



# The Adventiser

## Advent Lutheran Church

Our mission: To grow in the Lord and to make Him known.

Winter 2011-12

### *Stewardship in Review – It's Not Just About Money*

My Dear Friends in Christ, we just completed a 3-week series focused on Stewardship that showed us that “Stewardship is NOT Just about money!” A Steward is someone who has been put in charge of something by its owner. In scripture, God tells us that He has put us in charge of everything on earth: including our time, talents and treasures. Out of love for all that Jesus has done for us, our life of stewardship is demonstrated by how we use everything God has given us to Glorify Him, and for the good of others.

Our theme for the series was “GROWING AS STEWARDS THROUGH FAITH, LOVE AND HOPE!” And our theme verse was 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 “We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” That encompasses much more than just money.

On October 23, we looked at Hebrews 12: 1-2 and saw that we “GROW AS STEWARDS THROUGH FAITH” as we: remember the “cloud of witnesses” (the saints who have gone before us), and follow their example of faith, laying aside the weight and sin which clings so closely to us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Founder and Perfecter of our faith.

On October 30, we looked at 1 Corinthians 10: 31 and saw that we “GROW AS STEWARDS THROUGH LOVE!” when God’s love in Christ prompts us to do something, and we “do it all to the glory of God,” even when our life’s circumstances are challenging, and other people tell us that what we’re doing is unusual or even irrational. Because when we do that, we have the opportunity to experience God working through us to minister to others.

On November 6, we saw that we “GROW AS STEWARDS THROUGH HOPE!” when hope is a “confident expectation based on the solid promises of God” fulfilled in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. This God-given hope moves us to live our whole life in faithfulness towards Him and in fruitful actions toward others.

Our use of the money we have is one example of our Stewardship, but using everything we have for the Glory of God and the Good of others goes way beyond just how we use our money. It’s about how we use our life.

In today’s difficult economy, you may not be able to give as much money as you’d like to the work of the Lord, but don’t let that stop your Stewardship. The Lord looks at our hearts. And in Matthew 25: 35-36, he acknowledges good Stewardship when he says “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” Those acts of kindness demonstrate good Stewardship.

And, one day, you may be pleasantly surprised to discover that God has done abundantly more than you could have ever imagined, with your acts of kindness done in Jesus’ Name.

Thank you for your life of good Stewardship!

Blessings, Pastor John

## Stewardship

Thank you to all who returned commitment cards upon completion of "Grow as Stewards through Faith, Love and Hope!" We are grateful for the 28 cards we have received and encourage those of you who have not filled out the form to consider doing so. The budget committee will be using the totals within the next two weeks to plan our 2012 budget. At this point, members and friends have committed \$115,644.00, which is approximately \$12,000.00 less than last year. We rejoice that of those 28 cards, 12 increased their giving over 2011 and 12 remained the same even in our difficult economic times. I believe that this shows that we do have the faith, love and hope within us that God will provide what we need.

Although our focus on stewardship was only three weeks, we are reminded that stewardship is a daily activity of God's children, and that it includes not only giving our resources but also using our time and talents to do the work He has prepared for us.

### Financial Update through November 15, 2011

Income (offerings and misc.)	\$139,038.28
Expenses	\$138,982.73

## Church Council Report

The Church Council continues to meet on a regular basis to ensure that the operations, programs, and activities of the congregation are being conducted in a timely manner. At each meeting, Pastor John leads the Council in prayer as we ask God to open our hearts, guide our discussions, and help us be "In Tune with God's Will for Advent".

The Church Council is currently working on the 2012 Budget, which will be presented to the Congregation at Advent's Voters meeting on January 22. I'd like to thank everyone that has turned in a pledge card! For those that haven't, we encourage you to give your pledge card to Judy Neely so that we can better understand/plan for 2012.

The Church Council will continue to focus on overall Communications within the Church. Please continue to provide Congregational feedback and suggestions by talking directly with a council member, elder, Pastor John or by dropping your input into the communication box located in the Narthex.

