

# **CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY**

Grand Junction, Colorado



## **PARISH PROFILE**

2020

**Church of the Nativity**  
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**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:**

Church of the Nativity inspires love of God, creation, self, and others.

To meet our mission, we strive to:

- † Provide a center for the nourishment of group and solitary Christian worship.
- † Nurture a growing knowledge of Jesus Christ and His teaching.
- † Celebrate the diversity of our Church family with patience, understanding, and love.
- † Love and respect people within the immediate congregation and within the wider community.
- † Provide an environment for the growth of each person's chosen ministry, within and beyond the Congregation.
- † Care for the sick, the lonely, and those in adversity. Feed the hungry. Welcome the stranger. Spread the Word of God and radiate the love of Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- † Be faithful, pledging stewards of the blessings God has given us, both as individuals and members of the Congregation.

**INTRODUCTION**

Our Vestry selected a committee to prepare a profile of our parish. This profile will describe our community and our church family. It will describe the ways in which we try to live our mission statement. The Profile and Priest-in-Charge Search committees prepared and distributed 91 questionnaires (one for each parish member aged 12 or older), and received 57 responses. Not all respondents answered all questions. Participants were given the choice of completing the profile online or by submitting a paper copy. We also held a small group meeting that was attended by 8 people. Everyone who attended that meeting was asked to complete a paper copy of the survey if they hadn't already done so.

This profile is comprised of the survey results, church and community background, financial information, and a copy of the 2019 Annual Report.

## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY



In 1976 a small group of Episcopalians discerned a need for another congregation in the Grand Valley. The large suburban area of the Redlands, together with nearby Fruita, seemed underserved and thus would be a fertile area for a new parish. Most of the group, middle-aged or younger, favored contemporary music and a less formal liturgy.

The group gained permission from the diocese to proceed and was organized as the "Congregation on the Redlands," but had no official diocesan status or financial help. With small numbers and small finances, participation by many members in the life of the church became and remains a characteristic of the congregation. A retired priest, the Rev. Howard "Muzz" Ebright, served as the first clergy. Services were informal and took place in many unconventional locations, including a storefront, a nursery school, and outdoors. The first service, Easter of 1977, took place in a dilapidated gymnasium, with a makeshift altar and a cross made from bark. One of the most meaningful characteristics of the community was its focus on outreach, with expenditures of 50% of income being common.

Many churches lost members following the financial recession in the early 1980s, but the Redlands congregation, with its do-it-yourself ethos, weathered the hard times well. In 1983, it was accepted as a mission by the diocese, with the Rev. Paul Smith assigned as the vicar.

Although the services took place at various times and in various locations, the church family grew rapidly and maintained a valued closeness.

Fr. Smith moved on in 1986, leaving the laity and occasional supply priests to fill the gap. Fr. Ross Blackstock worked with Suffragan Bishop Dub Wolfrum to establish a team ministry approach, in which Fr. Blackstock, Fr. Muller of Delta, and Fr. Ebright worked together. Fr. Blackstock was named vicar in 1987. Deacon Betty Noice, the first female deacon in Colorado, joined the team that same year. In 1989, Richard Sigafos was selected by the congregation to study for ordination under Canon 9. He was ordained in 1992 and served as vicar, then rector, until his retirement in November of 2005. Deacon Judy Schneider offered her talents to Nativity as well.

During those years the family continued to grow, both in numbers and areas of focus. In November 2005, Church of the Nativity had three priests who began as Canon 9 clergy. They ministered to the Hispanic community (Rev. Susan Baker), the retirement and nursing home community (Rev. Bob Engels), and the mission to people living at the eastern end of the valley, which grew into the Clifton Chapel (Rev. Brenda Fheure). The Clifton chapel was closed in late 2005 and returned to secular use. Rev. Brenda Fheure then began serving as priest-in-charge at the Redlands location, and Fr. Muzz Ebright assisted as needed. The Reverend Nature Johnston was hired in July of 2007. She became Nativity's first full-time, seminary-trained priest.

Until 2011, we held two Sunday morning services, a Wednesday noon service, numerous on-going informal Bible and spiritual study groups, as well as special services and study opportunities during Advent and Lent. At that point, the decision was made to have one worship service at 9:30 on Sunday mornings.

