus Christ.

Maybe, this year, you might pay closer attention to the words of the carols we sing. They all tell a story of Jesus and his love for us. He came to save all sinners. They can accept or reject His free gift but it is offered to all humanity regardless.

Our prayer must be, "Let every heart prepare Him room." We have to pray for our community. They can't receive Jesus into their lives alone. It takes some encouragement, prayer, and a little boldness to reach out and tell them something they need to hear. It doesn't have to be much. We don't have to preach to them. We just need to be sensitive to their needs and offer a helping hand or a kind word.

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Continued from front cover

Maybe this year you could offer an act of kindness to a stranger. You might hold a door open for an elderly person, or maybe offer to put their groceries in their car, or give the impoverished person on the street corner some canned soup or a few dollars. The list is endless but I hope you would also say in response, "Merry Christmas!" or "Jesus loves you," or in some way show why you are doing this for them. We are His voice. Speak out!

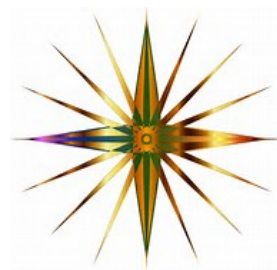
We have such joy because Jesus came to us. There are so many out there who have no joy in their lives. We need to reach out to them somehow. Think of ways we, as a church, can meet the needs of our community. Let us find ways to share our JOY with those around us who need it. Heaven and nature will sing for Joy!

I pray you have a blessed Christmas and holiday season. On behalf of Corinne and myself and our family, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed, healthy, and prosperous New Year.

Pastor Nick and Corinne ☺

And That's ...

*From my heart!
Pastor Nick ☺*



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is published quarterly by the

Church of the Nazarene
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www.patchnaz.net

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Check out our website at www.patchnaz.net for Sermons,
Church activities and other events for the Fall.



On November 12, 2017, Natalie Rose Callaghan was dedicated to the Lord by her parents Bryan and Jenelle. Natalie was born on June 3rd 2017. Her big sister is 5 year old Myla Bethany.



TEEN MINISTRY REPORT

We are super excited to report we have started youth group and we've had two sessions so far. The teens have so many great questions, and it helps Michael and I dig deeper in the Lord's word to try and find them the answers.

We plan on going to Word of Life Christian Camp upstate in March for snow camp and had a Thanksgiving bake sale to raise some money for the cost of the trip. We may want to try and have more fundraisers for the teen ministry going forward. Bake sales are usually a great way to do so. It's a nice way to get the church involved with the teens and a way for us to be able to do trips, etc., without using church money.

Recently we were blessed to go to Smithtown Tabernacle Church for a fundraiser for one of our great teens, Dakota. She is going to Mexico next year with her school on a mission trip. Please keep Dakota and the rest of her group called "Undignified" in your prayers.

We thank the Lord that the Teen Ministry keeps growing and pray it continues to do so.

Many Blessings,
The Messina's
Merry Christmas & A Blessed New Year



Different Routes, Same Destination

My sister, Karen, and I left her home in the hilly, tightly-gridded streets in the suburbs of Washington, DC while it was still dark and headed for the surgical center six miles away. It was the last day of my visit and I had volunteered to drop her off there for some minor hand surgery before heading back home to New York. I plugged in my ancient GPS, while she pulled up the route on her very modern iPhone, and we set out.

At first, our two devices were in agreement but the two "girls" with their silky electronic voices soon began to disagree with each other. One said, "Turn right," while the other suggested, "Go straight."

I followed my GPS but my sister offered that I should follow hers since I really had no idea where I was going and she could see the street signs better than me. While this was true, I felt more comfortable trusting my GPS and the experience gained over many years driving out of state for a former employer. She was nervous about getting to the center on time and, after all, this *was* her town, even though she'd never driven in it, owing to good public transportation and Uber.

But, at some point, a decision had to be made. Who was going to lead the way, my GPS or her iPhone? You see, you can't have disagreements like that while driving in the dark. Someone has to defer to the other and Karen graciously offered to mute her phone's voice while keeping the device on. Mine did the talking and leading, hers kept an electronic (albeit skeptical) eye on our progress.

