

From the Pastor, May-June 2011



The Rev. J. Elise Brown

God surprised me on Palm Sunday this year.

Not that God doesn't usually show up in unexpected ways every time we gather for worship, but it was different this year.

A man I had never seen before was outside in the crowd as we gathered on the steps of the church, spilling onto Broadway to bless the palms and begin the procession into the sanctuary. The man was passing by the church, but he stopped when he saw the crowd gathering outside. He watched intently, looking around at what was going on. He didn't have a bulletin, but a kind fellow worshiper reached out and shared his with him. And then, surprise of all surprises, the unknown man joined the procession and came into the sanctuary. He moved to the front of the sanctuary and claimed a pew, only three rows from the front – not the usual "last row behavior" of seekers and newcomers.

By this time, he had a bulletin and a palm. A different kind worshiper handed him a hymnal. As the lessons were being read, he sat on the edge of the pew, straining to hear the words being spoken. When Pastor Lundblad preached the sermon, he remained on the edge of the pew, nodding in agreement to what she was saying. During the prayers of intercession, when Barbara invited the congregation to both sing and do an arm motion during the prayer response, he joined right in, making large, bold movements with his arms up to the sky in praise and then back over his face to his side.

Everything about his posture and attentiveness that day said, "I'm thirsty." It was as if he was drinking up God's word, the music, the prayers, the fellowship. Like a sponge, he was taking it all in.

God surprised me with this man. God reminded me that it is for this man that we gather. Yes, we gather to celebrate our own traditions and faith, but it is truly for the thirsty ones that God has placed us here in this ministry. When we get bogged down that the bulletin or music may not be perfect, or all too concerned with what others are thinking, remember this man, this thirsty man. He was straining to hear God's word. Our call is to look for such a man, and help him.

See you in church,

Pb



A Melody from Common Ground

Here's a melody to hum, whistle and carry with you, a reminder that God is always with you wherever you are in the city, in your day and in your life. Enjoy!

We Are Not Alone - Taize

A D Bm E7 A

We are not a-lone, we live in God's world, we are not a-lone, thanks be to God.

A D Bm E7 A

We are not a-lone, we live in God's world, we are not a-lone, thanks be to God.

Common Ground is an alternative service organized and carried out by Advent's young adults. The services are every other Thursday evening at 7pm, followed by a meal and time of fellowship. The next Common Ground service will be on Thursday, May 12, on the topic of "Disagreement." Kathy Carpenter will be giving the message. Check the Advent website Adventnyc.org for more information on dates and topics. The Common Ground band plays for CG services and also sometimes on Sundays. The band rehearses on Thursdays at 8pm (after VOP rehearsal) unless there is a Common Ground service in which case the band rehearses before the service at 6pm. While Common Ground is planned and led by Advent's Young Adult community, people of all ages are welcome! Feel free to email Jordan Clawson at jordanclawson@gmail.com for more information or if you'd like to participate in Common Ground services.

Advent is an RIC Congregation – What's Up With That?

Started in 1984, the [Reconciling in Christ \(RIC\) Program](#) of Lutherans Concerned / North America recognizes Lutheran communities that publically welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender believers. The Reconciling in Christ roster of congregations, synods, college, seminaries and organizations now exceeds 450.

proclaiming Christ
as the Word of God's Welcome:
wet on our foreheads,
alive in our hearts,
and active in our world—
that justice might roll down like waters
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

*The above is from the Lutherans Concerned/North American website.
Log-on for more information.*



May is Care for Creation Month at Advent!

We have many opportunities for you to examine your lifestyle and make new commitments to care for God's earth as a steward of this gift.

May 1 – How big is your foot? Smallest Carbon Footprint Competition

You are invited to log on to the Advent website (www.adventnyc.org) and take a short, easy survey that will determine the size of your current carbon footprint. Then, make a commitment to lessen the size of your footprint over the course of the month of May. Each day, you will have the opportunity to do things that care for God's creation in a meaningful way. At the end of the month, we will announce the winner of the Smallest Carbon Footprint Competition! We encourage you to join us!

May 8 – Adult Education Class at 10 a.m. on Birding with Ricki Ravitts!

Ricki walks through Central Park twice a day to and from work. She has become an avid birder as a result of these daily walks. Come hear what wildlife lives right here in the middle of New York City!

May 15 – Care for Creation Sunday, Pastor Sudbrock preaching.

During each worship service, you will have the opportunity to make a commitment to caring for God's creation in a new way. Maybe it's walking to work one day a week rather than driving or taking the bus. Maybe it's giving up buying bottled water and drinking water from the regular household tap! Maybe it's recycling more or creating less trash. Think about it in advance; we will have some ideas to help you.

