

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ADVENT

170th Annual Parish Meeting

January 21, 2018



MISSION STATEMENT

To show Christ's light in us through worship and prayer,
play and work, sharing and giving, that all may know Him.

VISION STATEMENT

That Christ's light be seen in us.

**The Episcopal Church of the Advent
170th Annual Parish Meeting
January 21, 2018**

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

OPENING HYMN

OPENING PRAYER

INTRODUCTION OF THE VESTRY CANDIDATES

ELECTION

SENIOR WARDEN ADDRESS

FINANCIAL REPORT

FINAL REMARKS BY THE RECTOR

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS

CLOSING PRAYER

ADJOURNMENT

The Episcopal Church of the Advent 170th Annual Parish Meeting

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Pastoral Care

I have been at Advent for all of five months now, and I thank God every day for the opportunity to be working at such a vibrant and grace-filled place. Thank you for welcoming T. and me into your lives and for granting me the opportunity to lead the Pastoral Care effort here at the Advent. We are especially grateful for your many acts of care, compassion and hospitality as we moved and settled into Spartanburg - and even more so, as we journeyed through T.'s extensive rehab following surgery. I am truly blessed by your presence, your faith, and your trust.

Pastoral care has long been a passion for me, and I continue to be filled with joy to be a part of a parish that recognizes the value of pastoral care - and more importantly, participates in ensuring meaningful care is offered during times of brokenness and need. One of my foundational beliefs about pastoral care comes from the work of Martin Buber, who stated, "In the beginning is a relation." Ultimately, being made in the image of God speaks to the giftedness of humanity to enter into meaningful relationships with God and others. The story of the life of Jesus provides a powerful model of what it means to enter into and sustain accepting, merciful, and intimate human relationships. Interpersonal relationships are a place where God's grace can be experienced. This belief is grounded scripturally in the Genesis creation story, when God said, "It is not good for [humanity] to be alone." To be a person, is, moreover, to be constantly shaping others. Relations carry with them the power to help people pull together the broken pieces.

What a privilege and joy to see the many ways the light of Christ is shared through the ministry of those involved in pastoral care. Arriving and plunging into my new responsibilities, it did not take long for me to realize that the existing pastoral care effort here at the Advent reflects one of the most highly effective organizations I have ever seen!

Our pastoral care mission statement states, "As followers of our Lord Christ...we...are called to extend Christ's healing care to one another in a nurturing family by providing support and encouragement in the face of life's constant changes." At the Advent, I believe that we are doing just that. The following 2017 statistics from the Guild of St. Francis and St. Clare, I believe, demonstrate a parish family actively at work at extending Christ's healing care:

- Chaired by Patsy Copeland, the **Pastoral Visitors** made 92 visits and 246 phone calls to parishioners in need in 2017. Over the past year, the Lay Pastoral Visitor team, comprised of 12 lay volunteers from the parish, continue to minister following a two-person, weekly team approach to pastoral calls.
- Chaired by Barbara Adams, the **Short-Term Care Ministry** addressed the immediate needs of parishioners facing challenge in 2017. Throughout the year, a total of 107 contacts were made, of which 51 involved the provision of homemade meals including soups, casseroles, and desserts.
- Chaired by Suzanne Dantin, the **Young Families Ministry** provided care and support to young families in the parish. Through this ministry, 147 cards were mailed which included birthday cards to children 11 and under.
- Chaired by Doris Mathews, the **Long-Term Care Ministry** continued its focus in 2017 on serving the homebound and those with restricted mobility. Throughout the year, this ministry made a total of 84 visits, 63 of which involved the provision of food (e.g., casseroles, candy, cookies, or flowers). This is an extraordinary effort given that the number of parishioners on the current service list is only 13. Long-Term Care is supported by a team of 25 dedicated parishioners.
- Chaired by Donna Traywick, the **Bereavement Ministry** addresses the many needs of families in the parish facing death this past year. In 2017, 12 parishioner-deaths occurred. In addition, 47 parishioner family members or friends died in the 2017. Bereavement volunteers provided a total of 6 service-receptions at the Advent. The Bereavement Ministry is made possible through the efforts of 24 monthly coordinator and a team of 80 food providers.
- Chaired by Anna Gray Phillips, the **Card Ministry** mailed out 548 cards this year, averaging 45 card-mailings per month. Of these, approximately 21 Advent members on the Long Term Care list received monthly postcards, a birthday card, and/or a greeting card mailed at Easter and Christmas. In addition, cards were sent at times of bereavement, illness, surgery, as well as at times of celebration and thanksgiving. Thanks to the talents and generosity of the Advent Artists, throughout the year, the Card Ministry, the cards mailed out are reproductions of the paintings and drawings crafted by Advent members.
- Chaired by Martha Schwartz, the **Flower Delivery Ministry**, shared over 300 arrangements of flowers over the course of the year. These deliveries were made for 93 celebratory occasions and 200 non-celebratory occasions. In addition, 15 arrangements were placed in the Youth Center on the weeks The Advent hosted SPIHN (Spartanburg Interfaith Hospitality Network) participants.

For the full year 2017, the Guild of St. Frances and St. Clare initiated and administered a total of 1,792 contacts with parishioners during significant times of transition in their lives.

In addition to the Guild of St. Francis and St. Clare, the pastoral care effort at the Advent was also supported in 2017 by other vital parish ministries. The Daughters of the King, has maintained regular prayer over a private list of names, grounding our parish in prayer and the belief that all that we are and all that we do is by the grace of God and God alone. Special thanks this year to all our pastoral care volunteers and especially to Cathy McCabe who served as Vestry Liaison for Pastoral Care and chair of the Guild of St. Francis and St. Clare.

The pastoral care work of St. Francis and St. Clare exists alongside the care that clergy is providing on an on-going basis, and therefore extends the reach of care considerably in the parish. In the spirit of St. Paul: "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) At the Advent, laity and clergy work together - as one - in extending care in community.

As I look forward to the future in 2018, I am genuinely excited over what we will all be doing together to show the light of Christ to everyone in need of pastoral care at the Advent.

