

THE ADVENT ANNOUNCER

June, 2020

Advent Lutheran Church

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A "NEW NORMAL"

As I write this letter, it is mid April. After several weeks of social distancing, which most people are now taking seriously, I wonder, what will our lives, our world, our church be like as you read this. Will the virus still be raging? Or might we be clearly headed on the path leading us back to "normal?"

It is common to hear people say they look forward to things being back to "normal." But is that the right thing to hope for? Maybe we should rather hope for a "new normal?" Not the negative "new normal" some skeptics suggest will be a fact we have to live with indefinitely to avoid a resurgence of this pandemic. But rather a "new normal" influenced by having something good come out of what we went through. The kind of good that the apostle Paul envisioned when he said, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

When it was time to write this letter, I received an email from Warren Greenwald that inspired me to write this. His email suggested what that "new normal" might look like for people of faith. . .

- The next time a friend offers a hug, actually taking the time to appreciate the gift of their embrace.
- When school resumes and you are dropping off the kids, taking the time to thank the staff for the amazing gift that they give.
- The next time you are sitting in a crowded restaurant, taking the time to look around at the smiling faces, loud voices and thank God for the gift of community.
- The next time you attend church, hearing the voices of praise and prayer, receiving communion, taking time to thank God for the gift of congregation.
- The next time you see a person or situation that needs prayer, praying as passionately and fervently as you have these past few weeks.
- When you are at the grocery store, taking a moment to thank God for providing the necessities of life and the amazing people who work so hard to keep us supplied.
- Never again taking for granted the ability to hop in the car and visit a friend, go to the mall, go to the park, etc.

So may the challenges of the past few weeks create a new normal. One in which we pray more, love harder, and truly appreciate the daily abundance of blessings that were so easily overlooked just a mere few weeks ago.

God's peace,
Pastor Chris



AN EASIER WAY TO INVITE PEOPLE TO WORSHIP!

We had close to 60 families participate in our live zoom services for Easter. Additionally, over 250 had reviewed our prerecorded services. Several people noted forwarding the link for our Easter services to friends and family. Might you do the same? It is a great way to connect people to the faith and our church. Here is the link to Easter services: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmMZroh7x-M>.

Nearly 50 people have subscribed to Advent's New YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZZH1QJi1BRt-VmoRlcwOFA>. The channel may also be accessed to our website. Even as we have greatly missed "in person" worship, it has been wonderful to reconnect with former members and past acquaintances through the gift of modern technology. Call the church office with any questions on how to access online worship services.



CARE & CONNECTIONS TEAM MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“ If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be.”

This quote from Maya Angelou beckons us to celebrate our individuality, to explore our potential to serve, knowing we have many ways to make a difference in the world, now more than ever.

During the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the CCT continues to remain focused on our mission to **CONNECT**.

Community: We continue to take care of our own. Not only is Advent a strong “outreach” church, but also a strong “inreach” church. Many of us have “buddy” calls, texts, or emails regularly with one another. Weekly email blasts remind us to reach out for help. An abundance of volunteers continues to call Pastor to offer their help to members in need.

Outreach: Support continues to our charities such as Act in Faith, Food Bank, Salvation Army, etc. with gift cards and donations sent directly to these organizations.

Neighbors : Members continue to share how they are baking for neighbors, shopping for neighbors, arranging appointments for neighbors, etc.

Newcomers : Participation levels indicate we may have “guests” viewing Advent’s you tube services. Special thanks to all the Advent volunteers involved in our on-line services. Thanks to technology, making it possible to share Advent’s mission with no geographical boundaries. All are welcome!

Engagement: Zoom meetings, zoom worship, zoom Bible Study continue to keep our community engaged. We can explore many more creative ways in the future to grow our church with the wonders of technology.

Caring : On May 1st, Advent was scheduled to serve as an emergency blood drive location. Area blood supply continues to be dangerously low due to COVID -19. Please consider donating at our June 27th Red Cross drive, and help save a life. Advent cares!

Together: Thanks to the entire Advent congregation for continuing to **Connect** with each other in so many kind and creative ways, keeping us all together. When a date can be defined, look for an email blast warmly declaring a “ Welcome Back to Worship “ celebration!

May we continue to seek our strength from God and look to the future with great hope and optimism. God bless Advent.

GRATITUDE FOR ALL DURING HOLY WEEK AND THE EASTER SEASON

Last week was predicted to be one of bad news and sadness for our country due to the corona virus. However, as an outcome of our Holy Week services, I felt heartened with the good news that Easter proclaims.

On behalf of the Council, we extend appreciation to the many people involved in Holy Week worship and ministry experiences. While we cannot thank each one adequately, all deserve praise for their excellent contributions. We want to thank Pastor Chris, who shares the Gospel and its relevance to our lives during good and bad times. Working together with the Worship and Music committee, music director, and member volunteers, they transformed our online experience into meaningful experiences that met the individual and spiritual needs of our congregants during Holy Week. We also thank the church staff and other members who supported the behind the scene details of preparations.

All in all, we had a beautiful Holy Week. It is due to these incredible individuals and their willingness to share their time and talents to live out our Mission: to Worship God, Invite everyone to Jesus Christ, Nurture each other in Love, Hope, and Faith, and Serve others with the compassion of Christ.

We know that we are fortunate to be part of such a dedicated and caring church family.

Thank you again,

Charlene Underwood
President, Church Council

SCHEDULE

As this newsletter was forwarded for publication, we did not know when in person worship and other activities would resume at Advent. Therefore, please rely on weekly email blasts for the latest information.

JANUARY THROUGH MARCH 2020 FINANCIAL REPORT



Total income, \$77,931. Total Expenses \$90,500. Note that expenses included nearly \$2,000 of benefit expenses that were for April, but paid in March. So, in reality our deficit was about \$10,500. Last year, the first quarter deficit was \$5,313. Last year, a strong April, including Easter offering, reversed the deficit and we generally do not know where we stand financially until after April. A complete update of Advent's finances will be provided at our congregational meeting, on June 28.