



# The Adventiser

## Advent Lutheran Church

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

Fall 2014

### *Be Encouraged... You Are God's Treasure!* (excerpted from the sermon on July 27, 2014)

My Dear Friends in Christ, "CAN YOU USE SOME ENCOURAGEMENT?" I know that I can. The world seems to be becoming more and more non-Christian. Freedom of religion seems to apply to all other beliefs except Christianity. According to the International Society for Human Rights, a secular observatory based in Frankfurt, Germany, 80% of acts of religious discrimination in the world today are directed at Christians. Statistically speaking, that makes Christians by far the most persecuted religious body on the planet.

The evening news tells us of the horrific persecution of Christians that is occurring in the Middle East. And persecution, in terms of limiting freedom of speech and practice for Christians, is becoming more and more prevalent in the U.S. We could all use some encouragement couldn't we?

Jesus' disciples needed some encouragement as well. Their world was beginning to turn against Jesus and them. So, in Matthew 13, Jesus encouraged them with two short parables: "<sup>44</sup> The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." And, "<sup>45</sup> Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, <sup>46</sup> who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

The traditional interpretation is that Jesus' disciples are the man who gives up everything, and Jesus is the treasure. This is called the "Discipleship reading". This tradition holds that these parables are teaching the "cost of discipleship". That in order to be a disciple of Jesus, one needs to suffer the loss of everything and follow Him.

Now, Jesus does teach at other times, that a disciple must be willing to suffer the loss of everything and follow Him, but remember He's telling these 2 parables to encourage His disciples. I don't know about you, but I don't feel especially encouraged hearing that as a disciple of Jesus, I have to give up everything and suffer; especially when things seem to be going from bad to worse all around me already.

But notice that a key element of both parables is that the man purchases the treasure. And we know that we can't "purchase" Jesus, or do anything to earn or deserve God's love. So, a more recent interpretation is that Jesus is the man who gives up everything to "purchase" His disciples, who are the treasure. This is known as the "Christological reading".

In these parables, Jesus is saying to His disciples, both 2000 years ago and today, "Although it may seem like the enemy is winning, have no fear, you are My treasure. I sold all that I have to come to earth and live the perfect life in your place, then purchase you with my sacrificial death and glorious resurrection. And that's the encouragement Jesus has for you and me today!

So, BE ENCOURAGED! My Brothers and Sisters in Christ... when persecution comes, remember that God, the Holy Spirit is with you through it; and that because of what Jesus did for you, YOU ARE GOD'S TREASURE!

May God give you that assurance when you need it most, *Pastor John*.

## 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."

After a few months off during the summer, the Council will meet on September 4 and discuss our fall schedule, which leads to a celebration of Christ's Birth on Christmas day! Please keep the Council and Advent in your prayers as we work together to improve the management and coordination of Advent's 2014 plans and activities!

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

On Sunday, September 7, 2014, the regular 10:30 a.m. Worship Service will resume. Sunday School for children and adults will start at 9:00 a.m.

The Praise Team will normally lead music during worship on the third Sunday of each month. Anyone who may be interested in joining the Praise Team with either vocals or instruments is welcome to the rehearsal on the Wednesday before the third Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m. The next two rehearsals will be on September 17 and October 15, 2014.

Fall Praise and Pizza will be held on Saturday, September 20 and October 18 at 5:15 pm. Everyone is invited to attend a fun evening of praise music, a short devotion, fellowship and pizza. This is a great outreach opportunity. Please invite your friends and neighbors.

Choir practice will resume on September 24, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. Anyone interested in participating is welcome.

## Board of Outreach

Our mission involvement is based on what Jesus commanded us to do. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8).

Below is a tentative list of fall events. Council will be reviewing and details will be available soon.

