



July, 2020

Advent Lutheran Church

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PASTOR'S LETTER - "ONE DAY AT A TIME"

I have said the words, "You need to take this one day at a time," quite often to individuals. Those words have also been said to me. Likely, someone has suggested that to you at some point. Often, those words surround one who is facing a difficult situation or illness. Now, those words seem appropriate for all of us to hear and reflect on. As someone who enjoys both being active in the present and trying to anticipate the future while broadly planning for it, living in the midst of this pandemic is especially difficult. I have long found it meaningful to schedule events in my calendar to which I can look forward. Usually by now summer travel has long since been planned and coordinated. However, as I write this, my extended calendar is unusually sparse. Much of what I might like to do will not happen because it cannot happen, as we continue to face this virus. If it does happen, it may be in a less appealing way.



The pandemic reminds us that there is much in life that takes place that is beyond our control. It is true that all of our individual hopes, dreams and plans can change in a matter of seconds, following a phone call or a doctor's visit. The pandemic has simultaneously negatively affected us all in many and various ways. We may debate how it was/is being handled. Have we done enough? Could we have acted sooner? Will the economic, psychological, institutional, familial, life and relational costs of "flattening the curve" surpass the cost of the pandemic itself over the longer term? Likely the response to the pandemic will be discussed for years. But, much of that is out our

control. So, we have no choice but to take things one day at a time. I know that is not easy. But I also know there are still blessings to be found and experienced each day.

I have resisted the suggestion to publish a newsletter filled with scheduled events this month, including Christmas in July. Right before I wrote this, I received a call from the Scouts, confirming that they wanted to have their mum sale in conjunction with our 9/19 Flea Market and Family Fun Day. Hopefully, by then. . . Certainly, we will move forward at some point, in some way, at some time, returning to in-person worship and events. Maybe those plans will be forthcoming by the time you read this. Maybe not. (In late April, we already started having discussions on how we might do this more safely when the time comes.) Our weekly email blasts provide updated information. Regardless, we have to take things one day at a time.

(continued...)

(Pastors letter, continued)

I hope the words from the hymn, "Day by Day," bring you some comfort, as they do for me, in these difficult times. . .

Day by day, your mercies, Lord, attend me,
bringing comfort to my anxious soul.
Day by day, the blessings, Lord, you send me
draw me nearer to my heav'nly goal.

Love divine, beyond all mortal measure,
brings to naught the burdens of my quest;
Savior, lead me to the home I treasure,
where at last I'll find eternal rest.

Day by day, I know you will provide me
strength to serve and wisdom to obey;
I will seek your loving will to guide me
o'er the paths I struggle day by day.

I will fear no evil of the morrow,
I will trust in your enduring grace.
Savior, help me bear life's pain and sorrow
till in glory I behold your face.

Oh, what joy to know that you are near me
when my burdens grow too great to bear;
oh, what joy to know that you will hear me
when I come, O Lord, to you in prayer.

Day by day, no matter what betide me,
you will hold me ever in your hand.
Savior, with your presence here to guide me,
I will reach at last the promised land.

God's peace, Pastor Chris

PS. Remember that we offer both pre-recorded services on "YouTube" and live services on "Zoom." YOU DO NOT NEED A COMPUTER TO USE ZOOM. This service can be listened to on your landline phone or cell phone and you can add your voice! Call the church office for assistance. Links are provided on the home page of our website. We also do Bible study and prayer meetings by Zoom.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, JUNE 28. Following 10:30 AM service, live or via Zoom. Hear updates on how Advent has and is responding to the effects the Coronavirus has had on our mission. On the bottom of the staff and leadership page of our newsletter, there is a council-approved communication document with more information.

ANSWER THE SURVEY, WE ARE COUNTING ON YOU!

A survey has been produced regarding our Sunday AM schedule for the fall. The survey comes as a response to some members' desiring to enable a worship service to occur simultaneously with Sunday School. The survey is available online. If you do not have online access, and would like to participate, please call the church office by June 21 to make arrangements to receive a written copy.



ONLINE WORSHIP HERE TO STAY?

Even after "in-person" worship resumes, Advent hopes to continue an online worship presence. We plan to partner with WCCEC to purchase equipment that will enable us to do this more easily and with significantly improved quality of sound. We will ask for financial support once we know what equipment is needed.

CARE & CONNECTIONS TEAM GOOD NEWS HAPPENINGS

The CCT members continue to reach out to the Advent faith community and beyond. The team is involved in sewing masks for charities and hospitals, sending cards to shut-ins, checking in with our members on the phone or via text and emails, submitting inspirational stories to weekly email blasts, and praying for our community, country, and the world. An emergency blood drive held at Advent on May 1st was a huge success, with 36 units of blood collected. Our next blood drive is Saturday, June 27th, from 10am -3pm. Please consider signing up to donate by going to redcrossblood.org, enter sponsor code ALChurch, and choose your donation time.

A book club has been formed. Some of the CCT will be participating. The first book read will be "The Great Alone" by Kristin Hannah, with the first gathering scheduled for June 30. To join the club, nanbarjam@aol.com. Please continue to share good news stories or prayers with by submitting them to Pastor Chris, who will include them on the weekly email blasts and/or Facebook. You can be guaranteed your words of inspiration will make a big difference in members' lives, as we move forward together.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through April, Advent had a YTD surplus of \$716 versus last year's YTD surplus of \$2,188. Offering in 2020 was up 1/2% compared with last year. Generous Easter offerings, snow removal cost reimbursement from WCASD and onetime \$3,070 bonus credit card earnings eliminated our previous YTD deficit. Lower utility costs, were offset by lower building usage donations. We made our full budget contribution of \$1,200 to the Synod but suspended local benevolences. Future finances will be positively impacted by paying only the interest on our mortgage, which we can do for three months and a potentially partially forgivable loan from the Payroll Protection Plan. However, starting in May, WCCEC will reduce their monthly donation to \$1,500 (from \$4,000) as they have suspended their gatherings. Many thanks to those who increased their giving in these difficult times! The next financial update will be provided at the June 28 Congregation Meeting. At press time, 16 Advent family units had transitioned to "online giving" since mid March. For more information on that giving option, call the church office at 610 436-0807.