

THE ADVENTURE - 2021



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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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 in-person church services scheduled at this time.

We will continue to offer online worship services and will keep you informed of any technology enhancements on Facebook and the church website. Each week we will send you an email with the upcoming worship service and instructions on how to connect. For this reason, we will not be publishing weekly service information in the Newsletter.



Sunday Jan. 3

Second Sunday of Christmas

Sunday Jan. 10

Baptism of Our Lord

Sunday Jan. 17

Second Sunday after Epiphany

Sunday Jan. 24

Third Sunday after Epiphany

Sunday Jan. 31

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

PASTOR MATT'S JANUARY 2021 MESSAGE

Happy New Year! Thank God 2020 is over! What a year it was. The whirlwind of the pandemic, racial tensions and election year politics was overwhelming. So much tragedy, hardship and division. We look forward to 2021 if nothing else than to escape 2020. Certainly, with the distribution of new vaccines having begun, there is already reason for great hope for 2021. We all want to go back to normal.

As much as we want to escape 2020 and go back to normal, we are not out of the woods yet. As the transition of power to a new president happens, we are divided as ever. We are facing the darkest days of the pandemic before the vaccines can turn the tide. It doesn't seem like 2020 will go away silently into the night. Many of our societal problems, that the pandemic has exacerbated, have been long in the making. There may be no going back to normal but a seeking out of a new normal. It is a scary time.

We as Christians do not need to be afraid. Yes, we will be scared but we don't *need* to be scared. We do not need to fear death. We do not need to fear change. The very heart of our faith is the promise of the resurrection from death to new life. There is no bigger change than this. This season of Epiphany that we enter is about the celebrating of, with the birth of Jesus, and how the light of God's love enters our lives. When the light of that love enters our lives, it casts away the darkness and everything in us is revealed. Everything good and bad is revealed. This can be very uncomfortable. It is a human tendency to want God to love just the good in us and to conveniently ignore the bad. The problem with this kind of love is that it provides little comfort or nourishment. Our deepest hurts and needs are always located near the bad stuff. If the bad stuff stays hidden in the dark it is never lovingly healed. In our tendency to hide from our short comings, we are quick to point out the short comings of others. The peace the angels sing of at Jesus's birth happens when the light of God's love reveals the short comings of us and our neighbor that we might find forgiveness and reconciliation.

We need the wisdom of Epiphany in our society if we are to bridge our differences and forge a better world in 2021. The process of reconciliation with God and with one another that Epiphany shows by revealing the good and bad in all of us is both bold and humbling. It requires courage and faith. It is counter cultural. It is so much easier to pray that God punish our enemies and convince them that we are right without us having to change how we might be wrong. We all have the tendency to run from the light, even the light of God's love. Often it takes someone to be the first one to step into the light, to be revealed, to be vulnerable, before others will have the courage to do the same. We change the world when we do this with one person at a time in our lives.

Let us whole heartedly declare, "Happy New Year" this year. As we do so, let us boldly and humble step into the light of God's love to change this world for the better. Happy New Year.

God's Peace be upon you,

Pastor Matt

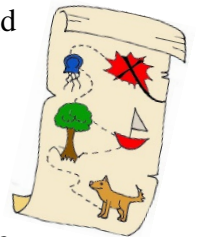
Bible Study for Kids God's Plan for Us

It's a new year! We look forward to new things! There is one thing that never changes, and that's God's love for us. God has a direction and a plan for your life. All it takes is a willing heart to follow his lead.



To do what is right, we must know what is right. It is the **Bible** that defines what is good according to God. We should study the Scriptures, asking God to give us such wisdom and insight, so that we might walk in His ways.

God knows where we are, how far off the path we are, and what it takes to get us there, and God will listen when we ask for help. He'll always be there to help us find our way.



In the book of **Micah**, Micah's message is for all times and for all people: As God's people, we should do what is right, be merciful to others just as God is merciful to us. We should walk in step with God and reflect his ways. "The Lord will bring me into the light, and I will see his righteousness." Micah's prophecies remind us that God demands justice, humility, sincerity and love from his people.

