

From the Pastor, January-February 2010



Rev. J. Elise Brown, Pastor

Light. We've heard a lot about it in the last few weeks; we will be hearing a lot more.

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light to all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome the light. John 1:4-5

Now our eyes move to the Epiphany light – the same light as that which led the wise ones to Jesus' birth – the light that guides our pathways as we follow Christ.

At the great Easter vigil we sing, "The Light of Christ. Thanks be to God!"

The message of Jesus is all about light, and it's a light we are called to carry into the world. The light born in a manger in Bethlehem; the light rising in a star which led the magi to Jesus; the light of Christ that breaks into the darkness of our world; the light we carry forth in 2010.

It is the light that still believes Bethlehem can live in peace. It is the light that clings to the hope that wars will cease in Iraq and Afghanistan and soldiers can be brought home swiftly and safely. It is the light that keeps shining from Wall Street to Wilmington, to the budget rooms of our own city and state. When hope seems thin and far away, the light of Christ shines once again. We are called to go on, carrying the light of a hope-filled Christ with us.

You are the light of the world... Let your light shine before others that they may see your good works, and glorify God in heaven. Matt. 5:14, 16.

I pray the light of Christ guide your steps and keep you filled with hope and joy in 2010.
See you in church,

Pb

Discover El Salvador

During the lunch for Tres Reyes Sunday (after the 11:00 service on January 10), be sure to make time to visit the Discover El Salvador table. We will serve pupusas and have information (including show-and-tell) about El Salvador in general and the important role of the Lutheran church in particular. It's also a great chance to learn about opportunities to visit our brothers and sisters of the Salvadoran Lutheran church this summer.

Sunday Schedule for January 2010

January 3: Pastor Brown preaching

9 and 11 a.m. Special Services to celebrate the New Year!

January 10: Pastor Sudbrock preaching

9 and 11 a.m. Celebration of Three Kings/Los Tres Reyes – a special potluck lunch with piñata will follow downstairs after the 11:00 a.m. service

1:30 p.m. – Misa en Espanol para celebrar Los Tres Reyes – Bienvenidos Todos

January 17: Pastor Karpen preaching

9 and 11 a.m. Come meet and welcome the Rev. K. Karpen, Senior Minister of St. Paul/St. Andrew's United Methodist Church, 86th and West End Avenue. Rev. Karpen will preach at Advent for both services; Pastor Brown will be at the 9 a.m. service at Advent, and then preach at St. Paul/St. Andrew's for their 11:00 a.m. service

January 24: Pastor Brown preaching

9 and 11 a.m. Doreen Wohl, Executive Director of Westside Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH) will be present at both services to share about the reality of rising hunger in New York City. WSCAH was the recipient of the monies collected from our Food Instead of Poinsettias Campaign during Advent and Christmas. WSCAH also received a percentage of our charitable giving monies in 2009.

January 31: Pastor Lundblad preaching

9 and 11 a.m. Pastor Paul Block, Transfiguration Lutheran Church, Bronx, NY, will be visiting with us to share a Mission Moment about the ministry of this partner congregation in the Bronx. Transfiguration received the monies from the Christmas Tree Sale (\$4,200), as well as being the recipient of a percentage of Advent's charitable giving monies in 2009.

Save the date!

Rev. Art Simon, Founder of Bread for the World, will be with us at worship on March 14, 2010. He will preach at both services. A synod-wide event is being planned for Saturday, March 13, 10 a.m. at Advent to encourage congregations to renew a commitment to Bread for the World. Rev. Simon will have copies of his new book, *The Rising of Bread for the World: An Outcry of Citizens Against Hunger*, which was published last year.

The Adventurous Adventonians Out and About

Up for January is a visit to the Brooklyn Museum on Saturday, January 9th to view the exhibit "The Life of Christ" by James Tissot, with dessert at Kathy Matson's apartment afterwards. For those with more profane tastes, there is also a photographic exhibit on rock and roll running at the same time! In February, we're looking to take in the concert at Carnegie Hall by the St. Olaf Choir. in the Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage on Sunday, February 7, 2010 at 3 PM. Tickets range from \$35 - \$75 (Adventonians generally opt for the lower end of the scale!). If you are interested please let either of the two Kathy's know.

