

THE ADVENTURE - 2020



ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

OUR MISSION – FAITHFUL IN THE WORD

- + To *gather* as God's people and nurture one another
- + To *know* the Word of God
- + To *grow* in faith, love, and service
- + To *go* into the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ



Rev. Matthew E. Ollikainen, Pastor
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A Blessed Christmas
To you and your loved ones



ONLINE-ONLY WORSHIP SERVICES BEGIN THIS SUNDAY

In compliance with our Bishop's recommendation and considering the current outbreak of additional COVID-19 cases:

Advent's Church Council has decided to **cancel all upcoming in-person worship services** scheduled through December 2020. Unfortunately, this also includes the Christmas Eve services.

On December 6 and 13, guest Pastor Frank Sayford will lead our worship team in audio worship services, which can be accessed on adventrichboro.org at any time you choose.

Pastor Matt will lead us in worship starting on December 20. Our worship team and church council are now working with him to expand the online format for worship. They would like to stream a live video of future worship services and hope to have a video version ready in-time for the December 20 service. A recorded version would also be available online. We will keep you informed about Christmas services thru e-mails and on our website.



Welcome, Rev. Matthew E. Ollikainen!

Advent's congregation unanimously approved Rev. Matthew E. Ollikainen as our full-time pastor at a special congregational meeting on November 22, 2020. We are happy to welcome "Pastor Matt," as he prefers to be called!

Pastor Matt preached and led the worship service that morning. Following the service, a brief congregational meeting was held, overseen by a representative of the local synod, and a vote was taken. Pastor Matt was invited into the meeting to learn the results and all were pleased as he accepted the call. We thank Advent's Call Committee for their hard work over the past year in recognizing Pastor Matt as the recommended candidate for our pastoral vacancy.

Pastor Matt has led congregations over the past 18 years and is the proud father of two teenage children. He earned a Master of Divinity degree at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and is a graduate of Susquehanna University and Council Rock High School. He will begin his work at Advent in mid-December and lead his first worship service as our official pastor on December 20, 2020, which will be featured online.

We thank God for bringing Pastor Matt to us and look forward to working with him in sharing God's love with our members, our friends, and the community.

We invite you to listen to services on our website and follow these lessons with your Bible.

Sunday, December 6, 2020 - Second Sunday of Advent

Introduction

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings and Psalm

Isaiah 40:1-11 - *Good news of God's coming to a people in exile*

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 - *Righteousness shall prepare a pathway for God. (Ps. 85:13)*

2 Peter 3:8-15a - *Waiting for and hastening the day of God*

Mark 1:1-8 - *John appears from the wilderness*

Sunday, December 13, 2020 - Third Sunday of Advent

Introduction

“Rejoice always,” begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. “All God’s children got a robe,” go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s party.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings and Psalms

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 - *Righteousness and praise flourish like a garden*

Psalm 126 - The LORD has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3)

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 - *Kept in faith until the coming of Christ*

Luke 1:46-55 - *You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly.* (Lk. 1:52)

Sunday, December 20, 2020 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Introduction

God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David’s throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel’s greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, “Count me in.” We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, “Count us in.”

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings and Psalms

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 - *The LORD’s promise to David*

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 - Your love, O LORD, forever will I sing. (Ps. 89:1)

Romans 16:25-27 - *The mystery of God revealed in Jesus Christ*

Luke 1:26-38 - *The angel appears to Mary*

Thursday, December 24, 2020 - Nativity of Our Lord I: Christmas Eve

Introduction

In winter’s deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus’ birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus’ presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings and Psalm

Isaiah 9:2-7 - *Light shines: a child is born for us*

Psalm 96 - Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. (Ps. 96:11)

Titus 2:11-14 - *The grace of God has appeared*

Luke 2:1-14 [15-20] - *God with us*

Friday, December 25, 2020 - Nativity of Our Lord II: Christmas Day

Introduction

As on the first day of creation, on this Christmas Day the Word illumines the world, shining forth to bring all things into being. Today we celebrate the incarnate Word, God becoming flesh to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ then and now. Emboldened by the good news of Christ's birth, along with the shepherds, Mary and Joseph, and all witnesses to the light of Christ, we declare to the world that we have indeed seen and been transformed by the arrival of "the salvation of our God." O come, let us adore!

