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Dear Friends,

When the pandemic began, we closed the church and live-streamed services. Eventually, we developed a plan to reopen in a way that would work to keep people safe. To my relief, I haven't heard of anyone who caught COVID attending a service or activity at Advent. I personally tried to follow the advice of the experts and the proper authorities. I received the vaccines when I was eligible, wore a mask when required to do so and social distanced as much as possible. I've also used a LOT of hand sanitizer! Beyond that, I left it in God's hands.

Isaiah 41:10 includes the oft-quoted words, "Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God." What does that mean to us? To me, it means what most people did during the pandemic: follow the advice as much as possible and leave the rest to God.

And now, we've reached a point where we should talk about whether we are living by faith or by fear. COVID rates have been under 10 per 100,000 in Cape May County for a couple of months now. It is true that we can pray and worship God wherever we are in the world, and certainly a live-streamed service helped us do just that over the past two years. I'm happy we can continue to provide a video service for people who are unable to attend worship. But Christianity is a faith that needs to be practiced in community. When we gather weekly to worship together, we can better support each other. We can also break bread together. Communion cannot be received through your computer screen. Technology helps connect us, but it's not a substitute for living out our faith with other Christians.

Now that it is safe to meet in-person and we have vaccines available to anyone over the age of five, I feel that it's time to ask that we return to worshipping together as a community. Attendance has been gradually increasing at Sunday worship and other in-person events - and it is wonderful to be together again. Over the next few weeks, we are finishing the season of Lent. It is a good time to return to the discipline of regular worship, Christian formation, and fellowship.

I also want to encourage people to take advantage of the sacrament of unction, the laying on of hands and anointing with oil for healing. James 5:14-15 says "Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayers of faith will save the

sick, and the Lord will raise them up..." We offer unction at every Sunday service, and before COVID, many people came forward for healing. People regularly tell me that they experience healing from this sacrament: there is power in receiving the laying on of hands and anointing of oil for healing. Like communion, this is a sacrament I cannot provide to you by video. Sacraments are received in person, by faith, as a means of receiving God's grace.

Do not be afraid. Trust in our Lord. Come and worship, receive the sacraments, and participate in Christian fellowship, so that we all, together, may be strengthened in our faith.

Yours in Christ,
Alan +

GOD IN THE HIGHEST

One of the subjects I am studying in my coursework at San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) is systematic theology. This subject focuses on how we think, speak, and write about God in a coherent and congruent way. To do "strong" theology means to draw on several sources (or methods). The more sources, the stronger the theology. As a result, I am learning to (1) read and analyze scripture; (2) research the Christian tradition; (3) consult and reflect on my experience (personal, cultural, and the findings of science); and (4) to use reason (logic and philosophy). Incidentally, participants in our *Education for Ministry* (EfM) program do the same. They routinely do "theological reflections" in weekly sessions in the search for practical applications for day-to-day ministry.

This spring I have learned about two concepts that, for me, are strongly related to the church season of Lent. They both have something to do with power. The first is *plerosis*, Greek for the action or process of being made full or achieving complete fulfillment. As applied to the concept of power in ancient times it manifested the utter, complete, ever conquering, dominating and unaccountable exercise of power by kings, emperors, and conquerors. Theirs was the power to destroy with impunity; there is no countering force to curtail or rebut it. Gods in ancient times were attributed this same kind of power. The response was always fear. In the narratives and pronouncements of the *Old Testament*, the God of the Old Testament, *YHWH*, wields this power. Its description is especially noted in the *Psalms*. A human exemplar of this kind of power resided in the life and conquests of Alexander the Great, who marched across a good deal of the known world in unrestrained conquest with such success that he was attributed god-like status, as were the Roman emperors that followed after him in the rise of empire.

