

ADVENTur e



Advent Lutheran Church

January/February 2017

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Advent's Annual Meeting

Advent will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 12, following the worship service. Annual Reports will be available by the end of January. Please bring your reports with you to the meeting. In addition to our regular business, we will hold election of Council members. If you are interested, or would like to nominate someone, please let Judy Baribeau know.

Choir Rehearsals

Advent's choir rehearses Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. If you like to sing, enjoy music and would like to join our choir, please speak with me. No musical knowledge is required. All are welcome.

Trevor Hicks



In Memory of Sandy

Two thousand sixteen was a year of great change loaded with unprecedented losses of many beloved people close to home and around the world.

To us here at Advent we lost few members along with Sandy Vopni, a congregation and prior Council member. After a chat with her mother Hilda Vopni, I learned that Sandy was suffering from stage 4 cancer. She was 58.

Furthermore Hilda mentioned to me that Janice a friend of theirs, wrote the following poem for Sandy, which is below.

A Note to Sandy

We miss you already

With your great love of music, art, flowers and animals

*I remember listening to you play the piano (oft times with your cat playing too)
and thinking what happiness it brought to all who listened*

Cats, dogs, even fish seemed to fascinate you with their interesting personalities

Especially their ability to give love unconditionally

You are missed!

*Your interest in all art and your comments about different pieces of my art were
both inciteful and helpful*

I will miss your input

You are missed!

Your beautiful gardens and koi fish pond was a joy!

So much work, but you never seemed to mind

Good for you!

*I remember when you coaxed a koi to jump out of the water to snatch a piece of
food from your hand, amazing!*

You had the grace to create beauty around you and I admired that about you

You are missed!

*Your quick wit and intelligence combined with your inner loveliness, made you
such a lovely woman and a wonderful friend*

I love you Sandy ...

You will be missed!

Love,

Janice E. McHaffie

May all of those who have moved on find a better endeavour, and all of those who left us to rest in peace. In anticipation for a better year ahead I wish all of you a Happy New Year.

Mona Marcobelli

Sunday School Coordinator Needed

With regret we accepted Xiuyan Xi's resignation as coordinator of our Sunday School program. She has faithfully carried out this important role for the last four years. Her family moved to Burlington at the end of the year, and we need someone to replace her. There will be no Sunday School program until we get a new coordinator. If you are interested, please speak with Judy Baribeau. ♦

lutheranstoronto.org **Now Available**

LutheransToronto website is now available and contains information about the 21 Toronto Area congregations. Please check it out and get information on upcoming events.

Of major note is the September 30, 2017, Common Prayer with Cardinal Collins and Bishop Pryse. This will be a joint Roman Catholic-Lutheran Prayer Service in Toronto, The location and time will be determined soon.

You will notice that, as they are updated, photographs of the area surrounding the congregations, rather than photos of the churches, will be posted. This gives an idea of the various communities where our churches are located. ♦

Congratulations

Congratulations to Heinz and Hildegard Weltner who celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on December 25.

Our Sympathy

Our sympathy goes to Hilda Vopni and the Vopni family on the death of her daughter Sandy Vopni on November 25.

ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

2800 Don Mills Road

Toronto, Ontario M2J 3B6

416 493 1435 (church)

The Rev. Ernie Skujins

Interim Pastor

Phone: 647 388 4024

Email: ernieskujins@hotmail.com

Worship Service – 10:00 a.m.

ADVENTure... is produced for our members and friends.

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Advent Lutheran Church

www.adventlutheranchurch.ca

Christmas at Advent



Thank you to everyone for your contributions to make our Christmas services memorable: The Advent wreath; planning and participating in the worship services; altar care persons; getting, setting up and decorating the Christmas tree (and then removal); our choir director and choir and soloists for all the extra music; gift bags for the children; donations for all the Christmas plants which decorated the worship area; extra bulletin preparation; set-up and all the other behind the scenes work. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated.

Upcoming Events

- **January 9** – Special Congregational Council Meeting
- **January 15** – ESO Meeting
- **January 16** – Congregational Council Meeting
- **January 29** – Worship and the Arts Meeting
- **February 7** – Congregational Council Meeting
- **February 12** – Advent Annual Meeting
- **February 26** – Pastor Doug Reble, Assistant to the Bishop, will be our guest and will preach
- **March 1** – Ash Wednesday

Financial Snippet

Did you celebrate your 71st birthday in 2016? Did you know that you have to collapse your RRSP accounts by December 31 of this year and transfer them to either a RRIF or an Annuity?

For more information ask me at marcobelli@rogers.com.

Until next time, keep financially fit.

