

ADVENTur e



Advent Lutheran Church

July/August 2016

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Frankie Flowers Visited Advent on June 12



Summer Worship Schedule

For the summer we will worship in Cedar Hall starting July 3 through August 28. We will return to our Sanctuary on September 4

2016 ELCIC Praise Appeal



The theme for the 2016 ELCIC Praise Appeal, *Liberated by God's Grace: Human Beings – Not for Sale*, echoes The Lutheran World Federation theme for the commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. The commemoration gives us the opportunity to remember and reflect on the Reformation and what it means for us now, living as Lutheran people within the whole body of Christ.

Our Congregational Council has set a goal of \$500 from Advent for this appeal. You may make your donations at any time and indicate "Praise Appeal" on your offering envelopes. The GWA will lead a worship service on September 18 to highlight this year's Praise Appeal. Please support the Appeal as you are able.

Advent Participates in Summer Community Event



On June 25 our younger members hosted an ADVENT OutREACH Tent at Shelley Carroll's Summer Community Event at Parkway Forest Community Centre. Ms. Carroll is the City Councillor for Ward 33 – Don Valley East.

Advent's team provided freezies, facepainting and a fishpond with prizes to help promote our Sunday School and raise awareness of our church services in the community.

Tracy McPherson

Trevor Hicks Concert

On Saturday, September 17, I invite you to join me in the main sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. for a concert commemorating the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks that shocked the world. To commemorate this tragic anniversary, I have written a cycle of songs that reflect my own patriotism through the lens of 9/11. Also to be heard at the concert are patriotic anthems and songs from around the globe, including Canada, the United States, Germany, Australia, Ukraine, England and Russia.

Tickets are \$20, a portion of which will be given to Advent to help us cover the cost of organ maintenance in advance of the Christmas season. I hope to see you there.

*Trevor Hicks
Music Director*

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.

ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Toronto, Ontario M2J 3B6

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The Rev. Peter Lisinski, Pastor

Email: fryarpuck@hotmail.com

Worship Service and Sunday School –
10:00 a.m.

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

Judy Baribeau, Editor 416 264 4527

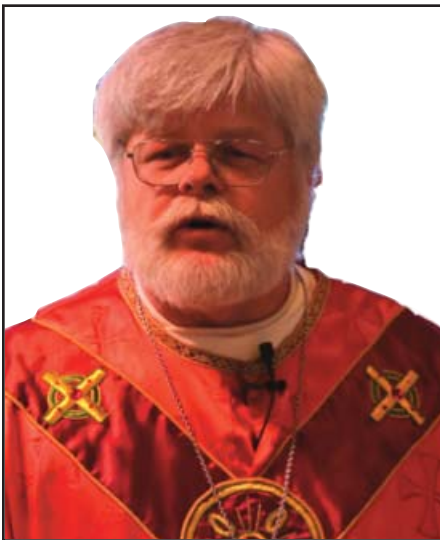
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Advent Lutheran Church

www.adventlutheranchurch.ca

Pastor Peter Writes



Dear Advent People of God:
The Lord be with you.

As you are aware, on January 17, AD 2016, a Special Congregational Meeting was held to consider, and vote on, our

Congregational Council's recommendation to reduce my ministry as pastor of Advent Lutheran Church from full time to half time. The proposed 50% reduction in both time and salary was framed as a financial necessity to maintain the congregation solvent.

After considerable concern and discussion, the recommended motion to commence half time ministry was adopted to be effective August 1, 2016, stipulating that the pastor's "Job Description and Contractual Terms" be negotiated.

Over the past several months, various proposals and counter proposals attempting to reach a mutually agreeable and fair resolution have been exchanged, to no avail. During this process it became clear that Advent's financial situation is not expected to

improve quickly or substantially enough to salvage my ministry with you.