After the 11 a.m. service, join a birding trip led by Ricki Ravitts to Central Park!

May 15 and 22 – Adult Education Class at 10 a.m. on the Millennium Goals that pertain to the environment and how we are doing as 2014 approaches.

May 29 – Announcement of the Smallest Carbon Footprint winner!



Liturgical Notes - Pentecost

The festival of Pentecost is often called the "birthday of the church." The original Pentecost was and is an important festival in the Jewish calendar (Shavu'ot), celebrated 50 days after Passover and commemorating the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai. It was also associated with the presentation in the temple of the "first fruits" of the harvest. Jews from far and wide gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate. In the Christian calendar, Pentecost comes 50 days after Easter and commemorates the appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a violent wind from heaven and the appearance of "what seemed like tongues of fire" resting on each of the Apostles (Acts Chapter 2, verses 1-12) The season of Pentecost is the longest in the church calendar, stretching from 50 days after Easter all the way to Advent. At one time this season was known as Trinity; the liturgical color is green.

Strategic Planning Update

The Church Council and Strategic Planning Team would like to thank everyone who participated in the annual meeting guided conversations and/or took the on-line survey. We are very pleased with the broad-based participation we received. Your comments and feedback are very important to Advent's ministry and its future.

At the Advent Church Council Retreat on March 26, the Strategic Planning Team, led by Pastor Charles Miller, and the Church Council adopted the following seven strategic directions for our ministry in the next 3-5 years:

1. Take our current commitments of inviting, welcoming, growing, and giving to a higher level by evaluating infrastructure and developing healthy leadership and a comprehensive communication strategy.
2. Gather and distribute information to the congregation through timely, transparent, and effective channels in order to equip and engage members in the life of the congregation.
3. Develop a bold plan for our church structure that maximizes opportunities for growth and flexibility in ministry.
4. Offer a rich variety of worship and music experiences in order to facilitate growth and deepen the spiritual lives of participants.
5. Enrich and educate children, youth, and their families in faith formation from birth to young adulthood.
6. Embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ through social action initiatives in order to better serve our neighbors, locally and globally.
7. Offer diverse educational opportunities to encourage the spiritual, intellectual, and physical health of our congregation and community.

Get involved! New teams will be forming around the Strategic Directions 1 and 2 for immediate attention - Growth/Leadership and Communications.

Exploratory teams will begin evaluation of Strategic Directions 3, 4, and 5 - Physical Space, Worship and Music and Children, Youth and Family ministries. If you are interested in becoming part of any of these teams, please speak to the designated coordinator. These people are helping form the teams and get the conversation started, but won't necessarily be leading the initiative.

Growth and Leadership

Linda Kelly (lkelly_ny@yahoo.com) and Djamillah Samad (djsamad@aol.com)

Communications

Karen Cantrell (kjckwords@aol.com) and Elba Cabrera (ecab910@optonline.net)

Physical Space

Aaron Wunsch (awunsch@gmail.com) and Madelyn Soussoudis (msoussou@aol.com)

Children, Youth and Family

Becky Eavey (wvugirl16@gmail.com)

Worship and Music

Norma Martin (nmartinnyc@gmail.com) and Naomi Frost (frostn18@yahoo.com)

Choirnotes

A large quantity of the great choral repertoire was composed by young people. We can hardly fault composers for this: Schubert died at 31, Mozart at 35, and Mendelssohn at 38; we mostly sing music from their "old age." Still, one wonders what musical wisdom Mozart might have left us had he reached his 70s, and so perhaps we should have a special reverence for those composers—and poets—who actually did. On June 5, the Advent Chorale will sing *Two Worlds*, composed by the 78-year-old Randall Thompson (1899-1984) and set to poetry by an 80-year-old, Edmund Waller (1606-1687).



Edmund Waller (1606-1687)

Waller's life was stormy, filled with adventures and mistakes. A member of Parliament by age 16 (!), Waller's political miscalculations landed him in the Tower of London, where he was condemned to death. He bribed his way out but was banished from the country, moving to France. Time was on his side, however: Waller outlived the anger against him, returned to England, successfully ran for Parliament again, and reinvented himself in his old age as a defender of religious tolerance. The poem for this song comes from the collection *Divine Poems*, completed at the ripe age of 80. This poem speaks volumes with few words and a measured wisdom; the present is perfectly balanced between the richness of character gained from having lived a full earthly life and the desire to embark upon the next:

*The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lies In new light through chinks that Time hath made:
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view
That stand upon the threshold of the new.*

Randall Thompson set these verses to music almost three hundred years later, when he had reached roughly the same age as Waller had been. Thompson was by then a well-respected professor at Harvard (teacher of a young upstart named Leonard Bernstein), but he had lived through an era in music history when choral music was woefully out of fashion. Thompson's music is masterfully serene, humble yet optimistic, and he achieves a great musical depth in very few notes. The optimism here is especially inspiring, as he composed this work shortly after he had a stroke. Both the music and the poem speak with a calmness and wisdom, and their spellbinding combination has a quiet power.



