



The Adventiser

Advent Lutheran Church

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

Spring 2015

FOCUS FOR LENT MIDWEEKS: “SINGING WITH THE EXILES” (Isaiah 40-55)

My Dear Friends in Christ ... Gathered by the waters of Babylon, Judean exiles wistfully wondered: Is God for real? If so, does He really care about us? What does our future hold? Will this ever change? God's people had watched their world shatter into a million pieces. They were demoralized and disillusioned. Their disaster looked terminal. Do you feel this way? Does it look as though your current problems are more than you can bear? Do you find yourself asking: Why did this happen? Why did God allow it? Is there any order in the world? Will God really deliver on what He said?

Isaiah answers these questions in chapters 40–55 of his book. He announces this just when Israel's history seemed closed and controlled by hopeless Babylonian imperial policy. To the shock and surprise of everyone, the Lord will stir up a king named Cyrus, and a new exodus will explode in the desert! A Servant will be wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. And barren Zion will be given so many children that, like the old woman in the shoe, she won't know what to do! Standing behind these marvelous promises is God's almighty Word. “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8). The exiles are going home!

That's why this Lent we are “Singing with the Exiles” as they are restored to their home. Isaiah 40–55 will shape us as we . . .

Study texts from Isaiah in Sunday morning adult Bible class; and

Listen to the following sermons during Mid-Week and Holy Week Services:

Ash Wednesday (2/18/15): “God Has a Word for That” (Isaiah 41:14–16)

Mid-Week Lent 1 (2/25/15): “He Only Has Eyes for You” (Isaiah 43:1–7)

Mid-Week Lent 2 (3/4/15): “Marked” (Isaiah 44:1–5)

Mid-Week Lent 3 (3/11/15): “Breaking Down the Gates” (Isaiah 45:1–8)

Mid-Week Lent 4 (3/18/15): “Get Out!” (Isaiah 48:17–22)

Mid-Week Lent 5 (3/25/15): “One Little Word Can Fell Him” (Isaiah 49:1–6)

Maundy (Holy) Thursday (4/2/15): “He Prepares a Table” (Isaiah 49:7–13)

Good Friday (4/3/15): “All” (Isaiah 52:13–53:12)

Easter Sunday (4/5/15): “We Are Going Home” (Isaiah 55:6–13)

Plan now to join your Advent Family for these Mid-Week and Holy Week Services, and sing with the exiles as we learn from Isaiah to walk the Lenten way to the cross and to the empty tomb. God promises to turn our weeping into joy and our present pain into an endless Alleluia!

Our Mid-Week services are at 7:00 p.m. following a light supper at 6:15. Our Easter Sunday Celebration begins with an Easter Brunch at 9:15 a.m., followed by Divine Worship with Holy Communion at 10:30 and an Egg Hunt for the kids following worship.

May the Blessings of Lent and Easter be especially meaningful to you this year. Yours in Christ, Pastor John.

Women of Advent

A good time was had at the WOA Valentine's Girls Night Out "Favorite Things" event on February 12 - lots of yummy food and great items!

The Carolinas District LWML Joy Event will be held March 21, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Salem Lutheran Church in Taylorsville, NC. The theme for the day comes from a quote from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther: "We are saved by faith alone, but faith that saves is never alone." Rev. Gaven Mize, Foothills Pastoral Counselor will lead the Bible study. The two Bible study themes are "What faith is!" and "What faith does!" based on 1 Peter 1:17-21. There is detailed information and a registration form on the Women of Advent bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall.

The Eastern Zone LWML Spring Rally is scheduled for April 18 at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Clayton, NC. When we receive detailed information, it will be posted on the Women of Advent bulletin board and an announcement put in the Sunday bulletins.

The Women of Advent's annual beach retreat will be held May 1-3 at the Trinity Center in Salter Path, NC. This year we will be using a Bible study entitled "Zip It and Pray!" by Karen Ehman (Keep It Shut: What to Say, How to Say It, When to Say It, and When to Say Nothing). Learn to talk to God before you talk to others so your speech is laced with grace. The study gives women practical, biblically based steps for knowing what to say and how to say it, as well as when it is better to say nothing at all. Pastor John will be joining us again this year on the Sunday morning of the retreat to lead us in worship. This is always a great weekend of fellowship and relaxation so mark your calendars now to attend. Watch for the poster and sign-up sheet coming soon in the church narthex.

