

# Advent Journey

April 2012



"Christ is Risen!" "Truly, He is Risen"

Christ est ressuscité! Il est vraiment ressuscité!

Christus ist auferstanden! Er ist wahrhaftig auferstanden!

基督復活了 他確實復活了

Kristus er oppstanden! Han er sannelig oppstanden!

ஈஸ்ட்டர் நல்வாழ்த்துக்கள்

Christos a înviat! Adevărat c-a înviat!

復活節快樂

സ്വ ഉയിർത്തെഴുന്നേറ്റു! മിർച്ചയായും ഉയിർത്തെഴുന്നേറ്റു!

Si Kristo ay nabuhay! Siya nga ay nabuhay!

عيد باک مبارک

عيد باک مبارک



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**Advent Journey is the newsletter of Advent Lutheran Church  
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## Dear Advent-urers

The Gospel story of “Doubting Thomas” (John 20:19-31) seems an appropriate parable about the challenges facing the mainline Christian churches in this third millennium. Christians who remain committed to the life of worship, ministry and mission into which Jesus calls his followers, represent those first disciples who met the risen Lord on the third day after his crucifixion. Those among Jesus’ followers habitually absent from our companionship in Christ – whatever the reason – represent Thomas, whose own absence is left unexplained in the story.

Like the faithful, but fearful, disciples gathered on the first Easter Sunday, we too are sent into the world to tell the good news of God’s love and forgiveness. But our message so often falls on deaf ears. Most of our family, friends and neighbours remain disinterested, indifferent, or skeptical. So, like Thomas, they stay away. There are at least two possible explanations.

On the one hand, in a self-centred, individualistic culture, serving others doesn’t seem to promise the fulfillment for which people hope – and fiercely compete! As St. Paul wrote, “The message about the cross is foolishness” (I Corinthians 1:18). So, no matter how enthusiastic our witness may be, it seems our efforts yield little fruit. In that case, we can take some comfort in remembering that our calling is not to be “**successful**”, but rather, **faithful** to Jesus – whose own mission was spectacularly **unsuccessful** in worldly terms.

On the other hand, the world’s rejection of the church’s witness may actually reflect our own unfaithfulness! Thomas insisted, “Unless I see the marks of crucifixion in Jesus’ hands, feet and side, I will not believe.” Thomas’ demand to see the scars of Jesus’ wounds, reflects our world’s demand to see some evidence of the personal self-denial, self-sacrifice, and self-giving the cross calls each of us to take upon ourselves.

That, in a *peanut* shell is the renewal to which the season of Lent calls us. That, in an *egg* shell is the promise of new life to which Easter points us.

Peace be with you all!

*Pastor Peter*



## Advent Lutheran Church Easter Services 2012

April 5 (Maundy Thursday) – 7:30 PM

April 6 (Good Friday) – 10 AM

April 7 (Easter Vigil) – 7 PM in Cedar Hall

April 8 (Easter Sunday) – 10 AM



### Word From the Chair

At the Annual Meeting in February three new members were voted on to Congregational Council - Judy Baribeau, Bob Schickedanz and Erika Schurr. Again this year we have a full Council whose members bring a mix of talents and opinions. There are some existing items to follow through on and looking ahead to the future we have Advent's 50th Anniversary to plan for in 2014.

At our March meeting the positions on Council were filled as follows:

Chairperson	Carol Peck
Vice-Chairperson	Brit Missirlian
Secretary	Judy Baribeau
Treasurer	Fred Roth
Financial Secretary	Claus Brandes
Property	Fran Brandes
	Bob Schickedanz
Mutual Ministry	Carol Peck
Christian Education	Peter Reble
ESO	Brit Missirlian
GWA	Brit Missirlian
Worship and the Arts	Walter Rothenburger
Youth	Nalini Beekie, Erika Schurr
Finance/Stewardship	Sonita Dillon-Rhodus
CNT Relationship Task Force	Mona Marcobelli

I would like to thank Erika Day and Jim Doak for their contribution while they were on Council. Although Fred Roth (Treasurer) and Fran Brandes (Property) remain on Council due to the positions they hold and the necessary reports they present, they officially finished their terms and no longer are able to vote on motions at Council meetings. Everyone on Council and all members in the Congregation of Advent Lutheran Church are important to the everyday functioning of our Church. If you have any comments/suggestions or wish to volunteer for any committee please feel free to approach any of the above members.

As we prayerfully await the coming Easter let us live fully the day that the Lord has given us,

Carol Peck,  
Council Chairperson



## Church Council Retreat

On March 24 Church council and some congregants had the privilege to meet for a full day retreat lead by Pastor Jonathan Schmidt who is a co-director with his wife, Alice Schuba, of The Canadian Churches' Forum for Global Ministries.

The retreat was jammed packed with workshop activities that enlightened us in many endeavours to understand ourselves, our cultures and exposed us to other people from the group with an insight on learning about "cultures" and their differences.

We sang, we ate, we had fun, and most of all we learned new ideas, and heard new views, as we bonded with one another.

One of the things discussed was the "star" of the gathering- our Lord Jesus Christ. All relayed that we have a great love for Jesus, and it was asserted that he had great charisma.

Indeed, as our Lord had no place to lay His head, yet, He was welcomed like a King in every city and every home. Though He had no money, He was still able to feed the five thousand. And though He had no employment in a company or a trade, He was employed by God to lead His people to the Kingdom, and guide them to Eternal Life. Yes, from nothing He was able to change the world! So can **you** make the changes **you** need in **your** world, with the help and guidance of the Lord.

As Easter is fast approaching and we are preparing for the festivities with our families, let us remember the many reasons Jesus came to this Earth for; such as teaching and offering us compassion, unconditional giving, and most of all unconditional love. Therefore this is an opportunity for all of us to follow His example and love one another as He has loved us, as this was Jesus' greatest commandment.

So I am hereby encouraging you to have one more space at your table this Easter, for someone who doesn't have anybody to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord with. Festivities times are often the hardest for those who are alone.

Blessings to all and Happy Easter to Everyone!

**Mona Marcobelli**



## All About Our House

Hopefully Spring has sprung!! Hallelujah!!!

To begin my article it seems fitting to start in the garden. Our Community Gardens, under the supervision of our new co-ordinator Diana Grimaldos, will be underway very shortly. Our guest gardeners are looking forward to another "fruitful" season.

Presently I am looking for volunteers to spend some time in the portion of the gardens that is the responsibility of Advent to look after. Interested ????? In the past we have gathered one evening a week for a maximum of 2 hours and indulged ourselves with some much needed exercise, satisfaction in a job well done and most of all fellowship and just plain fun. At the end of the season we reward ourselves with a dinner at a local restaurant. Please let me know if you would like to join us.

Now, coming indoors, the "Michael Angel-ettes, Brit, Carol and myself, once again demonstrated our painting skills by painting the kitchen and one accent wall in the Fellowship Hall. Have you noticed?

Heinz Weltner had his hammer in motion during the past while by completing some minor repairs, installing a new frame around the pass through window between the

kitchen and the Fellowship Hall and he also built a chair caddy in order to stabilize the folding chairs that are used in the Fellowship Hall.

I am SOOOooo happy to announce that George McLean has graciously offered to assist me with the property management of "Our House." Claus and I plan to be away a considerable amount of time this summer and an extra pair of hands will surely come in very handy.

Bob Schickedanz is diligently trying to get some firm information/commitment from the City regarding our parking lot expansion project. We all know what it is like working with the City of Toronto - need I say more? I will report any information as soon as it is available. Stay tuned.

For those of us who don't have occasion to venture up into the attic you are not aware of the great lighting that has been installed. It is a pleasure to work up there because you can actually see what it is that you are doing. Many thanks to Siamak Fadavi for his electrical work. While we are in the attic I would like to thank Michael Day for the work he did in applying landscape fabric over the large air vents in the bell tower. When the snow would be blowing it came through the vents and onto the floor and eventually melted down through the lighting fixtures into the narthex below. As you can well imagine this was less than satisfactory. Now the air is able to come through and the snow stays out where it belongs.

Well I think that is a wrap,

Thanks for reading,  
Fran



## Advent's Revenue Position 29th February, 2012

### Our Revenues

The January and February, 2012 totals for Advent's Giving are summarized below:

	<b><u>ADVENT'S GIVING TO</u></b>		
	<b><u>29/2/12</u></b>		
<b>Commitments</b>	<b>Received to 29/02/2012</b>	<b>Received to 28/02/2011</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Mortgage	\$695.50	\$828.00	-\$132.50
Sunday School	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>

Sub-total	\$12,373.28	\$10,629.38	\$1,743.90
Facilities	\$14,094.10	\$14,613.50	-\$519.40
Regular Benevolence	<u>\$1,397.00</u>	<u>\$1,491.00</u>	<u>-\$94.00</u>
<b>Total Received</b>	<b>\$27,864.38</b>	<b>\$26,733.88</b>	<b>\$1,130.50</b>
Other Giving			
Global Hunger	\$585.00	\$568.00	\$17.00
New Parking Lot Fund	\$1,798.00	\$0.00	N/A

**Current, Festival and Loose Giving**

Current giving corresponds with the “Current Budget” line of your offering envelopes, Festival donations are those from the pink envelopes at Easter, Christmas, etc., and loose are miscellaneous funds not specifically indicated from a specific member or envelope. Our total for these items for January - February was \$11,677.78, an increase of \$1,876.40.

**Facilities**

Facilities revenue for January-February was \$14,094.10, comprised of revenue from extra hours, in addition to revenue from our regular users. The revenues show a slight decrease of \$519.40, or about 3.6%. Bear in mind that Facilities revenue fluctuates considerably as rental payments are received. Overall, we are slightly behind last year.

**Benevolence Giving**

Regular Benevolence giving for January-February, 2012 decreased by about 6.3% from 2011. Global Hunger affect Advent’s financial position. The amounts are included for information only.

**New Parking Lot Fund**

To the end of February, 2012, total receipts for the New Parking Lot Fund totalled \$1,798.

Fred Roth  
Council Treasurer

*Judith Snow, an advocate for inclusion and a regular columnist for the Advent Journey, was invited to preach by Pastor Lisinski at our service on February 12<sup>th</sup>. The following is the text of her sermon in which she draws on the story of the Syrian military leader Naaman found in 2 Kings 5:1-14.*



## Willingness

By Judith A. Snow  
February 2012

Recently I have had the privilege of exhibiting twenty-three of my paintings at the Royal Ontario Museum. The exhibit was called: "Who's Drawing the Lines". The display was designed to show how a close relationship of communication and cooperation between an individual like myself - I am quadriplegic - and someone who listens and carries out another's desires can make it possible for a challenged person to create art.

My exhibit also portrayed the seemingly endless barriers a person can face in their efforts to live, work and contribute in society when that person is seen as different and in need of being made more "normal".

An individual who carries out the will of another is called a personal assistant, or facilitator. The essence of the role is to empty oneself over and over again of any thought or impulse to do things in one's own way. Instead one makes one's perceptions and physicality available to the one who is being assisted. The four qualities of willingness, availability, attention and listening are essential to this role. To the extent that one is true to this mission the actions and results will be those of the one who is being assisted.

I have had personal assistants for decades but recently I had the chance to practice being one myself. My Father who is ninety-one and lives in a retirement residence wanted a project done for him. I realized that not only did he want me to do the "leg work", he also wanted me to do it HIS way. He wanted me to be a genuine personal assistant to him. I decided to have a go at it and at the same time I often found it puzzling and annoying to take all the actions he wanted, with his timing and methods, for the results he wanted.

What sort of things got in the way? For one thing I had a different sense of the timing of things. To me doing some things too soon would only mean they would have to be done again at a later time. For example certain permission slips expire after 30 days. For another, I wasn't fully behind the goals he seemed to want to achieve. Mostly they seemed like a waste of time to me.

As I am writing this I am thinking of the Old Testament story of Naaman, a Syrian military commander who learned that his leprosy could be cured by the Israelite prophet Elisha. When he heard that all he needed to do was bathe seven times in the Jordan River he got incensed. He was embarrassed that the prophet did not come out of his house to see and touch him. Secondly the recommended treatment was so basic he suspected that really he was just being humiliated by his former enemy.

I can definitely put myself in Namaan's shoes. He was so certain of the process that SHOULD be carried out to cure his skin ailment. He may have had doubts about whether he could be healed. He had no doubts however about how his healer ought to behave. He "knew" that Elisha ought to meet him face-to-face, pay him some special attention, and use some rare and expensive creams and waters from extra pure rivers. When asked simply to rinse off seven times in the very ordinary Jordan River, Naaman nearly blew his chance. Fortunately for him, and us, his servants were able sweet talk him back into a willingness to try it a different way, and he was healed.

It turned out that my Father was very much aware of the issues and inefficiencies that arose as I did my best to follow his lead. At the end of his project Dad apologized to me. I was deeply surprised.

What had really been going on for Dad was that he had retired from the insurance business decades ago, and at age ninety-one, he was curious about how the industry operates now. Working through me he was getting to see how his beloved business gets done today. At the same time he was taking the opportunity to see if I was as capable of being a personal assistant for someone else as I expect my assistants to be with me.

I guess I passed the test. Dad learned all he wanted to know, and in the end, turned the project back to me acknowledging that his way had created obstacles for me. On the other hand I had come to realize that Dad has a strong desire to stay in touch with the business world of today and that, with a little extra cooperation, it is an achievable goal.

Imagine that we, as a church community, are God's personal assistants. God has some goals in mind for how the world ought to develop. Some of these goals are a mystery to us and God simply isn't letting us in on all the details. Being present, but not with a body in the typical sense, God is trying to work through us!

What things get in our way as we attempt to carry out God's will? Certainly the business of our lives gives us very little time to give God space to create through us. Then, like Naaman and like me, we already know what we find to be the best way to do things and it is troubling to our personal sense of ourselves to take on unfamiliar methods.

So, within the context of the Christian community, why bother to give to God the gift of our willing cooperation? Well, it looks like willingness is a two way street. In the story of Jesus' first healing, performed for a man with leprosy, Jesus had no intention of creating that kind of miracle. But Man asked God: "Are you willing?", and God said: "Yes".

Supposing a miracle is nothing more nor less than a made-in-the-moment agreement between the Creator and the created to try something that has never been done before. What if God is open to taking on the intention of giving the world a chance RIGHT NOW for things to go in a more fruitful direction than they were already going? If such is the case then God can indeed be called upon to express eternal love as willingness to create anew, and Christians can indeed be called upon to listen and cooperate willingly in exploring new ways to have life turn out for all, including for God.

Willingly open a space for God to play in the world through you and let the miracles be plentiful!



## Wedding of Priyan & Victoria



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Our thoughts and prayers are with Eric and James Azeez as they mourn the passing of their mother, Ivy Iris, into God's Glory on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

## Happenings in Our Neighbourhood

**Food 4 Thought Vanier:  
George Vanier Secondary School Student Nutrition Program  
By Kim Perry**

Created nearly four years ago in response to a need to assist hungry students at Georges Vanier Secondary School, the Food 4 Thought Program has grown exponentially. Food 4 Thought Vanier now serves over 100 students a hot and complete

breakfast four days a week.

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that many secondary school students arrive to school each morning without having eaten breakfast. In fact, according to a recent survey conducted by the Toronto District School Board, 41% of students face this problem each day. Research also points to the fact that 36% of Toronto's children live in poverty. Unfortunately, the Georges Vanier community is not exempt from this reality.

Students come to school hungry for a number of reasons and hunger increases the risk of malnutrition which can severely affect overall health, cognitive development and school performance. Morning fasting has an extremely negative effect on the cognitive performance of youth as it delays the speed and accuracy of the student's problem solving skills. Eating a healthy breakfast can be associated with improved cognitive function, reduced absenteeism, improved mood and greater academic performance!

A startling number of students here at Georges Vanier Secondary School come to school hungry on a frequent basis. In addition, many have no food for lunch either! This shocking reality has left us scrounging to supply our students with proper meals and nutritious options to sustain them during school hours.

Food 4 Thought Vanier is fortunate to have over 50 student and teacher volunteers to help run the program and receives funding through the Toronto Foundation for Student Success. However, due to the number of students who require this assistance, we consistently fall short of being able to eradicate student hunger. At a base cost of \$1.63 per student per day, our nutrition program requires \$652 per week to pay for the cost of food alone. This does not account for staff, appliances, equipment, cleaning supplies and other provisions.

Here at Georges Vanier SS, we believe in providing for our students to the best of our abilities. From bagels and cream cheese, egg and cheese English muffins to grilled cheese and breakfast burritos, Vanier's Food 4 Thought nutrition program strives to provide students with a variety of healthy and nutritious meals. In order to meet this goal, every little bit helps! We are extremely grateful to your generous Congregation for your recent donation of \$600. On behalf of our students, teachers and volunteers, thank you!

Inquiries can be directed to Kim Perry, Student Nutrition Program Coordinator and Child and Youth Counsellor, George Vanier Secondary School – 416-395-3250 X20039

To keep updated on Food 4 Thought happenings, follow us on twitter @food4thoughtvan or like us on facebook Food 4 Thought Vanier

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Dear friends,

The ESO committee would like to continue to support Eva's Place and we have received a list of items that would be very much appreciated by them

**Non perishable foods**  
**Toiletries**  
**Hygiene supplies**  
**Underwear**  
**Entertainment items**  
**Novels (romance, suspense etc)**  
**Board games**  
**Hats, Scarves, Gloves etc.**  
**Linens**  
**Pots and Pans**

Bring the items with you to church and place them in the box in the narthex marked Eva's Place.

Thank you!  
ESO committee



## Upcoming Events

**GWA** (Great Women of Advent) has an upcoming meeting Wednesday April 11 - Bible Study led by Mona Marcobelli. Meet at Mona's home at 7:30 pm

The Toronto Conference **Lutheran Women of Faith** are holding their Spring Gathering on April 28th. Hosts are Westside Lutheran Church, Barrie.

Our **Wellness** series continues on Monday May 14th. The theme is Alzheimer Disease. Meeting will be held in Cedar Hall at Advent, starting at 7 pm.

**Table Talk** continues after service on Sunday's on all topics pertaining to the Church and our faith. Look out for the start-up of **Bible Study** on Thursday evenings.

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**The Canadian National Theatre in partnership with Advent Lutheran Church** will be presenting a Peace Play titled "**The 1325 Key to Peace**" A comedy in one Act written by Shirley Farlinger.

We will be running auditions in June and rehearsals will commence and be carried over the summer at the Church.

We are looking for the following characters:

## **The Men**

- 1- The Hon. Ivan Pistol: Minister of Foreign Affairs. Age 40+
- 2- General Bullier: Canadian Chief of Staff. Age 50+
- 3- Mr Tycoon: A prominent business man. Age 35+

## **The Ladies**

- 1- Faith: A member of Canadian Voice of Women for Peace: Age 35+
- 2- Amira: A woman from Roguestan. Age 30+
- 3- Grace: A non-governmental supporter of the United Nations. Age 40+

We encourage you to volunteer and audition for a part if you like to act or be part of this community project for peace. This is a church event where all proceeds from this venue will be donated to Advent Lutheran Church's parking expansion project.

However if you feel that the funds could be allocated differently, please do not hesitate to voice your opinion to a council member, where it may be discussed at our May council meeting.

The play is projected to be performed in the week of September 21<sup>st</sup>, the week of Peace Day.

We look forward to your participation, your ideas, and your support in this endeavor.

Mona Marcobelli  
Artistic Director of CNT



## **Christian Education**

After many years of dedicated service, Erika Day is stepping away from running the Sunday School program at Advent Lutheran Church. We are pleased to announce that Xiuyan Yu has volunteered to take over from Erika. Xiuyan Yu was an elementary school teacher in Haikou City, China, and was a teacher in her church, Huao Quan, before coming to Toronto three years ago with her husband, Zhou Quan and two children, Ying and Yufei. She will be completing an Early Childhood Education course at Centennial College in April.