Randall Thompson (1899-1984)

Note: The Handel Te Deum originally scheduled for the Tiffany Windows rededication in February will be sung at the re-scheduled rededication on Sunday, May 22nd.

The Kelly Family - Faithful Worshippers All

Usually you see them at the 9:00 a.m. service, a family with four young children. Meghan, the youngest, likes to help collect the offering. You also see Meghan and her brothers, Ryan, Ethan, and Gavin, at Sunday school or Bible Explorers and Lighthouse. You may know Linda's mother Blanche Eickemeyer from the 11:00 service or the Adventurous Adventonians. But wherever you see them, you notice that each member of the Kelly family is involved in the Advent community.

As faithful attendees since 2000, Jim and Linda Kelly have worn many hats. Jim is currently on the Investment Committee, and Linda, having stepped down from being Advent's official treasurer, is a program advisor for the Children, Youth, and Family ministry and a member of the Strategic Planning Committee.

And yet, there was a time when they were church-less. In fact, when Ryan was born, they took him back to Linda's home church to be baptized. Linda's family had the stronger faith tradition; indeed although as a child she sometimes "kicked and screamed," church was "non-negotiable."

Jim's family hailed from a Catholic tradition but was not especially faithful, and yet, probably inspired by his friends, who were mostly Jewish and celebrating their bar mitzvahs, he began attending mass on his own because he felt that "something was missing."

Jim and Linda first visited Advent when Pastor Laura King was here. They finally joined the church after Pastor Brown arrived. They'd shopped for churches from 81st to 93d Streets and eventually decided that they wanted a liturgical service. Also they felt comfortable at Advent. Advent needed help at that time, so the Kellys got deeply involved. They helped transition Advent into becoming Reconciling in Christ, which included changing the welcome statement on the back of the bulletin. A few members left the church at that time, but the Kellys stayed. They believe that tolerance is an important lesson to teach their children, tolerance and regularity and familiarity with God's Word. In fact, the girl who "kicked and screamed" about going to church now says that she'd like to go through the confirmation process again, "to bring life experience to faith formation."



FROM THE MALARIA COMMITTEE

On April 2nd, an article in the New York Times reported that Malaria No More, a leading non-profit organization in the fight to end deaths from malaria in Africa by 2015, was close to completing its mission and shutting its doors (http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/02/business/02charity.html?_r=1). Malaria No More quickly denounced the article and reaffirmed their mission and the work left to be done (<http://www.malarianomore.org/news/blog/mission-end-malaria-deaths-far-complete>). These two articles demonstrate how easily confusion and sensationalism can dilute the realities of malaria and undermine efforts to combat it. Keeping abreast of the progress made against malaria, as well as working to educate our peers and dispel misinformation about malaria, are the most important ways in which the congregation of Advent can do its part to end this terrible disease.

Advent & ELCA Malaria Campaign Fact Sheet

Did you know?

Advent is part of the ELCA Malaria Campaign

What is the mission of the ELCA Malaria Campaign?

The ELCA Malaria Campaign enables Advent and other ELCA churches to join with African companion churches in the global effort to prevent, treat, and contain malaria by 2015.

What is the ELCA Malaria Campaign fund-raising goal?

The ELCA Malaria Campaign has a \$15 million goal. Funds raised will benefit our Lutheran companion churches and companion organizations in ten African countries: Angola, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

What is malaria?

Malaria is a disease contracted from the bite of an infected mosquito and affects all age groups - especially children, pregnant women and their unborn babies.

What are the Symptoms of Malaria?

If you are bitten by an infected mosquito, symptoms are similar to the flu: fever, nausea, achiness, fatigue.

Do people die from Malaria?

Yes, people die. Particularly when the immune system is compromised, such as in infants and pregnant women, the likelihood of death from malaria rises. If malaria is contracted by an older child or adult, it is possible (though not easy) to survive.

How many people die each year from Malaria?

One in five childhood deaths in sub-Saharan Africa is due to malaria. The disease is preventable and treatable, yet it claims more than 800,000 lives each year.