Consequently, on April 25, 2016, the Council decided to terminate my employment. After consulting further with Eastern Synod Bishop, Rev. Michael Pryse and myself, Council issued a letter dated May 6, 2016, extending my full time call until November 6, 2016, when my employment is scheduled for termination, which I have acknowledged.

It has been a joy and blessing to serve as pastor at Advent Lutheran Church for the past six years. I am thankful to God for the privilege and to you who have welcomed Rosarie and me and supported our ministry. I pray for and will do my best to ensure a smooth transition.

Faithfully,
Pastor Peter Lisinski

Our Sympathy

Max Harris died on May 28. Our sympathy goes to his widow Geraldine, their two sons and families.

Confirmation

The following young people were confirmed on June 5:

Joseph Persaud
Samantha Persaud
James Yamashita

New Members

On June 5 we received the following new members through Affirmation of Baptism:

Marthe Angama
Naressa Persaud
Daniel Yamashita

Baptism

On May 22 we welcomed John Michael Roy Day, Liam Marcus Day, and Alexander Matthew Day through Holy Baptism. Their parents are Ashley and Michael Day.

Pastor Lisinski's Vacation

Pastor Lisinski will be on vacation the following Sundays. In case of emergency you may reach him at his home phone number:

July 10 – sermon to be given by Adele Buckley

July 17 – sermon to be given by Jai Sahadeo

July 24 – sermon to be given by Mona Marcobelli

August 21 – sermon to be given by Jim Doak

August 28 – sermon to be given by Samira Gebhardt



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. When Gerard delivers them to the Food Bank, they tell him they are "gold" to them and to thank everyone for supplying them. The cartons are much appreciated. Thank you everyone and please continue bringing your empty egg cartons.

Judy Baribeau

Congregational Council Update

This year continues to be a busy time for Advent's Council.

With regret we accepted the resignations of two Council members – Karyne Holgate-Lemieux in May and George Tang in June. We thank them for their contributions to our Council's work. Council is able to appoint persons to Council to serve until our next annual meeting. If you are interested in serving on Council, or would like to know what is involved, please speak with me.

We are making some changes in our Property responsibilities. Tracy McPherson will be looking after space bookings, taking over from Brenda Kroeker. Brenda will continue working with the cleaning staff and ordering supplies. If anyone wants to reserve space for an event or a meeting, please contact Tracy. Tracy will also prepare the monthly calendar posted on the bulletin board.

We thank Tracy McPherson for arranging the Frankie Flowers event on June 12. We welcomed a number of our community gardeners as well to our barbecue following the service. We thank Marcus Walther and Gerard Baribeau for doing the barbecuing. Donations of \$122.60 were received at the barbecue and are designated for the parking lot fund.

On June 26 we announced that Pastor Lisinski's call as Pastor at Advent will terminate on November 6. Please see his letter on Page 3. This announcement comes after many months of discussion and negotiation. Throughout this process we have been in close contact with the Bishop and his office to ensure that we were proceeding properly. Please note the excerpt on the right which was part of the Bishop's sermon read on June 26 (Synod Assembly Sunday). It really speaks to our situation and gives good food for thought.

The upcoming change does ask some questions. The first one is, "what happens next?" Council will meet with the Bishop most likely later this summer to discuss appointment of an Interim Pastor. This person could be a current parish pastor, a

retired pastor, a pastor who doesn't have Sunday responsibilities (such as an institutional chaplain), or a pastor waiting for a call.

When we appoint the Interim Pastor, we will discuss the amount of time he/she is available to work for Advent, and also depending on our budget capability to determine the various responsibilities.

During the interim, we may be asking more of our laypersons to assist in leading worship, visiting, some administration or other duties. Please be willing to assist if you are asked.

At this time we are not in a position to form a Call Committee. Among other things, we need to spend some time

discussing our congregation's needs, our strengths and weaknesses. We need to look at our demographics and those of our community, as well as determining what are the most important qualities we are looking for in a pastor.

