

ADVENTur e



Advent Lutheran Church

May/June 2016

Inside

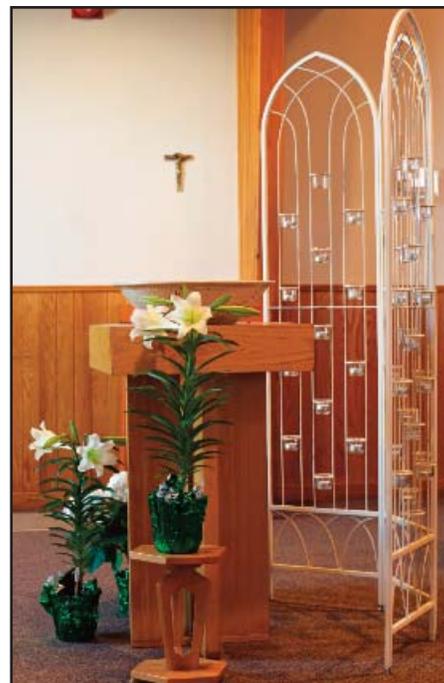
Easter at Advent	2
2016 ELCIC Praise Appeal	2
Thank You	2
Our Sympathy	2
Pastor Peter Writes	3
Men's Breakfast Group	3
Egg Cartons	3
Treasurer's Report	4
PAR	5
Lutherans Toronto Event	6
Congregational Council Update	7
Frankie Flowers Event	7
From the Loft	8
Volunteer Schedule	8



Frankie Flowers visits Advent
June 12.

See Page 7 for details.





Easter at Advent

Our Easter worship service was filled with lilies and hydrangea plants. We thank everyone who donated towards providing all the flowers for this service. These photos and the cover show our new white paraments as well. We thank Walter Rothenburger for his extra work in decorating the church for Easter. We thank George Tang for taking the Easter photos.

2016 ELCIC Praise Appeal



ELCIC
PraiseAppeal 2016

"Praise Appeal" on your offering envelopes. The GWA will lead a worship service on a Sunday in September to highlight this year's Praise Appeal. Please support the Appeal as you are able.

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

Thank You

Gerard and I thank you for your expressions of sympathy, messages and cards on the death of my mother Lillian DuBois on March 25. Her funeral was in Wheatfield, New York, on April 1.

Judy Baribeau



Our Sympathy

- Our sympathy goes to Sonita Dillon-Rhodium and Roxanne Rhodium and their family on the death of Sonita's father, John Dillon, on March 20. His funeral was held at Advent on March 28.
- Our sympathy goes to Jai and Rosie Sahadeo and their family on the death of Jai's aunt Sukhia Khemraj on April 12.

ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

2800 Don Mills Road
Toronto, Ontario M2J 3B6
416 493 1435 (church)
905 424 7649 (residence)

The Rev. Peter Lisinski, Pastor
Email: fryarpuck@hotmail.com

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

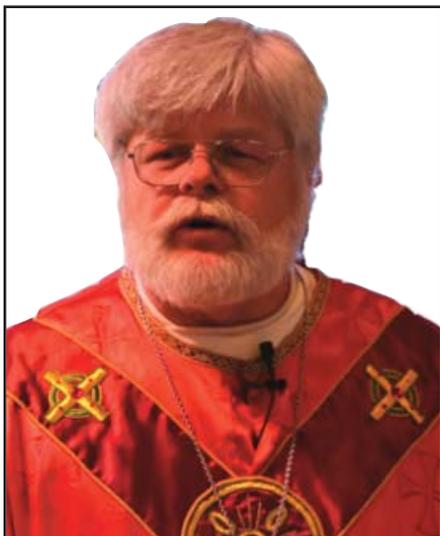
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members and friends.

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www.adventlutheranchurch.ca

Pastor Peter Writes



Dear Faithful Friends,
Since our congregation voted to reduce our pastoral ministry by fifty percent (time and salary), many of you have expressed regret for the decision, as well as concern about the impact it will have, not only within our parish, but on my family's life and wellbeing. Thank you.