1. Thanksgiving food drive – Advent will provide several local families with a Thanksgiving meal, other food staples, special items for the kids and, if possible, a gift certificate.
2. PORCH (People Offering Relief for Chapel Hill and Carrboro Homes) – Advent volunteers collect food items; take food to distribution locations once a month, and help sort food for distribution one Monday each month. We have been doing this for about two years.
3. SECU Family House (UNC Hospitals) – Advent volunteers will prepare a meal for approximately 35 people, eat with families, and clean up once per quarter.
4. Operation Christmas Child (Samaritans Purse-shoe box) – Advent will gather toys and other items and package in shoeboxes.
5. Christmas Gifts – Advent will collect food and gifts for one or more families in need at Christmastime.
6. Touched by Grace – Grace Lutheran Church of Durham sponsors this event to provide health screening, food, clothing, and spiritual support to those in its local community. Advent participated last year and provided food, clothing, and several volunteers. Grace has again asked for our help. Save the date: September 20, 2014.
7. Crop walks to support CORA (Pittsboro) and Interfaith Council (Chapel Hill) that support those who are hungry.

Have you ever asked the question, "What does God want me to do?" Jesus gave us an answer in Matthew 25:34-46. "Come, you who are blessed by my Father . . . For 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, . . . Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see You as a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? . . . Truly, I say to you, as you did to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

We are blessed to be a blessing to others. If you are interested in participating in any or all of these events, please contact Dave Neely for information ([dave.neely@hotmail.com](mailto:dave.neely@hotmail.com)).

## Christian Education and Youth Ministries

### Defending The Faith

James Sire, author of the book *Why Should Anyone Believe Anything At All?*, says there are four major categories of reasons that a person may have for holding their beliefs:

1. **Sociological.** They inherited their beliefs from their parents, friends, or culture.
2. **Psychological.** Their beliefs give them comfort, purpose, meaning, etc.
3. **Religious.** They acquired their beliefs from their church, scriptures, or religious leader.
4. **Philosophical.** Their beliefs are logically consistent with each other and, versus other candidate belief systems, best explain and follow how the world works.

Sire shows that, of these four categories, only #4 is comprised of valid reasons for believing something. Your parents, despite their best efforts, could be wrong. And just because something makes you feel good doesn't make it true – remember Linus and The Great Pumpkin! Finally, many religions have scriptures and charismatic leaders – they can't all be right.

So it's important to not only know *what* we believe, but also *why* we believe it. Accordingly, our theme for the 2014-2015 instructional year is **Defending The Faith**. Advent will always be a place to learn sound doctrine and the application of the Scriptures to our daily lives. This year, we additionally hope to enhance these teachings by learning about *why* we believe.

Now, we Lutherans know that the ultimate reason we believe in the Holy Scriptures is because of God's free gift of faith to us through His Holy Spirit, and not through any works we do ourselves. Still, God commands us to do the good work of loving Him with all our mind (Matthew 22:37). Through our diligent study, He directs us to seek good reasons to believe in Christ as the savior of the world. What does this accomplish?

- It sanctifies us and gives us a deeper understanding of God and His creation.
- It helps build justified confidence in God's promises in times of trouble. As Peter asks in John 6:68, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Through his first-hand confidence in Jesus as Lord, Peter knew that even when we don't fully understand God's plan, there is no other way.
- It helps us witness to our friends and loved ones who may not yet accept the Bible as inspired. As we are commanded in 1 Peter 3:15, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

**Defending The Faith** means we Christians must compete in the Marketplace Of Ideas, standing against the false philosophies of our day (Colossians 2:8). In their corner, the Enemy may at times have public opinion, the legal system, or even swords and bombs. But we have the 100% truth of God's Holy Bible on our side, now and forever. God is great and He is in control always! Hallelujah!



### We Need Teachers!

Are you looking for a new way to serve Christ and His church? Here at Advent we seek **"To Grow In The Lord and to Make Him Known."** We would love to use your talents (raw or otherwise) in the Sunday School instruction of our children and adults. No experience necessary. Concerned about making a weekly commitment? We will help you find a teaching partner to balance the load. Several age levels are available – we are flexible! Contact Cliff Mather (919-548-8608, [CJMather@yahoo.com](mailto:CJMather@yahoo.com)) for more information.