Until 2007, our style of pledging and stewardship differed from that of many churches. Our pledges were confidential, deposited in a box at the altar, with the amount known only to the giver and to God. Therefore, the budget was not based on set pledge amounts. When unusual needs arose, God seemed to provide, and the money for special projects was obtained. Nativity is one of the founding members of the Colorado Episcopal Foundation's Legacy Society, offering members the opportunity to bequeath gifts to the church. Once Reverend Nature was hired, it quickly became apparent that we needed to change to a traditional method of pledging and recording those pledges in order to create an accurate and realistic budget.

The church faced difficult financial decisions in 2010. Factors centered on the recession of 2008 caught up to the Grand Valley and Nativity did not escape those consequences. The parish faced hard decisions about the future of the church and how to move forward. Numerous small group meetings and planning sessions were held. In 2013, the Vestry and parish made the decision to use monies from the Endowment Fund as needed to support the operation of Nativity, in accordance with provisions of the Articles of Incorporation. A very generous bequest had been left by the Reverend Susan Baker and a significant portion of that money had been placed in the Endowment fund. Wise money management strategies, agreed on by the congregation, lead to the development of a 5-Year Plan as well as a Strategic Plan. By utilizing

these tools, Nativity has been able to move toward a balanced budget, and no monies from the Endowment Fund have been needed for the past two years.

The Redlands area, where Nativity is located, was mainly an agricultural area until the late 1940's when it became a popular residential area. Our current church building was the original Redlands Elementary School and provided education for grades 1-8. As the area grew, more schools were built and this original building came to be used only for storage. In 1983 the Diocese of Colorado purchased the building, and the church finally had a home. Remodeling and updating took place over the next several years. Bishop Frey gave the parish the name of Church of the Nativity.

Care, upkeep, and updating of our aging building have long been of concern to many in the congregation. In the fall of 2017, a series of dinner meetings were held to brainstorm and prioritize ideas for the future of our building. As a result of these meetings, two committees were formed. The "Stay" committee was charged with investigating the costs and logistics of many of the projects that had been identified in order to remain in our existing building. The "Go" committee was charged with investigating the feasibility of purchasing a different building or rebuilding on our existing property. After extensive research, the decision was made to stay where we are and address some of our building's issues. This decision led to the development of a Capital Campaign, which was started in earnest in February 2019 with a proposed goal of \$250,000. By July 2019, thanks to the skilled leadership of Reverend Nature, \$255,000 was pledged.

## **WHO WE ARE**

The congregation of Nativity is a mature population. Fifty percent of the parish is over 65 years of age, 30% is 41-65, 10% is 21-40 and 10% is younger than 20. We have a small amount of ethnic diversity with 5% of us being a race other than Caucasian. The church is approximately two-thirds women and 50% of the parish members are retired. The length of time that people have attended Nativity is varied with 40% attending for more than 10 years, 20% for 6-10 years and 40% for 0-5 years.

In a survey of the parish the most common responses of what attracted people to first attend Nativity included the denomination, the worship style, location, community programs and the rector. The factors most often mentioned that keep people coming back are the worship style, social outreach, community programs, the denomination, that their friends are here and the church's focus on Christ.

## **STAFF MEMBERS**

Immediate Past Rector: The Rev. Nature Johnston (Retired 1/31/2020)

Assisting Priest: The Rev. Emil Belsky (non-stipendiary)

Assisting Priest: The Rev. Jan Head (non-stipendiary)

Deacon: The Rev. Teri Shecter

Parish Administrator: Christie Frank

Bookkeeper: Lynne Habberfield

Music Director: Linda Jenks DMA

Director of Pastoral Care: The Rev. Emil Belsky

Youth/Children's Ministry: Tina Manchee, Cathy Manchee, Craig Hughes

Adult Spiritual Formation: The Rev. Emil Belsky

*Midweek* e-newsletter: Melinda Hill

Veterans' Ministry: Brenda Fhuere

Maintenance, Cleaning, Yardwork: Professional Services

## **OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE**

### **Worship**

Our 9:30 Sunday morning Service of the Holy Eucharist utilizes diverse sources including BCP Rite II, New Zealand Book of Common Prayer, Enriching Our Worship, and the Iona Community Eucharistic Prayer.