One of those conversations followed our congregational leaders' recent meeting with Bishop Michael Pryse. Waveney Kanhai, our new Council Secretary, wisely suggested that we include our congregation's future direction in our weekly Prayers of the People during worship – which we will begin to do immediately. As Waveney said in our subsequent email correspondence, "We need all the prayers we can muster up to heal the situation."

Our congregation's situation, of course, is not unique. Mainline Christian churches across North America today – particularly those that trace their origins to the "protestant" reform movement of sixteenth century Europe, ignited by our denomination's namesake, Martin Luther – are dwindling in numbers, as well as relevance. Worship attendance has steadily decreased in Canada since reaching its peak following World War II in the mid-1940s. And with declining birth

rates, and a shift in immigration patterns from Europe to Asia, the population of western civilization has become increasingly elderly and non-Christian. This has produced inevitable ministry, mission and financial challenges for all Christian congregations.

Ours is no exception. Some have seized the opportunity to develop more effective stewardship strategies and outreach methods; some congregations have merged with others; some have disbanded entirely; and many have opted to reduce pastoral ministry.

Whatever Advent's future may hold, the church's renewal – including our congregation's – remains the promise and mission of God's Holy Spirit. Though the Spirit's presence, power and purpose may be difficult to understand or identify in the midst of our current anxiety and confusion, I firmly believe that God's Spirit remains actively at work, among us and around us; with us and within us – sometimes even without us or despite us – to bring the holy communion of God's new creation, established by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to full revelation ("apocalypse", in Greek).

In the meantime, our only calling as God's people remains the same as it has been since the Day of Pentecost: to faithfully proclaim the Gospel of God's love in the world, and let "the chips" of God's grace "fall where they may". That is the only strategy that has preserved the Christian church throughout the ages, in our always changing, often challenging, sometimes hostile world. And the same good news of God's unconditional, unlimited and universal love for all people, revealed in the divine humanity of Jesus Christ, has kept, and will keep, the church alive in faith – and faith alive in the church – until the final coming ("advent" in Latin) of the promised future of God's whole, and holy, new creation (see Revelation 21-22).

*Faith – Fully yours,
Pastor Peter*

PS. Waveney's call to prayer has inspired me to prepare a two-part sermon series on prayer beginning on Sunday, May 29, and concluding on June 5. *Ora pro mei! Ora cum mei!*

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

Please bring your empty egg cartons to church and give them to Judy Baribeau. The food bank receives eggs in bulk and uses the cartons for their distribution to families. We thank everyone who has been contributing and look forward to your continued contributions.

Advent Lutheran Church

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

A Stewardship introduction to the Treasurer's Report

Matthew 6:26 "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

Have you ever seen a bird worry about their needs? Can they even consider tomorrow? Have you ever seen a bird depressed, with their head down, and stopped chirping? No, they don't have to work and store up for tomorrow because God ensures that they are fed today and since we know that God values us above all other created things, why would He not do the same for us since we are "of more value than they?" (Extract taken from Jack Wellman, who is an Author, Pastor, Writer and Publisher)

As a prelude to verse 26, in verse 25 Jesus tells us not to worry about those needs that God promises to supply. Worry may, (1) damage your health, (2) disrupt your focus/productivity, (3) negatively affect the ways you treat others, and

(4) reduce your ability to trust in God. How many effects of worry are you experiencing? Let us not worry (something that immobilizes), but let us genuinely be concerned that God through the Holy Spirit is in us and working through us to follow a new direction to save souls and restore Advent's financial stability. Concern moves us into action and that is what is happening.

A Stewardship Prayer and Praise for All

■ Praise the Lord, for guiding us in a new direction.

■ Praise the Lord for all the ministry, both at Advent and elsewhere that was enabled through the generosity of all His people, who enter and leave through the doors of Advent.

■ We pray for continued wisdom of our Pastor, Assistant Ministers, Congregational Council, Mutual Ministry, the Good Women of Advent, Sunday School, the Congregation and all Stewards.

■ We pray for all to continue to give generously of their time and talents to develop and set ministry priorities for Advent.

■ Praise the Lord, that to date (April 30, 2016), giving exceeded expenses, an indication that we are on the path to restore our cash reserves.

■ We pray that the current flat trend in Advent's giving would soon rise in 2016 in order to meet and exceed the expanding ministry expenses.

