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### **Wonderful Advent & Christmas Seasons Over 600 Worshipers on Christmas Eve!**

For the second year Advent held mid-week worship opportunities during the Advent season. Each Wednesday evening we gathered for food, fellowship, worship, and decorating. All who attended assisted with the weekly addition of decorations and furnishings in the sanctuary as we made preparations for the coming of the Christ Child. We also introduced a new event with our "Creating Christmas" celebration with music, crafts, food, fellowship and presentations of the nativity. On December 21<sup>st</sup> we shared the powerful "Longest Night" worship service with those in our community experiencing feelings of sadness, loss or brokenness. Advent welcomed the Christ Child with over 600 worshipers at our four festive Christmas Eve services on December 24<sup>th</sup> following a 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent Lessons & Carols service that morning with 160 in attendance. Thank you to everyone who shared their gifts with us during the Advent and Christmas seasons.

### **Annual Congregational Meeting**

The Annual Congregational Meeting was held on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 12:15 p.m. Many Advent disciples participated in this important meeting which included the approval of our 2018 Spending Plan for Ministry, and reports from our Ministry Boards. Special thanks to all who participated in this meeting.

### **Ministry Board Meetings**

Our Ministry Boards usually meet the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. Since the first Monday in January this year is New Year's Day, our Ministry Boards will meet on Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. The Church Council will keep its third Monday of the month schedule and meet on January 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

### **Evangelism News**

We had a beautiful day at the Market once again! Thank you to everyone who volunteered to spend a little time at the booth, and to those of you who just popped in to say "Hi!" - it was lovely to see you. Our next day at the market will be **Jan. 21**. If you are interested in helping, either with preparation or in greeting people, please join our Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/advent.market.team/> or contact Dana Luther ([dana.luther@gmail.com](mailto:dana.luther@gmail.com)) or Mary Ann Ball.

The monthly newsletter  
of Advent Lutheran  
Church

**Advent Lutheran Church**  
Orange Park, Florida ✠ January 2018

### **President's Report 2017**

As 2017 winds down, and I prepare my heart and mind for the celebration of Christ's birth, I'm reminded of the turbulent world to which our Lord was born. A world filled with strife, hatred, anxiety and suffering. A world that desperately needed a savior, and God provided; exactly what was needed, in the right place and at the right time.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in this age of scientific discoveries, technological advancements and medical "miracles", the world is still plagued by strife, hatred, anxiety and suffering, but God continues to provide exactly what is needed, in the right place, at the right time. He has provided Advent Lutheran Church whose members, for 52 years, have faithfully shared the message of God's grace, mercy and love with this community and beyond. This is the Advent Lutheran Church that I have come to know and love in the past 12 years since my family moved to the area in 2005. It is an honor to serve our Lord alongside you.

The year has presented its fair share of challenges, to be sure. From the passing of many of our dearest friends and family members into the embrace of our Lord, to a leaky roof with termite damage, to dangerous hurricanes impacting our city and other churches in our synod, to a tempestuous geopolitical climate, and to many of our sister churches closing their doors, it's hard to imagine that anything positive could have emerged this year.

Again, God has provided. Well before hurricane Irma's arrival, this congregation not only had the roof repaired, but was able to raise the money to pay for it in its entirety through a special appeal, with money remaining to pay for additional repairs, to fund a new staff member (coming early 2018), and to fund some technology needs to help the church continue to grow. The generous hearts at Advent opened the church to the community for many events, (Continued on Page 3)

#### **In this issue:**

- ✠ Youth Events
- ✠ Pre School News
- ✠ President's Report
- ✠ Upcoming Events
- ✠ Birthdays and Anniversaries

#### **Editor's Note:**

Advent news due no later than January 16th to be included in the next issue.

E-mail to [ncschroyer@aol.com](mailto:ncschroyer@aol.com) (preferred) or leave in church office.

## **W E L C A**

### **WOMEN'S MINISTRY**

***Naomi Circle*** meets January 25th at 7:00 p.m. in the Assembly Room. ✠

***Church Office Closed***  
***Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup>***  
***Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.***  
***Day***

## **President's Report** (Continued from Page 2)

including Mardi Gras, the Easter Festival, Vacation Bible School, the Pet Blessing and Quilt Sale, Trunk-or-Treat and Creating Christmas -- all of which were free to attend, provided food, fun and excellent examples of God's love to people who may have never received such gifts before. Through quilts and laundry supplies, Stephen Ministries, peanut butter, donations of food, time and talent to the community Feast of Plenty, and so many other ministries, Advent makes an incredible impact in the world.