The Rev. Paula R. Griffin, Associate Rector for Pastoral Care

The Advent Foundation

The following loved ones received memorial gifts to the Advent Foundation in 2017. Thank you for honoring all of them in this very special way.

Ms. Laurene Buchheit Babb	Mrs. Elizabeth Montgomery Oates Gage	Mrs. JoAn G. Morris
Mrs. Anne Haskell Lindsey Montague (Nancy) Browne	Mr. John Allen Hare	Mr. Liston L. Morris
Mr. Robert Edward Browne III	Mr. Larry Lee Harken	Mrs. Mary Lee Hammond Phillips
Mr. Jesse Milton Buzby, Jr.	Mrs. Betty Sanders Hendrick	Mr. Travis Manning Provost
Mr. John Montgomery Cart	Mrs. Max Bernard Hollis	Mrs. Caroline Ragsdale Reutter
Mr. George "Pat" Edward Case, Jr.	Mrs. Janice Hudson Janiec	Mrs. Laura Jane Kreuger Schwartz
Mrs. Dicksie Johnston Brown Cribb	Mrs. Ann Hultin Kiesau	Mr. Watt Elias Smith II
Mr. Edward Earl "Buddy" Cubitt	Mrs. Sara Pipkin King	Mr. W. Dewey Tullis
Mrs. Betty Ann Hawkins Edge	Dr. Vincent Earl Miller	Mr. Thomas Daniel Wyatt, Jr.
Mrs. Cynthia Audry Boyle Forster	Mrs. Francis Fleming Patterson Moore	
	Mr. Harry Arthur Morris, Jr.	

In 2017 The Advent Foundation received over 340 memorials for over \$30,000.00. Please know that a memorial gift to the Advent Foundation is a fitting, meaningful and sincere way to convey your sympathy to a family – and it also helps our Foundation to grow. Please see our Annual Report for more details.

Our Advent Foundation was created by and for the Advent in 1983 to honor our history, to sustain the present, and to help guarantee our future. Our Foundation has provided our parish with funds for outreach, maintenance, and pastoral care that have made a huge impact to our church. As we look back and as we push forward to "Show Christ's Light in Us" we use all of the resources that we have – our magnificent buildings, our wonderful people, and our Advent Foundation. Our Foundation and its growth are a vital part of our ministry together – and all in our parish can play a part in its growth. Please remember the Advent Foundation in your will, in your retirement planning, with your IRA, and with your life insurance.

Our special thanks to Jay Wakefield who led our board as President this past year. Anne Louise Greer succeeds Jay as President for 2018.

Many thanks again for the wonderful opportunity to serve God in his Church in this wonderful way. Please call me any time to discuss any questions that you may have about growing our Advent Foundation.

Kit Jennings – 864-504-3689 – kjennings@churchofadvent.org

Christian Formation

Adult Christian Formation

One of the wonderful things about our common life at The Church of the Advent is that there is energy to try new things and to always keep moving forward. While we value our traditions and hold fast to core values related to worship and relationships, we also value flexibility and adaptation. In the three areas of Christian Formation, those being; children, youth and adults, this energy is evident in staff and Commission conversations that acknowledge the challenges of busy schedules while, at the same time, focuses on our collective desire to grow in our relationship with the Lord and to integrate the fruits of that relationship into all aspects of our lives.

David Dixon's passion for nurturing authentic spiritual relationships with the youth of our parish finds him out and about wherever our youth are found at school, sporting competitions, and even at the gym. This is in addition to the planned activities that originate at the church, including Sunday School and Confirmation Classes, Sunday night ConneXion, Sunday morning XCentric ski trips, hikes, and, of course, the amazing Pilgrimage trips.

Suzanne Dantin completed her first full year as the Director of Ministry to Children and Young Families. She is a creative and caring leader and her calm demeanor has endeared her to both children and parents. Suzanne is working with Sunday School teachers, parents and Commission members to continually evaluate curriculum, to identify family activities that will build community, and to organize special programs like Vacation Bible School and Wednesday night programming.

My role overseeing Christian Formation for all ages gives me the opportunity to interact in a wide variety of settings and to offer support for and share ideas in each area. I spend the bulk of my time working with the gifted adult teachers and Commission members on formation opportunities for Adults.

Here are some highlights from the adult Christian formation programming in 2017.

The Gleaners Class - This ongoing Sunday School class is a gem in the collection of opportunities to grow in our faith and to meet and develop friendships. This year we were able to move the class to the new Library Conference Room in Satterlee Hall. The move makes the class accessible to anyone who may have limitations with mobility and particularly navigating stairs. The space is welcoming and adequate to the needs of the class. The format continues to consist of teaching and discussion on the lectionary selections for the day as well as music/singing, fellowship and food, and a wonderful exploration of artwork related to the readings. The class is open to all adults and you can participate as you are able. Thanks to leaders Roland Doepner and Agnes Martin.

Sunday Rector's Forum - The highlights from this year's Rector's Forums have included an ongoing series centered on the English Reformation taught in a winsome and interesting way by our own Dr. Anne Rodrick who is a Professor of History at Wofford College. Participation in these classes has been robust, and the feedback has been exciting. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Anne for her willingness to share of her gifts and for her care of our traditions and history as Anglicans. The other ongoing format for the Rector's Forum this year has been a program titled "What's In This For Me?". These sessions have sought to bring the Bible into topics of the day and to help us think "biblically" about such challenging issues as politics, tolerance, compassion, and forgiveness. The class is designed intentionally to have someone tee up the topic identifying a few stories or passages from Scripture and then open the floor to both large group and table talk discussion. It has been a rewarding and beneficial time of getting to know one another and of hearing many and varied perspectives.

Parents in Community class on Sunday Mornings - Facilitated for the second year by Ashley Reid, the class continues to focus on matters of Christian parenting and on building relationships both with our children and with other parents. Much of the Fall was spent in discussion of the DVD series "Boundaries with Children." The class has expressed an interest in incorporating prayer support and outreach activities into the current format of teaching and discussion. Ashley Reid has been a wonderful facilitator of this class.