Prayer of the Day

All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings and Psalm

Isaiah 62:6-12 - *God comes to restore the people*

Psalm 97 - Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the honest of heart. (*Ps. 97:11*)

Titus 3:4-7 - *Saved through water and the Spirit*

Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20 - *The birth of the Messiah revealed to shepherds*

Sunday, December 27, 2020 - First Sunday of Christmas

Introduction

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings and Psalm

Isaiah 61:10--62:3 - *Clothed in garments of salvation*

Psalm 148 - The splendor of the LORD is over earth and heaven. (*Ps. 148:13*)

Galatians 4:4-7 - *Children and heirs of God*

Luke 2:22-40 - *The presentation of the child*

**BIBLE STUDY FOR KIDS
GOD SENT HIS SON JESUS**



700 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah wrote about the future birth of a Messiah, which is someone who would be chosen by God to free His people.

At that time, God's chosen people were ignoring His guidance and allowed sin to ruin their lives, which caused them to suffer as a nation. Isaiah described that in the midst of this darkness, God would be sending His son as a baby, who would be the light of the world. "And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6)



Rejoice!

Indeed, this baby was born; **Jesus**, sent by God to save His people. We celebrate his birth on Christmas Day as we find joy in God's amazing gift, the gift of Jesus, who saves all who believe in him from our sin through his death and resurrection. We trust in God to take care of us, through good times and difficult times and we will live forever with Him in heaven.

Enjoy your Christmas celebrations and feel God's love for you throughout the season!

November 2020

Dear Advent Church Family,

My goodness what a sendoff! Thank you so very much for all the kind words and for the lovely reception. Thank you for everything. I must say it was rather embarrassing to hear such undeserved praise.

Advent has been a special place for many years as you know. I was pleased to be able to fill in until you had news of a permanent pastor. Things really worked out and now you will be on your way for a new beginning.

You have so many people of faith there that will be a blessing to the church and the new pastor. As we said previously it takes many people to make a church. You have many that are dedicated and loyal.

May God continue to bless you as you work in His vineyard and spread the gospel throughout the community!

In His love,

Reverend Josephine Wright

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

The Evangelism Committee has established a high top table in the Narthex, close to the coffee machine.

On the table we have devotionals to take home, prayer cards to take and mail to someone who could use a cheerful note, and there are cards for asking for prayer to fill out.

When we return to in-person worship, we will also meet at the table after church services if you would like to receive prayer at that time.

Sometimes we all could use a friend and a prayer to offer comfort. Please do not hesitate to ask us. When we are back worshipping on Sundays we will have the chance to pray with you immediately.

And if you would be interested in being on our Prayer Chain, just leave your email address. The prayer chain is sent out Sundays to the members on it, and you are anonymous as are some of the prayers. It is a very easy group to be part of - you just read the names and offer a prayer. And most of the time there is a prayer attached to the list!

Thank you for your devotion to God.

Karen Matlack
kmatl22349@verizon.net

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FOOD CONTRIBUTIONS

A huge thank you to everyone who was able to contribute to our pre-Thanksgiving food drive to benefit the Warminster Food Bank. We delivered over 300 pounds of non-perishables that were distributed to our very grateful neighbors! Our yearly Christmas outreach has had a very good response too! At this time we have collected 31 gift cards that will be handed out to clients during the month of December. Cards can be accepted until Sunday, December 13 so they can be distributed to clients before Christmas. As always thanks for caring and sharing with our neighbors.

Nancy Sclight, Social Ministry Committee

MEN'S BREAKFAST CANCELLED

Men's Breakfast scheduled for Saturday, December 12 is cancelled due to the recommendation in Bishop Davenport's recent message.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

The Offering envelopes for 2021 are available on the table in the narthex. If envelopes are needed before services resume call Cindy Frey at 267-205-0713 she will make arrangements to either deliver or mail them. Also, if you would like to have envelopes printed with your name, please let Cindy know.

FLOWER CHART AND MISSION CHART

The Flower Chart and Mission Chart for 2021 are on the table in the narthex. The cost of one bouquet is \$25.00. Because of services being suspended you can either email or call the office, leave a message if you would like to have a particular date for your dedication. All other questions please call Cindy Frey at 267-205-0713.

GIVE WITH YOUR SMILE!

As many of you are trying to stay safely at home, perhaps you are ordering more online and having it safely delivered. If you find you are doing that, consider using Smile.Amazon.com for your shopping and shipping needs. This acts the same as an Amazon account, but Amazon Smile Foundation will donate .5% of your purchases to the charity of your choice. Simply indicate Advent Lutheran Church, Richboro as your charity and the church will benefit. Advent has received \$381.57 as of November 2020 from Amazon Smile Foundation. If you need help setting up your account, please call or text me (Gail Oines) at 215-534-8218.

CARING for FRIENDS

We thank our thoughtful cooks who have prepared homemade meals and bowls of soup to be delivered to Caring for Friends, the local organization that distributes meals to homebound seniors, kids and families in Philadelphia and four surrounding counties: caringforfriends.org Thank you to Renee DeJames, Jeff Jobes, Michelle Rayher and others for adding meals to Advent's freezer! - Empty CFF meal trays are available in the church narthex if YOU would like to prepare meals at home. Call or e-mail Advent's office if you need them, as they are required by the organization. - Thank you!

