Holy Nativity Lutheran Church

3 Lenape Trail Wenonah, NJ 08090

OUR MISSION

Graced by a loving God to be a caring community of faith the fellowship of Holy Nativity is called to support one another, warmly welcoming others into our community, sharing in the mission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed, and reaching out in witness and service to the communities to which we belong as one in the Body of Christ.

Worship Service for Sunday, September 14, 2025

14th Sunday after Pentecost (Holy Cross Day) LBW Service of the Word

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

In response to God's overwhelming love, we stand in awe of the wideness of God's mercy and by God's Spirit we welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. In faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, mindful of our Lutheran emphasis on grace, and rejoicing in the celebration of our shared baptismal journey, we welcome all as members of our church family including any who have ever felt excluded by the Church for any of the reasons that too often divide us.

We are so glad you have joined us today!

First-time guests: Please fill out a Communion Card and place it in the offering plate. Newcomer orientations are held on various days several times a year for those who are interested in learning more about HNLC.

Restrooms are located in the hallway between the lobby and our fellowship hall.

Today's Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God..
The Sanctuary Candle is given to the Glory of God.

PRELUDE

The King o Love My Shepherd Is

arr. G. Peterson



Introduction to the day

This festival, which originated in the fourth century, celebrates the triumph of the cross. Paul reminds us that Christ crucified is the power and wisdom of God. As Moses put a serpent on a pole to be a source of healing for the Israelites, we lift high the cross as the sign of our health and such time we make the sign of the cross we remember our heatigm into the death and resurrection of

salvation. Each time we make the sign of the cross we remember our baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ.

GATHERING The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (The congregation responds with text in bold print.)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

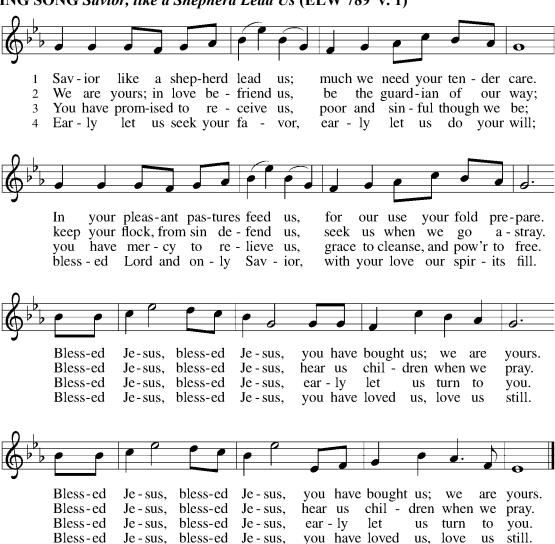
Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God, have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us (ELW 789 v. 1)



GREETING

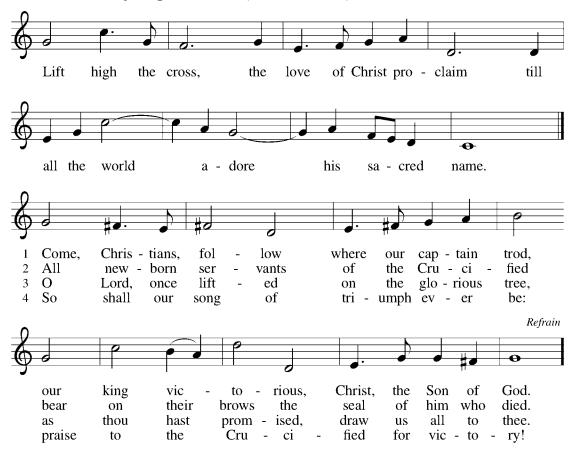
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE (Read responsively.)

Lord, have mercy: Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy: Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy: Lord, have mercy.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE Lift High the Cross (LBW 377 v. 1)



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross so that he might draw the whole world to himself. To those who look upon the cross, grant your wisdom, healing, and eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Numbers 21:4b-9 A reading from Numbers.

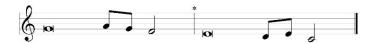
When the people spoke against God and Moses, the Lord sent poisonous snakes against them. Moses interceded for the people, and the Lord ordered him to erect a serpent of bronze on a pole. All who looked at it after having been bitten by a serpent would live.