Why do so many people die?

In addition to lack of access to medication and prevention, those infected are also hungry and live in poverty. Hunger and poverty further deplete the body's ability to fight back once someone is infected.

Can Malaria be treated?

Yes, Malaria can be treated. However many people who are infected do not have access to medication for treatment, and the ability to pay for them, keeps many malaria patients from receiving life-saving treatment and care.

Can Malaria be prevented?

Yes, Malaria can be prevented. Common methods of prevention are health education, protection from the infected mosquitoes using insecticide-treated mosquito nets, indoor residual spraying and water drainage.

What is the ELCA Malaria Campaign doing to help?

The ELCA Malaria Campaign is working through companion churches to bring mosquito nets, health education, mosquito control, and malaria treatment to communities across Africa. These malaria containment efforts are saving lives.

Praisenotes from Emily Ballentine Erb

"Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent."
- Victor Hugo

"Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words."
- Robert Frost

Voices of Praise carries out its ministry of praise through a combination of sounds and speech, both organized in a special way with each song. Whether the poem of a song is well-known or newly-inspired, or the melody has familiar contours or unexpected turns, worship music expresses and inspires emotion in a way that cannot be described.

Voices of Praise will join with the Advent Chorale on Pentecost Sunday with the anthem "When Speaking Has Ceased." This recent composition is a beautiful expression of the many and varied emotions that exist on the familiar day of Pentecost. Enjoy the poetry here, and come experience the melody on June 12.

When speaking has ceased and the room has grown still,
When solitude creeps over valley and hill,
The Spirit of God finds a place to alight
And puts our vain fears and our trembling to flight.

O Spirit of God, fill the earth with Your joy,
Give voice to our song that our praise may employ
Your well-spring of peace to fill ev'ry bare space
With sweet notes of gladness and fair tones of grace.

When clamor and noise fill the world with their sounds,
When harmony flees and loud tumult abounds,
The Spirit of God is not driven away;
He quiets our heart and forever will stay.

O Spirit of God, rising lighter than air,
Lift high to the Lord all the weight of our prayers,
No burden we carry is ever unknown;
No friend of the Spirit is ever alone.

Never alone.

- Johanna Anderson and Craig Courtney



Elected, Now Commissioned and Installed!

As many already know, Julie Hagen was unanimously elected (89 Yes, 0 No) as Advent's Associate in Ministry/Director for Youth and Family Ministries on Sunday, April 10th. She immediately accepted our call!

Now we get to participate in another important rite of passage for Julie, her commissioning as an ELCA Associate in Ministry! That will happen during the 11:00 am worship service at Advent on Sunday, June 5th. The Rev. Robert Rimbo, Bishop of our Metropolitan New York ELCA Synod, will be here to commission Julie as an ELCA Associate in Ministry and, while he is here, install her "officially" as Advent's Director for Youth and Family Ministries.

And we get to watch and participate with our fellow Advent members and Julie's family and friends! A reception will follow in the church's fellowship hall.

Please join us for this wonderful occasion!



Scholarship Fund Needs You!



You may have noticed that a special envelope marked "Scholarship Fund" is included in the packet of envelopes you recently received. Please prayerfully consider making a generous donation to the Fund. Our very own Dorothy Metzger started this fund some years ago out of her interest in, and commitment to, education and Advent's youth. Since then, many, many students have benefited from this fund. The Scholarship Fund distributes 60% equally among the successful applicants with the remaining 40% kept as seed money for the following year. Every year we have more and more applicants and college costs continue to rise as well. Textbooks now cost hundreds of dollars and students sometimes end up having to share them or use outdated versions because they cannot afford the expense. Donations at every level are very much appreciated! Scholarship Guidelines and application forms are available on the table at the back of the sanctuary. You can also request them electronically from Kathleen Carpenter at kathc89@gmail.com. Applications are due in the church office by Friday, June 17th; awards will be made by July 15th.

TIFFANY CELEBRATION

On May 22, 2011, at the 11 AM service, there will be a re-dedication ceremony for our beautifully restored Tiffany Windows. This has been such a labor of love for all involved and not only will we re-dedicate the windows, but it will be a time to thank those whose efforts produced this gift. A celebration will be held after the service. If you are interested in helping, please contact Suzanne Chadwick at suzychadwick@aol.com God bless all who made this possible!

Congratulations Are In Order!

Congratulations Jordan Clawson and Becky Eavey who were married on April 30 in Winchester, VA at the home of Jordan's parents.

Congratulations to Joe Jones and Sungwon Hwang who will be married on May 7 in Central Park where they met running a few years ago!