Christian Education and Youth Ministries

Never Read A Bible Verse ???

Greg Koukl, president of Stand To Reason, offers the following advice:

If there was one bit of wisdom, one rule of thumb, one single skill I could impart, one useful tip I could leave that would serve you well the rest of your life, what would it be? What is the single most important practical skill I've ever learned as a Christian? Here it is: Never read a Bible verse. That's right, never read a Bible verse. Instead, always . . .

Want more? Check out his informative article at <http://www.str.org/articles/never-read-a-bible-verse>.

Sunday School And Bible Study

Sunday School and Adult Bible Study continues through Spring. We are pleased to be 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 a.m. each week, followed by hour-long classes at 9:10. There are classes for lower elementary (around 1st grade), upper elementary (around 4th grade), youth (upper grades), and adults. The children are continuing with the *Growing In Christ* series from Concordia Publishing House. Having finished the video series *Tactics in Defending the Faith*, the adults are doing informal studies of the weekly service Bible readings (pericopes) as well as a special study during Lent that aligns with the midweek Lenten services.
- **Men's Bible Study.** The Tuesday evening men's group meets at 7 p.m. and continues with *The Theology Program* and the topic of Trinitarianism. Contact Cliff Mather (919-548-8608, CJMather@yahoo.com) for more information.
- **Women's Bible Study.** There are two groups to accommodate different schedules. A Tuesday morning group continues a Beth Moore study on 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Contact Maryanne Warne (919-468-0183, maryanne106@me.com) for more information. A Wednesday evening group meets at 7 p.m. and continues with *Life Principles From the Women of the Bible* (Monday evenings at 7 p.m. during Lent: Feb. 16 – March 30) No book to buy. Each lesson is inclusive with no homework. Contact Karen Baker (919-304-1227, krobortel@gmail.com) for more information.

Board of Outreach – Orphan Grain Train

In December 2014, we had a visit from Rev. Ralph G. Schmidt, Director of Development for Orphan Grain Train (OGT). He gave us a very thorough and interesting run down on what and how OGT operates.

The main purpose of his visit was to raise awareness and seek funding for a Grain Train warehouse being built in the Maryland region, part of the SED area. They lost the warehouse they had. Now they operate out of one classroom of a church where they sort items received. Once sorted, items are taken to another Lutheran church and loaded into storage containers. The bottom line is that the items are handled five or more times before they are packed into the final shipping container.

The cost of the new warehouse is \$836K and they have raised about \$432K. Because the permits will be running out in the fall of 2015, \$562K is needed by summer so they can get financing to start construction. Rev. Schmidt requested donations from our congregation and from individual members. He will be back in the area in March and has offered to lead a Bible study and give a short presentation at the end of the service.



As at all OGT branches, volunteers operate the Maryland Branch doing their own fundraising, donation acceptance, and shipping. They recently loaded a shipment for Nicaragua in the snow and cold of winter on January 9, 2015. Their warehouse is a container on the edge of the woods and they use the back of a pick-up to load the semi-trailer. Maryland's volunteers energetically push through the difficulty because they are passionate about serving our Lord by serving others. Pictured is the warehouse (container) and volunteers loading the shipment for Nicaragua.



Who is Orphan Grain Train? Orphan Grain Train is a recognized service organization of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This means OGT works primarily with the congregations, ministries, and auxiliaries of the LCMS here in America and around the world wherever possible. OGT's outreach is interdenominational in that we also partner with other Christian churches involved in disaster relief efforts here in the United States and other countries whenever it is practical to do so. OGT volunteers are members of Lutheran churches and other Christian denominations. They do it all using only 3 cents per dollar for administration and fundraising. A full 97 cents of every dollar spent goes for the mission of getting food, clothing, medical, and other needed items to the people who need them.