## Board of Worship

Mid-week Advent services will be held on Wednesday, December 7 and 14 beginning at 6:45 pm. The services will center on the theme "God's Love at Christmas." A light supper will be provided at 6:00-6:30. Choir will meet after the midweek Advent service.

Pointsettia order forms will be in the bulletin in early December.

Christmas Eve Service Candlelight Christmas Eve Service will be held at 7 pm on Saturday, December 24.

Christmas Day Regular worship service will be held on Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25 at 10:30 a.m. There will not be Sunday School.

Choir rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 – 8:00 pm in the sanctuary. Being able to read music is not a requirement. If any member or friend of Advent Lutheran Church wishes to share a musical talent as a prelude, offertory, or communion musical interlude, please contact Pastor John or Peggy Earnhardt ([pearnhardt@mebtel.net](mailto:pearnhardt@mebtel.net))

Altar Flowers A flower chart is provided in the fellowship hall. If any member or friend of Advent would like to donate flowers on a Sunday as a memorial or celebration please sign up. If you have questions, please contact Dorothy Preisel ([DorothyPreisel@hotmail.com](mailto:DorothyPreisel@hotmail.com))

Bell Choir If you have interest in ringing bells, please contact Chelsey Masterson ([chelsey.materson@gmail.com](mailto:chelsey.materson@gmail.com))

Praise and Pizza Night Invite your neighbors and friends to the next Praise and Pizza Night on February 18, 2012, at 5:15 pm, followed by pizza and fellowship.

Sermons on the Web Did you know that if you are unable to attend church one Sunday, you can still hear Pastor John's sermon? Just log on to Advent's web site ([www.AdventLutheranCH.org](http://www.AdventLutheranCH.org)) and click on Worship Services on the Worship drop down menu on the home page and then click on "Listen to the latest Sermons." The five (5) most recent sermons are available.

## Board of Outreach

**Operation Thanksgiving Meals:** Jon and Sam Fischer have been the leaders in the effort to collect and distribute Thanksgiving meals to four families. The response from the Congregation has been outstanding and very heart warming. Thrivent also provided financial support for these meals. Listed below is some additional information about the families who received Thanksgiving meals.

1. **Family of five** – Parents, 4th grade girl, kindergarten boy, and new infant. Spanish speaking family, daughter speaks English.
2. **Family of two** – Mother and 9-year-old adopted daughter.
3. **Family of four** – Parents and two children from Aretia,-Northern Africa. Both children have diabetes and they can never have enough \$ to entertain, requested extra food is to allow them to invite the mother's sister and family. Wanted a traditional American Thanksgiving!!
4. **Family of five** – English-speaking Burmese refugee family: Parents, 11-year-old girl, 1st grade boy, and 3-year-old boy.

**Helping Those in Need:** The Fishers are also leading an outreach group exploring ways the congregation can get involved in actively supporting those in the community. The group is looking into food collection options and methods of distribution. We are considering the Back Pack Program and supporting one family each month with a meal (similar to the Thanksgiving meal). We are planning to launch this new initiative in 2012. If you have any suggestions, please let Sam or Jon know. You are always welcome to join the group or be involved in any of these programs!

*“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,”* - 1 Peter 3:15

## Women Of Advent

A big “THANK YOU” to everyone who worked to make our “**Treats and Treasures**” holiday boutique a big success! So many ladies worked throughout the year on projects for the boutique. The response from the congregation for baked items was outstanding and greatly appreciated. There were so many yummy items! The day of the “Treats and Treasures”, we had many wonderful volunteer helpers. Three special “thank yous” to: (1) Kaori Maeda for providing our delightful holiday music throughout the boutique; (2) Dave Neely and Judy for providing a delicious lunch to all the workers on the day of the boutique; and (3) for all the guys (and gals) who helped with clean up after the boutique. Profits from “Treats and Treasures” will be used as seed money to support the “Abundant Joy” Women’s Center, a start-up women’s ministry under the direction of Beth Benham. We hope the sale proceeds will reach the \$4800 needed to receive the Thrivent \$1600 matching funds. When available, final figures will be listed in the church bulletin.

