

Advent Lutheran Church

Annual Report

2017-2018

Basic Congregation Info

**Mailing Address Fall - Spring Schedule**

Advent Lutheran Church Worship Sundays at 8:30 am and 11:00 am
5525 Harper Road Education Hour Sundays at 9:45 am
Solon, OH 44139

 **Summer Schedule**

**Phone:** 440-248-6904 Worship at 10:00 am Sundays

**Fax:** 440-248-9941

**Email:** advent@adventsolon.org

**Website:** www.adventsolon.org

Leadership Contact Information

**Pastor**: Jim Lewis 440-554-8964 pastorjim@adventsolon.org

**Family Life Minister**: Dana Lewis 440-554-7919 livingoutfaith@live.com

**Director of Music Ministry:** Alan Higbee 216-338-8057 alanhigbee@roadrunner.com

**Custodian**: Tom Ballard 330-468-3094

**Congregation Council**

President: Mike Davis 440-749-3566 modavis.cpa@att.net

Vice-President: Lori Burchard 330-257-0078 loriburchard@gmail.com

Secretary: Michele Bowman 440-241-7159 michelesbowman@gmail.com

Treasurer: John Sleasman 440-349-5530 johnsleasman@gmail.com

Member: Jean Fell 330-541-2471 davidjeanfell@hotmail.com

Member: Terry Dykstra 440-248-5396 artskydtl@aol.com

Member: Teri Moore 614-506-4944 moore0207@sbcglobal.net

**Ministry Board** (meets at 7 pm on the 1st Tuesday each month)

Member: Girisa Salibellas 216-355-9235 gsalibellas@gmail.com

Member: Cheryl Kravetz 440-567-2735 cherkravetz@gmail.com

Member: Joann Felton 440-382-2606 snoopydog786@yahoo.com

**Spiritual Growth Board** (meets at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Tuesday each month)

Member: Amy Fadeley 216-319-0154 amyfadeley@yahoo.com

Member: Doug Burchard 440-248-2960 d.burchard@att.net

Member: Terry Scott 440-409-3984 tscottsolon@sbcglobal.net

**Word & Sacrament Board** (meets at 4:15 pm on the 1st Tuesday each month)

Member: Paul Imm 216-292-3842 paulrimm2000@yahoo.com

Member: Lucy Szabo 216-328-8549 trittl@yahoo.com

Member: Carol Schevey 419-606-0675 ceschevey@neo.rr.com

**Committee Leaders**

Fellowship Committee Chair: Lori Burchard 330-938-2723 lburchar@kent.edu

Finance Committee Chair: Mike Davis 440-349-3566 modavis.cpa@att.net

**Ministry Board Report**

**Members:** Jim Lewis (Pastor), Girisa Salibellas (2016-2019), Cheryl Kravetz (2017-2020),
Joann Felton (2018-2021)

**Service**: The ministry board communicates with and schedules serving opportunities with our ministry partners Our Community Hunger Center (Twinsburg), Hands, Hearts and Homes Outreach (H3O, Solon), Hattie Larlham Group Homes (Solon) and The Mobile Food Pantry (Solon).

The Advent congregation has responded to God’s generous gifts and extended His love by:

* Providing financial and non-perishable food donations to Our Community Hunger Center in Twinsburg.
* Having non-perishable food on hand at Advent and using the Corinthian Fund to supply those in distress that occasionally call upon us for assistance.
* Providing Christmas gifts for 7 children and a single mom in Solon who otherwise would have gone without gifts of any kind at Christmas. We were also able to purchase tires for the mom’s car and provide her with gift cards to Walmart and Giant Eagle to continue to support her family’s needs.
* Donating hats, gloves, mittens and scarves annually to H3O for distribution to the homeless.
* Monthly serving a bag lunch and distributing clothing and personal care items to the homeless through H3O.
* Providing phone support for H3O donors and clients.
* Leading monthly worship and interacting with the residents of the Hattie Larlham Group Homes in Solon.
* Working monthly at the Mobile Food Pantry to distribute food to the needy in the Solon area.