In **Judges 2:1**, the angel of the Lord told God's people, the Israelites, "I brought you out of Egypt into this land that I swore to give your ancestors, and I said I would never break my covenant with you." After this, the people still disobeyed the Lord by forgetting all of the good things he had done for them and by disobeying him and worshiping false gods. But God rescued his people when they prayed to him for help.

Isaiah was a prophet who foretold the coming of the Messiah, to be sent by God. God would bring salvation to those who would trust in him and have faith in him. Isaiah looked toward the future to teach others about God's plan. Indeed, God sent us Jesus, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas.

In **Matthew 5:17-19**, Jesus tells his followers: "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets . . . until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.

As Paul wrote in **Colossians 3**, "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity."



Our Plan for 2021:

God has designed a plan for us. He wants us to have faith in him and follow him through bible study, prayer and sharing our faith with others.

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

The Evangelism Committee would like to thank all who requested prayers during this latest closure of the church. Since we cannot see each other to request those prayers, it is important that you inform us of those needs. When we are distanced from our church family, we have a deeper need to connect with others.

There was a devotional in Daily Guideposts that suggested setting your alarm for the same time every day to "stop and pray". It will become a habit after just a short time, and it will keep you connected to God on a regular basis.

We hope you have had the chance to tune in for the live streaming of the church services. Since there are several formats, you should be able to join in worship through one of them. Easiest is to continue going to the church's website and click on the sermon for the Sunday. Many are opting for Zoom and Facebook. Both are live streaming, and Facebook keeps the video so you can watch it at any time.

If you have prayer needs, either email Karen at kmatl22349@verizon.net or text at 215-932-2383. Until we can gather for in person worship, keep your Hope on Jesus.

Karen Matlack
kmatl22349@verizon.net

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFT CARDS

Wow!!! What a response we had with our gift card collection for the clients at the Warminster Food Bank this Christmas! Through the generosity of our congregation we were able to provide 72 families with gift cards totaling \$2215.00. Rhona and I were able to see first hand the surprise and then gratitude from the families. We were truly a blessing for the families! Please accept a huge thanks for all who were able to participate! Blessings to all for a happy and healthy new year!!

Nancy Sclight, Social Ministry.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

To be announced depending on the Wishes of the Governor, Bishop and Pastor

Dave

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2021

Individual boxes of weekly offering envelopes for 2021 were distributed to those who were able to attend in-person worship services in November. The remaining boxes will be mailed early in January to those who have received envelopes in the past. If you haven't used envelopes, but would like them, please contact the Financial Secretary, Cindy Frey, at 267-205-0713. Kindly discard any unused 2020 envelopes. Thank you.

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.

2021 CALENDARS

Mr. Fluehr advised that they will be providing the calendars for 2021 as soon as they are received from the printer.

TO CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE

You may leave a message at the church office at 215-355-2529. If you need to speak with Pastor Matt when he is not in the office, particularly in the case of a pastoral emergency, please feel free to call his cell 215-859-3778.