The Adventurous Adventonians are a group of 40+ congregants and their friends who enjoy getting together monthly to share a meal, socialize, attend a concert, play, museum or other event. For more information, contact Kathy Matson at kdmatson1@yahoo.com or Kathy Carpenter at kathc89@gmail.com or call (212)362-2338.

Special Events in February 2010

Ash Wednesday is February 17. Services with imposition of ashes at 12 noon and 7:30 p.m.. Spanish Service with imposition of ashes at 6:00 p.m.

Lenten Midweek services will begin on Wednesday, February 24 and continue through March 24. Please check the Advent website (adventnyc.org) for more details after February 1.

Sunday, February 14, after the 11:00 a.m. service—Special luncheon to benefit Project O, served by Danae and Steve Hudson. Project O is a charity working with AIDS orphans in Zulu communities within Durban, South Africa. Its main vision is to see African AIDS orphans fully supported within extended families or 100% self sufficient homes where children are nurtured in a safe, caring and loving environment, providing hope and the opportunity to grow and thrive.

Reflection with Rilke/Voices of Praise from Emily Ballentine Erb, Co-Minister of Music

The first two months of each year lead us through a whirlwind of emotion as people of faith. We give thanks for the New Year in the midst of our celebration of Christ's birth and, two weeks later, we rejoice with the Wise Men in the stable. Jesus' life whisks by over the next several weeks, and the celebration halts in the middle of February with the arrival of Ash Wednesday. The next weeks are a time of penitence and repentance, in preparation for the end of an earthly life that just began. What intense highs and lows in such a short time! It seems impossible to express with mere words the feelings and meaning of this particular period of time each year.

And so, God has given us the gift of music. As German poet Rainer Maria Rilke writes in his poem "To Music:"

Music: breathing of statues. Perhaps: silence of paintings.
You language where all language ends.
You time standing vertically on the motion of mortal hearts.

Feelings for whom? O you the transformation of feelings into what?-
into audible landscape.

You stranger: music. You heart-space
grown out of us. The deepest space in us,
which, rising above us, forces its way out,--
holy departure:
when the innermost point in us stands
outside, as the most practiced distance,
as the other side of the air:
pure, boundless, no longer habitable.

Voices of Praise is blessed and honored to prayerfully continue our ministry of music in this congregation as the new year begins. Our repertoire for the season of Epiphany includes pieces from the jazz, gospel and world music genres. Please speak to director Emily Ballentine Erb at emilyballentine@gmail.com if you are interested in singing with us. We sing in 2-, 3- and 4-part harmony and have a great time doing it!

Children, Youth, and Family News from Julie Hagen

Cookie Sale Fundraiser for City Harvest. Thank you to all the families who helped baked, organized plates, sold, and bought cookies during the Tree Sale. Together we \$1000 for City Harvest of NYC.

Sunday School and Lighthouse meet at 10am each week. All children ages 3-12 are welcome to join us for an hour of songs, Bible stories, activities, fun, and fellowship.

Bring a friend Sunday on Epiphany, January 10th. Our Epiphany program and celebration for children in Sunday School and Lighthouse will take place at 10am. Children will also be singing at each of the services. The piñata and lunch will be after the 11am service.

Bible Explorers meets every Wednesday at 3:15 with family worship from 4:30-4:50 pm. We are very excited about our new semester beginning on January 6th. Brochures are available at church and the website. Please talk to Julie if you are interested in helping bring healthy snacks.

First Communion Classes are being offered starting January 31. Anyone who, along with their family, believes they are ready to receive Holy Communion are invited to participate in the class. We will meet January 31, February 7th, and February 14th after the 11am service. On February 21st children will receive a special blessing before receiving Communion. If you feel your child is ready to receive their First Communion, talk to Julie.