**Evangelism**: We depend on members to extend invitations to people not associated with Advent and reach out to the surrounding community. Throughout the year ahead as we focus on Living the Story, we challenge each of our regular attenders to identify ONE PERSON or FAMILY you have a relationship with and know would benefit from being a more integral part of the Advent community. Once identified, pray daily for the opportunity to be Good News in his/her/their life, seek opportunities to share your life and faith with them, and commit to regularly inviting them to get to know the Advent community through the worship, events, ministries, and relationships that Advent offers.

* Parent’s Night Out enjoyed another successful year attracting young families not associated with the congregation.
* Opening our building to other groups increases Advent’s exposure in the community. We continued to provide space for Jazzercise, Classical Conversations home school group, Greater Cleveland Tamil School, TOPS, Coin Club, Alcoholics Anonymous, a Girl Scout troop, Lego League team, and for Friends in Christ an Indian Christian fellowship and prayer group. The evening and weekend Jazzercise class has moved seeking a larger space at another facility. They will be missed, and we encourage you to help us seek out other groups doing positive things in our community that could benefit from using the meeting space Advent has available.
* Motherhood Matters extends Advent’s hospitality and support to Moms seeking to connect with other moms for discussion, growth, and support in all matters of motherhood.
* We continue to increase and improve our online and social media presence. The AdventSolon.org website has lots of useful tools for newcomers and members to deepen faith and strengthen relationships as we Live the Story Together! We now have a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube and are actively exploring ways to utilize these connection points more effectively to widen our audience and support the mission of Jesus Christ through Advent.

**Fellowship**: An essential element of the Christian community is fellowship with one another. The Fellowship Committee plans many events throughout the year. In addition to the participation of members, these events are great opportunities to welcome non-members to get to know us. Activities and events held in 2017-2018 included:

* Souper Bowl Cook-off
* Bunco
* Congregational Picnic with Softball Game
* Easter Egg Hunt
* Appetizer night at the Garey’s home
* Lunch outings and potlucks after worship
* Happy Birthday Jesus Party
* Cleveland Monsters Hockey Game
* Lake Erie Captains Baseball Game
* Fundraising Outings at Station 42, Honeybaked Ham, & Handel’s Ice Cream.

Each of us has a “ministry”; to our families, friends, co-workers, school mates and even strangers. We are Christ’s hands and feet and the face that the unbeliever sees and associates with people called Christians. OK, so people “see” you. Remember people need to be invited! They need to be invited to come and see, come and participate, come and worship, to come and meet the God who loves them. Invite them to come!

**Spiritual Growth Board Report**

Members: Dana Lewis (Family Life Minister), Amy Fadeley (2016-2019), Terry Scott (2017-2020),
Doug Burchard (2018-2021)

 The Spiritual Growth Board serves the congregation by promoting and enriching the spiritual development of its members through education, youth ministry and stewardship. The goal of this board is to educate people of all ages in God’s message through educational lessons and discussions, so that they may learn and grow as stewards of God in living a more meaningful and purposeful Christian life that encourages virtue and solidarity among peoples.  This past year there have been many opportunities sponsored by Advent in order to achieve this goal. They were:

* **The STORY** provided us with a way to bring all of our age groups literally onto the same page as we read, study, and talk together about God’s Story.Preschool, Kindergarten – First, Second – Fourth, Fifth – Eighth, and Adult classes each have their own age-appropriate version of the Story (The Bible as One Continuous Story) in 31 chapters. We were thrilled with the increased participation (especially of adults) and the deepening of faith that this course of study helped us to realize as a congregation.
* **Vacation Bible School** – VBS was again offered this past summer to children 3 years old – 5th grade. This year’s theme was “Babylon”. Songs and stories of Daniel and his friends gave nearly 50 children an opportunity to grow in Courage, Faith, Hope, and Love each day.
* **Skinny on the Sacraments** – began this past year offering intergenerational classes on Baptism and Communion that unpacked a particular question related to the sacraments. We hope to use these classes to provide an ongoing interaction and growth in the sacraments, rather than a single course designed to prepare people for the sacraments. First Communion instruction for those desiring to begin receiving Holy Communion are offered for an additional 30 minutes following each Skinny on the Sacraments class.
* **Word on Wednesdays** – This educational opportunity continues to meet every Wednesday from 5:30 – 6:30pm. These meetings cover theological and spiritual ideas ideas and their Biblical support.
* **Men’s Breakfast** meets on the First Saturday of each month with the theme of Come Hungry, Get Fed. An enjoyable breakfast is paired with open and prayerful conversation about the way we live and grow as men of faith.
* **Women’s Bible Study** meets on the Third Saturday of each month and has spent the majority of this year working through a study entitled, “Experiencing Spiritual Growth.” The women who attend have greatly appreciated the insight and encouragement that the study has offered along with the support and conversation that the group affords.
* **Motherhood Matters** continues to meet on the First and Third Friday of each month giving Moms a much appreciated time to focus on the challenges and opportunities they have as mothers and find support, encouragement, and joy in the journey they share together.
* **Youth Ministry** is beginning to be a reality again at Advent. We enjoyed two servant focused events with Advent’s youth this past year, Cookies and Caroling in December, and a Day of Kindness on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. We are excited to continue to grow this ministry in the year ahead as our little ones continue to grow not only in height but in faith!

In the upcoming year we look forward to continuing the excitement of having all our Sunday School students on the same page each week. As we begin STORYlife; with a focus on the readings for worship each Sunday and FIVE KEYS for a FAITH-full life, SHARE your story, READ God’s Story, TALK about the STORY, PRAY in the STORY, and BLESS by the STORY; we are excited to see how God continue to grow us in faith and in number.

This year we enter into Confirmation ministry again after going 4 full years without a Confirmation class. The program invites three 7th-8th grade girls to explore Living the Story as a Lutheran-Christian over the course of two years. We will begin the journey again with a new group of students after their lifelong journey of faith has been fully launched!

**Word and Sacrament Board Report**

Members: Jim Lewis (Pastor), Alan Higbee (Director of Music Ministry),Paul Imm (2016-2019), Carol Schevey (2017-2020), Lucy Szabo (2018-2021)

It has been this board’s continuous goal to enrich Advent with a variety of services, liturgies, music and opportunities to worship God. A variety of services and formats were held throughout the year to implement these goals and inspire our members' faith through worship:

The past year was highlighted by our study of the STORY, a continuous story of the Bible, that formed the basis for our readings and preaching texts throughout the school year. Covering a chapter from the STORY each week (sometimes more than one whole book of the traditional Bible) presented some interesting challenges for worship presentations. However, the increased participation in Sunday School, Bible Study, and the benefit of reinforcing the stories all ages were studying in worship made for a wonderful year of worship together. We look to continue to build upon the foundation of shared story, intergenerational conversation, and worship in the years ahead so that this connected and focused approach can help us all to not only learn about the Story, but Live the Story Together!

During the season of Advent we held a traditional reflective service of word and prayer on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm. Using the theme, “Call His Name Jesus” worshipers were encouraged to consider the wonderful names of Jesus; Lamb, Shepherd, Emmanuel,
Son and Word; and what they mean to us today.

The Children's Christmas Program again highlighted the Sunday before Christmas. Thank you to the children, parents, and leaders that made this experience of the Christmas story such a meaningful time of worship for our community.

We continued with the Christmas schedule from the year before offering one service at 7 pm on Christmas Eve including a focus on the story for Children and the timeless tradition of Candlelight singing to Silent Night. The Christmas Eve excitement is followed by a traditional and celebratory service on Christmas Day at 10 am. This service, though much more lightly attended, met a need for several families to celebrate Christmas in worship which they had been unable to do on Christmas Eve.

Lenten evening prayer services began with Ash Wednesday and the imposition of ashes and then continued during Lent as we reflected on “The Call to I Am” with readings, prayers, and hymns that highlighted and brought new meaning to the I Am statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Lenten services were preceded by fellowship meals featuring meals prepared and provided by groups from Advent and community groups that meet regularly at Advent.