### **Spiritual University**

Spiritual University is offered on a trimester basis. This program is advertised and open to the public for a nominal tuition fee. A six- to eight-week DVD program is offered, followed by group discussion. Topics are varied and have included offerings from philosopher Ken Wilbur, Celtic Spirituality, Eco Spirituality, and Wholeness of Mind, Body and Spirit which was presented by a team including Karin Hughes MD (a parishioner) and the Revs. Jan Head and Emil Belsky. Several new parishioners have been introduced to our church through this program. This is usually facilitated by Fr. Belsky or guest speakers.

### **Adult Education**

Prior to our worship service, adult education is facilitated by Fr. Emil Belsky. A wide variety of faith-related and current social issues have been explored. The format is generally a DVD presentation followed by group discussion. Attendance varies but usually consists of 8-12 regular participants.



### CaYmin (Children and Youth ministry)

CaYmin is currently under the direction of Tina and Cathy Manchee (nursery - age 10) and Craig Hughes (Age 10+). Although our numbers are small, the children and youth of Nativity are an integral part of our parish life. In addition to attending Sunday classes, students participate in Outreach activities, provide hospitality, serve as greeters and acolytes, and take part in community service projects. Trips to Powderhorn Resort and to local amusement parks are also included in CaYmin activities. We pray that this ministry will continue to grow as additional families discover Nativity.



### Centering Prayer

Tuesdays at 5:15pm a Centering Prayer service is offered and is usually facilitated by one of the attendees. All faith traditions are welcome for this time of guided meditation and silent prayer.

### Additional Growth Opportunities

Advent and Lenten Wednesday night programs are offered. These usually begin with a soup and salad dinner followed by a DVD presentation and discussion around faith-related topics. Occasional workshops and prayer retreat sessions have been offered.

## OUR MINISTRIES AND COMMITTEES

Altar Guild	Choir/Music
Altar Servers	Endowment
Caring for all Creation	Finance
Greeters	Hospitality
Outreach	Vestry
Prayers and Squares	
Pastoral Care	
Prayer Ministry	
Veterans Ministry	
Lay Eucharistic Ministers	
Friends Cooking for Friends	
Peace and Justice Ministry	

## SOME MINISTRIES UNIQUE TO CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

### Caring for All Creation/Animal Ministry

Nativity's Animal Ministry demonstrates our love and care for all of God's creation. Comprised of numerous activities and open to all members of our community, this ministry embodies the mission of the National Church as well as the mission of Nativity. Activities include:

--*PAWS for a Blessing* is a non-denominational service honoring the human/animal bond. Twice a year the service includes a memorial component for companion animals that have died. We also maintain an area for burial of animal ashes and hold a *Parting Way* service for burials when requested.

--The *Caring for All Creation* lecture series offers free talks by state and local experts on a variety of environmental and animal-related topics. Recent topics have included the Endangered Species Act, managing healthy soils, composting, and raising backyard flocks.

--The *Animal Care Fair* has been hosted on the church grounds since 2015. Over 30 local and national animal welfare organizations are invited to participate. The event includes mini-seminars, a low-cost vaccination clinic for dogs and cats, and adoption opportunities.



--We also hold an annual in-gathering of pet food to distribute to local shelters and participate in the *Peace and Justice Resource*

*Fair* to assist low income and homeless individuals with pet care.

--In the fall of 2019, we expanded our outreach by partnering with Underdog Animal Rescue based in Moab, Utah. A group of Nativity volunteers joined Underdog for a weekend and traveled to a part of the Navajo Nation where we provided low-cost vaccinations to over 200 dogs and cats.

--In 2017, Nativity was awarded the designation of Humane Backyard. This means that our property is dedicated to providing the basic elements for wildlife to thrive (food, water, cover, and places to raise their young) while avoiding the use of harmful chemicals including pesticides and herbicides.

## Outreach

Outreach is a vital part of Nativity. The committee members have adopted the following "Golden Rule": "Outreach is not us fixing others -- it is a relationship between equals." The Outreach committee meets monthly and has a line-item budget and fundraising monies with which to work. Within this mission, Outreach intentions include: Social Justice, Economic Justice, Racial Justice, Environmental Justice, and being of service to others. Ways in which these intentions are being put into action include:

--*Bonnie's House*: restoration, maintenance & care of a transitional home for previously homeless youth.