Twenty-five minutes later both our devices informed us that we had, indeed, arrived on time at the surgical center! "Arriving at destination on right," the silky voice intoned and the same message came up on Karen's phone screen. The "girls" didn't agree on the route, but they absolutely agreed on the destination which was the most important thing to agree upon.

In the family of faith, there are many different 'devices' designed to help us arrive at our 'destination': eternity. It is so easy for us to get hung up on unnecessary particulars. We like different versions of God's Word, the Bible. We serve in different capacities as uniquely designed parts of the Body of Christ. We pray differently, worship differently, express love differently, meditate and study differently - oh, the list can go on forever! It's a sad turn of events when we turn on each other because we don't agree with how someone is living out their salvation because of the devices they use. Red-flag errors of doctrine aside (which should always be corrected after careful counsel) we must remember some important things God tells us when it comes to a disagreement over the process; the "routes and devices" of faith:



"Why do you judge another man's servant?" Romans 14:4-6

"Whoever is not against us is for us." Luke 9:49-50, Mark 9:38-39

"Work out your *own* salvation with fear and trembling." Philippians 2:12-14 (emphasis mine)

"Motes and beams, specks and logs." Matthew 7:1-5, Luke 6:41-42

There comes a point when the best and most graciously helpful thing we can do is defer to one another in this matter of process. As long as there is obvious evidence in the believer's life of, to name just a few, growth and maturity in personal faith and holiness, faithful support of and loving fellowship within the Body, outreach to those in need in the community, and a deeper love, reverence, and awe of the God who made us each so different; these are reliable indications that, while the routes and devices we rely upon may differ, the destination, eternity, will not be missed by those on the trip.

Sue Cerruto- Hospitality



The Giver

Many Christian families struggle with what role — if any — Santa Claus should play in their Christmas celebrations. No matter what you decide, it's fascinating to know the history of the real-life St. Nicholas

Born about 270 A.D., Nicholas was a bishop in Myra, or modern-day Turkey. In the year 325, he was part of the Council of Nicaea, which produced the Nicene Creed.

Nicholas, known for his generosity, often gave away his money anonymously. According to tradition, he secretly provided dowries for the three daughters of a bankrupt merchant. Nicholas threw two bags of gold through open windows and placed the third in a stocking hanging by the fireplace to dry. Thus began the Christmas tradition of placing gifts in stockings.

St. Nicholas is quoted as saying, "The giver of every good and perfect gift has called upon us to mimic God's giving, by grace, through faith, and this is not of ourselves."



WOMEN'S MINISTRY

The ladies have been busy at our two Bible studies as we come together to pray, learn and fellowship. We are finishing up the current book we have been reading together and will be doing an Advent series for the month of December. Between the two groups, we have raised over \$300 dollars which we will use to purchase goats and chickens for people struggling with hunger in third world countries. This will help them to have a livelihood to feed their families. As the chickens reproduce, they then help another family to start a business and have food as well. If you've never attended one of our groups why not give it a try in the New Year...we would love to have you!



Our annual Packing Party for Operation Christmas Child will be held on Nov. 18th. Since this newsletter will be sent out after that date, I will not be able to share how many boxes we were able to provide for children in need in the United States and around the world but will be sure to let you know the outcome. Many thanks to all who have donated gift items and money to help with the distribution of these boxes.

On Thursday, December 14th at 7P.M. we will once again have our Ladies Craft Night. All ladies are welcome to attend and I will hand out flyers to remind you to sign up and join the fun. Corinne always finds such wonderful items for us to make and we add our own individuality to each one. Hopefully, we won't make her too crazy this year! As always, there will be some tasty treats to partake of. Plan to join us for lots of laughs and great fellowship.

With the holidays fast approaching, we are in that time of year that seems to become more stressful with each holiday season. We tend to focus on the shopping, baking and cooking instead of all that we have to be thankful for. People spend weeks and sometimes months getting ready to celebrate the birth of our Lord but fail to keep the simplicity of His birth and the reason He came to earth as the precious gift that it is.

May you and your families be blessed as you gather together and thank God for all He has done for us.

Serving together,

Mary Ann

OPERATION FACE LIFT UPDATE

Operation Facelift is nearing completion.