[From Mount Hor the Israelites set out,] ^{4b} but the people became discouraged on the way. ⁵ The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶ Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole,

and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 98:1-4 (The Psalm is sung responsively by verse.)



Refrain: The | LORD has done * mar- |velous things. (Ps. 98:1)

Refrain: The | LORD has done * mar- |velous things.

- ¹ Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done | marvelous things, * whose right hand and holy arm have | won the victory.
- ² O LORD, you have made | known your victory, * you have revealed your righteousness in the sight | of the nations.

Refrain: The | LORD has done * mar- |velous things.

- ³ You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the | house of Israel; * all the ends of the earth have seen the victory | of our God.
- ⁴ Shout with joy to the LORD, ¹ all you lands; * lift up your voice, re-¹ joice, and sing. Refrain: The | LORD has done * mar- | velous things.

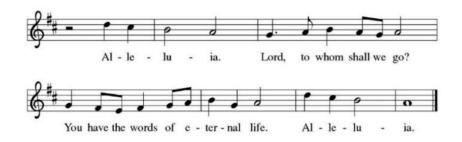
SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24 A reading from 1st Corinthians.

At the heart of the Christian message is the word of the cross. This proclamation seems foolish to many because it reveals true divine power in the absolute weakness of Christ's crucifixion. True wisdom understands how ours is a God who suffers for and with humankind in the cross.

- ¹⁸ The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,
 - "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
 - and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."
- ²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: John 3:13-17 The holy gospel according to John. Glory to you, O Lord.

After explaining to Nicodemus that one must be born of water and Spirit, Jesus speaks of being lifted up on the cross, with reference to the bronze serpent lifted up by Moses in the desert. Here the Son of God is revealed as the source of healing.

[Jesus said:] ¹³ "No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him."

The gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

HOMILY (HOLY CROSS DAY)

In the cross, God's presence is with us

John 3:16 is not a threat. It is a *promise*. Jesus died on the cross in order that we ALL might live! No Condemnation ... Instead ... Salvation! Remember ...

"If God didn't send Jesus into the world to condemn it, I doubt God sent you to."

Yes, it's hard to refrain from judgment. It is tempting for us to judge ourselves as right and everyone else as wrong. Good news! John's gospel puts such competitions to rest: God loves everyone and everything—the whole world, all of creation, every person and part of the entire cosmos, all that is. For God so loved *The world* that he gave his only son ...

At first take, we might be baffled that we lift up the cross as the place where God's expansive love is so significantly portrayed to us. Through Christ's crucifixion, death, and resurrection, God works to unravel all the violence that leads to things like crucifixion in the first place.

God has taken on all of our human suffering so we can know that Christ's loving presence is with us when we are hurting too.

God accompanies us through hardships. God brings new life in the midst of death!

This is the mysterious power of the cross.

We are created for community, as evidenced throughout all of Scripture, beginning with the creation story in Genesis and concluding with the thronging multitudes in Revelation (7:9). Without relationships and community, we are destined to perish. Although our society often trumpets the merits of rugged, meritocratic individualism, none of us survive in isolation.

Jesus, The Living Water, The Light of The World, The Good Shepherd, invites us into the most trusting of covenantal relationships. Just as our bodies require water to live, to avoid perishing, so our souls thirst for the living water, a relationship with our Creator.

Indeed, this relationship with God is what gives us salvation; it is not a box into which we must step — rather, we step *out* of the confining box and *in*to the freedom of a relationship with The Holy.

Every time God gathers us for holy communion, we remember that night when Jesus faced these hardest moments. Before being lifted up on the cross, he broke bread and shared wine and promised to remain with us always.

Jesus continues to be with us in the holy meal even all these centuries later: in bread and wine, for us, lifted high. Indeed, this is the presence we need. It is the presence that sustains us at work, at school, at play. It is the presence that makes grace real. It is the presence that saves us from sin and death, always.

