

Calendar

Serving Schedule

Our serving schedule is temporarily on hold until we can meet again in person to worship.

April

Birthdays

Peter Soriano	3
Sally Coates	5
Christopher Combs	7
Payton Nuckles	14
Bob Calamari	17
Jennifer Hall	28
Joan Koppehaver	30

May

Birthdays

Myrtha Christensen	11
Rachel Porter	14
Joyce Griffith	19
Heidi Gauthier	25

From the Pastor:

Grace and peace from our Resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ!

It is my sincere prayer that all of you are remaining in good health and are praying for one another. I am taking some time off this week to rest from this singularly strange Holy Week – but I am sending some lines to remind you of the Good News of the Gospel in the meantime.

First, I am still planning to have the chicken stock available for any who would like it. I hope to start making it tomorrow (Wednesday the fifteenth) and will make it available to each congregation. I'll send word when it is completed. Send a message if you would like some, I can have it on-hand or in the freezer at Lebanon.

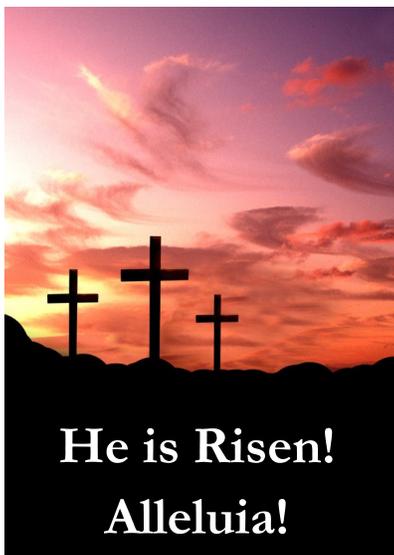
Second, I am looking forward to reconvening Bible Study and Confessions study via ZOOM next week. I have been provided with an account that will enable us to meet without time restriction. I also hope to resume the CREDO study groups within the next two weeks. I will communicate definite plans regarding this on Monday, April 20th.

Third, I am constantly following reports and developments regarding the pandemic and I am beginning to think about our future as congregations of Jesus Christ. I will be in communication with each Council regarding a timeline for small groups to gather for worship or other purposes. I cannot offer a definite start date for any of this, and each congregation may come to its own conclusions as to when this will be desirable. My chief concerns as pastor of both Advent and Lebanon remain the spiritual and temporal welfare of the parishioners, and obedience to the proper civil authorities. I ask for your prayers, especially that God would grant us wisdom, prudence, and courage to be the Church He has called us to be in this difficult time – seeking His will in all things.

Please know that I am still available for conversation and consultation through phone, email, and text.

In the meantime, I offer some selections from a pastoral letter composed by the Rev. Matthew Fenn for his congregation in Ontario, Canada. He has

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Advent Lutheran Church

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C-CAP Corner

Due to Covid-19, the C-CAP office is closed, however they are working with other community agencies to help our neighbors in need.

On 4/15, *The Star* reported this message:

The Highland Food Pantry needs your help so it can help others.

You can send checks to:

Highland Food Pantry
P.O. Box 1762

Winchester, VA 22604

or you can donate on their webpage at

highlandpantrywinc.org

The donate button is at the bottom of the page.

— Jan Calamari
C-CAP Representative

Anniversary News

Church Council is meeting to decide how to handle our Anniversary Celebrations, given the current situation with Covid-19 and social distancing. There will be announcements in the coming months on new dates and times.

Wanted!

Articles of interest to the congregation.

If you would like to contribute to a future newsletter, or have suggestions for future articles, please contact Carolyn Frye.

The Lamp is meant to be a means of communication to the members of advent. All members are welcome to contribute.

graciously given me permission to reproduce it. I found it to be very helpful for our present situation. All bracketed material is my own:

As I write this, it is Easter Tuesday. At this point we have gone without gathering for worship for over a month. As yet, we still do not know how long we will have to go on in these present circumstances. The reality is, we could have several more months of physical distancing, quarantine, and stay-at-home recommendations. Yet, far worse than not gathering together, is our [present inability to receive] the True Body and True Blood of our Lord and Savior [as we would normally receive it]. Since gathering together to receive Holy Communion is a defining feature of what it means to be the Church, [some may be experiencing distress at this privation]. . . Our life together as a church does not feel complete without gathering around the Altar. Our celebration of Holy Week did not feel complete without receiving Communion on Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday.

[We can see why] Holy Communion is so important. . . when we [consider]. . . what the Bible teaches about it. When we receive communion, we receive in our mouths not only bread and wine, but along with the bread and wine, the very Body and Blood of Jesus. This, of course, is proven by the simple words of Christ himself, "Take, eat; this is my body," "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood," (Matt. 26:26-28).