Confirmation: This ministry is open to youth ages 12-18 who are ready to affirm their baptism through study of the Scriptures, Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Lutheran tradition. We meet Fridays from 4:30-5:45 pm: January 15 and 29, February 12 and 26 to begin our studies on the New Testament.

Middle School Ministry: Monday, January 18th from 1-3 pm @ Leisure Time Bowl. Cost is \$15. We will meet at Leisure Time (in Penn Station). Youth are welcome to bring friends! Stay tuned for our February event!

Youth Group News!

January 17th – Discussion on hopes and dreams; How is God calling me?

February 7th- Souper Bowl of Caring Fundraiser. We will be collecting money and canned goods. Dress warm because we'll be outside all morning. Let's try to beat last year's earnings!

February 21st- Bowling after the 11am service. We'll stop for a quick lunch on the way. Cost is \$15/person.

Youth looking for service hours: Come volunteer at the Food Pantry (1st Saturday/month) or the Community Lunch (4th Saturday/month).

Remember to check out our MySpace page for more updates as well as pictures! www.myspace.com/adventnyc

We are looking for a few volunteers to help organize and lead some fundraisers for the youth group. Please talk to Julie if you are interested.

Lenten family resources are available for your family. Please talk to Julie if you haven't received your devotion yet. Lent is a season of preparation, starting on Ash Wednesday, February 17th and continues for 40 days. We pray that in the sacrifices we make during this season, we remember all that Jesus sacrificed so that we can live lives full of love, grace and peace.

Are you interested in getting involved with the many programs we have for children, youth, and families at Advent? Do you have ideas for a fundraiser, service project, family night theme, you'd like to share? Send Julie an email and she will help you get connected (julie@adventnyc.org).

Vacation Bible Camp- Summer 2010! We are gearing up for another great summer of bible stories, crafts, fun in the park, field trips, and fellowship! Our program will be 4 weeks this summer, July 5-30. Cost is \$600. Brochures will be available in early March.

If you have questions or would like to help with any of our programs, please contact our Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry, Julie Hagen, julie@adventnyc.org or 212-665-2504.

Advent's Food Assistance Programs

Advent sponsors two food ministries which are ongoing throughout the year. One is our Food Pantry which distributes groceries on the first Saturday of each month and the other is the Community Lunch which serves a home-cooked meal on the fourth Saturday of each month. Both ministries have seen increased numbers of people showing up for food assistance. In response to this increased need, the church lifted up two special appeals during the season of Advent. One was an appeal for cash assistance to support the Westside Campaign Against Hunger in lieu of our usual purchase of Christmas poinsettias for the altar. A total of \$2,250 was raised from the congregation for this purpose. The second appeal was for canned foods and other non-perishables for use in our own Food Pantry. It is not too late to contribute foodstuffs for this purpose. Some of the food collected has already been distributed by the pantry.



There are other ways you can support these ministries, however. One, of course, is to remember the hungry and these ministries in your prayers. Another is through contributions of canned goods or money. And another is to volunteer at either or both the Community Lunch and the Food Pantry. These ministries are extremely satisfying and are often in need of additional help. It is a fact that many, sometimes most, of the volunteers at these ministries do not come from Advent, but from the greater community. It's wonderful that our neighbors want to help us out; but when we don't show up, we are losing a valuable opportunity to witness to others about the vibrancy of our faith, the faith that instructs us to feed the hungry.

Please consider becoming involved in these ministries. Talk to Lauren Johnson about the Community Lunch; there are many different ways to help out—cooking, setting up the tables, serving, clean up, etc. Lauren can be contacted at laurenj27@msn.com. To get on the mailing list for the Food Pantry, contact Frankie Thompkins at frankieandtee@gmail.com. The Food Pantry sets up at 9:30am and is usually finished by 11:30am.