Synod has recommended the book *Holy Conversations* as guide to our discussions and I am asking interested persons to let me know if you are willing to engage in this conversation leading to calling a new pastor.

Finally, please pray for Advent and our mission that we will be led to the best solution moving forward. Please be assured God has a plan for us.

Judy Baribeau

Excerpt from Bishop Pryse's Sermon Prepared for June 26

There are not many congregations in our synod who are not experiencing significant challenges to their continued health and well-being. Fewer people are participating. Resources are being stretched thinner and thinner. The things we did in the past to meet these challenges no longer seem to be working in the ways they once did. And it's in the face of these challenges, that today's call to a more radicalized discipleship comes, not as a mere proposition, but as an imperative.

If you've ever ploughed a furrow, you will have no difficulty understanding the concluding image of today's Gospel lesson. "No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." You can't plough a straight furrow if you're constantly turning around to check your tracks. Ask any farmer! Instead, you need to pick out a spot such as a tree or fence post at the end of the field and never take your eyes off of it. Keep focused and never look back.

We've got to stop looking back over our shoulders and focussing on the past, solely focussed on doggedly maintaining

the structures and institutional expressions which may have defined our life and ministry in the past. As important and good as they might have been, those things were merely tools – ploughs if you will – that only have value to the extent that they help us engage the primary task at hand, whether that be the work of ploughing a field or that of making disciples.

We need to lift our eyes up from the furrows of our churchly life and re-focus ourselves on the Gospel imperative to love, radically and extravagantly. We have been liberated from the old yoke of slavery and made free. We have been liberated by God's grace and empowered to help fulfil God's mission to love and save the world. God is calling us to expand our ministries beyond the perceived safety of our churchly lives and to go out into the world in extraordinary ways! We are being called to help people see and meet Jesus; to throw off the shackles of a too-domesticated religion and throw ourselves into a life of faith, into the life of a Saviour who refuses to be domesticated; into a life that is never predictable and certainly never safe.

Advent Lutheran Church

Interim Treasurer's Report – January 1-June 30, 2016

“Through Christ you have come to trust in God,

And you have placed your faith and hope in God

Because He raised Christ from the dead and gave him glory. 1 Peter 1:21 (NRSV)

I believe that with God and all His promises, the Faith and Hope of Advent's members reflected in their prayers will be rewarded as the congregation moves forward.

This has been an incredible year, as we dealt with so many challenges, but now we have a number to face yet.

Past Year 2015

While it is humbling to look back from September 2015, when Advent's finances were rapidly used up and during this time when the congregation had a substantial debt load...Advent remained confident in its future and impenetrable about its Faith. Then part way through the year Advent's poise started to shatter and its challenges further declined, likewise its finances (October-November 2015).

My friends, whenever you have to face all sorts of trials, count yourselves supremely happy in the knowledge that such testing of your faith makes for strength to endure. James 1: 2-3

This verse from James admonishes us that challenges such as those we faced in the past year will make us stronger. The true test for us is our faith, being strong, will become stronger as much as it tests us. We should not pretend to be happy when we face adversity, but to have a positive outlook. Tough times can teach us perseverance.

Current Year 2016 (six months) – Challenges as Advent Moves Forward

During this current year, when Advent began to recover from its past financial issues, we as a congregation or individually, will now face another major setback. With the many ongoing illnesses and deaths Advent experienced, the Church will be losing its Pastor effective November 6, 2016. All these experiences – though real, can be an assault to our

collective sustained confidence. This is a constant and continuing reminder of our mortality. We are currently hurting, as we enter the summer when new concerns and challenges seem to jump in front of us at every turn.

For the months August through November 6, 2016, our Pastor will not be paid 50% as budgeted, but instead will be paid 100% It is estimated that the incremental cash outflow for compensation and benefits during this period will be approximately \$10K. Advent will have to find funds to cover this cost without losing focus on its approved 2016 Budget.