Mona Marcobelli

Men's Breakfast Group

All men in the congregation are invited to a good breakfast, conversation and fellowship the first Saturday every month, 9:00 a.m. at Rosemary & Thyme Restaurant, southwest corner of Van Horne and Victoria Park. Please speak with Jim Doak for further information. ♦

Egg Cartons

Thank you for bringing your empty egg cartons to church. The food bank receives eggs in bulk and uses the cartons for their distribution to families. The cartons are "gold" to the food bank and they thank everyone, and please continue bringing your empty egg cartons.

Judy Baribeau

Congregational Council Update

Our Council's year-end has been a busy time. We were pleased to welcome Pastor Skujins to Advent effective November 7, at our November Council meeting, and to lead our services beginning November 20. We look forward to his work with us.

I also give great thanks to Bill Wesioly for taking on the Treasurer responsibility. Taking on this role, particularly late in the year with year-end work added, is no easy task. He has put a lot of time and effort into this role. Thank you, Bill.

Call Process

On November 30, Pastor Doug Reble, Assistant to the Bishop, met with Council to review our options in the Call process. He mentioned that congregations that are doing well are the ones that are mission focused, particularly looking at the needs in our communities. From our statistical information on file, we are considered a healthy congregation. We are looking at initial steps preparing to call a new pastor.

Our first task is to complete a Congregational Mission Profile, which Council will discuss at a Special Council Meeting scheduled for January 9. Bill Wesioly prepared a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) which will help us as we plan our future.

We are looking forward to Pastor Reble being with us to preach on February 26. Please plan to be in church to welcome Pastor Reble.

Annual Meeting – February 12

Our Annual Meeting will be held on February 12 following the worship service. We need to elect a number of persons to complete our Congregational Council. This past year ended with the lowest number of Council members in our history. Without volunteers to look after the various areas of our ministry, it will be difficult to look after the many tasks required or even perhaps continue our ministry. Please speak with me or Sonita Dillon-Rhodus if you are interested in being a Council member.

We will need a quorum to conduct the meeting, so please be in church on February 12. It is important, particularly at this time, that we draw together a well-functioning Congregational Council.

2017 Budget

At our December Council meeting we took initial steps to prepare our 2017 budget. With a number of unknowns at this time, it is not an easy task. We will have a draft available prior to the annual meeting.

Benevolence

We did not make a Benevolence commitment for 2016, and Synod is strongly urging the congregations to make a commitment for 2017. Our congregation has certainly used a lot of Synod staff's time during this past year. The Bishop said to me, "That is what we are here for."

However, Synod staff can't be available to support the congregations without our financial help for them to do their work. Also, we will not be selecting a congregational delegate to the 2017 National Convention. With the ELCIC restructuring approved, the delegates are now elected at Synod Assemblies, and the delegates were elected at the 2016 Synod Assembly. The cost will be covered by the Synod. However, it is appropriate that we provide our fair share in our Benevolence commitment in our 2017 Budget. Please consider seriously your personal commitment to Benevolence for 2017.

We are looking forward, hopefully, to paying off our parking lot debt by the end of 2017 – or at least be close to it. We thank everyone for their contributions this past year and your continued support. We have many capital-related projects on hold that we can begin to tackle when the parking lot debt is paid off.

Montessori School Request

Council has also been discussing the possibility of the Montessori School, currently located at St. Matthew's, moving to Advent. If it is possible, the move will take place late in 2017 and they would require space year-round from 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. five days a week.

We ask for your continued support for our Council and congregation in the new year.

Judy Baribeau

From the Loft

The Songs of the Church Part One

In my past *From the Loft* submissions, I've discussed the importance of church music and liturgy as a whole, but I've never really dug deep into the purpose of our hymns and liturgical canticles. Over the next few issues, my goal is to write about the historical, scriptural and traditional importance of hymns and the parts of the liturgy that we sing each

Sunday. I truly hope that learning about why we sing these vital parts our service and where they come from further enhance the time we spend in divine worship together.

If I asked every one of you to name three of your favorite hymns, I bet that each of you would be able to name more than just three and explain your choices

with anecdotes and stories. Hymns are such an important aspect of worship and indeed of our lives that if one hymn is misplaced or ceases to be sung, congregants get pretty vocal in their



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From the Loft*Continued from Page 4*

disappointment and frustration. And understandably so.

That said, hymns aren't meant to be sung because they are popular, or have stunning, sweeping melodies, or because their chordal progressions are so moving they bring tears to your eyes. They certainly should never be chosen just because they are a favourite of the pastor or the organist. Hymns are much more than songs we listen to on the radio as we drive to church – they are the Word of God; they are prayers to God; they are messages from God; and they are praise to God.

A point that I cannot stress enough about church music in whole, but also

particularly to hymns, is that it is all begins and ends with God. As God is central to our lives, God is central to our worship and thus, He is central to our music. He is central to our hymns, central to every stanza, every line and every word.

It pains me when great hymns of faith fall out of favour in the larger church body due to misguided interpretations and disputed meanings. And it pains me when hymn texts need be rewritten for reasons of political correctness. To my eye, these changes fly in the face of the divine inspiration that goes into writing for God's people. As someone who has much experience as a composer, I cannot fathom someone changing words that I specifically chose in a moment of what I believe to be divine inspiration.