The second kind of power, *kenosis*, Greek for "self-emptying" power is the antithesis of *plerosis*. It is a concept that surfaces in early Christian theology and is descriptive of God's action in Jesus of Nazareth, i.e., God chooses to use God's all-powerfulness to "bow down" to humankind in an act of a loving, self-emptying relationship. Jesus witnesses to this kind of power when he calls it, "Abba," father, a recognition of God in a close, even parental relationship with humanity. Here, the reciprocal response is love, of God and neighbor. We can see this devolution of divine

power in the *New Testament* narrative of the journey Jesus takes with his followers from the moment of exaltation—the hilltop Transfiguration—then down the mountain and up the road to Jerusalem, to his Passion and Good Friday. Today, the church beckons us on a parallel, “self-emptying” journey in the sacred calendar season it calls *Lent*.

Over the centuries, thinkers and theologians have pondered, How does one address such power that eschews *plerosis* and enters into *kenosis*? To go from all power to “emptying power”? In the early 20th-century, a reformed theologian, Karl Barth, thought about this question. He finally arrived at a term found in the *Old Testament*, in the *Psalms*, and in tradition. It is a term that he uses to point to the differentiation of a ‘power over the power’ of even the most powerful imaginable. He finds it in the appellation that was before him in plain sight, one that is familiar to us, too. It is one that I grasp, now, with fresher meaning, the song of the Christmas Angels, “Glory to God in the *highest*.”

—Sam Wilson

FAMILY PROMISE

Family Promise of Cape May County has continued to serve needy families in the area even as the pandemic has complicated the lives and businesses of so many. Family Promise occupies the Day Center on Townbank Road in North Cape May. It's from here that the family begins their day - off to school or work and returning here in the afternoon for homework and dinner. Family Promise has bought a home in the Villas which the family occupies overnight instead of traveling to assigned area churches as they've done in the past.

Church of the Advent, along with other area churches, continues to support this mission by providing food, household items, and financial support to our client families as they transition from homelessness. Our host church is Cape May Methodist and for one week a quarter we have the opportunity to prepare at home and deliver one evening meal, breakfast snacks and other needs to the Day Center. We have the opportunity to engage with the family and provide homework assistance, read or play time with the children as the opportunity arises. During our assigned week, Director Laurie Johnson lets us know if there are specific ways that we could be of assistance during our host week.

Our next assigned week is April 25 to 29, 2022. We are responsible for the evening meal on Monday, April 25th. Any special dietary restrictions or requests will be relayed prior to that week. A sign-up sheet will be at the back of the church in the next couple of weeks. Please consider "giving a hand" with food prep, snacks, or other assistance.

Thanks,
Marty Torpey
Martha Stafford
Coordinators

WHEN THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY

"We brought nothing into this world...we can take nothing out of it." (1 Timothy 6:7).

The Endowment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee is pleased to report that there are 9 parishioners, that the church office is aware of, who have mentioned Advent in their wills. We also have other parishioners who have made recent cash contributions to our Endowment Fund.

The Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF) in NYC (www.episcopalfoundation.org, 800-697-2858) is an excellent resource on ways for Episcopalians to plan gifts for the Church in their estate. The ECF has this to say about writing your will, the most common form of planned giving.

For hundreds of years . . .

Since the first Book of Common Prayer, Episcopalians have been encouraged to make a will, to provide for their families, and to make bequests for religious and charitable purposes if possible.

Preparing a will is a loving and responsible act for the sake of your family. Dying intestate is difficult for the family and can cause many problems.

Here are a few helpful suggestions on how to prepare to write your will, the ultimate exercise in Christian stewardship.

Before seeing a legal advisor . . .

What should you do before seeing a legal advisor? To save time and expense and to ensure that you achieve your goals, take a little time to do the following:

- Make a list of everyone for whom you are responsible.
- List everyone you would like to remember in your will including charities or causes that have been meaningful to you.
- List all of your material assets. This list may be more extensive than you think.

After subtracting your debts . . .

Match the names with the assets or consider giving a portion of your total estate to each individual. Take care of your family first. This is also the time to consider special friends and your church.

Consider establishing a trust if your estate is large enough by consulting with a financial planner, the trust department of a bank, or a representative of the Episcopal Church Foundation. If your total assets are substantial, you may be subject to federal estate taxes. In some cases, forming a family and/or charitable trust may reduce both estate and inheritance taxes.

Ask your estate administrator (sometimes called executor/executrix) if he or she is willing to serve.

