

THE SAINT TIM'S TIMES



A Digital Display of Our Nativities

Many of us probably have a **nativity scene** (or more than one!) in our homes during the Advent and Christmastide season. A **crèche**, a French word derived from the Latin *cripia*, or crib, is any display of the **holy family** as imagined at the birth of Jesus, a **manger scene**.

Some might be handmade by a local artisan or even a friend or family member. Some might be from across the world, representing a different cultural interpretation of the scene. Some might be... well-loved, through the years of hands and playing. And some might be downright silly, a fun way to engage in the season – see the rubber duck nativity on JJ's rug next time you're at church! Almost all of them have a **special story**.

If you're interested in learning more about the history of nativity scenes, [this is a neat article](#) from the Smithsonian Magazine a few years ago. You can also see an incredible permanent exhibit of worldwide nativities at the [St. Nicholas Center](#) on the campus of Virginia Theological Seminary, an easy stop on the way in to Washington D.C.!

What follows is a collection of photos and accompanying stories about **our own nativities** that bring the story of Jesus's birth **into our homes** this time of year.



From Debbie Strickland

This is a picture of our nativity that has grown over lots of years. There are a few pieces that came from the Holy Land many years ago, some were handmade in Germany and gifts, some are painted metal, but most are wooden. Barbour enjoys setting it up each year and we have added trees that we like.



From Bitsie Harwell

I have two creches that I love because of who gave them to me. The one that includes a camel is a middle-sized Hummel set given to us by my aunt. She gave us the Holy Family for our first married Christmas in 1967 and other pieces through the years. The more modern one was made by my sister-in-law who is a potter in Concord, NC.





From Megan Roberts

My aunt, Aunt Elise, made this nativity as a gift for me in 2020. It's my favorite one!



**From Wanda
Williams**

This is a scene from
Africa. It is hand
carved and was a gift
from my daughter.





From Joyce Wittman

Nativity characters. These were handmade in 1978 for storytelling in a Sunday school kindergarten class.



From Betty Melchoir
Here is my Nativity collection. John created the Nativity tree.



From Mary Ava Johnson



From Gabby Decker



From Mary Vincent



From Martha Whitesides

We have a lot of nativities... close to one for each room of our (small) home. Mini ones, locally made ones, gifted ones, homemade ones (shrinky dink paper is fun!). But here are pictures of two that stand out. The first belongs to Tucker. His godmother gave him a piece every year for Christmas so by the time we got married we had a full classic Fontanini set to decorate with. We usually spread out the gathering of the scene, adding one piece each day through Epiphany. I continue to build it by gifting him a new piece or set each year for St. Nicholas Day, a treasured tradition in the Whitesides family.

The second is a needlepoint nativity that's still in progress. The

Christmas that we were engaged, Tucker presented me with the first of many canvases (baby Jesus, of course) to start a tradition of making a piece a year until it's complete. The 2024 piece, the first magi, is still off at the finishers. I look forward to seeing what he's picked each year!





From Sharyn Lennox

This set was purchased when Kathryn was as a year old from Sears when we lived in Fayetteville Arkansas. It plays Silent Night.



From Dennie Walker

I made 3 of these sets in 1974 -76. I have one and I made one for my mother and my mother-in-law. It is made of ceramic. It took several weeks to go through the process from earthenware to final finished product. Some of the pieces have a few chips. I treasure the experience of displaying it each year.



From Carol Taylor

This manger was made by a couple from Florida, Ben and Helen, for our church bazaar in 1965. I was 9 years old. They were parishioners at Grace Episcopal Church-in-the-Mountains where my father, The Rev. John Taylor, was serving as rector, in Waynesville, N.C. After the Bazaar, many of their ceramics had sold. The things not sold were given to my parents by Ben and Helen. This beautiful manger was the most priceless gift our family received. Each year we would set it up at the many rectories and homes we lived in over my father's 50 years as a priest.

We have cared for this precious set for 60 years with no breaks nor chips. I inherited it from my parents, and my brother inherited a light brown ceramic set too. We are honored to have been given these sets and plan on passing them onward for others to enjoy. It was always set up on Christmas Eve and taken down on the 12th day of Christmas, January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany.