

ADVENTure



Advent Lutheran Church

January/February 2020

Christmas Eve at Advent



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Congregational Council Update

As 2019 reaches its natural end, we set our eyes towards a New Year, and decade. Your congregational council has been busy seeing to the running of the church, and looking towards the coming year as well. We met on Thursday, December 12, for our latest meeting, and here is a recap of some of the items:

- The Mutual Ministry committee has completed the performance reviews for 2019. Representatives met with both Pastor Elaine and Trevor Hicks to discuss and provide feedback. It was a good opportunity for two-way dialogue.

- Our property survey report was completed and sent for filing at Synod. This gives a good physical overview of Advent.

- The Good Women of Advent (GWA) had a very successful Bake and Craft Sale again this year. We thank the GWA for their many efforts.

- Work on the washrooms has progressed very well this fall. The Ladies' washroom had new sinks and taps installed. Work in the Men's washroom has been more extensive. The piping underneath has been replaced and there are further renovations taking place to replace worn out fixtures. We are all very grateful for the tremendous work Michael Lenzner has done to oversee this work. Michael works continually to quietly make sure ongoing repairs and "touch ups" are taken care of.

- Outdoor Lighting has been installed, and as someone who is at Advent in the dark sometimes, I am very grateful for this great improvement.

- Discussions will begin soon with our various users to set rates for 2020. As many of you know we have a robust group of users and the facilities are constantly in use. We thank Tracy MacPherson for her work in overseeing this. At this time we are transitioning some of our User Liaison work across members. Again, we are very thankful for volunteers in the church. Without them, we couldn't open the doors.

Additionally, Council is looking at, and processing, some long-term items. Specifically, we met with Pastor Christian Ceconi last January in his role as Dean of the Toronto District. He prepared a "dashboard" report that identified strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for Advent as it moves on into the future. There were no real "aha" moments in the report, but council realizes that we need to discuss longer term planning for Advent. More information will be forthcoming, but we are looking at ways to engage in conversation with members around our future and solicit ideas.

Advent's Constitution

Finally, we have had a Constitution Subcommittee that has prepared a new draft Constitution and By-Laws for Advent. Jim Doak, Pastor Elaine, Judy Baribeau, Adele Buckley, and Martin Gangadeen have been working diligently to customize the Constitution template that was provided by Synod. Their draft was completed a few weeks ago, and it has been sent to Council for review/approval at their meeting in January.

It will then be distributed to the membership of Advent for review and first reading at our Annual Meeting (Sunday, February 16, 2020). If approved, a second reading must be completed at least 30 days after the first. If the second reading is approved by membership, then it can be sent to Synod for final approval. Many thanks to the committee for their faithful work in getting this done.

As we move towards 2020 I encourage everyone to consider whether they could serve on Council. Ask anyone who is on Council and they will tell you it is very fulfilling to be able to serve in this way. You get a better perspective on how the church is run, and have an opportunity to get to know your fellow members. Although we work hard there is always a lot of laughter, too. If you are interested, please speak to me, or any other member of Council.

Upcoming Dates to Remember

Here are some of our upcoming meetings you may want to make note of:

- Friday, January 17, Congregational Council

- Tuesday, February 4, Congregational Council

- Sunday, February 16, Annual Congregational Meeting

Wishing everyone a blessed Christmas season, and a happy, healthy New Year.

*Respectfully submitted,
Gabi Schickedanz*

Our Sympathy

- **Alex Otten** died on November 2 and his funeral was held at Advent on November 9. Our sympathy goes to his daughter Deborah Lawley and her family.

- **Joyce Tadege** died on December 21. Our sympathy goes to her sisters Joan McLean and Yvonne Cumberbatch and their families.

Baptism

We welcomed Esther Soltani into Advent's membership through adult baptism on December 1.

Thank You

We thank Walter Rothenburger and Gerard Baribeau for their work acquiring, setting up and decorating the Christmas tree this year.

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Advent Lutheran Church

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Pastor Elaine Writes...

It is not yet officially winter, but with the snow and stormy weather it certainly feels like it. We are well into the season of Advent and when you read this Advent and Christmas will be past and we will be well into winter.

This is a season of duality in the life of the Church. December is a time of waiting and watching and preparing and repentance. We have begun a new Church year. The lectionary for this year is year "A" and our Gospel focus will be on Matthew. Matthew is called the "Church's Gospel" because a great deal of our liturgy comes directly from the Gospel. As we read our way through the Gospel of Matthew, listen for words that sound familiar from the Sunday worship services.

This is also the time of year when the budget for the coming year is created, reviewed and discussed in preparation for our AGM in February. This is one aspect of the work of the Church.

I have now been your Pastor for two years. From my arrival in December of 2017 I have witnessed abundance at Advent while hearing of worries of scarcity. I have preached on the abundance of Advent. We are indeed a place of

abundance. We are a welcoming and warm congregation. We have committed members. Many people volunteer in many ways to assist with worship and with the work of the Church. This includes the financial and business aspects of the work of the Church. I know that if something needs to be done, someone will always step up to do it because Advent is important to us.

I have been working with Council on discussions about Advent. This has included a seminar on transitions at our ministerial and participation in a congregational dashboard with our area Dean, Pastor Christian Ceconi. We are asking where is Advent now? What are our strengths and our weaknesses? The conversations are ongoing and will be expanded this coming year. Like many congregations we are aging; our number of volunteers is shrinking and attendance is not what it was in the 1980s.

These may be perceived as concerns and can lead to anxiety about the future. We have around 200 families on our membership and responsibility lists. On paper this makes us a vibrant community. But our average worship attendance is much less.



This year I will be asking you why do you come to Advent? What is it about this place that makes it your church home? If you do not come to church regularly, why not? What is it that keeps you away? What do you think the future holds for Advent? What would you like the future of Advent to look like?

The Church is different than what it was. Society is different than what it was. Advent is different than what it was. Different does not equal bad – it's just different.

We live in a world that wants to quantify things. We live in a world that often measures "success" in numbers. In the life of the Church, it can be tempting to measure things in the way that the world does. But that is not the message of the Gospel. Jesus preached that the kingdom of God is not the way of the world. Jesus preached that the work of the kingdom of God is to care for the hungry, the poor, the orphan, the widow. To speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. To visit the sick, the lonely, the imprisoned. To love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind and your strength and to love your neighbour as yourself. This is the work of the kingdom of God, and this is the work of the Church. How will we, as the people of Advent do this work?

Property Update

We are making some major and minor improvements around the building, and progress will continue to make the building look and function better.

The women's washroom has a new solid porcelain double-sink with monolithic surface top and bowl, along with single-lever faucets that are a breeze for cleaners to clean. No more rusty, mouldy interface between the rotting counter-top and the enamel-coated steel basins, and no more difficult-to-clean-around faucet handles.

The men's washroom has been going through a major overhaul of its drainage system, and entirely new urinals that actually flush, automatically only when, and EVERY time, someone uses them. The new ones have a permanent special glaze to reduce chance of odourous microbes taking residence on them. The rusty eye-sore urinal-partitions will be replaced. Also, the floor is levelled; no more step up to use a urinal. This improves accessibility/safety, and makes it much better for the cleaners to wash the floor.

After last winter's roof leaks, we did some spot patching with roof-patch tar. Through this winter and early 2020 we need to watch for any leak issues with the flat roof and address preventative maintenance during the warmer months.

We owe great thanks to Steve Marin from the Orthodox group, for contributing his volunteer help with the plumbing the new sink. Other volunteer help in 2020 will be much appreciated.

Michael Lenzner

*Peace
Pastor Elaine*

What did Martin Luther have to say about Scripture?

The Bible was of fundamental importance to Luther. He basically had it memorized. He wrote about it, preached on it, engaged with it his whole life and translated it into German so that everyone could read it for themselves.

The Reformation was a direct result of his study of Scripture.

Luther recognized that some laws in the Bible were outdated or did not apply in his time and place. That is true for us as well. He taught that the biblical laws were one expression of the natural law governing humanity. Law that could and should vary according to time and place.

Luther paid close attention to historical content and literary style. He was concerned with the purpose and intention of biblical writers. He did not attempt to harmonize everything that is contradictory in our scripture.

Luther wanted everyone to have access to scripture. His small catechism was partly written as an introduction to scripture. He wrote prefaces to the Old Testament and New Testament and some

individual books of the bible. Sometimes he added notes to the margins to identify people or places or terms. Sometimes he added theological issues – Law and Gospel, faith and works, Christian freedom and promise. Luther’s translation of the Bible from Aramaic and Hebrew and Greek into German was one of the greatest achievements of his time. His was not the first – but it was the first to gain large acceptance, due to his skill as a translator.

But Luther did not regard all of scripture as equal.

Luther suggested that Christians should focus on the Gospel of John, Paul’s epistles, especially Romans, and 1 Peter. Luther thought these should be read first and then turned to as part of daily devotions.

Luther said: “For in them you do not find many works and miracles of Christ described, but you do find depicted in masterly fashion how faith in Christ overcomes sin, death, and hell, and gives life, righteousness, and salvation. This is the real nature of the Gospel.”

For Luther, the importance of Romans cannot be minimized. It was his reading of and meditation on Romans 1:17 that led him to a new understanding of the righteousness or justice of God.

Romans 1:17

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith.”

Luther came to recognize that God acted in the gospel to give away God’s righteousness. This was profoundly different from God acting in the law to demand righteousness from us.

The passage from Romans encouraged Luther to see some other passages of scripture differently. He began to see many places where he saw what God does in us. These insights led to a radically new way of understanding our relationship with God.

Scripture mattered to Luther. And so for Lutherans it also matters. We stress the importance of word and sacrament... word always comes first.

Pastor Elaine



Teddy joined Martin Gangadeen for worship on Christmas Eve.



Advent Wreath and Christmas Flowers

From the Loft

In the last issue, I wrote about composing for the assembly, namely hymns. I wrote about how my composition process works and what my aims are when writing hymns for God's people.

For this issue, I want to write about composing liturgy. While my catalogue of liturgical writing is significantly smaller than that of my hymns or choir anthems, the people of Advent know me as the composer of *The Liturgy of Advent*, which was first used at Advent shortly after my tenure as your music director began. I'm also the composer two other settings during my time at Emmanuel Lutheran, one of which served as my first foray into liturgical writing and was largely experimental, and one of which that was used number of times in divine worship there.

Liturgical writing is significantly different than hymn writing. A hymn is typically like a tire, a single entity that revolves and repeats. A liturgy is like a car, with several parts that work together to create the main vehicle. Some of these parts operate with a hymn-like structure. Some are single verses, some a call and response, but they all have a symbiotic relationship to each other – that is, they depend on each other to contribute to and make the full liturgy work.

Some aspects of liturgical composition parallel hymn-writing. Like writing a hymn, the melodic range of all the sung

parts needs to be in a comfortable range to be sung by the men and women of the congregation, for instance.

Text is evidently on the composer's mind when writing a liturgy. I've written three liturgies, and text was on my mind in different ways for each one. For *Liturgy of Advent* I used the exact text of liturgy as found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, so text was on my mind only in making sure that my melodies provided the appropriate syllable stresses needed. In my first setting, I used new Biblical verses as the basis for each canticle, so I needed to write my own texts. In my sophomore liturgy, I adapted the texts from the hymnal to suit my music. Three methods, each with its pros and cons, while none I find is better than the other.