In loving response to Christ, the Servant, the Orphan Grain Train movement encourages and enables God's people to share personal and material resources in bringing Christ's name and character to needy people both far and near. Sometimes that character expresses itself as a word well spoken, sometimes as a bandage well applied, and sometimes as a child well fed.

Where does Orphan Grain Train provide their services? OGT serves 71 orphanages in Russia and former Soviet Republics and more need help. Last year OGT shipped more than 3.4 million meals. They are proud of their wonderful volunteers from coast to coast. Last year 77,548 volunteer hours were donated by volunteers; that's 218 volunteer hours per day! Today OGT has shipped to 64 different countries, sharing God's mercy and love by meeting the needs of the hopeless. 70 semi-loads were sent to locations in this country, and 83 forty-foot shipping containers were sent internationally in 2013. They were delivered to Africa (17 countries), Asia (12 countries), Europe (15 countries), and South America (17 countries). In North America they deal with floods, storms, wildfires, Native American Indian Reservations, Texas-Mexico border missions, and other natural and man-made disasters.

You can help by volunteering, donating, and through special projects.

Find a Special Project

If you are looking for a project for yourself or your group, here are some suggestions that may suit your needs: Layette Kits, Pillowcase Dresses, Sleeping Mats, Hygiene Kits, School Kits, Quilts, Undie Sunday, Adopt an Orphanage, Medical Shunt program, Project Feed 500.

OGT's **Adopt an Orphanage** program currently has 71 orphanages under full sponsorship in Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Hundreds more are awaiting help. Many of these orphanages are in remote rural areas where poverty is the norm and adult unemployment is as high as 80%. Combined with chronic alcoholism, these conditions have a tremendous impact on families.

Conditions in the orphanages are often extremely harsh. The temperature was -20° Fahrenheit when the photo of a Severskya, Russia orphanage was taken. Many children have only one or two sets of clothing. Medicine and other necessities are often in short supply or unavailable. With the "Adopt an Orphanage" program, OGT provides support for each sponsored orphanage at a cost of \$280 a month. Funds are wired to OGT partners on location who purchase and deliver medicine, medical supplies, hygiene supplies, vitamins, and clothing directly to the orphanages



Orphans in Kyrgyzstan



A Typical Orphanage



Millions of children and families are starving in countries around the world. In order to help meet the need for food, OGT has initiated a new program called Project Feed 500. For a cost of about 3 pennies, OGT can ship a meal to a child in a foreign country, \$15 will feed 500 and \$150 will feed 5000. If a family of 4 could give up just one fast food meal, the savings would Feed 500. The goal of Project Feed 500 is to ship enough meals to feed 4 million hungry people. Will you help?

For more information, visit www.ogt.org.

Board of Finance and Stewardship

Let me share a few thoughts about stewardship from the November 2013 StewardCAST published by the LCMS Stewardship Ministry: *"We are not required by the Law to be stewards. We are created and redeemed to be stewards. Stewardship is indeed an important part of any congregation's sound practical theology. It begins with the cross. It flows from the font. It is fed and nourished at the rail, and it responds freely and joyously in thanksgiving to everything the Lord does for us."*

Advent Lutheran Church is a congregation of faithful stewards on a journey towards whole-life stewardship. As the Holy Spirit works in us, our hearts are being transformed and stewardship is becoming more intentional in every aspect of our lives. Thank you to all of you who gave of yourselves and shared your time, your talents and your resources in so many ways in 2014.

2014 Year-end Financial Summary

Giving to the general fund	\$ 160,918.71
General fund expenses	\$ 146,934.54
Income vs expense	\$ 13,984.17

At our January 2015 voters' meeting, those members present voted to donate \$10,544.99 of the 2014 overage to the following: SED Assist, Abundant Joy CWM, Interfaith Council for Social Services, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces, LCMS Joint Seminary Fund, LCMS Together in Mission and the Orphan Grain Train. With these donations, Advent's total 2014 mission giving is 10% of Advent's offerings received. The remainder of the overage will replenish the capital fund. If you would like to see the full financial statement for 2014, please see Jennifer Simis or Judy Neely.