Benedictine Study Group - After nearly twenty years of book studies, retreats, prayer, and friendship the Benedictine Study Group decided to disband so that the members could participate in other ongoing ministries here at the church and elsewhere. Each of these faithful women (and a few men along the way) is actively engaged in the life of the church and they continue to bless us with their love of the contemplative practices of our faith.

Wednesday Evening Family Dinner and Programming - Building on the enthusiasm and success of the Lenten series of 2017 which was anchored around guest speaker Dr. Jeffery Poelvoorde of Converse College, we changed the Wednesday night schedule from the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, to several "series" of three to four Wednesday nights in a row. In the Fall we organized a four-part series entitled "Faith Stories" during which we were inspired by the stories of people who have brought their faith to their vocations. Our Advent series was both entertaining and informative as the Gleaners class brought us music, art and skits having to do with Advent themes.

Men's and Women's Bible Studies - Opportunities for fellowship and conversation around Scripture continued Thursday mornings. The men worked their way through the letter of Paul to the Philippians and the women completed a DVD series during Lent titled "The Crucified Life" followed by "The Resurrected Life." The Fall and Winter has the women working their way through one of *The Great Courses* programs titled "Jesus and the Gospels." Thanks to Dave Rodrick for his leadership of the Men's Bible Study.

Book and Brown Bag - Taught by our rector, Ned Morris, since July 2011. The following books were read and discussed in 2017: *New Seeds of Contemplation* by Thomas Merton; *The Chronicles of Narnia* (5 of 7 volumes) by C.S. Lewis; *The Divine Dance* by Richard Rohr; *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* by Martin Luther King, Jr. and *Made For Goodness* by Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu. One highlight was reading MLK's last published work. Inspired by Presiding Bishop Curry's response to the tragic events in Charlottesville, VA in August, Ned chose this title. While attending a community event discussing race relations he issued an open invitation to those present. Seven guests from other churches accepted and participated in this class. The book, though written in 1967, inspired poignant and timely conversations. Classes continue to creatively address intellectual and spiritual needs of participants.

Adult Confirmation - Classes were held both in the spring (Sunday mornings) and fall (Wednesday evenings). We had adults to present for confirmation, reception and reaffirmation at both the Spring and Fall Confirmation services.

The Rev. Deborah D. Apoldo, Associate Rector for Christian Formation

Children and Young Families

As I reflect on the past year, I am overwhelmed at the amount of time, energy, love and devotion that is poured into our Children and Young Families Ministries at the Advent. We are so fortunate to have so many precious children in our midst. While it is our responsibility to raise these children to know, love and serve God, we receive such a blessing from them in doing so. Each smile and hug that these children give reminds me of the vastness of God's love for each of us.

Every Sunday during the school year, the children, ages 4K through 5th grade, gather together after the 9 am church service for Adventure Kingdom Sunday School. They are divided into three age groups: (1) 4K and 5K; (2) 1st through 3rd grades; and (3) 4th and 5th grades. This fall each class has learned lessons from the Old Testament. During the Advent season, each class studied the importance of the Advent and Christmas seasons. The 4th and 5th grade class has been using a curriculum especially designed for "tweens," titled "Live It! Building Skills for Christian Living." Attendance for Adventure Kingdom has averaged about 30 children per Sunday. We have ten wonderful teachers who devote a tremendous amount of time and energy into preparing and teaching these lessons to the children.

During 2017, we had a very active year with our Young Families activities. We kicked off the spring with a Paint and Plant event where the children painted flower pots and then planted spring flowers in them. This event was followed by our annual Easter Egg Hunt after the Easter church service. We had a beautiful day for this event, and it was well attended. Another Young Families event was our kick-off to Vacation Bible School ("VBS"). We had an inflatable slide and a BBQ picnic after church for all VBS participants and their families. This social was a fabulous way to kick off a great week of VBS. In the fall, we traveled to Sky Top Orchards where the children and their parents enjoyed picking apples and a hayride. This Halloween we held a Halloween Festival, which was held as a fundraiser for the Advent Youth Group. The children came in their costumes and enjoyed a hot dog dinner, games, cookie decorating, and, of course, lots of candy. Right before Thanksgiving, we celebrated with a pot-luck dinner. This "Be Thankful" pot luck dinner was very well attended. The children had a great time painting Thanksgiving placemats after dinner.

There are many other ways we have loved and served our children this year, including the following:

ACC Chapel Choir	Vacation Bible School
Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts	Food Delivery for new births
Worship Bags for Church Services	Blessing of the backpacks and Blessing of the Animals
Kid's Crew and Nursery on Wednesday Nights	Christmas Pageant
Basketball	Nursery staff and volunteers
Sunday Morning Children's Chapel	Flat Jesus
Birthday Cards	

All of these activities and events for our children and young families demonstrate the Advent's love and devotion to our youngest members. Many thanks for all the volunteers who help in each of these areas. This ministry would not be possible without the help of many hands and hearts. In reflection on this year, we are so blessed to be a part of the Advent community and may we continue to let Christ's light shine through us.

Suzanne Dantin, Director of Children and Young Family Ministries

Youth and College

This past year has been a time of continued building and developing the youth and college formation programs at the Advent. It has been a great joy and pleasure to serve as the Director of Youth and College Ministries. The success of the programs and activities are because of the continued support of the numerous volunteers, parents, staff and the amazing youth who participate and help to plan our youth programming.

The beginning of 2017 our Middle School youth went on two different ski day trips to the Cataloochee Ski area. The 2017 Pilgrims continued their fundraising efforts for the 2018 pilgrimages and for Spring Break we planned a Youth Week with several opportunities for local adventures. Sunday morning formation included XCentric and Confirmation. Over the spring XCentric presented a series on who Jesus is, the life and ministry of Christ and the heart of Christianity. Confirmation continued to build on the lessons from the *My Faith, My Life* textbook.