Amen

Continued on Page 5

Financial Highlights & Commentary

Current Fund

Revenues (nearest whole \$'s):

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016 vs. 2015</u>
	Current Fund \$	Current Fund \$	Variance-Fav/(Adv.) Total \$
REVENUES			
Contributions			
Envelopes (excluding Benevolences)	25,738	25,416	322
Festival services	1,685	580	1,105
Loose	1,350	1,213	137
Received from Other Charities	5,554	2,948	2,606
	<u>34,327</u>	<u>30,157</u>	<u>4,170</u>
Envelopes-Benevolences			
Regular (Synod Non-Commitment)	2,100	3,074	(974)
Other Specific	1,813	1,411	402
Total Contributions	<u>38,240</u>	<u>34,642</u>	<u>3,598</u>
Other Revenues			
User fees	29,707	25,687	4,020
Income from other sources (incl. recoveries)	-	60	(60)
Interest income	-	-	-
Stewardship & Finance	159	185	(26)
Misc.-Coffee	100	-	100
TOTAL REVENUES	<u>68,206</u>	<u>60,574</u>	<u>7,632</u>

Advent Financial Report, Continued

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 collected. Its 2016 target (no commitment) for the full year is \$10.5k. For the period January to April (2016 vs 2015) there is a shortfall. Let us challenge ourselves to achieve the annual target.

Other Revenues

■ **User Fees:** A favourable increase of rental income in 2016 over 2015 due to price increase and extra users. A sincere thanks to Brenda Kroeker for her diligent Stewardship activities in this area.

Operating Expenses

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

Total General Expenditures

2016 \$60.1k vs 2015 \$63.8k, a favourable difference of \$3.7k – due primarily to the following:

■ General expenses are in line with prior year, other than savings in Property – lower utility costs \$2.1k 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 full fees will be paid later in the year.

■ There are minor savings in other costs classification.

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 the Advent's property.

Cash Balance – Current Fund

Factoring the net income/(loss) after Inter Fund transfers, and assume outstanding payables are paid at the end of April, the estimated cash balances at the end of April are as follows:

■ 2016: Approx. \$23k vs 2015: Approx. \$12k

■ To better explain: In 2016 Advent used approx. \$1k of its cash balance brought forward from the end of 2015. Whereas, in 2015, Advent used approx. \$10k of its cash brought forward from 2014.

■ It must be noted that at Advent, as stated below – May through September are low collection months, and Advent needs to build cash to pay expenses and other debts if required to do so. Therefore, there is a need to conserve cash for future expenses.

Restricted Funds

■ **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 \$5.9k.

■ **Parking Lot Fund:** Balance of \$8.2k. Once this Fund reaches \$11k-\$12k, negotiation may take place to prepay debt to save interest charges.

■ **Sunday School, Youth and Confirmation Fund:** Balance of \$1.6k

■ **Virginia Fund:** Balance of \$3.4k

Conclusion

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.

■ For the first time in a long time, giving exceeded expenses, and this is an indication that we are on the path to restore our cash reserves.

■ 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.

Remember – May 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."

■ Finally, with God's guidance, let us not lose focus of Advent's new direction, as we continue to heartfully pray and give thanks to God for all His blessing. We should continue to trust God because He owns all that there is. We should give back to God thankfully and generously, because all that we have is already His and we are his stewards.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jai Sahadeo
Interim Treasurer*

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.

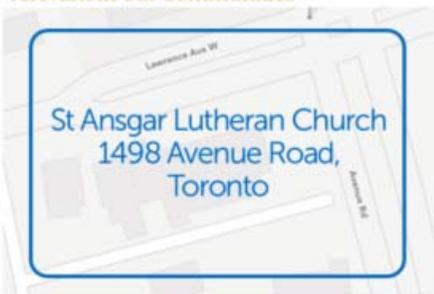
Lutherans Toronto

21 Congregations in the Eastern Synod
Central Toronto Ministry Area

Working Together:
creating a vibrant church,
relevant in our communities

Take a morning and
inspire your church

Saturday 28 May
9:00 am to 2pm



only
\$10⁰⁰

Workshop Themes & Leaders

CHURCH MUSIC "I will praise the Lord"

Andrew Slonetsky and **Sebastian Meadows-Helmer**
will explore enjoying music in the church

REFUGEES "I was a stranger"

A team from **Martin Luther Lutheran Church** will
discuss how you can support refugees

SOCIAL JUSTICE "...but to do justice..."

