

The Neighborhood Learning Center



Inspire, Instruct, Imagine

The Director's Corner

Marcie Peterson, Director

Dear Parents,

The nativity is one of the central themes of Christmas. Nativity scenes are depicted on church lawns, in Christian plays, and outside of homes.

The birth of Jesus Christ is the focus of the Christian nativity. He was born to Mary and Joseph in an animal stable because there were no rooms available in the nearby inn. Using a water trough filled with straw for a bed, Mary gave birth to the savior and laid him there. After the birth, the Christ child was visited by shepherds, wise men, and a host of angels. The men followed the North Star to his location in the east.

These are the basic elements of the story.

Sharing the birth of Jesus with your children doesn't have to wait until they are older. Learning about the nativity can be fun for all ages. In fact, sharing God and your faith can start with infants and toddlers through routines, books, toys and prayer. In sharing the story of the nativity with your children this Christmas, consider these ways to introduce and possibly start family traditions. Read books. There are a variety of books



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Staff Spotlight



My name is Madison Green and I am 20 year old college student. I live in Purcellville, but was born and raised in

Delaware. I work in the Duck Pond and love seeing the little ones grow from week to week. I am so grateful for the NLC staff and families for being so great. I enjoy playing lacrosse, spending time with my family, and hanging out with friends. I will be going to Stevenson University in the fall and continuing towards my biology degree to eventually be a physical therapist. I want to thank everyone involved with the

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This month at school

December is going to be full of activities for everyone. The children will be studying symbols of Christmas, scents of Christmas, and Christmas traditions. On the 4th, we will decorate cookies (thank you Wegmans for your donation) to distribute to local volunteer service organizations. On the 6th the children will hang collected mittens to be given to those in need. The children have already begun learning the songs for our Christmas pageant at 4 pm on the 13th with the help of Ms. Kathy and Ms. Prestipino, our music teachers. Following their singing gift to

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December Highlights

December 4th - National Cookie Day

December 6th Mitten Tree Day

December 13th - Christmas Pageant at 4 pm

December 14th - Parent's Day Out - 9 - 4 pm

December 17th - Gingerbread Day

December 18th - Wear NLC shirts

December 20th - PJ Day and the story of the Polar Express

December 21st - Parent's Night Out 5 - 9 pm

December 23rd - Red and Green Day

December 24th - NLC closes at 2 pm

December 25th - NLC closed

December 27th - Make Snowflakes Day





MERRY CHRISTMAS

Director's Corner (From Page 1)

out there covering the nativity, from picture books with few words, rhyming books, and books for more advanced readers that parents and children can read and discuss together.

Use toys. A wooden nativity set is the perfect idea for young children leading up to Christmas. It gives them the materials they need to act out the Christmas story.

Sing songs. At school we will be singing and listening to traditional Christmas songs such as Away in the Manger and Joy to the World. Children love to sing, and many pickup words easily with repetition. For older children, songs can prove to be great conversation starters as you talk about the words you are singing.

Act it out. Invite older children to put on a play of the nativity for younger children. Act out the story, within your own family. You can also go to a show at church or visit a live nativity.

Make crafts. Using popsicle sticks and glue, make a manger for the baby Jesus. If you don't want to use real straw, Spanish moss will work just as well. A fun nativity craft that the entire family can enjoy is the making of an Advent calendar. Each day of December through Christmas Day, families do something special pertaining to some aspect of the birth of Jesus Christ.

The Nativity is important to understanding the spiritual reason for celebrating Christmas. Enjoy sharing this wonderful event with your family.

Merry Christmas and God's blessings to all for a Happy & Healthy New Year!

Ms. Marcie

The Polar Express

Everyone has read or seen the movie "The Polar Express". The modern holiday classic by children's author Chris Van Allsburg's revolves around Billy (Hayden McFarland), who longs to believe in Santa Claus but finds it quite difficult to do so, what with his family's dogged insistence that all of it, from the North Pole, to the elves, to the man himself, is all just a myth. This all changes, however, on Christmas Eve, when a mysterious train visits Billy in the middle of the night, promising to take him and a group of other lucky children to the North Pole for a visit with Santa. The train's conductor along with the other passengers help turn Billy's crisis in faith into a journey of self-discovery.

All of the children are invited to wear PJ's on the 20th as the Ants, Owls and Enchanted Forest take an imaginary trip to the North Pole. They will watch the movie in their PJ's on their cots, make a craft and enjoy a special snack.

TNLC Bountiful Blessings Turkey



Thank you to all of the NLC families who helped spotlight what everyone is thankful for. It sure does look like all of our families have so much to be thankful for! The NLC is thankful for having such wonderful families!



Staff Spotlight (From Page 1)

NLC for being so welcoming to me and allowing me to be excited about coming to work.