A Prayer for the Lenten Season—Remembering the Hungry

Bread for the World

Bread for the World is an ecumenical nonpartisan citizens' movement of 48,000 people of faith, including 2,500 churches. Members of Bread for the World help hungry people by presenting a unified Christian voice to lobby our nation's decision-makers on legislation that addresses hunger in our communities and around the world. An ELCA pastor, Rev. David Beckmann, is the president of Bread for the World. **PRAY** for this advocacy effort on behalf of people who are hungry and living in poverty, and for the leadership of Rev. Beckmann, that this movement will continue to be a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves.

from the ELCA.org website

Music Mondays

January 25

Tessera Quartet

Stefan Jackiw, violin | Emily Daggett Smith, violin | Edward Klorman, violin | Michael Haas, cello
www.tesseraquartet.com

One of the most exciting currently emerging ensembles, the Tessera Quartet is captivating audiences with its glowing sound and bold interpretations. Later this year it will record all of Lowell Lieberman's string quartets for Koch Records. Their program will include works by Mendelssohn, Lowell Liebermann, and Jean Sibelius.



February 15

ECCO

www.eastcoastchamberorchestra.com



The passionate and joyous string players of ECCO (the East Coast Chamber Orchestra) return to Music Mondays. Find out why these extraordinary musicians have enraptured audiences across the globe, creating a duo; a kind of heat that took the music-making to a higher or deeper place." (Philadelphia Inquirer) The colorful and varied program will include Henry Purcell's Chacony, arranged by Benjamin Britten; Sir Edward Elgar's Serenade for Strings; Benjamin Britten's Prelude and Fugue, op. 20; Joaquin Turina's Bullfighter's Prayer; and Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings.

Coming Attractions for Music Mondays:

March 22, Daedaelus Quartet; April 26, Loki Ensemble; May 31, Brentano Quartet

Choirnotes from Aaron Wunsch.....

While I was accompanying longtime Advent member Dorothy Metzger out the sanctuary recently, she asked me if the Chorale would be singing the Epiphany anthem “we do so well” by “that crazy Englishman....” She nodded when I asked if she referred to Peter Warlock’s *Bethlehem Down*, a beautiful evocation of the nativity that also places the scene in the wider context of the church year. Well, I certainly wouldn’t want to disappoint Dorothy! Warlock is certainly one of the more enigmatic figures in the history of choral music, so perhaps a few words about him will pique the listener’s interest before we sing it on January 17th.

For starters, Peter Warlock was not his real name. Born Philip Arnold Heseltine in 1894, Warlock spent his childhood in Wales with his mother before studying at Eton and Oxford. He took equal interest in music and poetry, especially as fused in Elizabethan music, and went on to transcribe numerous Elizabethan lute songs into modern notation. After moving to London, Warlock made his living as a music critic and started to compose under his pseudonym. He crossed paths with Bela Bartok and became sympathetic to modern composers whose music was unpopular, writing that “music is neither old nor modern: it is either good or bad music...all old music was modern once.” In the late 1920s Warlock struggled to maintain his composure, perhaps as a result of multiple personality disorder and severe depression; he had run-ins with the police for public drunkenness, took an interest in the occult, and used marijuana. He was mysteriously found dead of gas poisoning in his apartment, and to this day there is disagreement about whether it was an accident, suicide, or murder. Someone had carefully placed his cat outside the apartment. He was 36.



Peter Warlock

Surprisingly, it was during this final turbulent period in his short life that Warlock composed *Bethlehem Down*. He wrote it together with his fellow drinking partner, the poet Bruce Blunt; they submitted it to a Christmas carol contest, which they won. The anthem begins by setting the stage for the visitation of the magi: “When He is King we will give Him the Kings’ gifts: Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown.” By the third verse, a parallel is drawn between the beginning and ending of Christ’s life, which also forecasts the coming of Lent: “When He is King they will clothe Him in grave-sheets: Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown.” Although Warlock uses the same music for both verses, his unique, subtly shifting harmonies are miraculously able to convey both the peacefulness of the nativity and the premonition of suffering to come. Perhaps Warlock’s own struggles, which likely cut his life short, allowed him to invest this anthem with the aching beauty of a fragile, impermanent peace:

“Here He has peace and a short while for dreaming:
Close-huddled oxen to keep Him from cold,
Mary for love, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.”