This fall our Sunday morning formation programming included XCentric and Confirmation Class. We averaged 40 youth in attendance. XCentric, our Sunday morning youth program, presented a series on *The ROAD* which is a reference to the post resurrection gospel passage where two of Jesus' followers meet him on the road to Emmaus found in Luke 24:1. The goal of this series was to help our youth encounter God everyday on the journey of faith of which we are all travelers.

The youth Confirmation class met on Sunday mornings all year with 10 youth who were moving toward confirmation in December 2017. This class was recently confirmed by Bishop Waldo, and a new group of 24 started in the fall moving toward confirmation in December 2018. The confirmands are blessed to hear from a variety of voices across the parish in their classes. Topics of study include Church History through the Reformation, worship, sacramental theology, biblical literacy and who we are as Episcopalians. Students continue with their mentored relationships, community service projects, a day retreat in the spring and a fall gathering in October and fellowship with Church of the Advent family.

Our Sunday evening program, Sunday Night ConneXion, met all year with a variety of activities available for our youth to participate in on a weekly basis. We alternate meeting on and off campus.

We offered several opportunities for growth and fellowship throughout the year for our youth including: High School, 9th Grade and Middle School prayer breakfasts, Baccalaureate Sunday and Brunch, Scout Sunday, Rise Against Hunger, Youth Sunday, Basketball Sunday and Banquet, HS/MS Winter Ski Retreat or day trips, basketball league, Spring Break youth activities, Sunday Night Walking Dead 11th & 12th Grade Group, youth band, acolytes, Wacky Wednesday summer program, school campus lunchtime visits, local ski trips, day hikes, gym and weight training at Anytime Fitness and the YMCA, and Venus Pie 11th and 12th Grade Group. In addition to these programmed activities, there are one-on-one time with students throughout the year, visits to events and games throughout the year, pastoral care & youth and parent counseling.

During Summer 2017 we took 10 of our youth on a mission experience to Charleston, South Carolina for a "Week of Hope" through Group Missions. The youth served in a variety of locations including residential homes for the elderly, inner-city youth outreach, home and yard repair and clean up, and outreach centers. The youth presented their experiences at a Wednesday night program in the fall. We have plans to continue to make these local mission experiences available.

The 2018 pilgrimages to Juneau, Alaska and Salt Lake City, Utah are just around the corner with departure dates of June 8 for Alaska and June 22 for Utah. The pilgrims and their parents continue to raise money for these pilgrimages which has a record number of 27 youth signed up to participate. Please continue to support your pilgrims from January to May of 2018 as they work hard to raise the money needed to complete the journey.

There are plans to continue expanding the youth program by including more opportunities for youth retreats, mission experiences, pilgrimages and community service opportunities.

The main thrust of the youth ministry at the Church of the Advent will continue to be Christ-centered through building relationships with one another and being a welcoming and engaging community of youth. It is a great pleasure for me to work, worship and serve at a place where the staff and the parish work together to build God's Kingdom.

Our college ministry continues to grow. Currently, we have two regularly scheduled activities for college students: Canterbury Club - weekly meeting at Wofford, and Advent College and Young Adult Group - on the 1st and 4th Thursday nights of the month at Hub City Tap House for *Board Games, Brew and a Side of Theology*. In addition, I scheduled day trips to USC in Columbia and other campuses to meet with our college students for lunch and other activities.

May the Lord continue to bless us and keep us throughout this coming year as we continue to serve God and our youth.

In the Peace of Christ, David A. Dixon

Music

It is my honor and privilege to serve as the organist/choirmaster of the Church of the Advent. 2017 gave the music department several reasons to be proud. We've increased the number of children participating in musical ensembles, we've continued to hold concerts and special services, and we traveled out of Spartanburg to "go out into the world and preach the Gospel."

There was one major victory in 2017, the purchase of two and a half octaves (i.e. 27 bells in total) of handbells built by the Malmark company of Plumsteadville, PA! These were purchased for the Advent Toners, formed in 2006 as a handchime ensemble but converted in 2017 to a handbell ensemble. These bells were purchased as a result of the very successful "Buy a Bell" campaign, launched on November 17, 2016 on the occasion of the Advent Toners' 10th anniversary concert. Over 20 parishioners contributed financially to this campaign. The campaign was completed the following March, eight months ahead of schedule! The brand new, beautiful shiny bells arrived at the end of June, and have provided beautiful music to enhance our worship services ever since then.

The most disappointing news of 2017 has been the decrease in numbers of adult choir members. The St. Cecilia choir (9 am adult) currently has 5 members and the Advent Schola (11:15 am adult) has 11 members. The positive side is that even with reduced numbers, I have very loyal and committed choristers! These choristers and I continue to actively recruit new members. Lindsey Brakhage and Bill Bungarz have continued as paid section leaders (soprano and bass, respectively) for the Advent Schola. We lost Meghan Speed, our alto section leader and children's choir assistant at the end of May following her graduation from Converse College, but fortunately, she has had two successors in differing roles. Zoe Kushubar, a sophomore at Converse became the Schola's alto section leader in September and Sarah Zdanowski, also a sophomore at Converse, became the children's choir assistant the same month. In the interests of staying on budget, I get Keith Dover to sing as a tenor section leader only on a very occasional basis. The Occasional Choir continues to serve those who can't necessarily commit to a choir on a regular basis. The Advent Toners (mentioned earlier on) has a strong core group of committed bell ringers (which has grown and gotten younger in average age) who play in church once a month. David Graham heads up our carilloneurs guild and coaches people on how to play the bells in the Cleveland Memorial Bell Tower.

Our children's ensembles continue to grow! There are 9 children in the Cherub Choir (4 year olds), 9 in the Angel Choir (gr. K-1), and 13 in the Junior Choir (gr. 2-5). The youth choir consists of two seventh graders who frequently sing with the St. Cecilia choir. The annual Christmas Pageant, which again in 2017 was "Light of the World" had large numbers of participants. Many thanks to Kelly Vaneman and Sarah Zdanowski for their help/leadership with the Angel and Junior choirs. Lindsey Brakhage, whose name I mentioned earlier, took on a position in September as the music teacher for the Advent Children's Center and has helped me immensely with the Cherub Choir. Gabriel's Instruments, our instrumental ensemble decreased in the fall to two string players (Alex and Stephen Forrest), but they are very strong musicians.