--*Men in Heels*: A community-wide event where men race in high heels to raise money for Latimer House (shelter & services to victims of domestic violence/sexual assault)

--*Sharefest*: A community-wide project helping those in need of spring yard work or minor home repairs.

--*Grand Valley Peace & Justice*: Collect and distribute food to various charities.

--*Nativity Cares*: A reverse offering to parishioners so they may reach out to others.

--*Monetary Support*: Nepal Hospital, America's Disaster Relief, Cathy Donahoe (Missionary with SAMS in the Dominican Republic)

--In addition, Environmental Justice offers a weekly reduce/reuse/recycle tip in the parish newsletter.

--Through our participation in the county-wide Interfaith Coalition, we work toward racial justice.



## Prayers and Squares

The Prayers and Squares Ministry involves creating hand-made quilts for recipients from both inside and outside the Nativity family. The quilts are designed and sewn by the group and blessed by our priest. Quilts are finished with ties in addition to being quilted. As parishioners tie the finishing knots, they offer prayers for the recipient.

## Friends Cooking For Friends

Many times individuals and/or families are in need of meals due to illness, family emergency, or a variety of other reasons. This ministry meets that need by having frozen meals ready to distribute immediately. Any member of Nativity may participate in this ministry, which meets on an as-needed basis, to prepare food in our kitchen that can be frozen and easily provided to our community and friends.

## Peace and Justice Ministry

Nativity's newest ministry was established in November 2019. It offers members and friends opportunities to act upon their Christ-inspired intentions to eradicate violence and injustice. There are opportunities to respond to both immediate needs and to participate in systematic social change campaigns. This ministry takes Michael Eric Dyson's statement to heart: "We must never ignore the injustices that make charity necessary, or the inequalities that make it possible."

## WHAT WE DO BEST

Nativity is a church that cares deeply for its members. This theme appeared in the majority of survey responses. Many respondents mentioned that we care for each other, we make people feel welcome and included, we treat each other like family, we practice radical hospitality, and we are non-judgmental. The size of our congregation lends itself well to a feeling of community that is not found in "big box" churches.

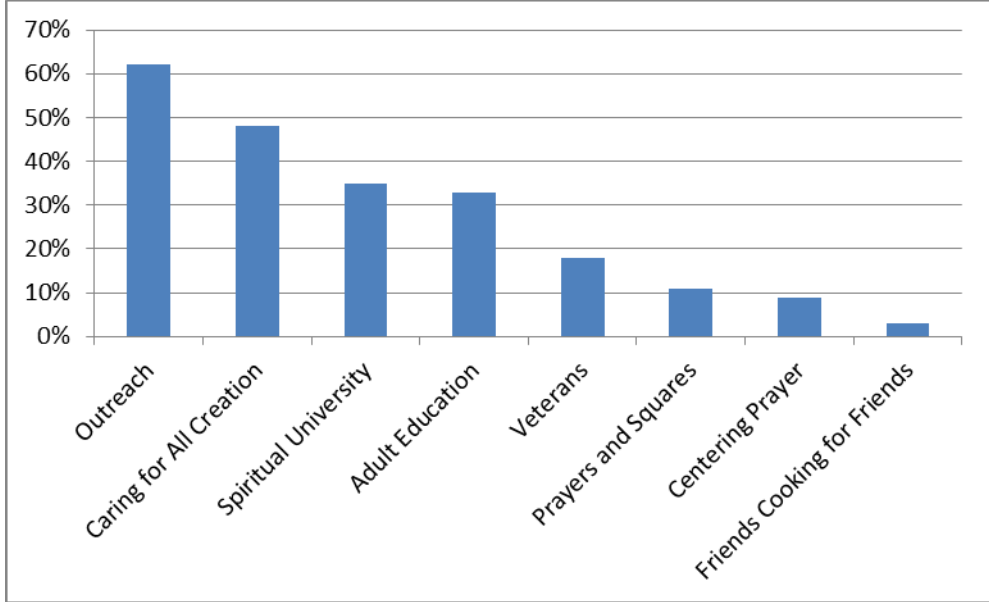
We have a shared partnership between laity and clergy, which furthers the feeling of inclusivity and participation. Our leaders (both clergy and lay) require us to think with our heads and our hearts. We have a vibrant Christian Education program that encourages participation from congregation members as well as the outside community. Our worship style can be described as warm, liturgically sound, and not overly formal.