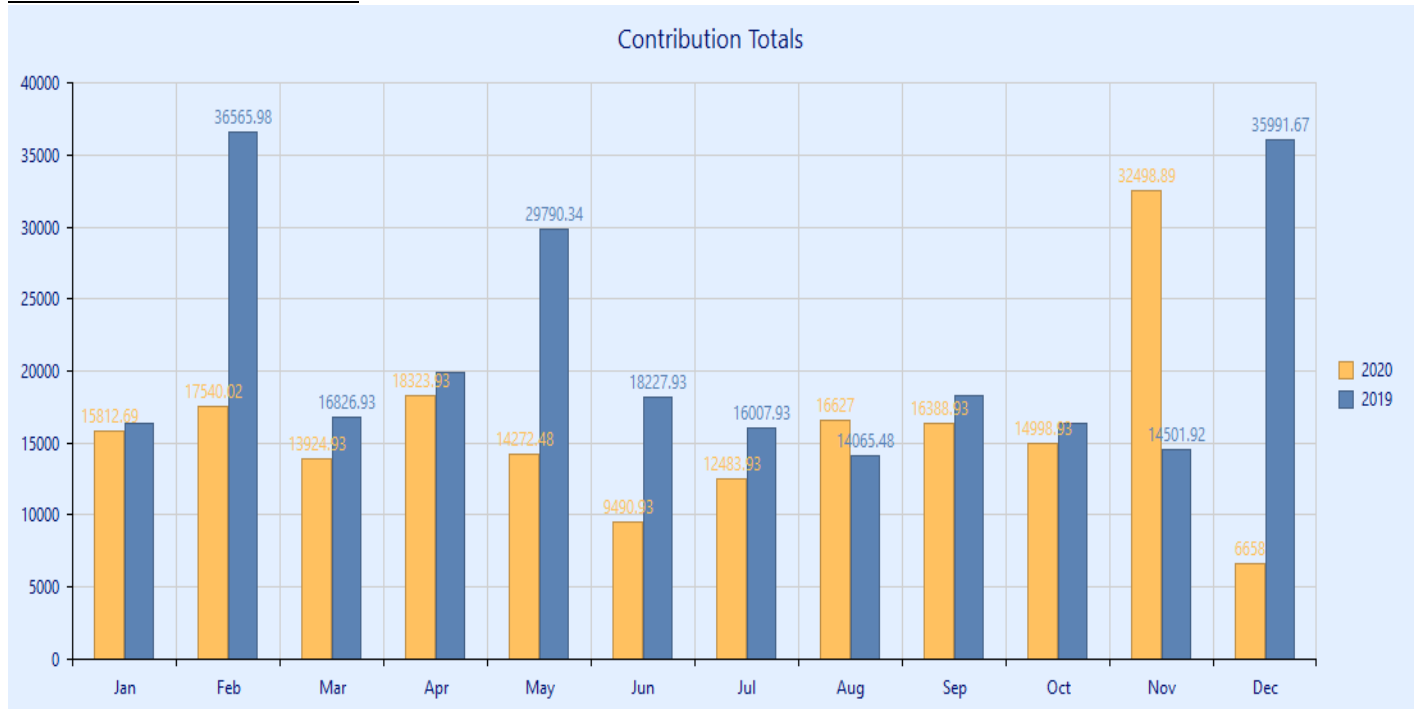
THANK YOU FOR YOUR OFFERINGS!

Advent continues to be blessed by those able to provide financial support during the pandemic. Thank you! We've also been fortunate to have had many who have dedicated their time and talent in various capacities to Advent throughout the year.

We'll have some challenges for calendar year 2021 in that we'll be responsible for providing Pastor Matt with a full-time compensation package, which includes medical and pension benefits and certain reimbursements. These are expenses we did not incur the past two years. We pray that you will be able to continue to support Advent's ministries and hope we'll be able to resume in-person worship services soon.

Your financial offerings are confidential and are only opened by Advent's money counters. Financial commitment cards for 2021 may still be submitted and will be forwarded confidentially to Advent's Financial Secretary. You may contribute online through our website, coordinate dropping off offerings at the church by calling the church office at 215-355-2529 (generally on Tuesdays through Thursdays between 9:00 am -1:00 pm), or mail them to P.O. Box 840, Richboro, PA 18954-0840. Thank you for being generous givers!

FINANCIAL UPDATE



Income for November 2020

Benevolence (LWR, Mission Support, etc.)	\$476.00
General Fund	\$17,993.89
Mortgage Fund	\$14,029.00



THE ARMED FORCES

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

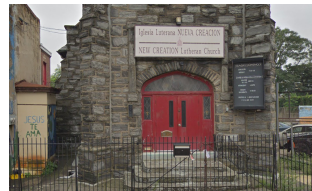
US Air Force Lt Col Andrew Frey is a student at Air War College, stationed at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

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
JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Madelaine Sjostrom | Jayson Wunder | |
| | Ellie Volz | 18 | Benicia Meyers |
| 10 | Katie Dettra | 22 | Colleen Morrison |
| 12 | Jim Hollingsworth | 24 | Jeremy Rayher |
| | Bryce Stocchi | 26 | Keith Wills |
| | Emeron Stocchi | | Jamie Sorcek Wunder |
| 14 | Nancy Sclight | | Kathy Sitler |
| | | 29 | Erich Rayher, Sr. |

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

God Guides Us

Find your way to Jesus



Jesus said:
"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Matthew 14:6