All of this experimentation with the text is interesting, but the most interesting aspect for me is the music. If my vehicle analogy didn't quite make sense, think of a liturgy as a film score: there are musical themes that intertwine to complete the score and unify it as one large-scale piece. A composer of liturgical material is not bound to any established rules pertaining to the music, but I find liturgies more compelling when musical themes are established and intertwined.

Have you ever noticed that some melodies in the liturgy share a striking similarity to each other? This is no accident. First, similar melodies make the

music easier to learn, especially when the majority of a congregation is not musically trained. Not only that, but the similarities also hint at connections between pieces in mood, style, doctrine and so forth.

Take for instance Setting Three in the hymnal: *This is the Feast* and the *Gospel Acclamation* share an undoubtedly related musical relationship, and both are canticles that proclaim Alleluia. Coincidence? My suspicion is that it's not.

I was taught that the most important canticle in the liturgy is the *Sanctus*, or *Holy Holy Holy*. For this reason, to borrow a phrase from my theater background, I consider it to be the "eleven o'clock number" of divine worship. When I write this canticle, I like to give it something extra. I like to create an evident musical relationship between penitential pieces like the *Kyrie* and *Lamb of God* and the joyful songs of praise, such as *Glory to God* and *Now, Lord You Let Your Servants Go In Peace* or *Alleluia*.

There is so much more to say about liturgy and very little space to do so. Next time we are singing the liturgy, take the time to really listen and note the relationships between the individual canticles.

Glory to God.

*Yours from the loft,
Trevor Hicks
Music Director*

GWA and ESO

The ESO Committee will meet on Sunday, January 12, following worship.

The GWA had another successful Bake Sale with \$450 raised. January is often a difficult month to plan meetings for, due to uncertain weather, but a movie date could be a possibility. Wait for more information. In February, we will as usual, together with ESO, arrange the Soup Supper on Ash Wednesday.

Brit Missirlian

Upcoming Events

- Sunday, January 12, ESO meeting following worship
- Friday, January 17, Congregational Council
- Sunday, January 19, Worship and Music Meeting following worship
- Sunday, February 16, Annual Congregational Meeting following worship

Youth and Young Adult Website

The Synod's Youth and Young Adult (YAYA) Committee is excited to launch its newly created website. Please see the link below and add it to your bookmarks. This space is a way to stay connected, to resource and inform one another and as a platform to highlight the many awesome young adults who are doing some incredible things in our Synod and the world.

<https://esyouth-elcic.ca>

Stewardship

I recently had to attend the funeral of my uncle in Barbados. Even though I knew he was sick, his death still caught me and my family by surprise. At his funeral, the entire community gathered at the church to mourn his passing – there was singing and tributes and flowers and food.

There are three events that happen in every life that serve to rally our community around each of us – our birth, our marriage, and our death. We don't realize the importance of our community until

one of these events occur. However, communities like my uncle's in Barbados or ours here at Advent, don't exist without dedicated people – elders, volunteers, and other leaders that nurture and support those around them. To have a community of support around us requires all of its members to participate in some way. Building friendships and connections through participation in our services and events at Advent also builds a community that we can rely upon, where we feel like we belong, and where all are welcome.

We need to continue to grow our community piece by piece. Over the next few months, there will be many opportunities to volunteer including as ushers, lay assistants, and especially to serve on Congregational Council when we elect new members at the annual meeting in February. Many of us will think “I can't do that” or “I don't have the time” or “Someone else will volunteer”.

Without the support of many who have come before us, we would not have the community that we have today. Each of us has a gift to share with the world around us. We recently had some of our members volunteer to keep building our community here at Advent including the Khan family welcoming people by volunteering to assume responsibility over the maintenance for the front garden from Judy Baribeau (who maintained this for years) and the Schickedanz family inviting people to worship with the installation of the church bells earlier this year.

Over the many years since I was first baptized at Advent, I have volunteered in different ways. I value the camaraderie and support I've received from those around me. I remember knowing nothing about Congregational Council when I was first asked to join but there was always someone more experienced to guide me. I am thankful that when I was asked to volunteer, I said “yes”.