Our classically-trained pianist offers her gifts to the congregation each Sunday. In addition, she coordinates musical events that are offered to the entire Grand Valley, many of which take place at Nativity.

Two ministries are truly the "heart" of Nativity: Caring for All Creation and Outreach. Caring for All Creation encompasses many of the projects we are involved with. In the past 10 years, we have increased our awareness of the Earth and all of God's creatures. We continue to focus on finding creative ways to honor the bonds between humans and all other life on our planet. As was described earlier, we have Outreach programs at the local, regional and national levels.

87% of survey respondents said they are satisfied with Nativity’s current variations of Prayer Book liturgy and style of music.

**Survey Results: Ranking Our Ministries by Degree of Importance**



**WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE**

In order to become more financially secure, we would like to increase our numbers. We are particularly interested in attracting more families with young children. Diversity and inclusivity are important to us and can always be improved upon. We would like to see improvements in our long-term vision, strategic planning and Christian education for children and youth. Improvements in reception and engagement with newcomers could result in increased membership. Keeping open communications between leadership and congregation is always needed. Accessibility for the physically challenged is a necessity and is currently being addressed by our Capital Campaign. We would also like to see an increase in awareness and attentiveness to our elderly population who are unable to attend church.

## WHAT WE SEEK IN A PRIEST-IN-CHARGE

In the March 2020 survey, 8 abilities we are seeking in our new priest-in-charge were listed for respondents to rank in order of importance. The top 4 results were:

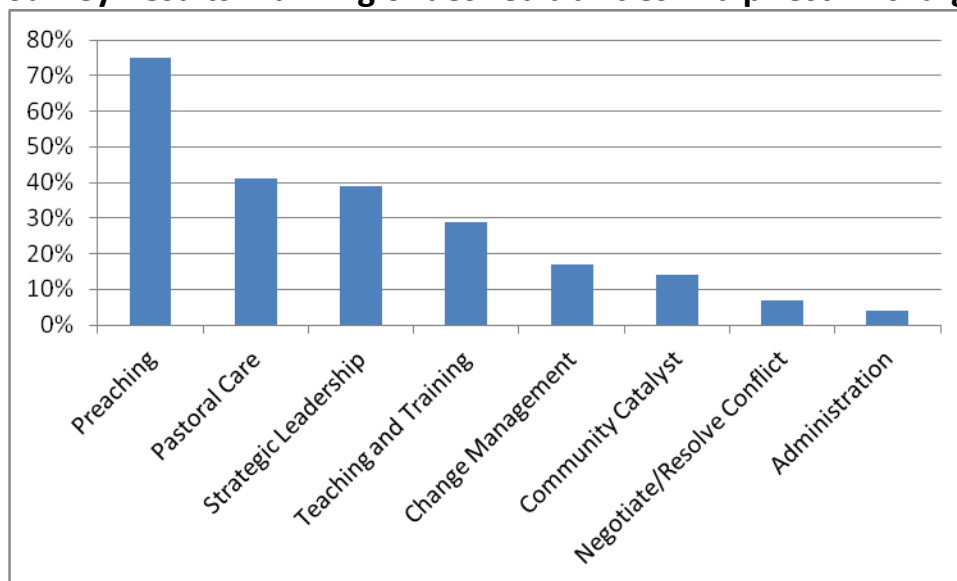
75% of respondents ranked *preaching* as their first or second priority

41% ranked *pastoral care* as their first or second priority

39% ranked *strategic leadership* as their first or second priority

29% ranked *teaching and training* as their first or second priority

### Survey Results: Ranking of desired abilities in a priest-in-charge by importance



In answer to questions on the same survey regarding the focus of sermons:

100% feel sermons should concentrate on spiritual development and daily living

92% feel sermons should speak to contemporary social issues

83% feel sermons should illuminate the Bible readings

Our new priest-in-charge must share our strong conviction for our Caring for All Creation and Outreach ministries. We seek a priest-in-charge who will participate, not just delegate. It is important that our new priest-in-charge embrace our current level of lay involvement. We are seeking a forward-thinking person who will guide and invite us rather than direct us and be a coach/teacher/motivator rather than a boss. It is important that this new person helps us grow spiritually as well as in the size of our congregation. We seek a priest-in-charge who is able to lead and inspire us during this period of change and uncertainty.