An internet meme circulating a few years ago chided its audience, "If God didn't send Jesus into the world to condemn it, I doubt God sent you to." It's hard to refrain from judgment, especially when so many social pressures tempt us to judge ourselves as right and everyone else as wrong. John's gospel puts such competitions to rest: God loves everyone and everything—the whole world, all of creation, every person and part of the entire cosmos, all that is.

At first take, we might be baffled that we lift up the cross as the place where God's expansive love is so significantly shown for us. But through Christ's crucifixion, death, and resurrection, God works to unravel all the violence that leads to things like crucifixion in the first place. In the cross, God's presence is with us: God has taken on all of our human suffering so we can know that Christ's loving presence is with us when we are hurting too. God accompanies us through hardships. God brings new life in the midst of death! This is the mysterious power of the cross.

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HYMN OF THE DAY Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us (ELW 789 v. 2-3)

2 We are yours; in love befriend us, be the guardian of our way; keep your flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray.

Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear us children when we pray.

Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear us children when we pray.

3 You have promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be; you have mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to you. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to you.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Holy Cross Day Sunday, September 14, 2025

Helena, mother of Constantine, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and found what may be the actual site of Jesus' crucifixion. Her son built two churches there, and the dedication of one of them gave rise to this celebration of our Lord's victory on the cross.

^{*}Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, martyr, died around 258 Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Cyprian served as a bishop during a time of great persecution of Christians. He insisted on receiving back those who had left the faith under duress. He also provided medical care during a severe epidemic.

Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, died 1179 Wednesday, September 17, 2025

A mystic who was widely influential within the church, Hildegard advised and reproved kings and popes, wrote poems and hymns, and produced treatises in medicine, theology, and natural history. She was also a musician and artist.

Dag Hammarskjöld, renewer of society, died 1961 Thursday, September 18, 2025

A Swedish diplomat, Hammarskjöld served as the second Secretary General of the United Nations until his death in a plane crash while trying to negotiate peace in present-day Zambia. His journal, published as Markings, revealed the depth of his Christian faith.

Nelson Wesley Trout, bishop, died 1996 (TFF) Saturday, September 20, 2025

A native of Ohio, Trout served parishes in several parts of the United States before being elected bishop of the South Pacific District of the American Lutheran Church, the first African American Lutheran to serve in such a capacity.

PRAYER LIST

The Community of Annunciation Parish in Minneapolis, MN, in the wake of the recent shooting, The victims, families and first responders of the Texas floods, Holly & Duane, Dawn Allen, The friends and family of John Austino as they mourn his passing, Hal Battindorf, Nicholas Baud, Madelene Budd, Carol Carty, Sal Castelli, Jenn Causey and family, Tracey Causey, Lisa Clark, Baby Landyn and Kristen Compagoni, Sherwood Cotton, Bob Counbs, Craig (diagnosed with cancer), Rocco Cristinzio, Leslie Criston, Milton Cuevas, Sr., Milton Cuevas, Jr., The family of John Cusack as they grieve his passing, The family of Rosemarie Daffin as they mourn her passing, Nicholas Damiani, The family of Tony DelMonte as they mourn his passing, Alicia DiRienzo, Kathy Drew, Barbara Esposito, Barbara Facchine, Scott Fey, Bill Flynn, Francis, Bobby G., Alma Garcia, Gavin Gigliotti, The family of Michael Gilletti as they mourn his death, Marie Giliberti, Mark Gismondi, Terry Gismondi, Wilma Gismondi, Jay Goheen and family, Randi Gordon, the Hatcher family, The family and friends of Ron Herrmann as they mourn his passing, the Hogan family. The family of Ken Jakubiak as they mourn his passing, Tom Jones, Marilyn Kaiser, The family of Robert Keen as they mourn his passing, Elise Kelm and the Kelm family, Corinne Klotz, Clara Kuter, The family and friends of Doris Lail as they mourn her passing, Grace Laphan, Pat Larkin, Joseph Lonia, The friends and family of Jessie MacGregor as they mourn her passing, The family of Doris Manague as they mourn her passing, Joseph Mansfield, The McCall family in their time of grief and loss, Rob and Nona McDonough & family, Caroline Miles, Jim Montisano, Bill Morris, The friends and family of Mary Alice Morrison as they mourn her passing, The family of Linsey Mullin as they mourn her death, George Muth, The family and friends of Carol Nardi as they mourn her death, Bob and Sue Nevins (suffering with a brain tumor), Janet Ostrowski, The family of Joseph Ostrowski as they mourn his death, Lucas Otev, Otis, Donna Paone, Danielle Peters, The family of Lewis Richards as they mourn his passing, The family of Charles Rust as they mourn his passing, The family of Scott Rust as they mourn his passing, Noreen Ruyuh, Dylan Sauer, Meleta Seher, Billy Shea, The family and friends of Glenn Shirley as they mourn his passing, Helen Simkunas & Family, Joyce and Arvin Skramsdad, Richard Sylvester, Eileen Simpson, Julia Stanz, Sarah Stanz, Nathan Storhoff, Donna Testa, Corey Temean, Frank Temean, Ed Tutka, Sharon Walker, The family and friends of Larry Wall as they mourn his passing, Rosie Ward, Winfield Watson, Wayne Weaver, Dolores Whilleson, The family of Michelle Whiting as they mourn her passing, the Wilke family including Tim & Catherine, Sue Willard, Jill Wilt, Shirley Yancer, Jerry, Pat and Kelly who are battling cancer.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Gracious God, we come to you in prayer for the church, the world, and all in need. A brief silence.