Below marks projects either competed or close to completion:

1. New floors installed in the Church entry and ladies bathroom
2. Pulpit furniture and communion table restored and beautifully refinished
3. New electrical circuits and exterior lighting controls installed
4. Window blinds are set to be ordered
5. Sanctuary and lobby walls painted
6. Overflow section of sanctuary were wainscoted
7. New viewing window installed in Crying room
8. All new banisters installed in entry
9. New interlocking seats installed in sanctuary and overflow section
10. New projection system installed in sanctuary



Special thanks to the OFL committee who dedicated time, prayer and courage in helping to complete this project. May God bless all who have donated funds to help get this done, you have done it as unto the Lord.

Respectfully submitted
Pastor John

Keep the Fire Burning – Leviticus 6:8-13

A devotion by Stanley Hayes from “The Secret Place” The book of Leviticus is not an easy read. It is difficult to apply its message in the modern era. But this Scripture reading is readily applicable for today.



The people of Israel were expected to worship intently with focus on the specific rules for worship given to Moses by God. Our tendency today is to worship without the “fire” burning within us. We tend to take God for granted and focus instead on our own wants. In fact, we may choose a place of worship based on its music style or whether or not the minister is a dynamic speaker. Sadly, our primary goal is often anything but the passionate worship of God.

Keeping the fire burning in us should not depend on the content of the worship experience we encounter on a Sunday morning. Nor should it depend on the people with whom we worship. Rather, we must prepare ourselves to meet God and expect the Holy Spirit to fan the flames of commitment that we often let die away.

Children's Ministry News



I can't seem to come to grips with the fact that we are already preparing for the holidays. Year after year, we marvel at how time goes by so quickly, and the children in our church are growing up just as fast. It is a joy to share in their growth as they learn more about our Lord Jesus Christ. I have been blessed by them and those who willingly volunteer to teach and guide them. We all know how vital this ministry is. We lay the foundation, and as the children mature, the Teen Ministry is there to answer the new questions and approach the varied situations they may face, which helps solidify their relationship and walk with Christ. These ministries are important and they focus on the future of our church. It is a privilege to serve them, and I thank God for giving me the opportunity to do so.

The children have been learning about the Bible, how God revealed Himself, loves His people and provided us salvation through Jesus Christ. In Units 1 and 2 they learned about important people such as Adam and Eve, Josiah, Philip, the Ethiopian, Matthew, Simon, and of course Jesus. They learned that we are all in desperate need of forgiveness, and that we can find life in Jesus Christ. It is our prayer and hope that the children desire to seek out and establish a relationship with Jesus Christ. We want them to know there is a merciful and loving Savior who pursues them. Yes, it is important for them to know the Ten Commandments, how to behave, obey God etc. However, they need to know about the love of Jesus Christ. Love and His Spirit is what transforms them (and all of us), not good behavior. So far, I am encouraged by their questions and enthusiasm!

We are still sponsoring a little boy named Adan every month and we recently received a card from him! I displayed it on the bulletin board so everyone can read it. We will continue to take an offering for him on Communion Sundays so please have the kids hand it in to their teachers or myself.

Please keep this ministry, and all others, in your thoughts and prayers. If you would like to volunteer or assist in any way let me know! The rewards of this ministry far outweigh the challenges and sacrifice. Have a Happy Thanksgiving, a Joyous Christmas, and Happy New Year! God bless!!

*"Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6*

Liz Duffy



Weekly Schedule

Subject to Change

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



Monday

7pm - 1st & 3rd Monday of the month - September through April - M.E.N.
(Men's Encouragement Network) - Fellowship Hall

Tuesday

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

Wednesday

7pm - 2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month - September - May - East End Bible Study - Mercurio home
7:30pm - Every Wednesday - Bible Study & Fellowship - HPYC Building

Thursday

10am - Every Thursday - Ladies Prayer & Bible Study Group - HPYC Building
7pm - 2nd Thursday each month - September through June - Ladies Sewing Circle - HPYC Building

Friday

6:30pm - 8:30pm - 2nd & 4th Friday of each month - Teen's Youth Group - HPYC Building

Saturday

8am - 1st Saturday of each month - September through April - M.E.N.'s Breakfast - Fellowship Hall

For other activities and events during
December, January and February, please refer to the
Sunday Bulletin and the
Monday Memo sent every week via email.