Consult with the people you select as guardians of your children (where minor children and other dependents are involved) to be sure they are willing to serve.

Talk with your priest to explore ministries that could best be funded by a gift from your will.

Bequests to your church can take several forms . . .

- An outright monetary bequest
- A percentage of an estate
- A specific asset, such as personal or real property
- A trust created in a will

- A contingent beneficiary, i.e., the church receives the assets if there are no surviving beneficiaries

After you make your will . . .

Make sure that someone knows where your will is located. You might place a copy in a secure file at home and leave a copy with your attorney.

Do not place funeral instructions in a safe deposit box. Generally, services will be over by the time your administrator checks your bank box. Leave a copy of your funeral plans and wishes with your priest and a member of your family.

Review your will from time to time with your legal advisor. Laws, assets, family, and personal interests often change over time. You probably have not written your last will, only your latest will.

Preparing a will is an act of love for your family and friends, a way of easing the pain of loss that follows death. It is your final legacy.

If you have any questions about the Advent endowment program please feel free to contact one of us on the Endowment Subcommittee.

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PARISH EDUCATION MATTERS . . .

The parish Education Committee met on Sunday, March 27th, and it commends the following information to you:

- Weekly weather permitting, the parish Sunday school will conduct Sunday 10:30 a.m. sessions during April in the parish hall garden area, culminating with the traditional Passion Sunday Easter egg hunt.
- Young adult/teen, adult bible study, and EfM programs, respectively, continue with the current schedules as announced in the weekly Sunday bulletin.
- The Adult Forum series on *Aging in Modern Society* continues with the Stockton University/Center for Successful Aging presented topic, "Family Caregiving," Friday, April 8th, 6:30-7:30 p.m. It will be presented **online** to all who pre-register. A registration link will be forwarded to parishioners via email when it is available.
- Vacation Bible School will either be the last week in July or the second week in August (to be decided within the next 3-4 weeks) at the same Cape May Point State Park venue as last year.
- The committee continues to sponsor the Wednesday 9:00 a.m. Lenten Anglican Rosary program in the St. Mary's Chapel through the first Wednesday in Easter.

- Planning for the fall 2022-spring 2023 Adult Forum program is considering the topic "Peacemaking & Conflict Resolution," to be confirmed at the committee's April meeting.
- There is preliminary consideration of a four-Sundays in Advent 2022 program on the topic, "Living in Hope," during Sunday mornings between services.

-Sam Wilson

GOOD FRIDAY OFFERING

On Good Friday 2022 (April 15) we not only venerate the love that was "so amazing, so divine," but also commemorate the 100th anniversary-the centenary-of acts of unselfish generosity and kindness by Episcopalians in our Good Friday Offering.

The Good Friday Offering offers us the opportunity to celebrate and rejoice in the hope and opportunity for the very young and the very old, for needy families, students, and many others in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. For 10 decades we have provided an opportunity for every parish throughout our church to connect with the ministry of love and compassion carried out by our Anglican sisters and brothers throughout the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. The Good Friday Offering has helped fund the following:

- The Mission to Seafarers in the United Arab Emirates
- The Arab Episcopal School in Irbid, Jordan, that provides a strong educational program for blind students.
- St. Christopher's Cathedral in Bahrain, that provides food and other care for migrant workers who have lost their jobs and cannot get a flight back to their home countries.
- Arab Ahli Hospital in Gaza.
- And many more important ministries across the region.

You can make a donation on line at iam.ec/goodfridayoffering

OUTREACH COMMITTEE NEWS

The Outreach Committee has appropriated \$1000.00 to Episcopal Relief and Development which is a companion to Church World Wide Relief to assist the relief effort in Ukraine. We are watchful of other ways to assist with the refugee crisis and will consider other donations as the situation evolves. We extend prayers for the Ukrainian people.

The committee voted to replace one of our students who left school in the Empower Africa Project with another child, Godknows Mudimba. We now support two students at the school in Zimbabwe.

Locally we will donate \$500.00 to the Pat Holden summer basketball camp for children in the Cape May area. Family Promise will receive \$150.00 to support their program for homeless families. We will be providing dinner to Family Promise on April 25. Cape May Housing residents will receive Acme gift cards for food for Easter dinner. This is a long established relationship providing food cards twice a year to these folks.