We all need to each think about how we can make our community a little bit better each and every day. And remember the words of Peter: “God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever. Amen.”

Erika Schurr

Together in Mission

we are making our world a better place to live.

Thank you!

(Canadian Mission \$350,000)

Canadian Missions (\$350,000)

- In 2018 the Eastern Synod Mission Committee provided more than \$325,000 in grants to 39 congregations and Ministry Areas to support initiatives that are about increasing the vitality of our church, strengthening discipleship in Jesus Christ and engaging those outside our walls.
- Potential recipients can apply for grants in three categories:
 - Compassionate Justice Initiatives (addressing hunger and poverty related issues in the wider community, through CLWR Funds)
 - Mission Partnership Support: Short Term and Long Term support that comes via synodical and national gifts and endowments. The grants support applications that:
 - a) are exploratory and experimental in nature;
 - b) seek to address a challenge being faced in a particular context in relation to the Church's mission
 - c) seek to develop relationships with others in local communities and neighbourhoods;
 - d) encourage participation in God's mission in local communities and neighbourhoods.

Financial Update

	November 2019 YTD	November 2018 YTD	% to 2018 Nov.YTD	2019 Total Year Budget	% to Total Year Budget
Current Envelopes	\$60,534	61,110	99.1	73,000	82.9
Other Current/Loose, Festivals, Other Charities	7,097	6,695	106.0	15,025	47.2
Sub Total Current	67,631	67,805	99.7	88,025	76.8
Benevolence	13,474	10,176	132.4	10,100	133.4
Facilities	76,760	88,978	86.3	94,800	81.0
Sub Total Revenue	\$157,865	166,959	94.6	192,925	81.8
Designated					
Outdoor Lighting	3,779	4,703			
Memorials	31,590	3,320			
Other – Endowment/Stewardship Vanier, etc.	1,102	1,030			
	\$194,336	176,012			

Hello friends and greetings to the Advent season.

The financial update is at the end of November 2019, and it shows our year to date revenue in comparison to the same period last year and to our 2019 budget. Some key observations:

- Our current givings are tracking close with last year. The month of December is always the biggest month in congregational givings so we can expect a large jump in our revenues as we finish off the year.
- Our Benevolence contributions continue to track well above last year and to our budget. Again, a good news story.
- Re: Facilities – with various fourth quarter contributions coming in December, we should see a rise in the revenue numbers.

Overall, we are doing adequately with our revenues, but it will be a stretch to meet our 2019 budget revenue goals.

At this time I wish everyone a very warm and safe Merry Christmas. Peace on earth and goodwill to all mankind.

Cheers

Bill Wesioly, Treasurer

Volunteer Schedule

	Altar Care	Assisting Minister Communion Assistant	Counters	Coffee
January 5	Judy Baribeau	Gabi Schickedanz Olga Cosburn	Gabi Schickedanz Erika Schurr	Coffee Only
January 12	Monica Ramdowar	Lester McLean Jim Doak	TBA TBA	No Coffee
January 19	Monica Ramdowar	Martin Gangadeen Indira Beekie	Adele Buckley Erika Schurr	Coffee Only
January 26	Judy Baribeau	Gabi Schickedanz Sonita Dillon-Rhodus	Gabi Schickedanz TBA	No Coffee
February 2	Brit Missirlian	Martin Gangadeen Olga Cosburn	Erika Schurr TBA	Coffee Only
February 9	TBA	Lester McLean Sonita Dillon-Rhodus	Adele Buckley TBA	No Coffee
February 16	TBA	Nalini Beekie Karen Doak	TBA TBA	Annual Meeting
February 23	Judy Baribeau	TBA Indira Beekie	TBA TBA	No Coffee
February 26 Ash Wednesday	Brit Missirlian	TBA TBA	TBA TBA	Soup Supper