Andrew Slonetsky will discuss ways your church can
advocate for social justice

SOCIAL MEDIA "#followme"

TBA an introduction to the new 'front door' of your
church

SUMMER CAMP "Come and see"

TBA will discuss the basics of running a Summer
Church Camp

SUNDAY SCHOOL "Let the children come"

Marlena Muller will discuss re-inventing Sunday
School

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT "Come and follow me"

Christian Ceconi will discuss the art of fishing for
volunteers

Breakfast Buffet 9am - 10am

Conversations about worship
and leadership (or, sit in quiet
contemplation)

Session 1 10am - 11:30am

Church Music
Refugees
Social Media
Summer Camp

Session 2 12 noon - 1:30pm

Refugees
Social Justice
Social Media
Sunday School
Volunteer Management

Sign Up Deadline
Monday 23 May 2016

email: admin@stangar.ca
Phone 416-783-3570
Fax 416-783-1751

Congregational Council Update

Our Congregational Council is experiencing a busy year. We thank everyone – both Council members and other volunteers in the congregation for their work. This year is particularly challenging as we will begin 50% ministry August 1. We continue to discuss with Mutual Ministry and Pastor Lisinski the transition to his 50% Call. This will mean additional work by volunteers to assist with worship services, administration, visiting, and other areas. These changes give us a large learning opportunity. If you are asked to help, or wish to volunteer, please give it serious consideration. Please keep Advent in your prayers.

These changes all relate to our stewardship. Stewardship is an important part of our church life. Without stewardship we cannot exist. We encourage additional volunteers to help with altar care, coffee hosts, and reading lessons which are part of our normal service, as well as our financial stewardship.

We thank Trevor Hicks for all the extra work he is doing with the choir and church music. If you like to sing, please speak with Trevor and he will be happy to help you become familiar with the choir music.

In March Council agreed to merge the restricted funds – Youth Fund and the Wishlist Fund – to Stewardship, Youth and Confirmation Fund. We also arranged to have our insurance coverage updated. We closed the 50th Anniversary Fund and transferred the money to the Parking Lot Fund.

We are planning to hold an interior clean-up day this spring as well as an outdoor clean-up time. Please watch for information in our bulletins, emails, website and at the services – and come and help.

Council members are discussing ways to better communicate with the congregation through social media as well as the current ways. Please watch for information when available.

Judy Baribeau

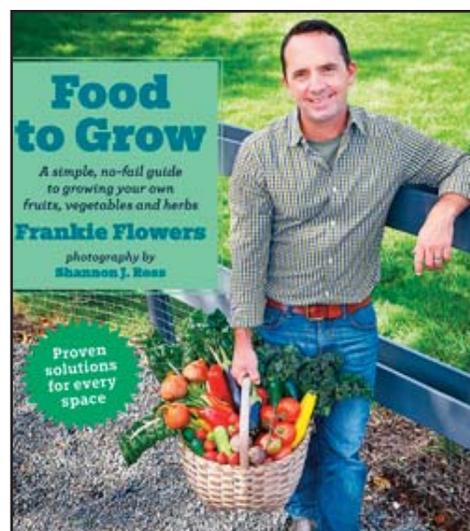
Congregational Council

At our March Council meeting, the following persons were appointed officers and chairpersons, or liaisons, to standing committees. They were installed at the worship service on March 13:

Chair	Judy Baribeau
Vice-Chair	Bob Schickedanz
Secretary	Waveney Kanhai
Interim Treasurer	Jai Sahadeo
ESO Liaison	Tracy McPherson
Financial Secretary	Gary Hoosein*
GWA Liaison	Karyne Holgate-Lemieux
Mutual Ministry	Sonita Dillon-Rhodius
Property	Bob Schickedanz
Property Manager	Brenda Kroeker*
Resource Development	Erika Schurr
Worship and the Arts	George Tang
English as a Second Language	Karyne Holgate-Lemieux
Newsletter	Judy Baribeau
Website	George Tang
Christian Education	vacant
Youth	vacant