New Mission Focus – the Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission

Advent’s Kathleen Carpenter has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission (NELM) in Rock Point, Arizona, located in the Four Corners area of the state. She will attend her first board meeting this January. Advent’s connection to NELM began through Yvonne Weidmann whose aunt, Christel Badey, has served on the Mission’s board for some time. Advent has over the years provided books through Scholastic Book Fairs for the school’s library, and Christmas gifts of warm clothing for the children at the school as well as our ongoing project of collecting Box Tops for Education and Campbell Soup labels (those boxes on the back table at the church). Kathy is looking forward to learning about a new culture, sponsoring some fund-raising at Advent for the school, and maybe even organizing a mission trip to the Navajo Reservation. For more information about the various activities and needs of the Mission, log on to www.NELM.org or talk to Kathy.

Invitation from Jordan Clawson to Warm Up Those Cold Winter Evenings at Common Ground

Common Ground continues this winter with many exciting services. Our first service of the New Year is "On Call" Thursday January 14 at 7:00pm with a message given by David Slagle Peck. On January 28 we will have an interfaith service called "Tikkun Olam – Healing of All the World" with Rabbi Jeremy and Rabbi Julia from Ansche Chesed Synagogue, 100th and West End Avenue, bringing the message.

Please visit www.adventnyc.org and the Common Ground at Advent Facebook group for additional service dates and information. Additionally on the Common Ground at Advent Facebook page are message boards where we invite you to post thoughts, inspirational quotes and readings, and prayer requests. Please add us to your profile to join in our online community.

Thank you to all of the message givers, cooks, curators, musicians, readers, actors, and congregants at our fall services. Common Ground would not be successful without all of your time and efforts! Some of the highlights for me from our fall services included caroling on the steps, Santa's workshop, our offering collections for West Side Campaign Against Hunger and Trinity Place Shelter, the bountiful potluck dinner, and our interfaith dialogue with Imam Ibrahim Abdul-Malik. For further study, Imam Ibrahim suggests the following readings:

ABDEL HALEEM, M.A.S., *The Qur'an – A Biography*, 2004, London, Oxford University Press

ARMSTRONG, Karen, *Islam – A Short History*, 2000, Modern Library ed.

ARMSTRONG, Karen, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*, 1992, New York, Harper Collins Publishers

The CG planning team will meet in January to plan the upcoming services for the winter and spring. If you have any suggestions for our offering collections, songs and readings, or if you would like to participate in the upcoming services, please email me at jordanclawson@gmail.com. Best wishes for 2010, and God bless you!

January-February Meetings

All meetings are open to the general membership unless otherwise indicated.

All meetings are held in the basement at Advent.

Common Ground Planning Meeting – Thursday, January 7, 7:30 p.m.

Stewardship Task Force – Monday, January 11, 6:30 p.m.

Mission Fund Committee – Thursday, January 14, 7:30 p.m.

Maternal Health Initiative – Wednesday, January 13, 6:30 p.m.

Church Council – Thursday, January 21, 7:00 p.m. Final report of Council Nominating Committee

Children Youth and Family Ministries – Friday, January 22, 9:00 a.m.

Property Committee – Tuesday, February 9, 6:30 p.m.

Church Council – Thursday, February 18, 7:00 p.m. Election of New Officers

Lifting Our Cup: A Coffee Challenge Litany (from ELCA.org)

by Barbara Lund

This cup holds grief
and balm in equal
measure, light, dark-
ness.

