



The Adventiser

Advent Lutheran Church

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

Summer 2015

Focusing on Our Neighbors

(“iNeighborhood”: a new District-wide initiative)

My Dear Friends in Christ, Cliff Mather and I recently represented Advent as the Lay and Pastoral Delegates at the LCMS Southeastern District (SED) Convention. As part of District President John Denninger’s report, we learned that all five ABLAZE goals established at the 2006 District Convention have been met and surpassed, these were: 1) 3,000 mission prayer partners; 2) 2.5 million Faith-Sharing events; 3) 100 new ministries started; 4) 100 congregations involved in District sponsored outreach development; and 5) 60 mission outreach teams established. In addition, more than \$6 million dollars have been raised for Global, District, and local mission outreach.

President Denninger then shared some sobering statistics that led to the establishment of the next set of SED goals: There are over 32 million people (more than 10% of the US population) living within the borders of the SED. A recent study shows that only 22% of them are in church on a Sunday morning (similar to the National average). While a majority of Americans say that they are Christian, only 2 in 10 put value on worship life, one of the vital signs of Christian life. So, nearly 25 Million of our neighbors in the SED are not in church on Sunday morning, and likely don’t know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

More than 2.5 million people living in the US die every year. On average that means that more than 250,000 people living within the borders of the SED die every year and encounter Jesus. Since 80% of them do not value worship life, likely 200,000 are dying without a saving relationship with Jesus.

There are 67,000 baptized LCMS members in the 210 churches and 91 schools of the SED. The Missional Question that comes from these statistics is: “How Do We Reach 25 Million People?” That is: those in the SED who do not have a vital Christian life, as indicated by not being in church on Sunday.

The answer is that since people are no longer coming to church as they once did, we (the church) need to go to them, connecting them with Jesus. The new SED Mission Statement adopted by the Board of Directors is: “In grateful response to God’s grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Southeastern District connects people with Jesus” And the new SED Vision Statement is: “As we work together to connect our neighbors to Jesus, lives are transformed and God’s Kingdom grows.”

The strategy for accomplishing this mission and vision is an initiative titled “iNeighborhood”. We focus on reaching people in our own neighborhoods. The 4 District goals are: 1) 50 ministries partnering in the iNeighborhood pilot project; 2) 100 congregations with called workers who are active in ministry in their neighborhoods; 3) 500 new congregations engaged in The Word; and 4) 6,000 members sent into new neighborhoods and received back with thanksgiving as lives are transformed and God’s Kingdom grows. You can read more about this initiative and see the progress toward these goals on the website www.iNeighborhood.org.

As a first step at Advent, let’s all make an intentional effort this summer to get to know our neighbors better, so that God can use us to connect them with Jesus. More specifics in the fall ...

Yours in Christ, Pastor John

Board of Finance and Stewardship

The Advent family has always had a heart for missions and reaching out to our community. Because of that, in January, voters approved a budget of \$160,138.00 for 2015 that included giving 10% of our offerings to missions even though our anticipated donations were almost \$10,000 less than budgeted expenses. This is a step of faith for our congregation knowing that we have a faithful and generous God who provides.

Expenses through mid-May are \$62,791.86 and are less than expected at this point. Total income to the general fund is \$60,581.15 and is \$2210.71 less than expenses.

Traditionally, Advent's income is at its lowest during the summer months of June, July and August. As attendance fluctuates, so does our offering. I challenge you to keep your donations current. Don't take a vacation from stewardship. James 1:17 states "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights..." God is the source. Christians give freely because God has first given so freely to us: we are only imitating our Father, growing up into His likeness.

If you'd like to give electronically, Advent participates in "Joyful Response," a free program sponsored by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. See Judy Neely for details.

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 March 12 and formed a Nominating Committee to talk to and recommend Advent members who would be interested in serving on Advent's Council from July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2017. The slate will be presented in May and the Election will take place at our Voter's Meeting on June 28.

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!

Board of Worship

Our summer worship schedule will begin on Sunday, June 7; the worship service will start at 10:00 a.m. There will be no Sunday School or Adult Bible Class during the summer. We will resume our normal worship schedule on Rally Day, Sunday, September 13, 2015.

The Praise team will lead music on June 21, July 26, August 16 and September 20, 2015. If you are interested in being part of the praise team, contact Pastor John or Peggy Earnhardt.