As in years past, 2017 had an abundance of concerts and special services. In January, we welcomed back a film producer Robin Arcus from Durham, NC. We had an evening dinner and screening of a movie, "Sacred Sound," which documented a week in the lives of several teenage girls as they learned beautiful Anglican music. We had a fundraiser for Spartanburg Shares medical loan ministry called "All that Jazz," featuring jazz musicians Lisa Cunningham and John Moody in February. In March, we had a mid-Lent evensong and in April, the Piedmont Convocation of our diocese came together to hear the choral excerpts of John Stainer's "The Crucifixion" following the annual "Stations of the Cross" walk through downtown Spartanburg. During the summer (specifically in July), several of our adult choir members spent a weekend in Washington, DC where they sang at a morning Eucharist and gave an evening concert at All Souls' Episcopal Church. The 2017-18 concert series began with the following events: a concert dedicating our church's handbells on October 5, liturgies for the annual diocese of Upper South Carolina convention during the first weekend of November (not to mention a service of remembrance and reflection), and in December, a convocational service of Advent lessons and carols at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church. The service was entitled "From Darkness to Light." Last, but not least, this year's "Word and Music" noonday Lenten service featured the principal organist/choirmasters of the largest churches in our diocese. Donald Duncan from Christ Church Greenville performed on March 15, and Jared Johnson from Trinity Cathedral in Columbia performed on March 29. A unique treat occurred on March 8 when I had the honor of accompanying on the harpsichord Bishop Andrew Waldo, who is an accomplished recorder player along with his wife, baroque flutist Mary Waldo.

Many thanks to all participants in the music program for your loyalty, hard work, and commitment. Many thanks equally to all parishioners for your continued encouragement and support!

Sincerely,
Brennan Szafron, organist and choirmaster

Parish Life Commission

“As followers of our Lord Christ, who is Friend and Companion, we, the people of the Advent are called to share with one another the joys and responsibilities of Christian fellowship through hospitality, celebration, learning, creative expression, play and services.”

What a blessing it is to work with a vibrant community that embraces the Mission statement of Parish Life. The Advent is fortunate to have a hard-working, loving Parish Life Commission, led by Chair, Elisabeth Hayes, and members, Barbara Adams, Ruthie Bailey, Ann and Quentin Broom, Arthur Cleveland, Witney Fisher, Sally Forrest, Betsy Jabbour, Brenda Lytle, Bob Page, John Price, Rogers Settle, Lynn Sherlock and Bea Smith. To these servants, we should all be grateful.

In addition to supporting Gail Owens and Jessica Owens on our Wednesday night dinners, Parish Life also planned, hosted and executed many special events during 2017. They are listed in bullet form here:

- Parish wide Picnic/ May 21– attended by over 300 people followed Confirmation and was held in the gym with snow cones, face painting and corn hole for the children.
- Red Velvet Cake/ June 4 – enjoyed by over 70 people on Pentecost in the Cart-Josey Garden.
- Mid-summer Brunch / July 16 – attended by approximately 120 people included a presentation by the Gleaners. People reported that they liked the time being earlier and serving brunch instead of lunch.
- Pre-Eclipse Picnic / August 20 – attended by approximately 60 people included eclipse glasses for attendees as well as Moon Pies and Orange Crush. Families brought their own picnics and Eclipse trivia was played with prizes.
- Back to School Pot Luck/ August 30 – attended by approximately 80 people included covered dish treats brought by all as well as a summer video that ran while people ate and enjoyed fellowship to kick off the program year.
- Nametag Campaign / October – working with the stewardship campaign, we printed and delivered a new nametag to every member of the Advent. (over 900 nametags!) PLEASE wear your nametag – it’s such an important part of welcoming others.
- Oyster Roast / October 26 – attended by over 400 people was a huge success thanks to Co-chairs Elisabeth Hayes and Liza Wood and committee members, Chad Graham, Katie Jordan, Frances Krydinski, Ashley Moody, Laura Price and Patrick O’Shields. Also on the Committee were Erin Strickland and Catherine Traywick who chaired the Silent Auction that raised \$15,800. Final figures for money raised will be available at the Annual Meeting.
- Diocesan Convention / November 3-4, offered volunteer support to Gail and Jessica in preparing and serving dinner Friday night to 120 and lunch Saturday to 400.

Complementing these special events, Parish Life oversees the Hospitality Groups that meet as well as the ECW (Episcopal Church Women) Circles. In 2017, EpiscoPals met 6 times, Baby Boomers met 5 times, Fellowship Group met 10 times, and the 20s, 30s, and 40s CONNECT group met twice. Our Circles - Fruit of the Spirit, Lunch Bunch and Serendipity - as well as The Brotherhood of St. Andrews each met 7-10 times.

The Ministry of Hospitality is also a vital component to our Parish Life Commission. Currently, we have 33 members of the hospitality team. These individuals sign up to welcome people to the Advent every Sunday. They also reach out to visitors via email, text or in handwritten notes. This year, we attempted Coffee and Conversations on the 3rd Sunday as a way to meet and answer questions of visitors. Unfortunately, that did not gain much traction, so we decided to discontinue after this fall. We do offer our Welcome table every 2nd and 4th Sunday with information for visitors as well as members. This past year, we had a total of 992 people who visited the Advent. That compares to 903 Visitors in 2016.