Who drinks from it
must change. (May
Sarton)

Ed Note: *The importance of coffee in Lutheran community life and our commitment to economic justice is borne witness to in this abridged version of this litany from the ELCA website. For the entire text, log on to the ELCA.org website and search for "coffee litany." The challenge referred to is the sale of 90 tons of free trade coffee. Advent participates in the sale of free trade coffee and other products. We thank the Sudbrocks for organizing this important activity.*

Gather together, sisters in Christ, to celebrate the community God creates. Fill small baskets with coffee beans and grounds, light candles, surround with coffee cups and pour a pot of delicious brew.

Read and reflect

This cup holds grief and balm in equal measure, light, darkness.
Who drinks from it must change. (May Sarton)

Perhaps Sarton knew the goodness of conversation shared over coffee. Fellowship and coffee renders space for listening and supporting, serving, inviting, healing one another in grief and balm. Through your commitment to purchase fair trade coffee, your fellowship expands and you are connected to traditional coffee growers; their families and communities.

Read together Psalm 116: 12-13

What shall I return to God for all God's bounty to me?
I will lift up the Cup of Salvation and call on the name of God.

One: Women of Faith, Action and Discerners of good taste, lift up your cups in thanksgiving, for your commitment, challenge, and call to create trade relationships for fair trade coffee.

All: We lift our cups, thanks be to God!

Drink slowly, aware of the blessings in the giving of thanks.

One: The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, we give thanks for the earth: water, soil, sun and seed. For the forest canopy that supports the diversity of life sustained alongside the traditional shade grown coffee plantations of fair trade farmers — birds, plants, insects, watershed, and rich soils.

All: We lift our cups for the sanctuary of creation, thanks be to God.

Drink and savor the taste, remembering all good gifts.

One: Coffee growing communities are at the heart of fair trade. We imagine their faces of life and labor from the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro to the islands of Indonesia, from the fincas of Costa Rica to the foothills of Kenya, from the terraced coffee gardens of Arabia to the rugged landscape of Columbia, from the ambient climate of Brazil to the wild coffee forests of Ethiopia, from the small plantations in Vietnam to the vast plantations of Nicaragua, from the small farms in Mexico to the volcanic rich soil of Guatemala, along the Ivory Coast of West Africa to the shaded canopies of El Salvador — fair trade ensures producers of a living wage that puts people and planet before corporate greed.

One: We will continue to drink together, remembering we share God's vision of abundant life for all.

All: What shall we return to God for all God's bounty?

One: We pray to the Giver of Life and Hope.

All: You call us, O God of Blessing, to bless others with the cup of life and salvation. Your presence is the power we need to evoke change. Your blessing of love enables us to commit ourselves to the unending struggle for justice. How grateful we are for your generous love. How glad we are for one another and the coffee time we share from field to table. In Christ we pray,
AMEN!

“Welcoming the Stranger” from Dorothy Metzger

Many years ago, on a typical Sunday at Advent, two strangers crept into the church and quietly took their place in a back pew. The service was just beginning; the choir was processing to the hymn “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” which is set to music by Haydn, music which is also, as it turns out, the music for the German national anthem.

After the service the Pastor, John Garcia Gensel, greeted the newcomers. A few of us chatted with them and took them downstairs for coffee. The couple was John and Helen Mark. We learned that John was a tenor with a beautiful voice. He was very affable; Helen was withdrawn, sad, almost hostile. John joined the choir and invited Ken, the choir director, his partner Mike and me to their apartment for a nightcap. This became a common occurrence and we spent many hours there. “Lene,” her nickname, began over time to relax. Pastor Gensel was also meeting with her and helping her to open up.

Gradually, Lene was able to recount her horrific experiences in the concentration camp. One evening she showed us the camp number which had been burned into her arm. She told us of a wonderful rabbi who helped them all survive.

It turned out that Lene was also a great actress who performed regularly with our church drama group which was blessed with a very talented director. Her most memorable role was as Mary Magdalene at the cross.

One of the most beautiful experiences I had at John and Lene’s house was a Viennese Palm Sunday dinner. Everything was elegant: the dinner and the background music of Bach’s St. Matthew Passion.