The word of these great things is spreading, and we are beginning to grow again. It's incredibly exciting to see God at work, raising our average worship attendance from 200 -> 250, increasing the frequency of new disciple classes and the average attendance in each class, seeing the increases in Sunday School attendance, and in the generous increases in time, talents and financial gifts. We're finding new, effective ways of reaching out to share God's story, and our part in it, with the community through new signage, social media, the Orange Park Farmer's and Arts Market, and several other avenues, and people are taking notice -- attendance at our community events has been fantastic, and we've planted many seeds. I have faith that God will grow those seeds, in His time, and that growth will continue to strengthen Advent and its ministries for years to come.

We're far from perfect, and I am likely at the top of the list of imperfections. In 2018, one of my primary goals is to improve communications to and with the members of Advent. We've made some solid progress, but there's a lot of room to do better. At the same time, my hope is that people feel free to communicate with me, too. I'd like to hear your concerns, your stories, and words of encouragement really do help. We're all in this, together.

A specific area of communicating that we need to improve upon is how we ask for help, and how we offer to help. Advent's members have always been very generous when asked to pitch in on just about anything. However, we often have a tough time articulating the need for help. Sometimes, we totally overlook opportunities where having more help would dramatically improve the outcome, or allow someone new to experience the joy of serving. Having the opportunity to serve is one of God's great gifts to us -- it always feels good to serve. My hope is that we all have those opportunities, and often; that we look for, and enable others with opportunities to serve. At the same time, I hope that Advent's members continue to be receptive and responsive to those requests for help, and that they are always searching for and finding new and exciting ways to serve our Lord. If you are not involved in one of the many ministries at Advent, I warmly encourage you to consider it -- it is a wonderful way to grow in your faith, to get to know one another, and to help us become more effective in carrying out our mission.

Finally, I'd like to briefly touch on the topic of change here at Advent. The Advent of 1970 was different from the Advent of 1980. Times change, people change, society changes. The Advent of 2018 will be different from the Advent of years past. However, our God's love for us does not change, and the incremental changes at Advent will never impact our core values -- our love for Jesus Christ and our commitment to share His good news with the world, through loving and caring for each other. This is the part of Advent that captured the hearts of my family 12 years ago; something that we will always strive to preserve.

Thank you all for your hard work and faithfulness in 2017, and I'm excited to see where our Lord takes us next, together.

Yours in Christ,

Todd Luther, Council President



### **Preschool News**

The New Year is here! Along with it are preschool children excited to return to school on Wednesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>. I hope you took the opportunity to see our little ones sing in their Christmas performance. The children, staff and Ms. Kristin all worked so hard to put on such a wonderful show.

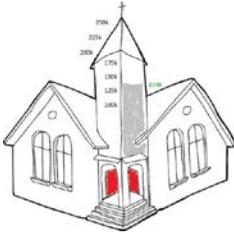
We are going to start this new year learning about a perennial favorite: dinosaurs! Then we will explore the Polar regions and how animals live in the winter. Our literary focus this month will be on the story "Stone Soup". Pastor Jerry will guide the children through the stories of John the Baptist and Jesus Feeds the 5000. Our wonderful resource teachers, Ms. Irene, Ms. Amy and Ms. Amy will help extend our students exploration of these topics through cooking, art appreciation, science and music.

Our preschool is a wonderful place thanks in large part to your support. Thanks to your efforts, we have a beautiful courtyard for our parents to admire and for the children to investigate flowers and insects; our playground is safe and clean, our classrooms are clean and in good repair and a child is able to attend preschool through the scholarship fund.

We are always ready to welcome new friends. If you or someone you know is interested in our program, contact Kristina Ranieri at 272-6370 or email [adventpreschool@bellsouth.net](mailto:adventpreschool@bellsouth.net).

### **Recycling Bin Is Hungry For Your Paper**

Did you know there is a recycling bin in the Advent Church Parking Lot near the entrance? This bin is for paper and newspapers. (NO plastic bags, trash, cardboard or phone books). You are encouraged to bring all of your paper and newspaper for recycling each week when you come to worship and place it in the bin. Your donations will help the bin to not suffer from hunger and proceeds received will be used for youth scholarships. The youth will tithe 10% to ministries in our local community. So, bring your paper!