The Morning Chapel Service continues at 8:30 am when Sunday School is in session, with Celebration Worship following Sunday School at 11 am. During the Summer months we continue to combine our worship services for one service at 10 am.

Finally, we thank our director of music, Alan Higbee for his dedication to providing and leading us in making a joyful noise unto the Lord week after week in worship. And we especially want to thank the members of the Altar Guild and ALL those who serve faithfully as worship volunteers. To every person who has read lessons and prayers, handed out a bulletin, greeted a worship guest, cared for an infant or toddler allowing a parent to worship freely, sung, rung, or strummed out praise for our God, lit candles, assisted with communion, and more... You have helped those who worship at Advent clearly hear and experience the Good News of Jesus Christ!

We are deeply grateful to you all.

**Statistical Report**



19

105

 33

**Baptized (1)**

Bella Felton

**Affirmation of Baptism (6)**

Joann & Bruce Felton

Dave Denes

Kris, Tony, & Jacob Binkowski

**Deaths (2)**

Martha Dovala

Don Ganzhorn

**Ministry Team Report**
Jim Lewis – Pastor, Dana Lewis – Family Life Minister

2017-18 Was an amazing year of ministry together. We welcomed several new families, saw a big increase in attendance at our Education programs (especially among adults), took a step forward in our relationship with the community groups that meet at Advent adding in an Indian Christian fellowship group (Cleveland Friends in Christ), and discovered the power of a focused intergenerational approach to our worship and education ministries. The STORY, the Bible as one continuous story, provided the energy, focus, and connection that we had hoped it would and we look to capitalize on the steps we took this past year, learn from them, and deepen the impact we have as a congregation in our community in the year ahead. The past year was about Discovering the STORY – the year and we believe *years* ahead are about Living the Story.

This was the theme at our recent Rally Day celebration as we highlighted the five-fold way in which we Live the Story together, Sharing your story, Reading God’s Story, Talking about the Story, Praying in the Story, and Blessing by the Story. These five aspects of Living the Story form the pattern for our worship, our classes, meetings, and events at Advent, and our daily lives as we continue Living the Story at all times and in all places. We look forward to seeing and hearing about the many ways you encounter our Lord Jesus alive and at work in the everyday life and relationships you experience.

On the other hand, we continue to struggle with the financial side of our ministry. The end of our 2017-2018 fiscal year shows that we have all but exhausted the reserves that we had and begin this year with a keen awareness that we cannot support another year of deficits. Our Congregation Council and Leadership Boards have met regularly and consistently work to keep costs as low as possible while still seeking to fulfill and grow the mission we share. The budget proposal that follows is very lean and incorporates reasonable goals for fundraising efforts, third-party donations utilizing payments from programs like Thrivent Choice and Amazon Smile, and does not show an increase over the past year regarding general offerings. In this way it shows a clear picture of the challenge before us, we need to find ways to make up the deficit it shows of $24,940.

We have set out to tackle this challenge by inviting you, our current community, to face it together. The $30 challenge launched this Fall invites every household to commit an additional $1 per day or $30 per month to Advent so that we can continue Living the Story for the sake of the world. When you stop to consider all the things we spend a $1 on without a second thought, isn’t it worth committing $1 a day to ensure that your local congregation has the resources it needs to continue in this amazing ministry we share. Still to get to $24,940 we will need 69 commitments of $30 per month, that happens to be just above the 67 regularly giving households we have right now. Which leads us to the last point. None of us can do this on our own, we need each other. We need to work ***together*** at this and ***Everyone Matters.*** On top of that we ***all need to work at inviting others to join us in Living the Story***. Surely you know one person or family whose story would be improved by living it together with Advent. Make it your personal mission this year to be a consistent voice of faith and source of blessing in their lives and to welcome them into the Advent community before Easter. Imagine if even one/third of us make that happen. We would add 22 households and move from 67 to 89 active households. Repeat that same 1/3 ration again the following year and we’d have 118 active households. Together we can. Let’s get started, together today!

Together in Christ,

Jim and Dana Lewis