MERRY CHRISTMAS

The Chaplin's Corner

Bringing Near Christmas - Keeping Advent
Join us for Advent Workshop Dec. 4th 4- 7 pm

The Church celebrates the season of Advent (the 4 Sundays before Christmas) as a way to anticipate the coming (Advent) of Jesus to be born to us. Our waiting is in expectation of Jesus to be born among us again. We wait also in expectation for Jesus to come again and bring near the Kingdom of God on earth.

Getting ready for Christmas is about opening our hearts to receive this amazing, wonderful gift that Jesus came, Jesus is coming, Jesus will come again.

With all the pressures that exist at this time of year to do this, to go there, to buy that, the season of Advent invites us to stop, sit and see, so we may ready ourselves to better watch for Jesus to come and break into our lives at Christmas. We invite you to do that by joining us for our Annual Advent Workshop. Join us Wednesday, Dec. 4th from 4 to 7 pm. Families are invited to make their own Advent wreath to keep on your table. There will also be a Kids' Craft area as well, where your children can pick up and begin keeping their own Advent Calendar. Share your gifts in mission by helping to pre-

pare gifts and cards for the homeless living on the streets in DC. Be in community with others opening their hearts to God's gift at Christmas by coming together for dinner, a Chili Cook off. This will be followed by a Blessing of the Greens Worship, where we sing carols, light the Advent Wreath Candles and join in prayer.



You can indicate that you will be joining us by signing up with your teacher, or simply come. We do accept donations to help offset the wreath costs, but it is a Free and Open event for our NLC and church families.

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Jessica

eCheck and Credit Card Tuition Payment

As previously announced the NLC will be rolling out eChecks and Credit Card payment of tuition on January 1, 2014. Parents will have the option to pay online by eCheck or Credit Card as well as in person at the NLC desk from January 1 through the end of March. As of April 1, 2014 no checks will be accepted at the NLC desk, all payments will be made online by eCheck (free) or credit card for which a credit card processing fee of 2.97% charged by the credit card company will be added to the weekly tuition invoice.

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you, refreshments will be served in the Fellowship Hall. Please feel free to dress your child in their holiday finery on their performance day.

We will celebrate Gingerbread Day, school spirit day and red and green day. On the 20th, we will take an imaginary trip to the Polar Express while wearing our PJ's. We will then all celebrate Jesus' birthday on the 24th with a birthday cake. Make sure you check the calendar every day on the last page so that your child is able to participate in all events.



Kid-Friendly Christmas Eve at 5:30

You have likely seen the Bethlehem mural in the northwest corner of our Fellowship Hall at St. Andrew. That's a leftover of one of the best Christmas Eve services I have ever been a part of.

About five years ago, Pastor Jessica and I decided that we would abandon having sermons and formal prayers at our family Christmas Eve services. Instead, we thought it would be best to have a service that had as its goal: telling the Christmas story to the children. For the most part that means that the two of us do some kind of interactive drama. We star as goofy characters. We give the kids props to hold up at appropriate moments. We laugh and we wonder. We sing Christmas carols and always close with having everyone light a candle while singing "Silent Night."

Two years ago, I wanted to do something different. Instead of drama, I had the idea that we could have a canvas put across the front of the sanctuary and have three artists paint the Christmas story as we told it in word and song. The children all sat up front.

To be honest, I thought that they had been bored because they were a lot quieter than most previous Christmas Eves. What I found out later was that they were mesmerized as they watched the painters work. The artists painted Joseph and Mary on their way to Bethlehem, then shepherds and angels, and finally the manger with a place for the baby in the cradle of hay.

As we drew our focus to the manger, I said that the little half circle that was meant to be the baby Jesus, just wasn't quite enough. So, I asked: "Does anyone out there have a real baby we could have up here to help us remember Jesus' birth. Three families were at the ready. "I've got a baby," one father said from the back. Then the three families brought their newborns to the front. We baptized them. We celebrated that God came into the world as a little baby. And everyone went home remembering that best thing about Christmas is that Jesus came to live among us.

We aren't having another art exhibition this winter. We are back to telling the story in a fun way, inviting the children and their families to laugh, ooh and ahh, wave props around and sing the songs of Christmas. Yes, at the end, we will turn down the lights at last, the glow of candles lighting our faces as we sing "Silent Night." Through drama, art, song and welcome, we love to tell the story of Christmas so that the children can open their hearts to it (and their parents and grandparents, too). We invite all our Neighborhood Learning Center families to join us for the 5:30 service. Blessings on your preparations for Christmas.

Yours lovingly,

Pastor Dave



December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 National Cookie Day	5	6 Tuition Due Mitten Tree Day	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 Tuition Due Christmas Pageant at 4pm	14 Parents Day Out 9am- 4pm
15	16	17 Gingerbread Day	18 NLC Spirit Shirt Day	19	20 Tuition Due PJ Day and Polar Express	21 Parents Night Out 5pm- 9pm
22	23 Red and Green Day	24 NLC closes at 2pm	25 NLC Closed	26	27 Tuition Due Make Snowflakes Day	28
29	30	31				