* not a Council member

**Sunday, June 12,
please join us
at Advent
for a Community
Barbecue
Featuring our
Guest**

**City TV's Weather and Gardening Specialist, and Best-Selling Author, Frankie will be available to answer your gardening questions and sign copies of his new book *Food to Grow*.
Church Service at 10:00 a.m.
Followed by the barbecue at 11:30 a.m.
Invite friends and neighbours to join you.**

From the Loft

Prelude

In my last segment of *From the Loft*, I discussed why music is so integral to our Christian life. Just in case you need a refresher: music is scriptural; music is inclusive; and, a text is “worth a thousand words.” These reasons all pertain predominantly to congregational song, that is, why we sing, but inadvertently almost completely neglect to discuss the purely instrumental music that is heard in divine worship. These instrumental moments occur at two main points in worship: the prelude and the postlude.

While it might be easy to assume that these parts of worship are a time for the organist to show off his skills, this couldn't be farther from the truth. Music in church, whether it is instrumental or accompaniment, should never be a performance nor should the reason ever be to show off what you can do. If a church

musician is doing their job with these motives, then they aren't doing their job right. The instrumental parts of worship, just like the liturgical canticles and hymns, have liturgical purposes behind their use; and the effect of the right music at these times can have a tremendous impact on the mood of the service.

The prelude is intended to inspire and prepare the people of God for worship. It should never be too loud or interfere with prayer and meditation before worship, though sometimes, I'll admit, I pull out one stop too many.

The postlude is intended to remind you of the victory of Christ and your own mission as His followers. This music is generally more triumphant in nature than the prelude and I often seek to use the full resources of the organ to musically visualize the triumph of Jesus' resurrection and the promise it brings.

Of course, there are other times you will hear instrumental music in church

besides these two times. The Offertory is the most common of these. As someone who easily drifts into conversation, I like to say that the Offertory music is a way of bringing people back into worship-mode and reminds them that the most important part of our liturgy – Holy Communion – is coming.

While the temptation is always there to catch up on the latest news from friends in the congregation during the instrumental periods of worship, I invite you to sit silently and listen to the preludes, interludes and postludes I play. You never know how any one selection will inspire you in your Christian life and maybe even make your worship experience just a bit more profound.

*Yours from the loft,
Trevor Hicks*

Postlude

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
May 1 Judy Baribeau	Jim Hicks Ted Winslow	Gabi Schickedanz Sonita Dillon-Rhodium	Mona Marcobelli	Sonita Dillon-Rhodium George Tang	Coffee only
May 8 Walter Rothenburger	Karyne Holgate-Lemieux	Nalini Beekie Judy Baribeau	Nalini Beekie	Erika Schurr Karyne Holgate-Lemieux	Gangadeen Family
May 15 Judy Baribeau	Cynthia Stewart	Victoria Gangadeen Indira Beekie	Elizabeth Lancia	Judy Baribeau George Tang	Marlene Barthelmy Elizabeth Lancia
May 22 Judy Baribeau	Joan McLean	Bill Wesioly Waveney Kanhai	Indira Beekie	Sonita Dillon-Rhodium Waveney Kanhai	Coffee Only
May 29 Brit Missirlian	Adele Buckley	Nalini Beekie Sonita Dillon-Rhodium	Judy Baribeau	Waveney Kanhai George Tang	Joan and George McLean
June 5 Carol Peck	Olga Cosburn	Gabi Schickedanz Judy Baribeau	Olga Cosburn	Judy Baribeau George Tang	Coffee Only
June 12 Walter Rothenburger	Joe Hunt	Nalini Beekie Indira Beekie	Carol Peck	Erika Schurr George Tang	Peck Family
June 19 Judy Baribeau	Yvonne Cumberbatch	Lester McLean Waveney Kanhai	Jim Doak	Sonita Dillon-Rhodium Karyne Holgate-Lemieux	Coffee Only
June 26 Brit Missirlian	Indira Beekie	TBA N/A	Karen Doak	Judy Baribeau George Tang	Mary Khan and Family

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