

# THE ANCHOR

## Newsletter



**Episcopal Church of the Advent**

Franklin & Washington Streets  
PO Box 261, Cape May, NJ 08204  
609-884-3065

[adventsecretary@comcast.net](mailto:adventsecretary@comcast.net)

[capemayadvent.org](http://capemayadvent.org)

**Fr. H. Alan Leonard, Rector**

Patricia E. Keltie, Editor Emeritus

Kathe Christensen, Editor

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Dear Friends,

Happy Advent and happy New Year! Advent is the beginning of the new year for the church. It's also a time when we prepare for Christ's coming by thinking about what we need to do and be as disciples of Christ.

It takes all of us working together to be the church and to be a community of faith.

*"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." (1 Corinthians 12:12)*

In our various church groups, people offer their gifts to the work of the church by doing the things necessary for a healthy community. Some groups raise money and plan how to use our resources so the church can continue to thrive. Other groups help us to grow as Christians through education and formation. We have a group that plans ways to share our resources with those in need around the world. And of course, all groups provide opportunities for Christian fellowship. By working together, we do the work God has called us to as disciples of Jesus Christ.

I am grateful for all the hard work that our many volunteers do to make this church community function. Later, in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, Paul reminds us that all the parts of the body of Christ must work together in the church. One part should not say I'm more important or I don't need the other parts. We should not judge the work one person or one group does as more or less important than the work done by someone else or a different group. Our finance and stewardship committees must work together with the vestry or our budget will never work out. Men help the Episcopal Church Women with fundraising events and women provided desserts for our Advent dinners and will surely support other ECM events in the future. Our terrific sexton cleans up after every event. His work might not be noticed but we'd certainly notice if it didn't happen! We all have a part to play in the church and together we do the work and ministry of Church of the Advent.

The season of advent reminds us, though, that the real purpose of Church of the Advent is not to have worship and fellowship activities. Sometimes it surprises people to hear that – wait, worship isn't the main purpose of a church? No, our purpose is to proclaim the Gospel to the world and help God's people in our wider community. Worship strengthens us to be disciples: to go into the world and minister to people.

Fellowship helps us build community and serve each other. Both things are important, but they are not the purpose of the church. They are not solely what we are called to do as disciples of Christ.

Wonderful things happen when churches focus on doing God's ministry in the world rather than focusing their energy entirely on internal matters. As we begin a new church year, let's unite ourselves as a community of faith that looks outwards to the world. Then we are truly serving Christ as his disciples.

Faithfully,

Alan+

### **LESSONS AND CAROLS AND ECW**

On Sunday, December 11, at 3:45 PM, the choirs and friends of Church of the Advent and Cape May Presbyterian Church, along with the Joyful Ringers bell choir, will join to offer the traditional Festival of Lessons and Carols at Church of the Advent. ECW is excited to announce that our first reception in several years will follow in the Parish Hall! Donations of finger food would be appreciated and can be brought that Sunday.

The Festival of Lessons and Carols follows a very old format from England with readings that recount the prophecies and then tell the story of the birth of Jesus. Between each of the readings are anthems and carols for the choirs and the congregation. No matter how you celebrate Christmas, this is a wonderful way to be ready for the day, listening to the stories and hearing and singing the traditional music of the holiday.

*-Carol Obligado*

### **COOKIES!!!!!!**

***We will, once again, be hosting MAC's Christmas Candlelight House Tour on December 3, 2022, from 5:30 until 8:30.***

Our job is to provide hospitality (refreshments and restrooms) for those who are visiting the houses open on the tour. In the past we have had more than 600 people visiting the church and stopping in the parish hall for cookies and beverages, so you can see that we need plenty of cookies. (MAC does compensate us, so this is a fund raiser.) Please bring your MAC cookies to the parish hall during the week before the event. Please mark clearly that they are for MAC and leave them in the kitchen. Thanks so much.

*-Carol Obligado*

## **CARING FOR KIDS**

It's that time of year to consider gifts for our Caring for Kids children. This is a partnership with their "Adopt a Family" community project which reaches out to needy families in Cape May County.