Eventually, John’s job moved to California but at least once a year they would return to New York City. Between times, we kept up on the phone and with letters. For the last two years of her life, Lene returned to live with her cousin in Vienna where she died in 2008, well into her 80’s.

Lene remembered the kindness of Advent through a bequest in her will. When her cousin forwarded the gift to Advent, she commented that Lene had always found Advent to be a happy place for her. Let us always remember the importance of “welcoming the stranger” – not because we might come to benefit from it but because, when we welcome the stranger in our midst, we are also welcoming Christ. Lene came into our midst with great sadness and left with joy in her heart. What a great gift to give someone!



Helen and John Mark on their Wedding

Liturgical Notes for January and February 2010 by Kathleen Carpenter

The days are cold and the nights, long, but January and February are rich in liturgical traditions as we look forward to the glory that is Easter.

First up is the festival of Epiphany. The word "epiphany" has come into popular usage as a way to denote a sudden insight. The word itself has Greek roots in the word *epiphaneia* which means manifestation. The church season of Epiphany stretches from January 6 until the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday which is celebrated as the Transfiguration of our Lord. The length of the season varies and is determined by working backwards from the moveable feast of Easter.

The manifestation referred to in the word "Epiphany" refers to the revelation of Christ to all nations through the Magi who were non-Jews who "came from the East." This story foretells the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles. If you were in church over the Christmas season, you might have noticed the Magi first appearing on the organ and then, on January 3, moving over to the piano! They will not arrive at the manger until January 10th (although the "official" day of Epiphany is January 6th, which falls on a Wednesday in 2010.) In the Spanish tradition, Epiphany is celebrated with parades, small gifts for children and, of course, much feasting! Advent has always had a tradition of celebrating Epiphany with special music, procession, and a piñata during the coffee hour. This year, we will also be recognizing our special mission relationship with the Lutheran church in El Salvador.

Epiphany ends with the festival of the Transfiguration of Our Lord which falls on the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday. The Transfiguration, which is celebrated in August by some Christian traditions, refers to the event on the mountain when Jesus was transfigured into a radiant figure in the sight of Peter, James and John, appearing above Elijah and Moses, and referred to by God as his Son.

Ash Wednesday follows Transfiguration Sunday on February 17th this year and will be marked by three services for the imposition of ashes. The ashes remind us of our mortality and our death in sin without the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Ash Wednesday ushers in the season of Lent which comes from an Anglo-Saxon word for spring. Lent last 40 days which recalls the 40 days' fast of Jesus in the wilderness and Moses' 40 days on Mount Sinai. Lent, like Advent, is a season of simplicity, repentance and preparation. Many people mark the season by prayer, fasting or some other type of sacrifice and special service to others. In many Sunday Schools, children make posters with the word "Alleluia" which are then hidden or "buried" until the triumph of Easter.

A Prayer for Our Military

O loving and almighty God, bless the members of our armed forces as they perform the tasks of their calling for love of their country. Protect them from all harm and danger of body and soul; sustain and comfort those in areas of conflict and those at home, especially in their hours of loneliness, anxiety and worry. Prepare the dying for death and the living for your service. We give thanks for those who have died in this service, and remember their loved ones in their time of loss and grief. Give to all an understanding of your love for all humankind so that, relying on your aid, they may promote righteousness, honor and unity. Grant unto us and all nations a speedy, just and lasting peace, to the glory of your name and the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

One of Advent's own, Jason Nunez, has been deployed to Afghanistan. Please keep him and his family, including his grandmother Alice Warwick, in your prayers.



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*We are a diverse, Christian community
committed to building relationships and
transforming lives through faith and action.*

Official Notice: Advent Annual Congregational Meeting – Sunday, January 24, after the 11 a.m. service. Please bring a dish to share.

A sample of the foodstuffs donated by Advent members during the month of December for distribution at the monthly food pantry. There has been a steady increase in the number of our neighbors seeking food assistance through the food pantry and the community lunch.



If you'd prefer to receive the newsletter electronically, please let Jane Huerta know by emailing her at finance@adventnyc.org.