

THE ANCHOR

Newsletter



Episcopal Church of the Advent

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Dear Friends,

Lent is a time of self-examination, repentance, and amendment of life. Lent is also a time to rejoice that God has forgiven our sins. Let us take a closer look at these things.

Self-examination means taking time to prayerfully consider the temptations and sin in our life. As you pray, ask God to send the Holy Spirit to guide you in this examination. The Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21 are a good place to start. You might write down the specific details of how you failed to follow God's commandments. Next, look at the commandment to love God and our neighbor, found in Matthew 22:37-40, Mark 12:28-31, and Luke 10:25-28. Examine your life to see where you have failed to love God and your neighbor and add those sins to your list. This list of sins is where repentance starts.

Repentance involves confessing your sins to God. You might like to make an appointment to see a priest for a private confession. The seal of the confessional is absolute; the priest will never reveal the contents of a confession to anyone under any circumstances and will never bring up the confession with you again. If you prefer, you can just make your confession to God. The important part of confession is repenting of each of your specific sins.

The final piece is amendment of life, where you should look at what tempted you to sin and consider how you can avoid those temptations in the future. Make a commitment to actively avoid those sins and ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen you to do so. When certain sins keep reoccurring in life, you might seek spiritual direction about how to change yourself to avoid these sins.

A word about private confession: I have made a number of private confessions throughout the years. Personally, I find two major advantages in making a confession to another priest. First, I receive immediate reassurance that God has forgiven my sins. Second, I can talk with my confessor about ways to amend my life in the future. Confession is a sacrament, like baptism and the Eucharist. It is an important part of our Christian life. While we make a corporate confession on Sunday mornings, it can be deeply meaningful to make a private confession to a priest.

The season of Lent ends with the Easter Celebration, where we rejoice that forgiveness of sins is a free gift of God's grace through Jesus Christ. Glory be to God that sin does not lead to death if we truly repent and amend our life.

Faithfully,
Alan +

LENTEN REFLECTIONS

*O God, who created all peoples in your image, we thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in this world. **Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship**, and show us your presence in those who differ most from us, until our knowledge of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP p. 840).*

We reflect this season in gladness, in seeing the restoration of traditional celebrations in fellowship as well as quite a number of new opportunities for spiritual development. Our Advent Calendar for 2023 reverberates with a sense of creative energy, to try new things, to reach new people. It is our calendar; it is our community.

Especially during Lent, we reflect in prayer upon the intersection of our faith and how we have been living our lives, how we have been engaging our faith. So as the Advent community embarks upon new directions with the potential for new impactful relationships, please consider how you might own it, seeking a new approach, however tentative, to participate, to lend a hand, to join in, to attend, to volunteer, to share a talent, skill, knowledge - even for an hour at a time.....

As Christians within the Episcopal communion, we value the need for living our faith in community. May our Lenten Reflections bear witness to the potential for "**ever-widening circles.**"

In peace and fellowship,
Barbara Smith (Basia)
Senior Warden

CHURCH OF THE ADVENT YARD SALE

Mark your calendar! Saturday, October 7 — Our church is having a yard sale!! As the winter ebbs and spring comes on, and you begin your cleaning in earnest, please save your treasures for our church yard sale to be held Saturday, October 7, 2023. We are looking forward to many shoppers as this is MAC Victorian weekend and lots of visitors will be in town. We hope to have a very large yard sale with lots and lots of everything...old, vintage and antique. It is going to take a lot of effort and coordination to make this yard sale successful. Everyone is welcome to participate. Please let our church secretary Kathe know if you will be able to help. Richard Hudson will host a brief planning meeting in early April. Save the date, save your stuff!

ADVENT BOOK CLUB

The Advent Book Club will meet on Tuesday, March 14 at 7:00 PM. The book for discussion is Golden Hill by Frances Spufford. All are welcome. For more information please call Lynda Cogswell at 609-884-6675.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE NEWS

The Outreach Committee met on February 15, 2023, and voted to send \$1000 to Episcopal Relief and Development to help the victims of the earthquake in turkey. Parishioners are invited to join this effort. Please make checks out to Church of the Advent marked "Turkey Relief". Let's match the \$1000!

The committee voted \$350 to join with Quakers on the "Knitting for Peace" project. Each box costs \$175 to ship. This is a project involving a large number of Cape May County knitters who have been sending hand knitted items to Ukraine. It has now grown to include clothing that can be dropped off at the back of Elaine's Cape May Restaurant on Lafayette Street. Shipments go every few weeks. When Volodymyr Zelenskyy was in the United States to address Congress, he wanted to know where Cape May was located.

A tutoring program for Cape May elementary school students will be led by the Spanish Honor Society of Lower Township School District. This will take place in our Parish Hall on Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:30 PM. Outreach will coordinate with tutors and provide snacks.

Please pick up your Mustard Seed Jar and fill with loose change during Lent. Fr. Alan blessed the jars on Sunday, February 19, and we will collect them on Sunday, April 16. This collection will go to the Collateral Repair Project that works with refugees in Jordan.

Our next meeting will be at 3:00 PM on March 22, 2023.