Thank you all for your continued love and support of this important ministry,

Laura C. Bauknight
Director of Membership and Parish Life

**THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ADVENT
EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN BAZAAR DISBURSEMENTS**

2016 DISBURSEMENTS TO LOCAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Organization	Amount
Ballet Spartanburg	\$4,136
Birth Matters	\$1,500
Healthy Smiles	\$3,687
JumpStart	\$1,000
Mary H. Wright Elementary School	\$1,500
Missy Rowland Turner Memorial Fund	\$3,500
Partners for Active Living	\$450
Spartanburg Soup Kitchen	\$1,000
Spartanburg Science Center	\$1,800
TOTAL Ministries of Spartanburg	\$1,000
Total	\$19,573

2017 DISBURSEMENTS TO LOCAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Organization	Amount
Adult Learning Center	\$1,500
BirthMatters	\$1,500
Boys & Girls Club-Mary H. Wright Elementary School	\$1,500
Child Development Center	\$1,100
Habitat for Humanity	\$700
Healthy Smiles	\$1,700
Hope Center	\$2,000
Jump Start	\$1,500
Missy Rowland Turner Memorial Fund	\$3,000
Speaking Down Barriers	\$1,500
Total	\$16,000

2016 & 2017 Disbursements Total \$35,573

In addition to the local non-profits, the ECW also supports the Billie Little Kitchen Fund, Discretionary funds for the Priests, Diocesan Mission work including the Bena Dial Scholarship and Seminarian's Book Fund as well as National and World Mission.

Outreach and Missions

The following grants were awarded totaling \$132,844:

Adult Learning Center	\$ 5,000
Advent Children's Center	\$ 6,250
Advent Missions	\$10,000
Bill & Joy Irwin/World Gospel Mission	\$ 3,000
Cameron & Roberto Vivanco	\$ 3,000
Children's Advocacy Center	\$ 5,000
Citizen Scholar	\$ 500
Jump Start	\$ 6,850
Mary H. Wright	\$17,000
Mental Health America of Spartanburg County	\$ 3,000
Miracle Hill	\$ 1,500
Northside Initiative	\$20,000
Rise Against Hunger (formerly Stop Hunger Now)	\$ 2,944
Safe Homes/Rape Crisis	\$ 5,000
Shepherd's Center	\$ 300
Soup Kitchen	\$ 2,000
Spartanburg Shares	\$ 5,000
SPIHN	\$ 3,500
St Luke's Free Medical Clinic	\$18,000
Total Ministries	\$15,000

Highlights from the year include:

- Epiphany Wednesday Night Program, including food drive
- SPIHN Wednesday Night Program in February
- Mary H. Wright Wednesday Night Program in May, along with art show and sale of children's artwork
- Revised grant process to work in conjunction with ECW for more streamlined application and allocation process
- Hosted Rise Against Hunger, packing 10,000 meals during Christian Formation (since beginning participation, the Advent has packed over 81,000 meals)
- Raised \$15,423 with Silent Auction and \$9,101 with Oyster Roast
- Facilitated Northside workdays in February and March, completing several projects
- Hosted SPIHN in February, May, August and November
- Cumberland Mission Trip
- Charleston Youth Mission Trip
- Sending forth of Estevez family for mission work in Ecuador
- Facilitated children raising money in Mite Boxes for Free Wheelchair Mission
- Solicited donations for Miracle Hill
- Ongoing children's Sunday morning offering collection
- Reestablished "tool trailer"
- Sponsored school supply drive in July/August
- Outreach Sunday in August, including visit from Vivancos, blessing of the school supplies and reception for all of our grant recipients
- Mary H. Wright ongoing initiative: Valentine's Day parties, Dr. Seuss Day, Earth Day event, 5th grade special lunch, May end-of-the-year parties, field day, trip to Washington, D.C., immigration day, special work with Leadership Group, assisted with transportation for District 7 choir performance, production of school musical, Halloween parties, Polar Express Day, Operation Magi, faculty Christmas party, grandparent's breakfast, Fall Festival, Halloween Dash 5K Race, 3rd grade Colonial Day, and ongoing tutoring, reading buddy and mentoring

Molly Cashman, Clint Settle and Erin Strickland
Outreach Commission Leadership Team

Advent Children's Center

The Advent Children's Center had a very successful school year. This success was due, not only to the hard work and dedication of the staff and parents, but also the continued support of the Episcopal Church of the Advent.

The ACC provided forty weeks of loving, safe and educational care to the parish and community. The ACC enrolled eighty-one children in the spring and eighty children in the fall. There were twenty staff members.

The ACC continued the partnership with Trinity United Methodist Church Afterschool Program. The ACC staff transports five children to Trinity United Methodist Church each day. This partnership is provided for families in need of an extended period of care. The ACC also held a summer camp in May and June for approximately forty-five families.

The ACC commission met three times this year. Martha Schwartz served as the Vestry representative to the commission. The commission members were Bess Lee, Allison Little, Kent Brannon, Faith Pope, Jenny Moore, Angela Halstead, Nealie Floyd and Alix Refshauge.

An Usborne Book sale was held in October. Usborne books are high quality and educational books not usually available in stores. The school earned a \$450 credit towards books for the preschool's library.

The ACC held the third annual ACC Walk-a-thon in November 2017. All of the children participated as well as many parents and grandparents. The total amount raised was \$1500. Besides being a fundraiser, the children learned about pre-run activities, hydration and post-run nutrition. It was fun for all.

The families of the ACC lovingly provided for the children at the Hope Center of the Upstate. The parents adopted 5 children for the holiday and provided items to be used to stock the clothes closet at the shelter. Many children that come to the shelter leave their homes with no clothing or possessions. The donations allow them to have new clothing, underwear, shoes and a jacket!

Registration for the 2018-2019 school year will start in February 2018. Planning for that school year is underway. Inquiries about the program and enrollment will start in January with tours available through August. We are thankful for the opportunity to provide a safe and loving educational program to the parish and the community.

Kathie Borowski, Director

Advent Children's Center Staff Years-of-Service

We recognize and thank the following staff members for their years of service and commitment to the Episcopal Church of the Advent and the Advent Children's Center. We express our sincere appreciation for their dedication and for the care they provide to the young children and their families in our church and in our community. Thank you!