Once again 40 children will be entrusting their wish-lists to us. There will be ornaments with names, ages and items desired. It's up to you as to how many gifts on a particular tag will be purchased. Ornaments will be available Sunday, November 20, 2022.

Please wrap your gift with the ornament attached and return to the church on or before Sunday, December 11, 2022. We thank you for your support of this worthwhile project.

*-Jo Armstrong, Outreach Committee*

## **SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE CHRISTMAS COLLECTION**

As we at Church of the Advent look ahead to the coming holiday season, the Outreach Committee again asks for your support of our annual campaign to collect items for the Seamen's Church Institute. Advent has been faithful in the past, providing cargo ship crews far away from home, with ditty bags during the holiday season. The bags contain practical gifts and treats which, for many seafarers, is the only gift they will receive. The mission of Seamen's is to reach out to all who enter the Delaware River ports with a small gift of gratitude from those who benefit from the goods and produce that enter our country by ship. Collection containers are located in the Church Narthex and the Parish Hall. We need to send our donations to Seamen's Institute in early December so the ditty bags can be prepared in time for Christmas. For questions or donation pickup please call Glenda Unzelmann at 443-243-7615.

### **Wish list for ditty bags:**

Hats and scarves in dark colors  
Work socks, work gloves  
ChapStick  
Nail clippers  
Razors  
Shaving cream  
Playing cards  
Hand lotion  
Toothbrush, toothpaste  
Deodorant  
Shampoo  
Comb  
Mini-sewing kit  
Hard or boxed candy, gum, cough drops

**FULL SIZES FOR TOILETRIES, PLEASE**

## **ECW ANNUAL PECAN SALE**

Orders are being taking for the annual pecan sale. 16 ounce bags of Priester's fancy half mammoths will be \$13.00 and can be ordered by calling Glenda Unzelmann at 443-243-7615 or by email at [werneru@verizon.net](mailto:werneru@verizon.net). Delivery will be in late November. Pecans make a lovely gift and a festive cloth bag can be ordered as well for \$2.00.

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE NEWS**

The Church of the Advent Outreach Committee met on October 16, 2022. We welcomed a new member, Richard Hudson. We are actively seeking new members to join us to reach out to those in need. The Diocese of Southwest Florida sent us a gracious "thank you" for the \$1000 we sent them to help rebuild their churches and help victims of Hurricane Ian.

Sam Wilson has written two grants for Sustainable Grants to match the funds we have already given to Flying Kites in Tanzania and Collateral Repair for refugees in Jordan. Thank you, Sam.

Our traditional Christmas projects are underway. Caring for Kids gift tags will be on the Advent trees in the sanctuary beginning November 27. Please take one and return your wrapped gift with the tag as soon as possible. Seamen's Institute collection boxes are in the Parish Hall and Narthex of the church with the lists of items we need. Acme Food Gift Cards will be purchased and delivered to the residents of the Cape May Housing Authority the first week in December to help with their Christmas dinners.

We awarded two scholarships to two children from our parish who are taking dance and gymnastic lessons. This is made possible through the Sid Hicks Fund for enrichment of local children.

Our next meeting will be January 18, 2023, at 3:00 PM in the Parish Hall. Please join us to see what your Outreach Committee is doing.

*-Marrie Cassidy*

## **ADVENT PROPERTY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

We celebrate the close of the year with good news indeed! The Diocesan Council, in response to the recommendation of the Diocesan Loan/Grant Committee, has agreed to support the deferred projects as outlined in Advent's application with a relatively short-term, low-interest loan. As the upcoming season permits, and in sync with contractor schedules, improvements to stairs, safe ADA access, parking lot designations, and completion of landscaping design will finally be realized. In the meantime, special thanks to our Sexton, Onesimo Corona, for repainting yellow striping on all stairs in consideration of the time change bringing dark evening hours. Moving Forward...