 **Special Appeal Update**   
**\$190,050**

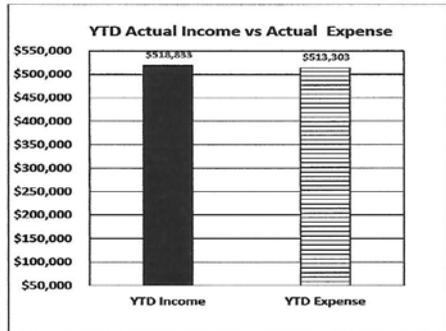
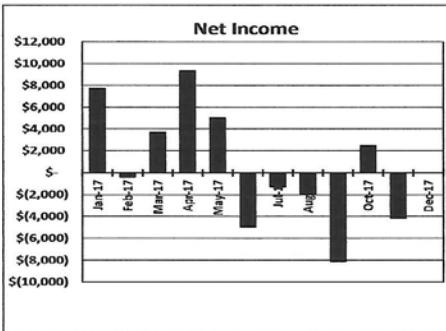
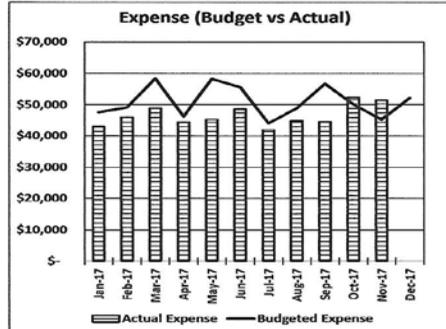
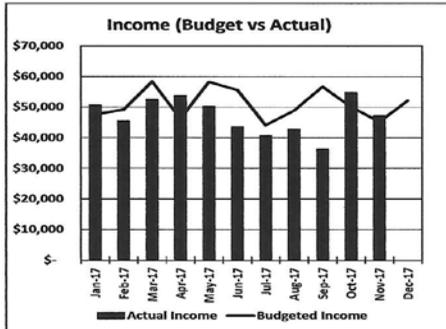
God is good and the disciples of Advent have made the Special Appeal an absolute success. The Special Appeal was blessed to see 76% of the original \$250,000 goal. (This total does not include any gifts received in the last couple of weeks.) God's work will grow at Advent because of your faithfulness. Even though the Special appeal has officially ended, any remaining gifts will continue to be received. Please make sure you designate them for the Special Appeal. Prayers need to continue for the hiring of a staff person to help Advent target a younger demographic for hearing the Word of God and helping them grow in a relationship with Him.

Thank you – Stewardship Board

## WOWS

The WOWS is the new group for widows and widowers formed for a time of fun, ideas, and support. The WOWS enjoyed a Christmas social beginning with a snow ball fight. A ham dinner was followed by Christmas bingo and white elephant gift exchange. Some of the gifts were a bit bizarre but hardly any were taken from the recipient. One was a ceramic pig or hippopotamus which prompted the singing "I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas!" This lively group welcomes all who have suffered the loss of spouse, members don't have to be disciples of Advent. The next meeting of the WOWS will include planning for future meetings. If you or a friend would like to be included in the next meeting please contact the Advent Church office 272-6370 and let us know your name and phone number.

## Advent's Finance at A Glance





## Heartship for God

(Stewardship from the Heart #7)

It is a new year and another year to grow in our relationship with the Lord. As Pastor Jerry challenged us on Christmas Eve: “We need to make sure Jesus is bigger this time next year in our lives than He is right now. Jesus wants to be more than just a babe in the manger that we think about once a year. He wants a day by day, moment by moment relationship.” But how do we help our relationship grow? If you were listening Christmas Eve, it is actually quite simple: (1) Set aside a quiet time every day for prayer, devotions and studying God’s Word. It does not have to be lengthy but it needs to be consistent and free from distraction. (2) Step up your prayer life. Prayer is more than a few words at meal time and our participation in prayer on Sunday mornings. It is a constant communication with God throughout the day. (3) Fellowship with other Christians for the purpose of encouragement, comfort and validation. (4) Commit to meaningful worship on a regular basis.

And because this is a stewardship message, reevaluate how you are spending your time, talents and resources. Ask God to help you continue or perhaps adjust these resources to further His Kingdom. Make this a year of growth in your relationship with God. Make Jesus bigger! After all, the baby grew and you can too.

Blessings from the Stewardship Board

***January Anniversary Celebrations***

Robert & Evelyn Kissinger	January 20, 1975
Charles & Susanne Kresol	January 6, 2007
Daniel & Melissa Middleton	January 11, 1991
Tim & Denise Pingel	January 10, 2009
Dean & Audrey Ramsey	January 25, 2003
Paul & Carolyn Schlichtman	January 4, 1975
Ron & Kathy White	January 10, 1970

***Life's Transitions:***

**Judith Ellen Knafelc "Judi"**  
**December 19, 2017**

**Baptism:**

**Elouise Katherine Rick**  
**Born – October 18, 2017**  
**Baptism Date – January 7, 2018**  
Parents – Christopher and Jessica Rick  
Grandparents – Jason and Debbie Merritt  
Sponsors – Todd and Dana Luther  
Tiffany Csalovszki



Join us for our Prayer Time: Each Wednesday at 12:00 noon we will gather in the Sanctuary to lift up in prayer all who are in need of God's love and healing.

(Editor's Note: Please forgive any typos or omissions of members. Notify church office of corrections. Thank you.)