Congratulations to Tanya George and Mitchell Kent who will be married on June 4 in Diamond Point, NY near Lake George, where both of their families have summer homes.

Congratulations to Barbara Lundblad and Nicole Johnson who will be married on Saturday, June 18 at Union Theological Seminary. This is a small service, but the whole Advent congregation will celebrate with them on Sunday, June 19 at a special reception in their honor.

Children, Youth, and Family Ministry:

Now is the time to register for Summer Camps:

(All registration materials are available on our website.)

Confirmation Camp, youth in Grades 7-9. July 3-8 at Camp Koinonia in Highland Lake, NY. This program is in conjunction with other Lutheran congregations in the Metropolitan New York Synod. We will experience a wonderful week of Christian community in a beautiful outdoor setting. We believe the week of Confirmation Camp is vital because it enables our youth to experience and explore their faith in relationship with their peers from other churches.

Vacation Bible Camp- July 11-22, Monday-Friday 9am-3pm for all children ages 3-12. Suggested Donation is \$250. Explore Bible stories in fun & interactive ways. Build friendships in a community of Christ. Give praise to God. Go on field trips to Governor's Island the Brooklyn Children's Museum . Share in God's gifts of peace, love, forgiveness, and light.

Middle School Leadership Camp- for youth in Grades 6-8. July 25-29, Monday-Friday 9am-3pm. Suggested Donation is \$100. Youth will be participating in group building, leadership activities throughout the morning tied into stories of Biblical leaders. Each afternoon we visit different locations around the city to use our gifts and talents to help others. Sites include Westside Campaign Against Hunger, VanCortland Park, a local nursing home, and prep for the Advent Community Lunch program.

High School Mission Trip- for youth in Grades 9-12. July 31- August 5. Suggested Donation is \$150. We will be traveling to Pittsburgh where we will be working with the Pittsburgh Project, the Ronald McDonald House, and World Vision. Each of us will develop new skills, exhibit leadership, practice old skills and experience God's creation in new and beautiful ways.

Notes from the Council

In addition to the Strategic Planning session in March, the Church Council has also been involved in the following:

Since the Mission Fund requires 501(3) non-profit status for any organization, and not individuals, that intends to apply for a grant, Council agreed to sponsor the Malaria Initiative and Equipo El Salvador.

Council will be deciding on an insurance company and policy at the May Council meeting – when the policy is due. Good news: Advent has a new color copier.

Advent expects to be involved in celebrating the 300th anniversary of Henry Muhlenberg's bringing Lutheranism to North America. A seminary professor from Gettysburg and a professor from Muhlenberg will preach at Advent on October 2 and 9 and will speak on October 11 at the Manhattan Ministerium.

This fall is also the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. Union Theology professors will speak at Advent on the second Sunday in November about this Bible and why translations matters.

Faith Formation for children, youth, and families starts with YOU!

In the next months we will welcome new children in Baptism and witness youth Confirm their Baptism after two years of catechetical studies. Both of these occasions and throughout the church year (Easter Vigil, Baptism of our Lord, and the reception of new members) are times when we remember our own Baptism. The Affirmation of Baptism is significant for the whole Christian community. How are you living out your responsibility to walk with young people, raising them in the Christian faith, praying for them and teaching them to work for justice and peace? Step out in faith and become involved in the lives of the children and youth at Advent. The Holy Spirit is alive and at work and we hope you will catch the Fire!

A big heartfelt THANK YOU to all who contributed to the Easter Breakfast and Bake Sale Fundraiser. Because of your generosity, the youth group has met their fundraising goal for the year. Thank you to those who baked treats, helped cook breakfast, and all who came to eat and buy goods.

Congratulations and God's Blessings to youth who will be Confirmed on June 12th; to Matteo and Olivia Baldassare who will be baptized in May; and to all the young people who are participating in First Communion preparation classes.

Sunday School and Lighthouse Pentecost Party- Sunday, June 10th, 10am.

All children are invited to this special end of year celebration. Bring a friend to join you! We are blessed to have wonderful volunteers who help teach Sunday School and Lighthouse each week. Thanks to all who have contributed to these important ministries throughout the past year. Sunday School and Lighthouse will resume again in September.

ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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

Peaceful In His Love

We are rich
Who are clothed
in the garment of righteousness
Woven in truth

At Pentecost
We are as consuming fire
Like flames on ancient hilltops
We are aglow

Red-robed in sovereignty
Crowned from above

The Spirit rests upon us
Peaceful in His love.

Veritas
Poetry, Prayer, and Praise

**Be sure to check out Advent on
Facebook and Common Ground on
MeetUp.com!**