## **OUR FINANCIAL OUTLOOK**

### Financial Report/Budget Information

Since 2014, Church of the Nativity has had two four-year financial plans. These were adopted to guide us to a healthy financial state following the economic downturn of 2010. In the first four years our goal was to increase our pledge income 20% annually and keep our increase in expenses to 5% annually. This approach worked well. In 2018 we decreased our anticipated increase in income to 10% annually and still tried to maintain the increase in expenses to 5%. This approach anticipated achieving a balanced budget in 2021.

In 2019, we conducted a Capital Campaign to raise funds for much needed maintenance and improvements to our building. The response from the congregation was incredibly generous with \$255,000 being pledged. In 2020, for the first time since starting our financial plan, our pledges have fallen short of our hoped increase over the prior year. We feel this is a result of the passing of several parishioners in the past year and the impact of the Capital Campaign on peoples' ability to support the church financially. We are anticipating being back on track again in 2021 toward a balanced budget in the coming years.

For details on the church finances, please see Appendix C.

## **APPENDIX A:**

### **COMMUNITY INFORMATION**



Western Colorado began to be settled in the late 1800s. Grand Junction's first settlers came in 1881, the city was incorporated in 1882, and it became the county seat of the newly formed Mesa County in 1883. The area referred to as the Grand Valley includes the communities of Palisade, Clifton, Fruitvale, Grand Junction, the Redlands, Appleton, Fruita, Loma, and Mack, and has a population of close to 150,000.

The Grand Junction area is the focal point for western Colorado and eastern Utah, being a major retail and medical care center. There are three full-service hospitals, one of which has been listed among the top 100 in the nation. The area is served by a regional airport, Interstate Highway 70, Greyhound, Amtrak, CDOT Bustang Service east to Denver and south to Durango, and Grand Valley Transit.

The local school district includes 4 high schools, 8 middle schools, 24 elementary schools, and 6 alternative schools. Private and parochial school options also exist. Colorado Mesa University (CMU), established in 1925, has over 10,000 students and offers liberal arts and professional studies, as well as providing the community with fine music, drama and a variety of sports. Western Colorado Community College, part of CMU, offers associate degrees, vocational training, and community education. Additional higher educational opportunities also exist.

Agriculture has always been important in the Grand Valley and surrounding areas. Our premium fruit is prized in many markets. The successful introduction of wine grapes in the early 1980's has created a vibrant wine industry here.



There are other regional economic drivers as well. Tourism is extremely important to the entire area. The valley has a world-wide reputation as a premier mountain biking destination. Recreational activities are numerous and serve as a draw for tourists. The Grand Mesa and its National Forest at the east end of the valley offers skiing, hunting, fishing, camping, and hiking. The red sandstone of Colorado National Monument at the west end of the valley offers climbing, hiking, bike racing, and touring. The Colorado River flows through the valley and joins the Gunnison River near the downtown area, making river-related water sports quite popular. Several golf courses dot the community, including a national award winner. The energy industry has played a major role in the economy of the Grand Valley for decades. Recently, several companies in the outdoor recreation industry have relocated here, while the technology sector continues to grow. Heavy industry and manufacturing has never had much of a presence in the area.

Cultural offerings abound in this community. Opportunities include a very active symphony orchestra, a community band, the High Desert Opera, The Art Center, multiple venues that draw world-class live entertainment, several museums, two quilting guilds, numerous dance studios, drama and poetry groups. Colorado Mesa University provides a full-range of cultural offerings. Dinosaur Journey, a world-class working paleontology museum, is located in Fruita. There are numerous active paleontological quarries in the valley.

The Grand Valley is a high desert environment. A series of large irrigation canals supply the valley with the water needed to maintain its agricultural base. Hot summer days, cool nights, and lots of sunshine, combined with mild winters, make the Grand Valley a comfortable place to live.

## APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENT/DOCUMENT

### Parish Survey 2020

We would like everyone, regardless of age, to complete a survey. This information will be used in completing our Parish Profile and in the search for our new rector. Please either fill one out on paper, online or at a small group discussion.

Background Information- Please select the appropriate choice.

Age:  0-10 years  11-20  21-40  41-65  Over 65  Prefer not to answer

Gender:  Male  Female  Non-binary  Prefer not to answer

Race/Ethnicity:  Asian  African American  Hispanic  Native American  Caucasian  
 Prefer not to answer

Employment:  Student  Work part-time  Work full-time  Unemployed  Retired  
 Prefer not to answer

How long have you been coming to Nativity?