*January Birthday Celebrations*

- 2 Patricia Benko, Lisa Felegy, Joe Meekins, Tom Scarbrough, Cordelia Painter, Walter Roberts, Donna Smith
- 4 Jacob Moss, Joseph Moss, Nancy Silki
- 5 Duane Brown, Gene Schwab, Ellen Vernon
- 6 Margaret Curry, Dawn Marnell, Clara Schreiber, Karen Wilkins
- 7 Jessica Eichhorn
- 8 Chuck Mendat, Charles Mendat IV, Rebecca Rau
- 9 Margaruite Nagy
- 10 Kathleen Rowlinson, Carolyn Veres
- 11 Margaret LaPlace, Marie Long
- 12 Jordon Luther, Ruth Schmandt
- 13 Shane Turcotte
- 14 Holly Brown
- 15 Marion Christiansen, Brogan LaBranche, Marilyn Longworth
- 16 Lynn Comiskey, Johnathan Dews, Alexis Mizeur, Nancy Patrick, James Shockley
- 17 Cynthia Buhlert, Camden Flint, Emily McClelland, Sophie Willadsen
- 19 Lori Brown, Brian Cordes, Bob Currie, James Lambert, Brody Schiffer, Bonnie Whitehead
- 20 Ryan Currie
- 21 Gordon Schaeffer, Marcus Schwartz
- 22 Sherwood Krause, Robert Lambert, Chris Meekins, Mike Phillips, Andrea Redlitz
- 23 Susan Eichhorn, Barb Jenkins, Matthew Linde, Steven Lowe, Amber Snyder
- 24 Alexa Gohl, Mary Scarbrough, Carolyn Schlichtman
- 25 Kira Luther
- 27 Barbara Herman, Marie Roberts
- 29 Matthew Brown, James Paine
- 31 Teresa Doerr, Hailey Johns, Timothy Mitchell, Sam Pedersen

# LESSONS FOR JANUARY

	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
January 7	Genesis 1:1-5	Psalm 29	Acts 19:1-7	Mark 1:4-11
January 14	1 Samuel 3:1-10	Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18	1 Corinthians 6:12-20	John 1:43-51
January 21	Jonah 3:1-5, 10	Psalm 62:5-12	1 Corinthians 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-20
January 28	Deuteronomy 18:15-20	Psalm 111	1 Corinthians 8:1-13	Mark 1:21-28

### STAFF AT ADVENT

Rev. Gerald A. Nordsiek, Jr. Pastor  
 Cell Phone (727) 741-0959  
 Kristina Ranieri, Pre-School Director  
 Joanna Corbett, Music Master/Organist  
 Kristin Sakamoto, Worship Arts Spec  
 Ines DeMartinez, Bookkeeper  
 Rebecca Johnson, Secretary  
 Office Hours: 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Mon.-  
 Fri.  
 Office Phone: (904) 272-6370  
 E-mail: [adventop@bellsouth.net](mailto:adventop@bellsouth.net)  
 On the Web: [www.adventop.org](http://www.adventop.org)

### 2018 CONG. COUNCIL

Todd Luther, President  
 Dana West, Vice President  
 Sadako Long, Treasurer  
 Kathy Ordonez, Secretary  
 Education  
 Dana Luther, Evangelism  
 Becky Solberg, Fellowship  
 Wes Ordonez, Property  
 Pat Benko, Social Ministry  
 Sandy Emery, Stewardship  
 Steve Benko, Worship  
 Tiffany Csalovski, Youth

## CIA PARENT PLANNING MEETING

Our next CIA event is going to be on Saturday, January 13th at 7:00 pm at the home of JR and Andrea Redlitz. This event will be for the CIA parents/grandparents and the youth for a "meet and greet" planning meeting around a campfire (complete with s'mores). We would like to get the parents' thoughts for activities throughout the year, with the hopes of generating more involvement, excitement and developing our youth program. More details will follow.



***Holy Rollers to Holy Bible:*** Members of Naomi Circle spent their summer sessions rolling bandages that were eventually shipped overseas to areas in the world with little or no medical facilities... now that winter has come they have Bible study and fellowship the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday on each month. All Advent women are invited to join this lively group, which next meets in the Assembly Room, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

*Messenger* from:

Advent Lutheran Church  
2156 Loch Rane Blvd.  
Orange Park, FL 32073

A Non Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit 34  
Orange Park, FL 32073

Church Office: (904) 272-6370

Fax 272-2896

Office Hours: 8:30-2:30, Mon.-Fri.

E-mail: [adventop@bellsouth.net](mailto:adventop@bellsouth.net)

Web Site: [www.adventop.org](http://www.adventop.org)

Preschool: (904) 272-6370,

Hours: 9:00 a.m.-12 Noon, Mon.-Fri.

-OR- CURRENT RESIDENT



Advent's mission is to proclaim God's reconciling grace in Jesus Christ through Word and Sacrament while educating, equipping and empowering each other so that we will serve and care for all people.