TO CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE

You may leave a message at the church office at 215-355-2529, with Church Council President, George Henry, at 215-970-8523, or with Finance Committee Chairperson, Tony Gryszka, at 267-408- 3255.

TWO CHURCH COUNCIL POSITIONS REMAIN OPEN

We thank all of our Church Council members for meeting the challenges of making leadership decisions on behalf of the congregation and taking on the work of so many projects throughout the year. On December 29, Church Council added one new member who has offered to serve for an upcoming three-year term, starting in January. Other members have agreed to continue in their present position for an additional three-year term:

Jennifer McQuiggan has volunteered to serve as the Secretary of Church Council.

Cindy Frey will continue to serve as the Financial Secretary.

Tony Gryszka will continue to serve as Finance Chairperson.

Nancy Hill will continue to serve as Treasurer.

Nancy Sclight will continue to serve as Social Ministry Chairperson.

Rhone Slawter will continue to serve as Congregational Life Chairperson.

Here are brief summaries of the responsibilities of the two open positions on Church Council:

The *Christian Education Chairperson* works as an administrator with the Pastor, Sunday School and VBS leaders to coordinate activities and to report the findings for discussion at Church Council monthly meetings, in addition to voting on church matters.

The *Youth Coordinator* works with the Church Council in identifying and coordinating group activities for our youth, attends monthly Church Council meetings and provides input and votes on church matters. When there is also a youth leader, the youth leader would report to this council member.

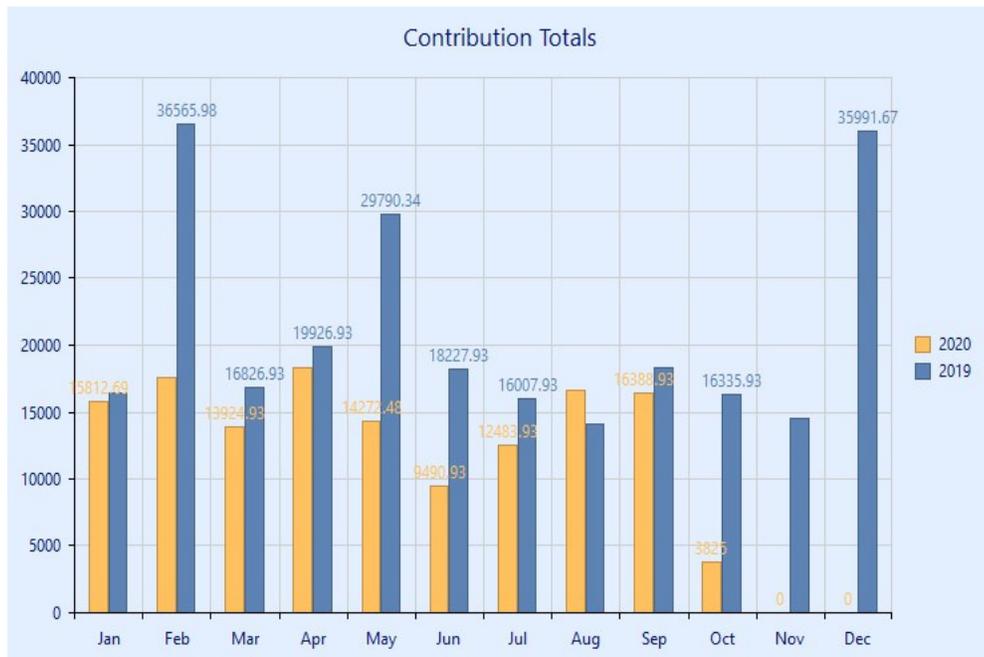
We ask that you prayerfully consider volunteering to fill one of these positions starting in January 2021. Please contact Church Council President, George Henry, if you have any questions.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

A budget for calendar year 2021 was approved at the congregational meeting on November 29, 2020. We thank everyone who was able to stay after the worship service that day. Although in-person worship services have had to be canceled for December, you may send your financial gifts and financial commitment cards to the church at P.O. Box 840, Richboro, PA 18954-0840. Offerings are confidential and are only opened by Advent's money counters. Financial commitment cards for 2021 are directed to Advent's Financial Secretary and are also confidential. You may also make an arrangement to personally drop off these items at the church by calling the church office at 215-355-2529, generally on Tuesdays through Thursdays between 9:00 am -1:00 pm. Thank you for being generous givers!