We need to maintain and, or increase our current rate of giving. Also, I encourage members, one by one to come forward to take a role in our Church, so collectively using our individual gifts, we can face the many emerging challenges.

The Chair explained what's next in her report. For me, members may have another pressing financial question. The question is..."How will Advent be able to cover this \$10k, with minimum \$ impact on its current operations?" A suggested answer is as follows:

- Use the 2015 Actual GST/HST Refund (Non Budget cash) **\$3,829**
- Use the current year 2016 Estimate (Jan to June 2016) GST/HST Refund **\$2,000**

– (This has to be applied for in July/August 2016)

- Balance – Favourable User Fees \$7,978 (2016 \$39,373vs 2015 \$31,395) **\$4,171**

Total Incremental Cost **\$10,000**

An important fact to know here, is that this money was earmarked to be used in 2016...to build cash reserves and to spend against the much needed neglected capital projects.

Conclusion

Advent's challenges are not a test of one person but the dedication of many. Responsibility for tasks, usually done by a few, now needs to be taken up by the many. Our congregation never and must not lay down in depression and let the church fade. It got together with a life of its own and continued its own ministry, one that was different than before, but was still recognizable by its members.

Therefore, through prayer and action, let us substantiate our Faith that supports our Hopes, and move forward to make 2016 a successful year.

Commentary

Contributions

Contributions were up in 2016 vs 2015. This was due primarily to two reasons:

- Festival: Increased attendance and giving, and
- Received from other Charities: Advent received from a charity in January 2016 \$4.8k, a one-time gift for the full year. In 2015 this amount was received in two installments: January (\$2.8k) and December (\$2.0k). There is no certainty that this amount would be received in future years.

Benevolences

- Regular: Advent will only remit to Synod amounts it collects. Its 2016 target (no commitment) for the full year is \$10.5k. For the period January to June (2016 vs 2015) there is a shortfall. Let us challenge ourselves to achieve the annual target.

Other Revenues

- User Fees: A favorable increase of rental income in 2016 over 2015 due to price increase and extra users. Part of this increase (as stated above) will be used to pay the incremental estimated compensation and benefit costs of \$10k – August 1 to November 6, 2016.

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Financial Highlights and Commentary – January 1, 2016 to June 30, 2016

Current Fund

Revenues (Actual-nearest whole \$'s):

CHART:

	2016	2015	2016 vs. 2015
	Current Fund	Current Fund	Variance-Fav/(Adv.) Total \$
REVENUES			
Contributions			
Envelopes (excluding Benevolences)	36,332	36,105	227
Festival services	1,685	580	1,105
Loose	1,925	1,870	55
Received from Other Charities	5,934	3,138	2,796
Received from non-registered Corporations	300	0	300
	46,176	41,693	4,483
Envelopes – Benevolences	3,373	4,950	(1,577)
Regular (Synod Non-Commitment)	3,064	2,585	479
Other Specific			
Total Contributions	52,613	49,228	3,385
Other Revenues			
User fees	39,373	31,395	7,978
Income from other sources (incl. recoveries)		60	(60)
Interest income (Note 5)		-	
Stewardship & Finance	174	185	(11)
Misc.-HST Write off	781		781
TOTAL REVENUES	92,941	80,868	12,073

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Operating Expenses (Estimated).

There is no chart for operating expenses – (in nearest \$000).

Total General Expenditures: 2016 \$82.3k vs 2015 \$86.2k, a favourable difference of \$3.9k – due primarily to the following:

■ General expenses are in line with prior year, other than savings in Property- (lower utility costs \$0.8k; indoor maintenance \$2.0k) and Parish Administration-\$1.1k mainly to the convention delegate fees which were partially paid to get a \$100 discount for early registration. This is a timing difference as the balance of the fees will be paid in July.