## Rally Day: September 7th

Rally Day 2014 is upon us! The new Sunday School and Adult Bible Study instructional year begins on September 7. We are pleased to be once again offering many opportunities to study God's word as it applies to our lives:

- Sunday School.** Sunday School begins with a group opening in the Sanctuary at 9:00 a.m. each week, followed by hour-long classes at 9:10 a.m. We are planning classes for lower elementary (around 1<sup>st</sup> grade), upper elementary (around 4<sup>th</sup> grade), youth (upper grades), and adults. The children will be continuing the *Growing In Christ* series from Concordia Publishing House. The adults will first finish *The Story* series and then have a choice of several new teaching materials oriented towards **Defending The Faith**. Our youth will alternate between their own class and joining the adults, depending on available teachers.
- Women's Bible Study.** There are two groups to accommodate different schedules. A Tuesday morning group restarts on October 7 at 10:30 a.m. with *Gideon: Your Weakness, God's Strength*. Contact Maryanne Warne (919-468-0183, [maryanne106@me.com](mailto:maryanne106@me.com)) for more information. A biweekly Wednesday evening group restarts on October 1 at 7:00 p.m. with the *Following God Series: Life Principles from the Women of the Bible*. Contact Karen Baker (919-304-1227, [krobortel@gmail.com](mailto:krobortel@gmail.com)) for more information.
- Men's Bible Study.** The Tuesday evening men's group will reconvene September 9 at 7:00 p.m. The group will be continuing *The Theology Program*. This year's topic is Trinitarianism. Contact Cliff Mather (919-548-8608, [CJMather@yahoo.com](mailto:CJMather@yahoo.com)) for more information.



## Advent Family Photos

We are sure that you have noticed the large bulletin board in the Narthex that serves as a pictorial directory of (most of) our "Advent Family". It is time to update pictures and add new ones. Every Sunday in September, we will be taking pictures in a "photo corner" set up in the Fellowship Hall for your convenience. If you like your current picture, we will, of course, leave it up! OR, bring a copy of one of your recent favorites. Questions? Contact Carolyn Jones ([cmfpjones@yahoo.com](mailto:cmfpjones@yahoo.com))

## Birthdays

Peggy Earnhardt	Sept. 5	Paul Mather	Sept. 28	Don Eckert	Oct. 22
Aidan Connor	Sept. 7	Christy Wells	Sept. 29	Caitlyn Wriedt	Oct. 30
Jaxon Benham	Sept. 7	Lauren Koban	Oct. 1	Phyllis Underwood	Nov. 7
Ron Hinkle	Sept. 9	Craig Walker	Oct. 2	Kathy Crabtree	Nov. 9
Nathan Peterson	Sept. 13	Maryanne Warne	Oct. 4	Cliff Mather	Nov. 18
Walter Gaestel	Sept. 14	Dori Walker	Oct. 4	John Stow	Nov. 22
George Snowden	Sept. 15	Jonathan Simis	Oct. 5	Dana Higgins	Nov. 24
Melanie Mather	Sept. 16	Jarrad Borg	Oct. 7	Ryan Lemon	Nov. 25
Carolyn Walker	Sept. 17	Carolyn Hinkle	Oct. 8	David Anderson	Nov. 26
Wendy Healy	Sept. 22	Joseph Sheref	Oct. 10	Anona Serpas	Nov. 27
Bill Healy	Sept. 27	Pauline Ramsey	Oct. 12	Jon Fischer	Nov. 30
Cathy Stow	Sept. 28	Joyce Eckert	Oct. 20		

## Anniversaries

Peggy & Dan Earnhardt	Sept. 4	Tom Ortel & Karen Baker	Oct. 2
April Welborn & Nathan	Sept. 11	Jennifer & Paul Simis	Oct. 5
Martha & Walter Gaestel	Sept. 14	Christine & Tom Struckmeyer	Oct. 10
Wendy & Bill Healy	Sept. 25	Maryanne & Dwain Warne	Oct. 21
Janice & Clay Wriedt	Sept. 30	Cathy & John Stow	Nov. 22

**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.

## *Board of Finance*

**Stewardship of Time and Talent** – Stewardship isn't only about money and how we give; stewardship is about how we live. God created us to serve. With autumn approaching, now is the time to re-energize and share our time and talent at church. The following few paragraphs are one section of an article by the Barnabas Foundation entitled *7 Habits of a Highly Effective Steward*.