-Marrie Cassidy

THIRD ANNUAL SUPER BOWL FOOD DRIVE

ECW is again sponsoring a food drive that began on Sunday, February 12 and continues until Sunday, March 12, 2023, to benefit Cape May Community Food Closet and St. Barnabas Cares Food Pantry. Please bring your donations to our Parish Hall during this time where there is a designated space for you to leave them. Lists of needed items are available in the Parish Hall and the back of the church. Also, please check the expiration date on the food you want to donate to make sure it hasn't expired. If you would like to make a monetary donation, you can make your check payable to Church of the Advent ECW and drop it into the box provided there.

"SITZ IM LEBEN"

Recently, I began a graduate New Testament course, *Introduction to the New Testament Gospels*. One of the texts I use in my studies is a uniquely helpful tool, *Gospel Parallels: a comparison of the Synoptic Gospels* (5th edition, Burton H.

Throckmorton, Jr.). It enables one to examine comparative accounts of the same gospel story side-by-side. Using this text, I learned that the “Good News” initially came down to us in two major scriptural traditions: Jesus’ teaching about the Kingdom of God and Paul’s teaching about Jesus’ divine importance to our lives as Christians (Paul wrote his epistles before the gospels were written). Jesus taught about God and the advent of His Kingdom on earth. He announced God’s call to repent and become its citizens. Paul taught about Jesus, the anointed of God, whose special relationship with God and whose life, death, and resurrection are the central event in the Christian life. These two traditions are brought together in the different written accounts of the canonical gospels: *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*. From antiquity on, scholars have spent careers closely analyzing their similarities and differences,

There are many theories and hypotheses to explain similarities and differences in the gospel accounts. It is generally agreed, however, that early Christians convinced of the soon return of Jesus focused more on his teachings. While those, who eventually accepted Jesus’ non-immanent return, dwelled more on who he was and his importance. *Mark’s Gospel*, for example, seems to be more interested in what Jesus had to say about God and the immanent coming of His kingdom while still portraying the mysterious uniqueness of the “Son of Man.” The other three gospels feature various degrees of the importance of the person of Jesus, with John perhaps dwelling the most on Jesus’ personhood. Yet, all feature parables and teachings of Jesus about the Kingdom and his healings. The Gospels differ, scholars believe, because of respective efforts to relate the “good news” to audiences living in different settings with different faith questions. These audiences sought specific understandings about God’s Kingdom and the life and death of Jesus, and what it meant to them in their circumstances. German scriptural scholars call this context “Sitz im Leben,” or life settings.

A good example is when we briefly take up the comparative accounts of Peter’s confession to Jesus at Caesarea Philippi. *Mark 8:27-33* relates an account where Peter answers Jesus’ query about who people think he is. Peter proclaims that Jesus is the Messiah! The same response is recorded in *Matthew* and *Luke*. However, in *Mark*, it is apparent that Peter understands Jesus would lead his followers to an earthly, political, or military triumph to restore the glorious kingdom of ancient Israel. Peter gets upset and rebukes Jesus when Peter learns that this is not to be the nature of Jesus’ messiahship. *Matthew 16:13-23* uses the same tradition to establish Peter as the “rock” of the future church whose judgments would prevail on earth and in heaven. Life among God’s faithful would be mediated in the church’s life. *Luke 9:18-22* uses the same story to stress that suffering by Jesus and those who follow him and his message is expected because of resistance to the good news. However, all who remained loyal would be redeemed. Hence, the same story and proclamation are recorded by different writers but with differing implications. Why? Because of different audiences’ differing contexts and needs to hear and understand the “good news,” i.e., their *Sitz im Leben*.

We are fortunate to have these various perspectives. We experience different circumstances—past or present—shaping our comprehension of the *Good News*. Our views or needs change as we age or develop illnesses, or experience changes in our life circumstances, for example. This is why we hear each gospel in regular liturgical rotation in our worship. Thereby, we may gain deeper insight into God’s power, the church’s moral authority, and the redemptive role of suffering, among other insights. I believe these different gospel accounts enrich our faith. During this season of Lent, I am trying

to “listen” to the “good news” with the ears of different ancient audiences. I want to understand their needs and expectations and perhaps thereby clarify and understand my own.

— *Sam Wilson*

STEWARDSHIP

Leaves, twigs, bark—
 What voice do trees have
 But our choice
 To speak out against those
 Who plunder
 And do not sustain
 What grows under
 The clouds and rain?

Roots hold earth’s
 Soil hid under snow
 That nurtures the birth
 Of pods and seeds to sow
 By early spring winds,
 Yielding, in turn, fruits and nuts,
 And summer shade
 Accessed free in a park nearby,
 God-made and aided
 By our worthy toil.

-*Karla Kiefer*

March Birthday Celebrations

March Anniversary Celebrations

3	Ainsley Reed		
7	William DeHart		
10	Arlene Hauptman-Lehman		
14	Joseph O’Brien		
18	Amy Marie Reed		
22	Sharon Werth		
23	Werner Unzelmann		
27	Matthew Craig		
27	Patricia Keltie		
29	Lee Snyder		
30	Diane Dilworth		

SPECIAL LENTEN ACTIVITIES

Sunday: Lenten Series – Spiritual Samplers, that explores and offers practice on the topic of various “Prayer(s) of Meditation” – 9:00 a.m. – Parish Hall

**Wednesday: Stations of the Cross – 5:30 p.m.
 Lenten Supper – 6:00 p.m. – Parish Hall**

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