Inter Fund Transfer: \$2k was transferred from the Current Fund to the Capital Reserve Fund in 2016. Building up the Capital Reserve Fund is very critical to the maintenance of Advent's property.

Cash Balance-Current Fund

■ The estimated cash balance at the end of June 30, 2016 – Approx. \$20k, after taking the following into consideration:

– Factoring the estimated net income/ (loss) after Inter Fund transfers YTD June 30, and

- Assuming all outstanding payables-liabilities (including ELCIC Benevolences) at the end of June, are paid in June/July
- Assuming GST/HST Refund received (\$3,829) is allocated towards Pastor's full time salary etc.

Restricted Funds (as of June 30, 2016)

■ **Capital Reserve Fund:** Balance of \$28.3k. Target needed during this year and the next two (2 years) \$35-\$40k – for much needed capital spending on subdued items of capital improvement.

■ **Endowment Fund:** Balance of \$6.9K.

■ **Parking Lot Fund:** Balance of \$16.8k. Members continue to maintain and increase their contributions to this Fund. Monies from parking fees and Parking Lot fund raising events are also, included in this Fund.

The parking lot loan which currently stands at \$40k, will be reduced to \$30k effective August 1, 2016. This will be a result of a loan prepayment of \$10K plus accrued interest, which will be made on August 1, 2016 without any prepayment penalty, as a token of the kindness from the lender.

■ **Sunday School, Youth and Confirmation Fund:** Balance of \$1.6k. During the year, three Funds (Sunday School, Wishlist and Youth) were combined into a new fund called Sunday School, Youth and Confirmation Fund, which has a combined balance of \$1.6k.

■ **Virginia Fund:** Balance of \$0. All monies in this Fund (\$3.3k) were paid out

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to Virginia Ling during May, effectively closing this Fund.

■ **50th Anniversary Fund:** Balance \$0. A small balance in this fund was transferred to the Parking Lot Fund. This fund is now closed.

Final Thoughts

■ From the financial data in this report we should be thankful to God and one another for the following:

- Since the beginning of 2016, there are signs (increased giving, etc.) that the congregation is responding positively to various stewardship ways, as disclosed in Advent's 2016 financial plan.
- Debt and interest on debt reduction is a priority and this is recognized by congregational members, as Parking Lot receipts have nearly doubled from 2015, due to a substantial gift in the month of May 2016.

Remember June through September are traditionally low giving months. Let us break this tradition and be encouraged by:

Luke 6:38 "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be the measure you get back."

Notes to Financial Statements (Unaudited) for the year ending December 31, 2015:

Note 8: This Note refers to "Insurance Policy and Insurance Premium payments", which came to my attention after the 2015 Annual General Meeting but before the filing of the "Annual 2015 Charity and Information Returns" to the CRA Charity Division. This note is included as an addendum to this report, due to transparency to Congregational members. It was also included in the Annual Charity Information Return.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jai Sahadeo*

From the Loft**The Choir and Your Benefit in Joining**

The church choir has been a mini-community within the larger church community for many years. It fulfills its liturgical function of singing music at services, but that's not all it offers. No doubt many of you will recall my inviting you to become a member of the choir at Advent. The more the merrier and I hope that this installment of *From the Loft* entices you to take me up on the invitation to sing with us.

The most common reason I hear people give upon opting not to join the choir that they "cannot sing". To God, I believe that every voice is equal and that He hears every one of them. Furthermore, I believe that every voice should be welcomed in a parish choir, nurtured and used to its full potential. A vocal teacher of mine once said that every voice can be taught to sing, and I like to believe in that mantra.

My complaint about television programs like *American Idol* is that, when they show people who do not sing well but who still think that they sound like Whitney Houston in their minds, it creates a fear in people who don't sing badly that they too might hear something that no one else hears, and what everybody else hears is like nails on a blackboard. This therefore causes people to shy away from moments when they can – and should – sing.