Angels We Have Heard on High



The name is Dwayne. I'm an angel in the service of the Lord Most High. Ok, so the name Dwayne isn't exactly what you'd expect for an angelic being. You were thinking Gabriel or Michael right? Listen those guys are Cherubim, few in number, specialized, super angels something like your military Special Ops. As for me and billions like me, we fit into the Most High's Living Creatures Division. It might come as a surprise to you but angels like me spend a lot of time with people like you, more than you might imagine. The word *Angelos*, means messenger. Among other things my job involves: delivering God's answers to prayers and pointing people in the direction God has planned for them, and that is no easy task.

Hey, I could tell you stuff you just wouldn't believe. And while we're talking, let me clear something up, we had nothing to do with the Anaheim Angels winning the 2002 World Series. Just wanted to settle that point before our discussion went any further.

Angelic beings have been around a long time. I don't like to drop names, but some of my best friends delivered some critical messages to several of your spiritual ancestors. We told Abraham about Sodom and Gomorrah. Used a nifty lion taming trick to help Daniel out of a tight spot and delivered the news to a stubborn old priest named Zachariah that his wife Elizabeth was about to have a son named John. We've had some pretty cool moments alright, but nothing compares to that night in Bethlehem. It took place about two thousand years ago on that thing you people call a calendar.

Listen, when it comes to angels, humans either give us too much credit or ignore us completely. I'll let you in on a little secret; angels are delighted when the Most High, sends us to you on a heavenly mission. There was the time the Holy Spirit gave the Apostle John, a glimpse of heaven's throne. (Revelation 4-5). John was blown away seeing the Heavenly Host proclaiming the Lord Most High's wonder and majesty encouraging all who've experienced God's grace to join in worship.

Let me further enlighten you. That silent night in Bethlehem, was far greater than John's majestic vision. John was transported by vision to Heaven, but that night, God brought Heaven down to earth. And to whom did we declare this great news? Bethlehem shepherds keeping watch over their sheep. Really ... shepherds? I thought it would be people of stature, like holy men, or dignitaries not shepherds, never saw that one coming. There were so many angels in that night sky they couldn't even see the stars, except for one. That star was brighter than all of us put together. I guess Doctor Luke tells the story best, in the book by his name.

⁸Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"
Luke 2:8-14 NKJ

The announcement of Jesus' birth, the birth of the Messiah, was the most exciting moment of my life. I guess you could say it brought definition and reason for my very existence. But God sent His Son to save humans not angels. So tell me what does Christmas mean to you? That Bethlehem morning was more than just a memory, it changed everything; it opened the door way of heaven for all people. So allow me to be the first to bring good tidings of great joy to you. *For unto you is born this day a **Savior**, Christ the Lord.* Is He yours?

Wishing you a Merry Christmas,

Pastor John



Winter gift

“God ... does great things beyond our knowing. He says to the snow, ‘Fall to the earth’; likewise to his heavy, drenching rain. He shuts up all humankind indoors, so that all people may know his work” (Job 37:5-7, NABRE).



Snow, ice and cold can make winter a hassle. “Snow days” due to a blizzard may thrill students but usually inconvenience parents. But now and then, winter blankets the earth so heavily that it seems to quiet everything.

We’re granted permission to hunker down at home, snuggle close with family or pets, enjoy a book or movie, make cocoa or cookies, and rest. It’s like a surprise Sabbath — the gift of grace-time — when no one’s expected to get out the door or the driveway.

Perhaps indeed, as Job declared, God sees fit on such days to put our busyness on hold and shut us all indoors so we pause and remember his work — his place — in our lives. Praise God for snow days!

—Heidi Mann

St. Valentine's sacrifice

Every February 14, we celebrate the loved ones in our lives with cards, flowers and chocolate. But Valentine’s Day has another meaning that’s been lost.

First declared a holiday by King Henry VIII of England in 1537, it commemorates the beheading of St. Valentine on February 14, 270 A.D. His crime? Performing wedding ceremonies after Roman Emperor Claudius II had outlawed marriage.

Valentine was martyred for faithfully doing the work God had given him. Although it’s good to celebrate love and marriage, let’s also remember the courage of a man who gave his life following his convictions.