*- Barbara Smith*

## A CHRISTMAS DANCE

November 14th finally came. Months of declining vitality, chafed by weeks of precautionary isolation, were ending. COVID and medical clearance delays since last summer had finally run their course. Medical science and art—diagnostic, testing, surgical, nursing, therapeutic, plus the spiritual support of many people intervened—all came to bear on the task of repairing my failing heart at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. I was to experience a concentrated surge of expert care from doctors, surgeons, PAs, NPs, RNs, technicians, and support from many of you.

In retrospect, I see the process as an intricate choreography set to ever-slowng musical movement. It was a dance of measured medical restoration by doctors and surgeons extended through the ministrations of nursing of all stripe, entwined by the swathing of prayer and support by many more. My experience with this dance began with a predawn drive from shore to city, delivering me to an orderly registration, followed by well-honed preparation steps; then an **adagio** of gurney wheels rolling briskly down polished floors through double doors to the OR where multiple hands swirled about the OR, fiddling or positioning this or that technology over me with a *series* of IV's started. I nodded to multiple soft-voiced checks on my comfort as twilight but not darkness ascended into my hyper-alertness, muting my awareness. Then, **accelerando**, a slow minuet of mystical masked figures, each in turn, shimmered in and out of my supine view. Next, **ritardando**, hushed and meticulous movements of dramatic and intimate, extensive and intimate, virtuoso and rudiment, transforming me, infirm, to one, renewed. In less than three hours, a voice pronounced from somewhere on the borders of my hearing, "It is done. It all went well."

Then more gurney wheeling into a swish of reassuring voices and sponge stick massaging cold water on my parched tongue and lips in recovery; then more gurney movement in and up the elevator and out, finally ending in a space lit by reflected light from a vaulting tight-cluster of center city buildings that vaulted into a cloudless skyline. Another flurry of hands, then melting away, full stop!

Finally, in solitary, I hesitate, then **rallentando**, I release my crimped-up knuckles and drift into relenting sleep to soft, rhythmic beeps and hums of rolling monitor screens graphing heartbeat, bp, and O<sub>2</sub> measurements. A quiet voice from somewhere inside interpolates it all, "Let go now. Let your healing begin."

The mystical dance continues in the following days of drip, pinch, stick, and steady monitor beeps. New, caring faces emerge around the clock in day-and-night shift shuffles; an aperiodic pattern of visits at all hours by the sage and humble technicians ensues—all caring, all focused, and all are ministering those measures to return me to a less labored life of gratitude and hope.

I am home now. Yet, the dance perichoretic continues in my heart in new metaphor and rhythm. I am prompted to remember the powerful synergy of communities linked in prayer, support, healing, recovery, encouragement, and restoration. Not just for me but for all, at all times, places, and circumstances. I am reminded once again that nurturing communities lie at the center of our Anglican/Episcopal ethos. This gives rise to new and different codas of our enduring faith and practice. I reflect that in the interstices between home, hospital, family, friends, and parish, *we experience God in [the sometimes highly skilled] giving to, receiving from, and mutually sustaining of each other through all tests and challenges.* The important

modern poet Wallace Stevens opines, "Life is an affair of people, not of [things and] places." And the central wonder of it all is that this was sprung from a simple manger in a stable at Bethlehem in Judah in Palestine long ago in the divine dance of loving, healing intervention, to the effect, as John the Divine, parish patron, records, "See, I make all things new." Rev. 21:5.

—Sam Wilson

**December Birthday Celebrations**

**December Anniversary Celebrations**

8	Anthony Canesso	1	Gary & Amy Reed
9	Liam McKeown	11	Josh & Amanda Pierce
16	Dick Cassidy	13	Herbert & Arlene Lehman
18	Kona Wong	14	Michael & Marty Torpey
21	Mihael Kirk	28	Cal & Martha Stafford
22	Pam Kelly		

**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: Morning Prayer at 9:30 a.m.**

**Thursday: The Holy Eucharist at 12:00 Noon**

**CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES**

**Sunday, December 11 – Lessons and Carols at 3:45 PM,  
followed by a Reception in the Parish Hall**

**Christmas Eve: Saturday, December 24 –The Holy Eucharist at 7:00 PM**

**Christmas Day: Sunday, December 25 – The Holy Eucharist at 10:30 AM only**