The community that is the church choir is a helpful and understanding community. At Advent, there is no audition process to join the choir and no one is forced to sing solos that they don't wish to sing. We seek to keep our members in their comfort zone, even if that means adding notes that aren't written to make a passage easier to sing or to fit in an individual's range. As a trained vocalist myself, I am always willing to assist members in singing easier and freer. The point is, that there is no need to fear that you cannot sing to join the choir –

because even in the unlikely event that were remotely true, the choir would step in and reverse it.

The experience of singing in the choir will also make it easier for you to sing in worship. I approach choir music as if no one is musically trained, which for the most part is true in many of our choir members. Ability to read music is not required. If anything, you will leave choir with a little bit more of an understanding of music theory and will be able to read the music in the hymnal with a bit more understanding through what we sing. While I sometimes use musical jargon that needs to be explained, even those instances are learning experiences.

Of course, then there's the presentations in church when it all comes together. Singing as part of a church choir in divine worship is one of the most uplifting feelings that one can feel. Praising God through song in the midst of His people is such a rewarding experience and is something very special – and dare I say sacred – to be involved with.

I once again invite all interested people to get in touch with me either by phone, email or after church one Sunday to discuss joining the choir. I guarantee you, you won't regret it.

*Yours from the loft,
Trevor Hicks, Music Director*



On June 12 our congregation enjoyed a community barbecue with our Guest Frankie Flowers

Virginia Ling Visits Advent



On May 8 we welcomed Virginia Ling (left) and her mother Angela to Advent. Virginia came to Advent as a small child with her father and was baptized here. Virginia's father Chi Wang Ling died tragically in May 2008. Following his death, members of Advent wanted to do something for Virginia and agreed to set up an education fund for her. The amount collected was \$3,365 which we kept in a reserve fund. We were pleased to present this cheque to Virginia who will use it to help cover her tuition. She is a student at West-

ern University majoring in Psychology. We look forward to keeping in touch with her as she continues her studies and beyond.

In her thank you letter to Advent she said, "Church is a wonderful community and I am so blessed for the welcomeness and support you showed my dad and still show me to this day. Every single person at Advent deserves a thanks for making this community possible and for keeping it well and strong."

We wish Virginia all the best as her studies continue.

PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance)

If you would like to contribute regularly to Advent, and are not able to attend worship services each Sunday, or are away for extended periods (summer at the cottage or winter in Florida), you have the option to arrange for a monthly transfer from your bank account to Advent's. Please speak with our Financial Secretary, Gary Hoosein, to get the form to fill out. Regular remittances to Advent will help greatly to keep our finances on track.

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	Reader	Counters	Coffee Hosts
July 3 Brit Missirlian	Elias Yousefi	Victoria Gangadeen Sonita Dillon-Rhodium	The Assisting Ministers will serve as readers during July and August.	Judy Baribeau Sonita Dillon-Rhodium	Coffee only during July and August
July 10 Cynthia Stewart	Jim Hicks Ted Winslow	Lester McLean N/A		Erika Schurr George Tang	
July 17 Judy Baribeau	Karyne Holgate-Lemieux	Erika Schurr N/A		Sonita Dillon-Rhodium Judy Baribeau	
July 24 Carol Peck	Cynthia Stewart	Nalini Beekie N/A		George Tang Waveney Kanhai	
July 31 Brit Missirlian	Joan McLean	Bill Wesioly Olga Cosburn		TBA	
August 7 TBA	Adele Buckley	TBA Olga Cosburn		Judy Baribeau George Tang	
August 14 Judy Baribeau	Olga Cosburn	Victoria Gangadeen Sonita Dillon-Rhodium		Sonita Dillon-Rhodium	
August 21 Carol Peck	Joe Hunt	Erika Schurr N/A		George Tang Waveney Kanhai	
August 28 TBA	Yvonne Cumberbatch	Lester McLean N/A		Judy Baribeau Erika Schurr	

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