Sustaining God, guide your church on the way. Give us patience in our journey, and protect us from division and doubt. May we look to the cross and live. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Creator God, renew the earth. Heal our planet from the venom of greed and exploitation, and direct us to respect all life as a gift from you. May we look to the cross and live. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God of wisdom, grant discernment to those in authority. Thwart the plans of the proud, bring low the mighty, and uphold those who work for peace. May they seek the way of the cross and live. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God of grace, alleviate suffering. Comfort the sick and the grieving (*especially*). Come to the aid of those who are hungry or needing shelter. May they find hope in the cross and live. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Good Shepherd, guide your flock. Protect us from the world's lies and lead us in the way of truth. Strengthen us in our faith and inspire us to serve others. May we follow you to the cross and live. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered. God of grace, receive our prayer.

Merciful God, you receive into your loving embrace those who have died. Giving thanks for them, may we find comfort in the cross and live in the hope of resurrection. God of grace, **receive our prayer**.

We entrust these prayers to you, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend. Amen.

PEACE

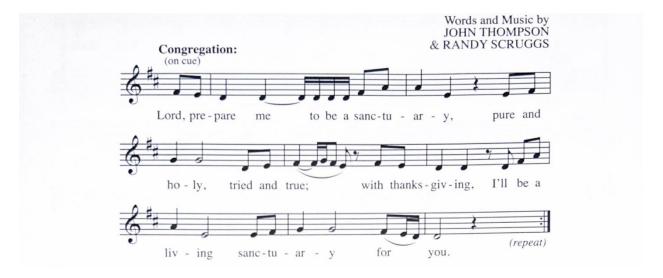
The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

The ministers and congregation may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

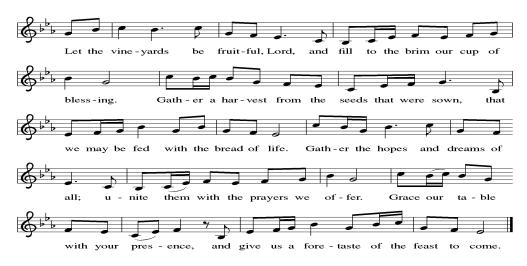
Peace be with you. Peace be with you.

CHORAL OFFERTORY Sanctuary



OFFERING

OFFERTORY VERSE



CANTICLE OF THANKSGIVING (Read in unison)

Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever. Great and wonderful are your deeds, O God of the universe; just and true are your ways, O Ruler of all the nations. Who can fail to honor you, Lord, and sing the glory of your name? Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever. For you alone are the Holy One, and blessed is the one whose name is the Word of God. All praise and thanks to you, holy God! Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray.