### *Habit 6: Give Time and Talent*

What can we do with the life that God has given us? Since everything we have really belongs to God, we are simply using for God what God has entrusted to us. This includes our intellect, beauty, skills, energy, time and imagination. Each one of us is uniquely gifted. God has a purpose and plan for each of us that no one else can fulfill. We possess our own unique temperaments, passions, skills and experiences to be used for God's purpose. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)

As Christian stewards - managers of the gifts God has given us - we are called to reflect God's love in our community. We are called to love as Jesus loved, to serve as Jesus served. This means we have a responsibility to reflect God's love in our homes and offices, city streets and neighborhoods - in everything we say and do. In a world weakened by a lack of love, we are called to offer loving service to others. One of the greatest gifts we can give is the gift of self. Any day is a good day to offer the gift of self to build up the Kingdom of God in our families, communities and church.

What will be the fruit of a truly Christian stewardship of time and talent? First, we will multiply ourselves in His service. Second, we will advance the work of the kingdom. Third, we will bring glory to God, and this is the reason we are here.

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## *Using Our Gifts for Advent*

On a recent Sunday, the Epistle (Romans 12: 4-8) reminded us to recognize and share our individual and collective gifts as Christians. As summer draws to a close and we go back to our regular schedule for Sunday school and Worship, please consider adding your name to our lists of volunteers.

Monthly **Time and Talent** schedules support and enhance Sunday worship and Communion. Adult roles include Altar Care, Communion Steward, Tray Bearer, Greeter, Reader, Usher, Bread for first time guests, and Refreshments. Children may serve as Bell Ringer before Worship, Acolyte and Crucifer. Contact: Carolyn Jones

We invite your ideas for **Bulletin Boards and Banners** and your help in creating and installing them. Contact: Carolyn Jones ([cmfpjones@yahoo.com](mailto:cmfpjones@yahoo.com))

If you want to help maintain our **Church Building and Grounds**, contact Paul Simis, outside ([paulsimis@aol.com](mailto:paulsimis@aol.com)) or Jon and Sam Fischer, inside ([jonf5555@gmail.com](mailto:jonf5555@gmail.com), [samjon@comcast.net](mailto:samjon@comcast.net)).

Would you like to put **Fresh Flowers on the Altar** on Sunday? Contact Dorothy Preisel (919-479-6057, [dorothypreisel@hotmail.com](mailto:dorothypreisel@hotmail.com)) or sign the Flower Chart on the bulletin board in the office hallway.



Advent's **Care Ministry** sends cards and notes, visits sick and shut-ins, keeps vigilant in prayer, helps provide transportation, and helps organize meals when emergencies arise. Contacts: Carolyn Jones, John and Cathy Stow, Marge Schradie, Carolyn Walker, Pauline Ramsey, and Lois Durr.

These are only a few of the ways you can help – join us!

## *Women of Advent*

Women of Advent will kick off their Fall activities with an "International Potluck Dinner" on Tuesday, September 16, at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Anona Serpas, 519 Carolina Meadows Villa, Chapel Hill, NC. Sign-up sheets, flyers, and directions will be available in the narthex. Please join us for an enjoyable evening of fun, fellowship, and delicious food from many nations! Yum!

On October 7, at 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall the Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study will begin a seven week DVD study by Priscilla Shirer entitled "Gideon" which will help you find God's strength in your weaknesses. This study will encourage you to recognize your weaknesses as the key that the Lord gave you to unlock the full experience of His strength in your life. Cost for the study book is \$12. A sign-up sheet will be in the narthex. Any questions see Maryanne Warne.