The next meeting of the Outreach Committee will be Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at 3:00 PM in the Parish Hall.

-Marrie Cassidy

EASTER FLOWERS

If you would like to donate toward Easter flowers please complete this form and send it with your monetary donation to Church of the Advent, PO Box 261, Cape May, NJ 08204. Donations must be received by April 11, 2022. Thank you.

Easter Flowers

In Memory of:

In Thanksgiving for:

Enclosed is a check made payable to Church of the Advent Altar Guild for

\$_____.

Your Name(s):

ADVENT BOOK CLUB

The Advent Book Club will meet on Tuesday, April 12, 2022, at 7:00 PM at the home of Jack and Lorraine Shaw. The book for discussion is The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah. All are welcome. For more information please call Lynda Cogswell at 609-884-6675.

April Birthday Celebrations**April Anniversary Celebrations**

| | | | |
|----|--------------------|--|--|
| 2 | Susan DeHart | | |
| 4 | Martha Stafford | | |
| 7 | Patricia Kowalski | | |
| 16 | Betty Steger | | |
| 18 | Fr. Alan Leonard | | |
| 19 | John Coyle | | |
| 20 | Kristen Craig | | |
| 21 | Kathe Christensen | | |
| 23 | Trisha Andrzejczak | | |
| 30 | Nellie Laborowicz | | |

HOLY WEEK SERVICES**Palm Sunday: Sunday, April 10 – 8:00 and 10:30 AM****Stations of the Cross: Tuesday, April 12 – 6:00 PM****The Anglican Rosary: Wednesday, April 13 – 9:00 AM****Morning Prayer: Wednesday, April 13 – 9:30 AM****Maundy Thursday: Thursday, April 14 – 6:00 PM****Garden Watch: Thursday to Friday, April 14-15 – 8:00 PM to 8:00 AM****Good Friday: Friday, April 15 – 9:30 AM Stations of the Cross on****The Promenade beginning at Convention Hall****Friday, April 15 – Liturgy and****Veneration of the Cross - 12:00 Noon at Church of the Advent****Easter Day: Sunday, April 17 – 8:00 and 10:30 AM****WEEKLY WORSHIP SERVICES****Sunday: The Holy Eucharist at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.****The 10:30 service is also livestreamed on YouTube****Wednesday: The Anglican Rosary at 9:00 a.m.****Morning Prayer at 9:30 a.m.****Thursday: The Holy Eucharist at 12:00 Noon**



Caregiving for Loved Ones:

Information, Support, & Dialogue for
Care Partners

Friday, April 8, 2022
6:30-7:30pm (Live via Zoom)

Free-of-Charge, Open to All, Pre-Registration Required, Register [HERE](#)

“Child, spouse, partner, cousin, neighbor, friend – as people take on a caregiving role, it is important to know that, no matter what your day-to-day responsibilities are, the heart of your relationship will always remain. You will always be the child, or spouse, lover, cousin, neighbor, or friend” -Adapted from Next Steps in Care, 2012

According to the AARP, there are close to 45 million unpaid caregivers in the United States-those family members and friends who assist others with activities of daily living, medical tasks, and emotional support. We will define and explore caregiving and the way it impacts caregiver and recipient. Opportunities for discussion and resources will be provided.

Kathryn Brzozowski, DSW, LCSW
Assistant Professor of Social Work
Stockton University

Speaker Bio: Kathryn Brzozowski received her Doctorate in Social Work from the University of Pennsylvania and her MSW from the University of Central Florida. She is an Assistant Professor at Stockton University. Her interests include older adults, life transitions, illness adjustment, and the use of technology in social work. Dr. Brzozowski has over 20 years of social work practice experience, primarily in the areas of aging, oncology/medical social work and private clinical practice.



This lecture is presented by the Stockton Center on Successful Aging as part of the [Episcopal Church of the Advent](#) (Cape May, NJ) Aging in Modern Society Series. All are welcome.

Stockton Center On Successful Aging **SCOSA**
STOCKTON UNIVERSITY 