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

SENDING God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

The God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The God of all grace

→ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us (ELW 789 v. 4)

4 Early let us seek your favor, early let us do your will; blessed Lord and only Savior, with your love our spirits fill. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Offering received September 6th and 7th \$2743.00. Weekly amount needed to meet the spending plan-\$2498.00. Total received to date—\$81540.95. Amount needed to date--\$89928.00. (We are currently about \$8387.00 behind our spending plan goal. Please don't forget the church if you will be away.)
- Donations through Venmo and PayPal--Please note that, per council policy, if you make an electronic donation through Venmo or PayPal, it will not be recorded on your annual giving statement. It is the member's responsibility to track these donations for tax purposes.
- The food pantry needs laundry detergent. They also need men's briefs and boxers during June. They are also requesting school supplies for school children. They continue to collect in August and will distribute at the end of this month. Thank you for your generosity!
- This year's NJ Synod Bishop's Challenge asks all NJ congregations to engage in the care of God's good creation by choosing one of the following action areas focusing on environmental sustainability, including Building, Grounds, Programs, Worship & Education, Community Action & Activism. Our congregation is already engaged in significant work with our church grounds. If you are interested in sponsoring one of the areas on our property, see the poster in the Narthex or speak to Pastor.
- Shop Rite shopping cards are available for purchase after the services.
- If you are interested in receiving a daily bible reading by email, visit the following website and click the subscribe button: Daily Bible Reading Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (elca.org).
- <u>ST. PETER'S COMMUNITY PANTRY</u> is here to help serve those facing food insecurity in Gloucester County. If you are having a difficult time buying food for yourself, or your family, please let us try to make a small difference for you. The Pantry is located behind St. Peter's Episcopal Church at 304 Kings Highway in Clarksboro. We are open every 3rd Saturday of the Month from 9 AM to 1 PM. Next distribution date: Saturday, September 20, 2025.
- Coffee hour <u>between services</u> is scheduled for the first Sunday of each month, hosted by the 8:30 service. Come and join us for coffee and fellowship Sunday, October 5th.
- Save the following dates:
 - * Wednesday, September 24--Please join us for one last summer BBQ from 5pm-7pm. Please sign up in the Narthex if you are able to attend.
 - * Tuesday, September 30—Red Cross Blood Drive (2:00 to 7:00 pm)—Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: wenonah tp schedule an appointment. Thank you in advance for your generosity!
- <u>GROWING IN FAITH: THE DIAKONIA PROGRAM</u> Growing in Faith is a ministry within the ELCA committed to fostering learning environments for followers of Jesus to grow in faith. Lay members of congregations are integral to healthy discipleship in the church and community. If you would be interested in this program, check out the website www.njdiakonia.com for more information.
- There are two Planet Aid clothing bins in the parking lot. Clean items may be placed in the yellow bins: including clothing, shoes, bedding, towels, curtains, sleeping bags, socks, underwear, bras. They do not accept items that are tattered beyond repair, dirty, wet or moldy.

- If you have someone that you would like on the prayer list, please fill out a form in the narthex and place it in the offering plate or contact the church office email: hnlc.secretary@hotmail.com.
- Choir rehearsals resumed on September 7 @ 9:40. All are welcome to join us.
- Live Sunday School sessions resumed September 7th. Church school resources also continue to be available on our website on a weekly basis.

DISMISSAL

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE Trumpet Song

arr. L. Smith

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HOLY NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

3 Lenape Trail Wenonah, NJ 08090 856-468-5760

hnlc.secretary@hotmail.com

Pastor: Andy Gordon Music Director: Chris Robinson 5:00—Harriet Vico; 8:30—Lori Kershaw; 10:30—Colin Crawford

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

April Montana—Council Person/President & Christian Education
Vince Montana—Council Person/Vice President/Property/Worship & Music
Joyce Bradbury—Council Person/Secretary
Donna DeFrank—Council Person/Stewardship & Finance
Lori Kershaw—Council Person/Social Ministry--Fellowship
Kim Theriault—Council Person/Social Ministry--Outreach
Juliet Genovese—Council Person at Large
Stephen Genovese—Council Person/Co-Treasurer
Karen Cusack—Council Person/Co-Treasurer
Brett Montana—Council Person/Youth Representative