On Saturday, October 18, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Women of Advent will be hosting the Lutheran Women's Missionary League Eastern Zone Fall Rally. Pastor John Benham will lead a Bible study on "Living Out Our Faith." We are excited Advent's Praise Band will be participating so others can enjoy their music. The Gifts From the Heart collection for the day will benefit the Abundant Joy Center. A list of needed items will be available. A coffee hour will be held during registration and a luncheon provided at noon. We hope many will plan to attend this Rally. There will be sign-up sheets in the narthex. Sign-up sheets will also be available for those who are willing to help with luncheon preparations, morning registration, and coffee hour. We need and welcome your help! Let's make this an outstanding day for the ladies attending! See Lois Durr with questions.

Mark your calendars now for the Annual Women of Advent Christmas Breakfast Buffet to be held this year on December 6, the FIRST Saturday in December, at 9:30 a.m. at the home of Maryanne Warne. There were several conflicts this year with our usual SECOND Saturday in December date.

For those who like to plan far ahead, the WOA annual Trinity Center Beach Retreat for this coming year will be held May 1-3, 2015.

## *Men's Retreat*

The Men of Advent look forward to another great weekend of fellowship, studying God's Word and growing together in Christ in 2014! Pastor Chas Spomer will be leading our discussion on 1 Corinthians. We have currently reserved 10 rooms, which hold up to 20 men double occupancy, at the Trinity Center in Salter Path, NC from Oct 31-Nov 2, 2014. Let John Stow or Dave Neely know if you can attend. We look forward to another great weekend!

## *Abundant Joy Center for Women's Ministries*

This fall **Abundant Joy Center for Women's Ministries** is offering the following small groups for women: *Making Peace with Your Past*, *Help for Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families* by Tim Sledge, *The Best Yes* by Lysa TerKeurst, and *The Daniel Plan* by Rick Warren. Please visit our website <http://www.abundantjoycwm.com> for more information. Contact Beth Benham (919-943-0789, [abundantjoycwm@gmail.com](mailto:abundantjoycwm@gmail.com)) to register.

On Sat October 25, Abundant Joy and Women of Advent will host a one day workshop, *A Gift of Joy* presented by Connie Denninger wife of SED President John Denninger. We will learn how to live a life of Gratitude each and every day. This is based on the book *One Thousand Gifts* by Ann Voskamp. Save the date! More information coming soon. This will be a wonderful day of fellowship and learning.



*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 Winter 2014/2015 issue:  
Thursday, Nov. 20, 2014*

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**Contact the Pastor:**

**Rev. John V. Benham III, Pastor**

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

**e-mail:** [adventpastor@bellsouth.net](mailto:adventpastor@bellsouth.net)

**Sundays**

**9:00am** Sunday School/Confirmation/Bible Class

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



## **Dates to Remember**

**Tuesdays – 10:30am**

Beginning October 7, Women's Bible Study

**Tuesdays – 7:00-8:00pm**

Beginning September 9, Men's Bible Study

**Wednesdays – 7:00-9:00pm**

Sept. 17 and Oct. 15, Praise Band Rehearsal

**Wednesdays – 7:00-8:00pm**

Beginning September 24, Choir Rehearsal

**Alternate Wednesdays – 7:00-8:00pm**

Beginning October 1, Women's Bible Study

**Sunday, Sept. 7 – Rally Day**

Resume Regular Worship Schedule

**Tuesday, September 16 –6:00pm**

Women of Advent Dinner

**Saturday, September 20 – 9:30am-2:30pm**

Health Clinic Event, Grace, Durham NC

**Saturday, September 20 – 5:15-7:00pm**

Praise and Pizza

**Saturday, October 18 – 9:00am-2:00pm**

LWML Eastern Zone Rally at Advent

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

Praise and Pizza

**Saturday, October 25**

"A Gift of Joy" Workshop

**October 31 – November 2**

Men of Advent Retreat, Salter Path NC

**Saturday, December 6 – 9:30am**

Women of Advent Christmas Brunch

**May 1-3, 2015**

Women of Advent Retreat, Salter Path NC