25+ Years of Service

Mary Pat Walker

20+ Years of Service

Dee Johnson

15+ Years of Service

Anne Charles Jean Palmer
Kathy Hopkins Sarah Parker

10+ Years of Service

Amanda Hopkins Linda Long
Kristi Zimdahl

5+ Years of Service

Nancy Blank Jomary Prus
Brenda Rivera Martha Hayes

The Advent Shoppe

In the Fall of 2007 The Advent took a leap of faith by expanding its Outreach ministry to include the religious-themed Advent Shoppe. Thanks to Tom Bridgeman, Dick Gibson, Sarah Gunn and Sue Zoole who pioneered to help realize the initial business plan. Staffed at first entirely by volunteers, it came under professional management when Bill Hunter became The Shoppe manager in 2009. Bill used his managerial skills and retail experience to expand and increase the scope of merchandise and activity within the parish and beyond.

Over the years the Shoppe and its volunteers have supported the church's ministry with discounted blankets for SPIHN (Spartanburg Interfaith Hospitality Network), school supplies and backpacks for Mary H. Wright students, books for church study groups, as well as many unique gifts for special occasions. The Shoppe was also an incredible source of information and cultivation of fellowship and friendships.

For the last five years, the Shoppe ran a deficit in spite of significant efforts to increase advertising, encourage more foot traffic, create broader inventory and run special shopping events. The fiscal reality has been that the Shoppe has yielded negative returns with no funds available for Outreach. Based on the Advent Shoppe's continuing deficit, Vestry members at their May 30, 2017, meeting made the difficult decision that it was in the church's best interest to close the Advent Shoppe following its ten year run.

Special appreciation is given to the nearly forty volunteers who lived out their faith through a ministry of service and to Bill Hunter, Advent Shoppe Manager, for his dedication and tireless service to running the Shoppe. Thanks be to God for all of them!

Communications

"The Bell Ringer," Advent's weekly newsletter, has proven to be a popular publication so we have increased the number of printed copies over the past year from 200 to 250 at parishioners' request.

We had two guest Facebook administrators during the past year: Lathrop Mosley and Katie Jordan. Lathrop, a member of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, interned at the Church of the Advent as part of the Discernment Process towards the priesthood in the Diocese of Upper South Carolina. We were delighted that she was able to spend six months with us. Our own Katie Jordan publicized the Oyster Roast and Silent Auction and did some storytelling about the organizations that benefit from the Outreach Commission's proceeds that are disbursed via their grant process. We gained 100 Facebook followers in the past year and our Likes now total 417. I hope that the growth trend will continue despite the anticipated changes in "reach" (visibility) that will be created by Facebook's new publication policies. Instagram, a photo and video sharing platform, has experienced better traction with more views per post. Instagram is frequently viewed as a "happy place" where people can see behind-the-scenes multimedia without viewing news or political posts as they would see on Facebook. There are 364 parishioners, community members, and churches that follow our content.

A fun project during the summer was "The Adventures of Flat Jesus!" We received photos from Alaska, South Carolina, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Texas and even India! Thanks to the Adams, Adamson, Catolico, Fisher, Mosley, Pittman, Soto and Strickland families for sharing their travels with us. Additional thanks to the following volunteers who shared photos of our church activities and events. Cathy Albert, Becky Bagwell, Martha Blackman, Ted Conwell, David Dixon, Suzanne Dantin, Nancy Gage, Ted Gage and Troop 1 leaders, Stephanie Hall, Susan Irwin, Michael Jameson, Jenny Moore, Joy Oates, Julie Schwartz, Martha Schwartz, Judy Waddell and Steve Wyman.

I enjoyed seeing Carrie Graves, Canon for Communications, in action during the 95th Diocesan Convention. She did an amazing job, and it was a great learning experience for me. I contributed a few photos of our parishioners and the growing Episcopal Veterans Fellowship in South Carolina.

I continue to serve as an ad-hoc member of the Stewardship Commission in preparation for the annual campaign. Thanks again to Kit Jennings for sharing his input on publicity discussions.

Our website provider, ACS Technologies, and I are working on some improvements that will allow us to have a mobile-responsive site. That means the screen will resize according to the device you are using - computer, tablet or smartphone. Changes to the back-end of operations have been made. I expect we'll do the conversion in the first quarter of 2018 after we discuss changes with focus groups and test multiple browsers and devices.

Special thanks for the volunteers who assist me throughout the year: the printing volunteers (Doris Mathews and Roy Ellis), the Thursday-afternoon receptionists that do bulletin assembly (Carole Davis and Linda Ellis) and the Parish Paper mailing team (Pat Frédéric, Kay Foster, Wilson Lanford and Betty Snow).

Becky Pittman, Director of Communications

Advent Archives Committee

As it now enters its fourth year of existence, this Committee continues to preserve and protect the history of the Church of the Advent. The collection and cataloging of various documents, photos, and artifacts remain a primary focus. However, the exploration of some of the more narrow aspects of our history has provided a unique opportunity to gain a far deeper understanding of not only who we were, but who we are today.

Our partnering with the Spartanburg County Public Libraries (SCPL) has proven to be of great benefit to both organizations. This collaboration has resulted in the digitization of a great portion of our collection and has made it available to the general public. As an outreach partner, the SCPL co-sponsored an event with us last year that attracted a wide array of attendees from other denominations in the upstate area interested in preserving their own church histories.

The 2016 assessment of our church graveyard by the Chicora Group which was commissioned by this Committee resulted in an extensive re-landscaping project that took place this year. Thanks to a magnificent plan developed by nationally renowned horticulturalist Stewart Winslow, dying trees and overgrown areas were cleared away and replaced with new plantings. This has brought a new vitality to our church grounds and has made our overall appearance more welcoming. Funds for this project came from the St. Fiacre Fund administered by the Advent Foundation.

The Chicora Group assessment provided a detailed approach to better preserving our grave stones, markers and monuments. There are about 20 to 30 gravestones that need to be repaired and re-set. Some can be done by volunteers while others will require professional expertise. Estimates are being collected and a schedule developed for the work to begin. We have cleaned 5 to 10% of the headstones in the cemetery and hope to train a cadre of volunteers to complete this effort. The product used to clean is user-friendly, effective, and environmentally safe. The results thus far have been dramatic.