Less than 1 year  1-5 years  6-10 years  more than 10 years

**What originally attracted you to Nativity? Please select all that apply. You may select more than one.**

- The church's reputation
- The church's focus on Christ
- My friends are here
- Adult education
- Youth program
- Music program
- The social outreach
- The Rector
- The worship style
- Community programs such as Spiritual University and creation/animal ministries
- The denomination
- Location
- Other (Please specify)

**What keeps you coming to Nativity? Please select all that apply. You may select more than one.**

- The church's reputation
- The church's focus on Christ
- My friends are here
- Adult education
- Youth program
- Music program
- The social outreach
- The Rector
- The worship style
- Community programs such as Spiritual University and the creation/animal ministries
- The denomination
- Location
- Other (Please specify)

**Sermons should illuminate the Bible readings. (select one)**

- Very important    Somewhat important    Not very important    Not at all important

**Sermons should concentrate on spiritual development and daily living. (select one)**

- Very important    Somewhat important    Not very important    Not at all important

**Sermons should speak to contemporary social issues. (select one )**

- Very important    Somewhat important    Not very important    Not at all important

**My preference for service music is. (select one )**

- Traditional    Blended    Contemporary

**Nativity's current selection of music is suitable. (select one)**

- Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

**Churches should include variations on Prayer Book liturgy in services. (Contemporary wording, special services)**

- Very important    Somewhat important    Not very important    Not at all important

**Nativity currently includes about the right number of variations on Prayer Book liturgy.**

- Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

**Other comments:**

**Please rank Nativity's Ministries from 1 to 8 in order of importance to you. (1 being most important)  
Please use each ranking only once.**

- Care for all Creation (PAWS)    \_\_\_\_\_
- Veterans    \_\_\_\_\_
- Prayers and Squares    \_\_\_\_\_
- Outreach    \_\_\_\_\_
- Spiritual University    \_\_\_\_\_
- Adult Education    \_\_\_\_\_
- Friends Cooking for Friends    \_\_\_\_\_
- Centering Prayer    \_\_\_\_\_

Rector Profile Information, continued

What do we want to keep the same?

What do we want to do differently?

Please share any other comments or concerns that you have:

### **Rector Profile Information**

Please rank from 1 to 8 ( 1 being most important) the following critical abilities for our next Pastor.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Preaching - Capacity to inspire and connect people to God's word.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strategic leadership - Capacity to cast a vision and lead the church toward realization of the vision.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Change management- Capacity to lead a church through a significant and necessary period of change.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching/Training - Capacity to deepen understanding, form character, and equip members with new skills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral care -Capacity to engage people empathetically and care for people in times of of need.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Negotiate/resolve conflict - Capacity to help a church deal with conflict through training, negotiation, and mediation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Administration- Capacity to manage church operationally including facilities, finances and staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Community catalyst-Capacity to function on a larger stage beyond the church and to rally a variety of individuals and groups to address critical issues.

What is our purpose at Nativity?

What are the priorities of our church?

What do we do best?

## **APPENDIX D**

### **COVID-19 RESPONSE**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to note that church of the Nativity does not have a full or part-time rector or priest-in-charge. Our clergy team is operating on a supply basis, and our lay leadership is strictly voluntary. At this time, we have a paid part-time Parish Administrator, a paid part-time Bookkeeper, and a paid musician.

Our clergy team continues to care for the spiritual and emotional well-being of the church through a variety of creative ways. During Holy Week, clergy members posted a video of support and prayer to YouTube. They also personally created, assembled and distributed kits for those who wished to observe the Triduum. These kits contained written instructions, prayers, scripture readings, and suggested actions to help parishioners prepare for Easter. They present a weekly "Fireside Chat" via YouTube to keep connected with the congregation. In addition to the spiritual message, these chats include selections from our musician as well as readings done by congregation members. Several members of the congregation are involved in making cloth masks for parishioners, KidsAid (a local non-profit that benefits low-income children), and the Navajo Nation. A calling tree has been set up to maintain frequent, regular contact with all members of the congregation. Our vestry has continued to meet monthly via WebEx to address the business of the church, the priest-in-charge search, and the building renovation.