Church Council

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 Council met on January 15 and finalized a proposed 2015 Budget and discussed each Board's activities as part of the Spring schedule which leads to a celebration of Christ's Resurrection on Easter Day! We would like to thank the congregation for attending the Voters Meeting and approving Advent's 2015 Budget on January 25!

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. Also, keep the Council and Advent in your prayers as we work together to improve the management and coordination of Advent's 2015 plans and activities!

Men's Retreat

The Men of Advent look forward to another wonderful weekend of fellowship, studying God's Word and growing together in Christ in 2015! We have currently reserved 12 rooms, which hold up to 24 men double occupancy, and the St. James room at the Trinity Center in Salter Path, NC from October 2-4 in 2015. Let Bill Ackerman or Dave Neely know if you can attend. For those that plan ahead, we've also reserved 12 rooms with the Beach House from Sept. 30 – Oct. 2 in 2016.

Board of Worship

Choir rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:00 p.m. or after Lent services 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 Peggy Earnhardt, Pastor John or Xavier Richert.

Birthdays

Martha Gaestel	Mar. 2	Gavin Borg	Mar. 27	Lydia Berrong	Apr. 21
Denny Zarnt	Mar. 3	Marilyn Ernst	Mar. 27	Dan Koban	Apr. 21
John Byrnes	Mar. 3	Laurene Ackerman	Mar. 28	Dan Earnhardt	Apr. 28
Anders Borg	Mar. 5	Gary Gunn	Mar. 29	Greg Maves	May 6
Ashley Watren	Mar. 9	Matt Simpson	Apr. 5	Allison Watren	May 9
Patrick Connor	Mar. 15	John Cangelosi	Apr. 7	Keith Lemon	May 16
Jennifer Simis	Mar. 15	Karla Byrnes	Apr. 7	Maggie Southwell	May 17
Tracie Foels	Mar. 16	Tom Struckmeyer	Apr. 11	Clay Wriedt	May 21
Wendy Rosenstock	Mar. 17	Sophie Struckmeyer	Apr. 13	Janice Wriedt	May 21
Julie Hess	Mar. 20	Matthew Wells	Apr. 16	Shannon Graines	May 25
Savannah Mather	Mar. 24	Alice O'Grady	Apr. 17	Judy Neely	May 27
Marge Schradie	Mar. 26	Annabelle Koban	Apr. 19	Max Worley	May 30

Anniversaries

Pauline & Ron Ramsey	Mar. 1	Phyllis & Kent Underwood	Apr. 22
Rina & Doug Borg	Mar. 11	Lauren & Dan Koban	May 27

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).

Newsletter Deadline for the Summer 2015 issue: Tuesday, May 19, 2015

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web: www.AdventLutheranCH.org

Contact the Pastor:

Rev. John V. Benham III, Pastor

Phone: (919) 943-7082

e-mail: adventpastor@bellsouth.net

Sundays

9:00am Sunday School/Confirmation/Bible Class

10:30am Divine Service with Holy Communion



Dates to Remember

Tuesdays – 10:30am

Women's Bible Study

Tuesdays – 7:00-8:00pm

Men's Bible Study

Wednesdays – 7:00-8:00pm

Choir/Praise Band Rehearsal
(after midweek service during Lent)

Wednesdays – 7:00-8:00pm

Women's Bible Study
(Mondays during Lent)

Wednesday, February 18, 7:00 pm

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesdays, February 25-March 25

6:15 pm – Supper

7:00 pm – Lenten Service

Saturday, March 21

LWML Joy Event, Taylorsville NC

Thursday, April 2 – 7:00 pm

Maundy Thursday Service

Friday, April 3 – 7:00 pm

Good Friday Tenebrae Service

Sunday, April 5 – Easter

9:15am Easter Potluck Brunch

10:30am Worship Service

11:30am Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 18 – 5:15-7:00pm

Praise and Pizza

Saturday, April 18

LWML Spring Rally, Clayton NC

May 1-3

Women of Advent Retreat, Salter Path NC

October 2-4

Men of Advent Retreat, Salter Path NC