In the past year, we acquired the equipment and the supplies for conservation of the material that we have accumulated. The items and records are now better organized and are stored in the vault. Additionally, two of our historical assets have been indexed. The silver and other artifacts maintained by the Alter Guild have been pictorially indexed with a narrative describing each individual piece. Although many of these pieces are irreplaceable, having their value assessed is important should a disaster ever occur. Also pictorially indexed was each individual grave stone and marker. Inscriptions that were becoming less legible over time were recorded as a part of this index and several grave sites unaccounted for have been re-discovered. This type of survey was last done over seventy years ago and was in great need of updating.

In April 2018, an historic marker will be erected on Advent Street near the front of the church that will commemorate our founding and celebrate our involvement in the spiritual life of this community. Committee members labored long and hard in rendering a concise narrative that best describes our history which will be inscribed on the marker.

The Archives Committee looks forward to a meaningful and productive year ahead as the years past are preserved.

Advent Staff Years-of-Service Recognition

We recognize with immense gratitude the following staff members for their years of service and commitment to the Episcopal Church of the Advent. We express our sincere appreciation for their dedication and for the special contributions they make to our church. Thank you!

30+ Years of Service

Gail Owens

20+ Years of Service

Kathie Borowski, Laura Koman and Wallace Williams

10+ Years of Service

Jessica Owens and Brennan Szafron

5+ Years of Service

Laura Bauknight and Ned Morris

OUR MISSION IMPERATIVES

CHRISTIAN FORMATION: GROWING IN UNDERSTANDING

As followers of our Lord Christ, who is Teacher and Guide, we the people of the Advent are called to grow in our understanding of the gifts and demands of the Gospel as we deepen our faith and strengthen our commitment to Jesus Christ as the Lord of all that we are and all that we have.

Programs and Ministries: Advent & Lenten Programs, Adult Confirmation Preparation, Adult Class Leaders (Parents in Community and Rector's Forum) Book & Bible Studies, Basketball, Boy Scout Troop/Cub Scouts/Webelos/Girl Scouts/Daisy Troop, Children's Sunday School, Nursery Volunteers, Vacation Bible School Volunteers, Young Families Ministry and Youth & College Leaders (Advent College Group, Christian Formation, Confirmation Preparation, Journey Group, Mission Experience, Prayer Breakfasts, Sunday Night ConneXion and XCentric)

LITURGY: PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL

As followers of our Lord Christ, who is High Priest and Celebrant, we, the people of the Advent, are called to proclaim the Gospel as our primary reason for being through our worship, our preaching and our personal witness in the world.

Programs and Ministries: Acolytes, Advent Schola, Advent Toners, Altar Guild, Angel/Cherub/Junior Choirs, Carilloneurs, Chalice Bearers, Eucharistic Visitors, Evening Worship Leaders, Evensong Choir, Gabriel's Instruments, Lectors/Intercessors, Morning Prayer Officiants, Occasional Choir, St. Cecilia Choir, Summit Hills Musicians and Servers, Ushers, Vestment Caretakers, Youth Band and Choir

OUTREACH: GIVING OURSELVES AWAY

As followers of our Lord Christ, who is Prophet and Servant, we the people of the Advent are called to give ourselves away in servanthood in response to the needs of others beyond the walls of this parish.

Programs and Ministries: Adult Education (Adult Learning Center), Building Ministry (Habitat for Humanity), Helping with Homelessness (SPIHN & Miracle Hill), Medical Ministry (St. Luke's Medical Clinic & Spartanburg Shares), Children's Education (Mary H. Wright Elementary School, Citizen Scholars, Northside Initiative), Food Basket Ministry, Mission Experiences (TN, Haiti, Ecuador), Outreach Commission, Prison Ministry (Jump Start), and Serving and providing food locally to the hungry (Spartanburg Soup Kitchen, St. Matthew's Food Pantry & TOTAL Ministries)

PASTORAL CARE: EXTENDING CHRIST'S HEALING CARE

As followers of our Lord Christ, who is Pastor and Comforter, we, the people of the Advent are called to extend Christ's healing care to one another in a nurturing family by providing support and encouragement in the face of life's constant changes.

Programs and Ministries: Altar Flower Delivery, Cancer Support Group, Daughters of the King (DOK), Ecumenical Blood Drive, Guild of St. Francis & St. Clare, Health & Wellness, and Lay Pastoral Care

PARISH LIFE: FOSTERING CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

As followers of our Lord Christ, who is Friend and Companion, we the people of the Advent, are called to share with one another the joys and responsibilities of Christian fellowship through hospitality, celebration, learning, creative expression, play and service.

Programs and Ministries: Bazaar, Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Episcopal Church Women (ECW) Circles (Serendipity, Lunch Bunch, Fruit of the Spirit and Labors of Love), EpiscoPals, Fellowship Groups (20s, 30s & 40s CONNECT, Sorta Young/Baby Boomers, Fellowship Group I) Oyster Roast, Parish Picnic, Photographers, Wednesday Dinners and Welcome Committee

PARISH MANAGEMENT: SUPPORTING THE ADVENT'S MINISTRIES

As followers of our Lord Christ, who is Leader and Worker, we the staff and people of the Advent, are called to use our gifts, engage our minds and concentrate our labor on the tasks that enable people throughout the parish to perform ministries of Liturgy, Pastoral care, Parish life, Outreach and Christian formation.

Programs and Ministries: Advent Gardeners, Bus Drivers, Volunteer Receptionists, Parish Management Commission and Vestry

STEWARDSHIP: GIVING IN FAITH

As followers of our Lord Christ, who is Provider and Giver of all that is good, we, the people of the Advent, are called to give freely of ourselves and our treasure, to enable the people throughout the parish to perform all such good works as our Lord has called us to do, so that we can build up the body of the Church and nourish our souls.

Programs and Ministries: Advent Foundation, St. Helena's Commission (Buildings and Grounds) and Stewardship Commission