Women of Advent

The ladies attending the Women of Advent beach retreat May 1-3 had an enjoyable weekend in the sun exploring the beach while learning what the Bible tells us about "What to Say, How to Say It, When to Say It, and When to Say Nothing at All." Pastor John joined us Sunday morning and led us in worship and communion, a special part of the weekend.

Women of Advent activities are in recess for the summer months and will resume in September. Enjoy your vacations and other summer 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 10 rooms, which hold up to 20 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. We look forward to great weekends together studying God's word!

Board of Outreach - Hope

If we are investing for our family's future or if we were a coach of a sports team, hope would not likely be a good strategy for financial security or producing a winning team. However, when it comes to our spiritual security, "hope is a shatterproof word, representing something supremely sure." This devotion by Richard E. Lauersdorf, explains Christian hope.

WHERE IS YOUR HOPE?

"In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3"

It is only a small word of four letters, yet what an important role it plays. Unfortunately, for many hope is an ambiguous word, wishful thinking that seldom if ever materializes. But for the Christian, hope is a shatterproof word, representing something supremely sure. It's the window through which I can look into God's loving heart and see all his promises fully kept. That is why Peter calls it "a living hope," because based on God's sure promises; it will never let me down.

What's the content of the Christian's hope? All that God promises me in Christ Jesus. His pardon to cover all my sins. His power to help me in the fight against temptations. His comfort to help dry my tears. And especially, his heaven as my home. All this and so much more he promises me.

Where's my assurance that this hope is shatterproof? "The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," Peter reminds me. Jesus' resurrection is the heart of the gospel. Without it I have no spiritual hope. Then my sins still hang like some warped steel beams around my neck. Then my grave is a dark, dank prison that locks me in. Christ's resurrection is proof positive that all God has promised is true. No wonder the New Testament devotes so much space to Christ's resurrection. That's where true hope plants it feet.

Lord, every day take me back to Christ's resurrection as proof for all your promises. Amen.

As we compile our list of those words that focus us on our Lord's promises, let us add hope and resurrection to love, grace, mercy and peace. And them, let's share them! Blessings to us all.

Birthdays

Patricia Williams	June 5	Vi Messick	July 11	Madison Maves	July 29
Alice Neebe	June 7	Tom Berrong	July 12	Laura Simis	Aug. 4
Beth Benham	June 9	Chris Lehman	July 16	Gayle Zart	Aug. 7
Karen Baker	June 10	Ruth Schwasinger	July 16	Colleen Walther	Aug. 8
Rick Heizler	June 21	Cameron Gunn	July 17	Nancy Whiteley	Aug. 12
Simon Walker	June 24	Nicholas Hoffman	July 18	Dave Neely	Aug. 18
Dorothy Schmidt	June 27	Joseph Sheref, Jr.	July 18	Ginger Massey	Aug. 19
Josh Benham	June 29	Joe Schradie	July 19	Grace Hoffman	Aug. 21
Emma Richie	July 1	Linda Mather	July 19	Carolyn Jones	Aug. 25
Amie Sheref	July 7	Ryan Healy	July 21	Dorothy Preisel	Aug. 26
Brennan Higgins	July 9	Ed Wriedt	July 22	Bill Ackerman	Aug. 28

Anniversaries

Madison & Greg Maves	June 4	Judy & Dave Neely	July 4
Lydia & Tom Berrong	June 11	Gayle & Denny Zart	July 8
Marge & Joe Schradie	June 18	Carolyn & Craig Walker	Aug. 14
Sam & Jon Fischer	June 19	Dana & Brennan Higgins	Aug. 13
Carolyn & Ron Hinkle	June 20	Laurene & Bill Ackerman	Aug. 19
Karla & John Byrnes	June 21	Wendy Rosenstock & John Cangelosi	Aug. 21
Pamela Ro & Tim Hoffman	June 28	Loni & Gary Gunn	Aug. 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.

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Summer Schedule

Sundays June 7 – September 6, 2015

No Sunday School/Sunday Bible Class

10:00am Divine Service with Holy Communion



Dates to Remember

Wednesdays – 7:00-9:00pm

Praise Band Rehearsal

June 17

July 22

August 12

September 16

Sunday, June 7

Summer Schedule starts

Sunday, June 28, 11:30am

Voter's Meeting

Sunday, Sept. 13

Resume Regular Worship Schedule

October 2 – 4

Men of Advent Retreat, Salter Path NC



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 Fall 2015 issue:
Tuesday, August 18, 2015*