But, receiving the Sacrament with our mouths and receiving it in such a way that we benefit from it are two different things. This is an important distinction. The prayer entitled, "Thanksgiving after receiving the Sacrament," on the inside of the front cover of our Lutheran Service Book helps explain this distinction: "Send Your Holy Spirit that, having with my mouth received the holy Sacrament, I may by faith obtain and eternally enjoy Your divine grace, the forgiveness of sins, unity with Christ, and life eternal." Did you see the difference? We receive with our mouths the Holy Sacrament, but we will not benefit from the grace that God offers except by faith. That explains why the Apostle Paul warns that a person without faith can receive Holy Communion to his harm and judgment (1 Cor. 11:27-30).

Christ our Lord also makes the same point. In the Gospel of John chapter six, commonly called "The Bread of Life Discourse", Jesus shocks the people of Capernaum by claiming, "he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day," (John 6:54). It is not hard to see why these verses have been cited throughout the centuries as referring to the Lord's Supper. However, Martin Luther disagreed. Referring to this passage Luther remarked, "There the Lord refers to spiritual eating and drinking, to the eating not of the mouth but of the soul." What Luther is saying is that this passage is actually about obtaining the benefits of Jesus' flesh and blood. But wait, Jesus is talking about eating his flesh and blood! Surely this is a clear reference to Communion! Can you really eat Christ without the Lord's Supper? In fact, Christ himself makes

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In response to the mission ideas proposed at the September 22, 2019 Congregational Meeting, our church will head-up an action team to prepare health kits for NALC disaster responses.

Each health kit will consist of:

- One bath towel of any color
- One wash cloth of any color
- 2 bars of soap, in original wrapping
- 1 toothbrush
- 1 pack of dental floss
- 1 tube of toothpaste (2 tubes if sample size)
- 1 deodorant
- A note card with a prayer or devotional and a statement that reads “We are praying for you at this time.”

Each kit will be made by wrapping the healthcare items and the note card in the bath towel. Members are encouraged to gather materials for as many kits as they determine feasible, and to invite other families and friends to participate in this project.

This was supposed to be a Lenten activity, but we had to postpone this until our Covid-19 distancing is over. We will reschedule a Winchester visit and pick-up of the kits by Mary Bates, our wonderful NALC Disaster Response Coordinator.

To help with this project, Sally has received \$250.00 from Thrivent to purchase some towels and wash-cloths.

Thanks for your help and support with this project!

himself very clear. “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst,’” (John 6:35). Here, Jesus is saying that to come and believe in Christ is to eat and drink his flesh and blood! He is referring to another type of eating, one done by faith.

Our Lutheran Confessions also refer to two types of eating and understanding this will help us get through this difficult time where we cannot partake of the Holy Communion. The Formula of Concord says,

There is a twofold eating of Christ’s flesh. One is spiritual, which Christ describes especially in John 6:54. This “eating” happens in no other way than with the Spirit and faith, in preaching and meditation on the Gospel, as well as in the Lord’s Supper. By itself this is useful and helpful, and necessary for all Christians, at all times, for salvation. Without this spiritual participation the sacramental or oral eating in the Supper is not only not helpful, but is even harmful and damning.

This spiritual eating is nothing other than faith. It means to hear God’s Word (in which Christ, true God and man, is presented to us, together with all benefits that He has purchased for us by His flesh given into death for us, and by His blood shed for us, namely, God’s grace, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal life). It means to receive it with faith and keep it for ourselves. It means that in all troubles and temptations we firmly rely—with sure confidence and trust—and abide in this consolation: we have a gracious God and eternal salvation because of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, while during this difficult time we are unable to receive Holy Communion, we can still “eat” Christ. What does that mean? It means that despite our time of separation, the Word of God is still available to us. To eat Christ spiritually means to believe the promises of the Gospel. It . . . appropriating for ourselves by faith all that Jesus did for us on the Cross. God is still offering us His “divine grace, the forgiveness of sins, unity with Christ, and life eternal.” He does so through the Word, wherever it is read or heard. The exact same grace and forgiveness which God offers to us when we receive the Lord’s Supper in faith is offered to us when we trust God’s promises to us offered in the Word. Our greatest comfort and during this time is that God has not left us alone. No, we are given the sure and certain confidence that because Jesus Christ has died for our sins . . . and [is now Risen from the dead], we know that God is gracious to us. Jesus Christ is the bread of life, and this is the bread that, “is given, and given to be broken in death, so that those who eat of it may not die, but have eternal life in the present and the future and be raised up on the last day.” God has not abandoned us in wrath, but because of Jesus, he continues to extend mercy and forgiveness to us. When we trust in this God, who extends forgiveness for Christ’s sake, then we are truly eating of Christ!

Before I end this article, I want to thank all the people at Advent and Lebanon for their understanding and support at this time.