Women of Advent will host a “**Girls Night Out**” on Tuesday evening, December 6, at 6:00 p.m. at the “Spartacus” Greek restaurant in Durham. Watch for flyers and a sign-up sheet in the church narthex. Sign-up deadline is Sunday, December 4. It should be a fun evening!

There will be a “Girls Night Out” in both January and February. Watch for church bulletin announcements and flyers with detailed information.

Our annual Women of Advent **Christmas Breakfast Buffet** will be held on Saturday, December 10, at 9:30 a.m. at the home of Lois Durr in Apex, NC. Flyers will be available soon containing detailed information. This is a fun gathering always enjoyed by all who attend. Mark your calendars now!

Both women’s **Bible studies** for the Fall have been completed. New studies will begin in January. Watch for information in the church bulletins as to dates and study topics.

For those of you who like to plan ahead, the dates for the **2012 Women’s Retreat** at the Trinity Center in Salter Path, NC are May 4-6. Mark your calendar now and plan to attend this awesome retreat.

## ***Sharing the Gospel Message Clearly***

It's a big moment. You know God has ordained this moment -- that you would sit in this very seat, next to this very person, at this exact time. As they pour out to you what their family is experiencing and the hopelessness they feel, like a drain that's unclogging, it is undeniable that you have been purposefully placed.

At first you thought to yourself: *I can't believe this person is bearing their soul to me! How did I get into this conversation?* But now, the light bulb goes on in your heart! You have no doubt: *This is a Holy-Spirit appointment.* As someone who has been in this situation several times, I assure you, this is no coincidence.

I too am amazed by the extent a total stranger will open up to me at times. I think to myself: *I'm not a counselor. I'm not an exceptionally good listener. I didn't spur this conversation on; and, oddly, this person doesn't seem this open usually. It just... happened! Why?* It is a mission moment.

Annoyingly, your head and emotions begin to chime in, as if their opinions are valid in spiritual matters. Your head gives numerous reasons why this could not possibly be a spiritual appointment, saying: *You just happened to make eye contact and smile at the wrong person at the wrong time.*

Your emotions chime in with a shaking voice, full of insecurity: *You have nothing to offer this person. You have nothing this person needs. You will just mess up the words, like you always do. Please don't embarrass me!*

But, the Holy Spirit continues to prompt you, reminding you of the truth - that you are God's child; you have the power of His Spirit with you - the Spirit of the living God!

With a prayer, blocking out your mind and your emotions, you choose to be led by the Spirit and follow thru on what has been set in your heart. On your own, you have nothing to offer. On your own, you have no words to say. But, you are not on your own. This is a divine appointment.

You know you have the hope found in Christ to share with this heartbroken person. You must speak; and you know it. The motivation and the will are there. Now what? How do you communicate the most important message that could ever utter from your lips with time constraints? Read *Tips for Sharing* below to find out.

### **WITNESSING**

1. **Listen.** Allow them to share their burden with you.
2. **Connect.** Share a time you experienced a similar burden in your personal life.
3. **Introduce Christ.** Share that God came through for you at this time and how. He provided His peace and/or His love, displayed through others.
4. **Explain sin...** "I don't deserve His help. I mess up all the time." Giving examples... "I have hurt others in the same way this person has hurt me." Help them identify their own sin... "Do you know what I mean?"
5. **Explain atonement.** The Bible says that the wages of sin are death. God is just. Sin is a debt that must be paid.
6. **Describe God's love.** "He sent His sinless son for us to take on the blame for our sin. Christ paid off our debts. We no longer have to pay the debt ourselves."
7. **Explain how.** "It is a gift to be received -- not something you can buy with goodness."
8. **Invite them.** "This help, provision and peace aren't just for me. You can have this too! He loves you just as much as He loves me. You can be in heaven with a loving God for eternity, and enjoy His peace, provision and help in this life... in this situation."

**What next?** Pray with them. Lead them to the Bible to nurture their relationship with Christ. Invite them to become connected to your body of believers.

*Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for being awesome in our lives. Thank you for taking on that huge debt of sin that once weighed us down so heavily. Sometimes we pick up that load again and try carrying it ourselves, too ashamed to talk to you and hand it over. But you know what we're carrying. You know it's too heavy for us. You already took care of it, knowing well before what would trip us up. We thank you that Christ died for that very sin. We thank you that He carried the cross so we could let go of that load. And thank you for your daily reminders and your loving kindness, telling us daily to put that down. Help us lay this down at your feet every day, always. And, help us to clearly communicate this message to others, weighed down by sin, that they too might be able to walk free and light. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*

## *Men's Retreat*

The Men of Advent have scheduled next year's annual retreat at the Trinity Center from November 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The Trinity Center is located in Salter Path, NC near Morehead City. Please mark these dates on your 2012 calendar.

The retreat not only gives us time for great fellowship but also provides an opportunity to study God's Word. Pastor Bill Seaman has agreed to lead the Bible Study and discussion on the Book of Revelations. We have currently reserved 10 rooms, which hold up to 20 men double occupancy; let John Stow or Dave Neely know if you can attend. We look forward to enjoying the fellowship and growing together in Christ.

## *Birthdays*

Pastor Herbert Walther	Dec. 1	Lansama Sheref	Dec. 21	Paul Simis	Feb. 8
Loni Gunn	Dec. 1	Taylor Richards	Dec. 25	Kathleen Simis	Feb. 10
Pfc. Gentry Gunn	Dec. 1	Kaori Maeda	Jan. 1	Kent Underwood	Feb. 12
Rina Borg	Dec. 3	Ann Swan	Jan. 13	Konii Sheref	Feb. 13
Bob Serpas	Dec. 4	Hank Swan	Jan. 16	Pastor John Benham	Feb. 16
Barbara Bergdolt	Dec. 6	Jason Yando	Jan. 24	Sophie Baker	Feb. 16
Sam Fischer	Dec. 16	Christine Mefferd Struckmeyer	Jan. 25	Doug Borg	Feb. 18
Melanie Nicol	Dec. 18	Lois Durr	Feb. 6	Emma Schumacher	Feb. 21
Allyson Elizabeth Wriedt	Dec. 19	Sabrina Mather	Feb. 7	April Welborne	Feb. 23

## *Anniversaries*

Anona & Bob Serpas	Dec. 21	Joyce & Don Eckert	Jan. 25
Ann & Hank Swan	Dec. 21	Beth & John Behnam	Feb. 21
Carolyn & Frank Jones	Dec. 30		

**SPECIAL DATES** – Please let the church office or Carolyn Jones know if your birthday or anniversary dates aren't listed or are incorrect. We want to celebrate with you and keep our church records up to date.



*The Adventiser*, the newsletter for Advent Lutheran Church, is published quarterly. If you have something you would like included or have other comments or suggestions, contact Karla Byrnes ([kmkbyrnes@gmail.com](mailto:kmkbyrnes@gmail.com).)

*Newsletter Deadline for the Spring 2012 issue: Monday, February 20, 2011*

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**Contact the Pastor:**

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**Phone:** (919) 943-7082

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**Sundays beginning September 11, 2011**

**9:05am** Sunday School/Bible Class

**10:30am** Divine Service with Holy Communion



A Congregation of  
THE  
**LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Missouri Synod

## Dates to Remember

**Tuesdays – 7:00-8:00pm**

Men's Bible Study

**Tuesdays – 10:30am-12:30pm**

Women's Bible Study, beginning January

**Wednesdays – 7:00-8:00pm**

Women's Evening Bible Study  
(watch for dates)

**Wednesdays – 7:00-8:00pm**

Choir Rehearsal

**Tuesday, December 6**

WoA "Girls Night Out" at Spartacus

**Wednesday, December 7 & 14**

6:00pm Supper

6:45pm Mid-week Advent Service

**Saturday, December 10**

WoA Christmas Brunch

**Saturday, December 24 – 7:00pm**

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

**Sunday, December 25 – 10:30am**

Christmas Day Service  
No Sunday School/Bible Class

**Sunday, Jan. 22 – 11:30am**

Advent Voter's Meeting

**Saturday, February 18 – 5:15-7:00pm**

Praise and Pizza

**May 4-6, 2012**

Women of Advent Retreat, Salter Path NC