Income for October 2020

Benevolence (LWR, Mission Support, etc.)	\$343.00
General Fund	\$11,287.93
Mortgage Fund	\$3,368.00



THE ARMED FORCES

Please keep in your prayers all our service men and women and especially those related to our congregation:

US Air Force Lt Col Andrew Frey is a student at Air War College, stationed at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

US Air Force Major Fred Gouse is a pilot and instructor stationed at Holloman AFB, New Mexico.

US Army Colonel (Ret.) Jeff Williams is serving in Dubai, UAE as a military advisor.

If there are any errors or omissions, please notify the church office.

Thank you.



NUEVA CREACION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Please keep Pastor Lyzette Rios Sanchez and our mission congregation Nueva Creación Lutheran Church in your prayers. Your mission support gifts help them to minister in an impoverished area of Philadelphia.



ADVENT'S BIRTHDAY CORNER
DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

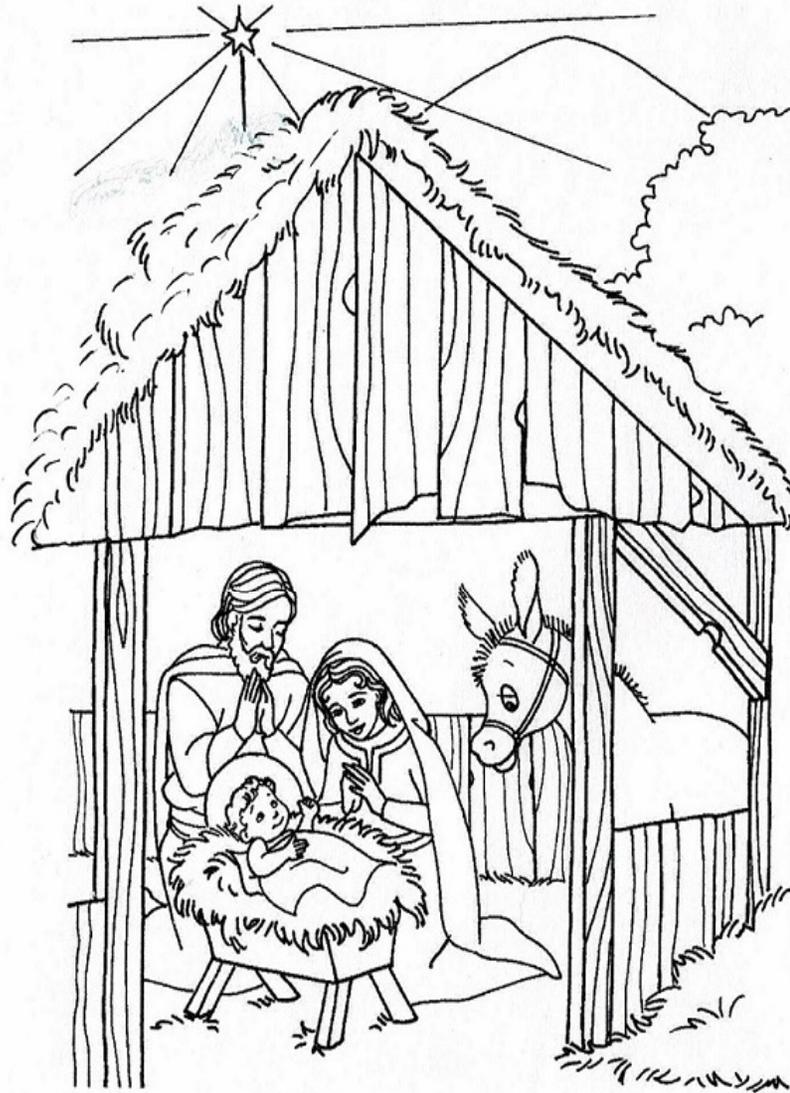


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|----|-------------------|----|-------------------|----|----------------|
| 1 | George Morris III | 15 | Landon Ryan Baker | 26 | Judy Buttil |
| 6 | Tom McQuiggan | 18 | Noelle Becker | 29 | Brian Kropp |
| 10 | David Shearer | 19 | Greg Heiss | 30 | Shirley Morris |
| 12 | Logan Frey | | Kayla McGee | | |
| 14 | Hailey Eagles | 20 | Tommy Herbert | | |
| | Robert Matlack | | Zachary Meyers | | |
| | Dawn Lenox Merk | 21 | Ken Earle | | |
| | | 22 | Drew Frey | | |
| | | 23 | Karen Matlack | | |

Please contact the church office if you or someone you know has been omitted from the list.
Thank you

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2:1-20



Baby Jesus is born in a stable

THE SHEPHERDS

Luke 2:8



THE THREE WISE MEN

Matthew 2:1-23



The three wise men bring gifts and worship Jesus