Special thanks to both Councils, and the presidents: Sally and Brenda. You

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Message from the Council:

On behalf of church council, I want to thank our congregational members for all that they have done to support each other during this challenging Covid-19 time - the phone calls, cards, emails, offers to run errands, and endless prayers. We are grateful to George and Pastor Porter for providing us with inspirational online services. We also greatly appreciate the continuation of your monetary gifts which has given us the ability to pay our bills. Just as each individual and family unit in our parish has had to forgo celebrations and projects because of the stay-home policy, so of course has our congregation had to do the same. A local marketing campaign and a mission project involving health kits have been put on hold until we can be back together. Now we are faced with reconsideration of our 10th Anniversary Celebration, currently set for the weekend of June 12-14. Council will meet by a teleconference call this weekend to discuss the probability of moving the celebration to a later date.

Please know that we are praying for each of you and for our congregation as a whole. Together we will get through this trying time.

Sally Coates
Council President

Alive in the Gospel
Advent Lutheran Church Winchester, VA
Celebrating 10 years of Ministry in Winchester



have shared the difficult decisions with me, and I am grateful for your service to the people of God. To Pastor J.D.: for all your help with the Holy Week Services and your continuing educational ministry. To all those who helped with setting up for Holy Week: Carolyn and Missy and J.D. and Joy, especially. To Brenda and Mike for tirelessly working to make the purchase of the land next-door a reality. To Jeff and Lebanon's Outreach Committee for your recent work with the hospital and businesses . . . phenomenal work, really. To Sheryl, Lebanon's new secretary, you have been gracious and enterprising during this whole weird thing. To my wife Colleen for seemingly infinite patience and for your good work with the masks, and to Sue for your assistance in numerous things. And finally to thanks to George for the great work providing music for our Services and for tech and moral support — and for all around general helpfulness. To those who have been steadfast in your giving . . . To all who contributed to the service projects and who otherwise helped in big and small ways — you are a blessing to our churches and our communities!

May our merciful Lord continually renew and sustain your faith by His eternal Word, this Easter Season and beyond!

Prayerfully,
Pastor Porter



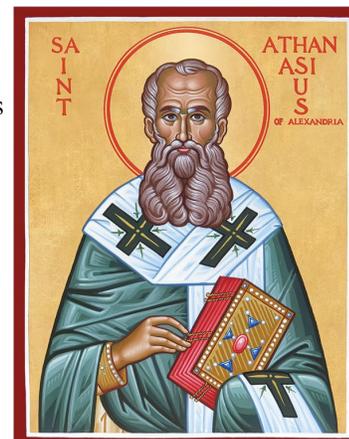
Welcome Nancy and Wayne!

Nancy and Wayne Underwood joined our membership on Sunday, March 8.

We are happy to have them as part of our family at Advent!

Athanasius of Alexandria, Pastor and Confessor

Athanasius was born in Alexandria in Egypt in A.D. 295. He served as a church leader in a time of great controversy and ecclesiastical disagreements. At the Council of Nicaea in 325, he defended Christian orthodoxy against the proponents of the Arian heresy, which denied the full divinity of Jesus Christ. During his 45-year tenure as bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius wrote numerous works that defended the orthodox teaching. His enemies had him exiled five times; on two occasions he was almost murdered. Yet Athanasius remained steadfast and ended his days restored fully to his church responsibilities. The Athanasian Creed, though not composed by Athanasius, is named in his honor because it confesses the doctrinal orthodoxy he championed throughout his life.



ADVENT CHURCH CALENDAR APRIL/MAY 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
19 Second Sunday in Easter 1 0 am Worship Live Streamed	20 7 am Pastor's Devotional Time 10 am Bible Study ZOOM 7:30 pm Large Catechism ZOOM	21	22	23	24	25 Family Day
26 Third Sunday in Easter 1 0 am Worship Live Streamed	27 7 am Pastor's Devotional Time 10 am Bible Study ZOOM 7:30 pm Large Catechism ZOOM	28	29	30	MAY 1	2 Family Day
3 Fourth Sunday in Easter 1 0 am Worship Live Streamed	4 7 am Pastor's Devotional Time 10 am Bible Study ZOOM 7:30 pm Large Catechism ZOOM	5	6	7	8	9 Family Day
10 Fifth Sunday in Easter 1 0 am Worship Live Streamed	11 7 am Pastor's Devotional Time 10 am Bible Study ZOOM 7:30 pm Large Catechism ZOOM	12 2 pm Webinar: Trot through the New Testament Find link on church calendar on Advent Website	13	14	15	16 Family Day
17 Sixth Sunday in Easter 1 0 am Worship Live Streamed	18 7 am Pastor's Devotional Time 10 am Bible Study ZOOM 7:30 pm Large Catechism ZOOM	19	20	21	22	23 Family Day