The hymnody of the church of God is rooted in the Psalms of the Bible, and people have been singing about God and to God from the earliest times. And what a tradition to be part of. The hymns we sing are intended to bring us together in our songs to God, as one, as per the meaning of the word *liturgy* – the work of the people. Yes, even hymns that we might not personally like. Yes, even new hymns that pop up in our services from time to time.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

*Yours from the loft,
Trevor Hicks*

Treasurer's Report

Greetings to my friends at Advent. This is my first status report to you since I assumed the Treasurer duties in October. This is a quick status as I am still closing the books for 2016. But I am far enough along that I can share the following observations/trends of 2016. More detail will be provided as part of our annual report in February.

Overall, we are in a better financial situation than we were last year. But there still remains thoughtful financial diligence going forward.

Revenue

Our total revenue will come in slightly higher than last year. But there are meaningful differences in the sub-categories.

Members' contributions to the Current Fund have fallen from last year. Though this is a cause for concern, a lot of the members made choices to contribute more to the Parking Lot Fund. With the increased contributions, I fully expect our Parking Lot loan balance to be paid off in 2017. I will provide a more accurate picture of

where we specifically stand with the Parking Lot fund at our annual meeting.

Contributions to Benevolence have also fallen from last year. Part of the reason could be that members wanted to focus on paying off the Parking Lot. Now with that goal almost complete, we could see an uptick in benevolence contributions in 2017.

The revenue decreases noted above were more than offset by increased amounts received from Current Facilities rentals. And these increases will continue in 2017. Advent has benefited greatly from the Facilities rentals to other churches and organizations, and the fact is that our church could not survive financially if it was not for the Facilities rentals.

Expenses

Expenses have decreased somewhat from last year. Decreases were noted especially in the Pastor Payroll expenses which were line with decisions made to re-evaluate these expenses in 2016.

Property expenses were higher in 2016. Yet there were decisions to put off indoor maintenance work which helped to limit the expense increase. In 2017, continued increases in hydro and heating rates will push these expenses upwards.

The remaining General and Administrative Expenses were lower than last year. Hopefully the low trend here can continue in 2017.

Conclusion

Again, the end of 2016 will find us in a better financial position than 2015. But the decisions we make going forward as to how we want our church to proceed will have great impacts on our financials.

My thanks to the Treasurers before me, Fred Roth and especially Jai Sahaedo, who has put in a lot of work and time. Also, thanks to the Congregational Council, especially Judy Baribeau who is the quickest responder to emails that I have ever seen.

I look forward to a more detailed report and discussion with you in February.

Bill Wesiohy



Volunteer Schedule

Please contact Olga Cosburn if you would like to serve as coffee host on a particular Sunday. On Sundays where we provide “Coffee Only”, volunteers are needed to help with the cleanup after coffee. Also, any offerings of goodies are welcome.

	Altar Care	Greeter	Assisting Minister/ Communion Assistant	Counters	Coffee Hosts
January 1	Elizabeth Lancia	Olga Cosburn	Olga Cosburn	Judy Baribeau Tracy McPherson	Carol Peck Olga Cosburn
January 8	Brit Missirlian Astrid Walther	Joe Hunt	Bill Wesioly Jim Doak	Sonita Dillon-Rhodius Bob Schickedanz	Judy & Gerard Baribeau
January 15	Judy Baribeau	Yvonne Cumberbatch	Bill Wesioly Karen Doak	Bob Schickedanz Sonita Dillon-Rhodius	Erika Schurr
January 22	Brit Missirlian	Indira Beekie	Lester McLean Indira Beekie	Bob Schickedanz Erika Schurr	Coffee Only
January 29	Brit Missirlian	Elias Yousefi	Nalini Beekie Jim Doak	Bob Schickedanz Mona Marcobelli	Tracy McPherson, Elizabeth & Samantha Walther
February 5	Judy Baribeau	Mona Marcobelli	Erika Schurr Sonita Dillon-Rhodius	Bob Schickedanz Erika Schurr	Brit Missirlian & Cynthia Stewart
February 12	Carol Peck	Mona Marcobelli	Erika Schurr Judy Baribeau	Bob Schickedanz Erika Schurr	Wesioly family
February 19		Cynthia Stewart	Lester McLean Olga Cosburn	Judy Baribeau Bob Schickedanz	Coffee Only
February 26	Brit Missirlian	Joan McLean	Gabi Schickedanz Jim Doak	Mona Marcobelli Bob Schickedanz	Coffee Only

Please check the Usher sign-up sheets on the bulletin board and volunteer for Sundays you are available.

The Assisting Ministers will read the lessons. If anyone would like to read on a particular Sunday, please contact Olga Cosburn.