



Advent Journey

Advent Lutheran Church — December 2007

Do You Hear What I Hear?

An Advent Prayer

With Mary,
who could not have known the outcome of her 'yes',
we pray for trust.

With Joseph,
whose silent questions continued in his heart,
we pray for patience.

With the wise Ones,
who had not imagined their destination to be a stable,
we pray for boldness and adventure.

With the shepherds,
whose vision was more glorious than expected,
we pray for open minds.

With the child,
whose future, like ours, was always in God's hands,
we pray for hope.

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Michael's Meanderings...

As I write, the church has a pine lattice covering about 80% of the roof and metal sheets are beginning to be put in place. There is a fair amount of snow under the metal. This will melt when the sun shines and water will eventually drip through the ceiling, but after that final drip session, we will be in the clear. The roof is beautiful. I'm grateful for those who have contributed so generously to its construction and to the upkeep of our house.

In Hebrew the word *Bethlehem* means *house*. More specifically it means 'House of Bread', a fitting place for Jesus' birth. And I am reminded this winter, again, how important it is to have a roof, and four walls, a working furnace, and a place to be with family and friends – how important it is to have a house. It is a necessity in this country in particular.

In our congregation, many people work to help others have a holy and safe house. Members of our parish regularly contribute to the food bank. Many of our folks contribute to Eva's Place – a house for youth without a home. Many give a Christmas donation to charity above and beyond their regular church donations. One woman in our congregation volunteers to serve soup downtown at Young Street Mission. At this time of year when we realize that our house is larger than we usually imagine it to be, and our family includes people from all over the earth, I'm grateful for all of you who share your love so freely with God's world.

I wish you peace this Christmas.
Michael



Sunday Church School

At the start of September, Sunday school class had slowly begun with a small group of one to two children. On a recent Sunday, one class had eight children participating. The children enjoy the lesson for the day and make an interesting craft based on the lesson that they can take. There is a bit of fun-filled colouring and one class had a blast creating trumpets for the story *The Walls Came tumbling Down in Jericho*.

The group may be small but is very energetic and they do enjoy the time spent together working, learning and sharing their stories with one another. In November, the children were busy making special craft items that were brought to sell at the Craft and Bake Sale on December 2nd.

Sunday School continues until Sunday December 16 and then we will break to celebrate the Christmas season. Classes resume on January 13, 2008.

We welcome all children to share in the fun of learning with the *COME and SEE JESUS* Series. Little ones who find it difficult to stay quiet through a long worship service are welcome to join the class, too.

Erika Day

Several months ago, Peter Reble invited our congregation to hear a little bit about his sister and one of her traditions. As I listened to Peter speak about Brenda's wonderful custom of throwing dinner parties, it struck me that she truly did find a wonderful way to build community. Now, in the season of Advent, it strikes me again that Brenda's dinner parties provide more than a way to build community. The Legacy Dinner Party has the potential to help us build trust, find patience, be bold and adventurous, keep our minds open and hold hope in our hearts. Peter, thank you again for sharing this with us.

The selection from Luke 14 reads:

He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

The Legacy Dinner Party

to honour Brenda Reble b.14th September 1953 d. 14th June 2007

- When: On September 14th, or New Year's Eve. or any time
- Invite: Three to a dozen people
- Include: Someone who has never invited you
Someone new to Canada
An old friend
- Serve: Something that you think people will really enjoy
Make sure you all sit facing one another so that conversation can be shared
- Purpose: You want people to enjoy some food you've prepared
You want to offer someone a change of pace
You want to share and cultivate the joy of human companionship
- Discuss: Dreams for the future
Thoughts about life
The joy of human companionship
How to help the less fortunate
- Plan: One or more future dinner parties at the homes of other people
- Write: Ask guests to write any of their thoughts for you to have as a memory – perhaps in your scrapbook the way Brenda did.

Right Here...Right Now

One of the things you notice about the Christmas story in Luke's gospel is all the ordinary life stuff. Quirinius, the governor, is calling a census to know how many people are in the territory he governs – he wants to know what tax revenues he can be expecting over the next little while. All sorts of people are going here and there to be counted – some to their birth place, some to the homes of their parents: lives passing each other on the road. Some struggle to find lodging. One couple end up putting their infant son in a feed trough, maybe not the first time that sort of thing has happened. Meanwhile shepherds are out and about on a local hillside watching for predators – it's their livelihood. The sheep are doing what sheep do – filling their bellies or sleeping. Elsewhere people are also sleeping or maybe getting up to go to work. Not so much unlike the sheep, I guess. All of life is happening in this short story. People are coming and going and birthing and working and sleeping and doing what they do, aware or not aware that something important is going on.

It's always that way isn't it? We can be going about our lives wholly unaware that next door at the neighbour's someone is having a heart attack. There is the stunned response from the family, the flurry of activity, the calling of 911, the arrival of the paramedics. And all the while we are brewing a second cup of tea and deciding whether or not we should cut into the pie that's supposed to be saved for after dinner, humming an old tune to ourselves as we putter away.

W.H. Auden writes:

When the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood...

Isn't that always the way with the presence of the divine in our world? Some single-mindedly wait, while others don't seem much to care one way or the other. But life's like that, isn't it? The day my first brother got married I felt like stopping people on the streets to tell them the news: don't you know what important thing is happening today? I was thirteen at the time and everything was enthralling: the hall, the tables decorated so beautifully, my new suit, the dancing, the glass of champagne my mom promised I could have. By the time my sister got married (my fifth sibling), I wondered if it would be possible to arrange a nap between the church and reception while portraits were being taken. It turns out it wasn't. As the pastor they wanted me in the photos.

Life is full of mixed feelings. It's not a good thing or a bad thing. It's just the way things are. We get mixed feelings because, as human beings, we are blessed (some may say cursed) with the ability to anticipate the future. For all the joy a wedding ceremony invokes, we know that down the road there will inevitably be hardship and struggle. And we are torn. For every joyous family gathering, there is the possibility of too much wine, unkind words and hurt feelings. So we hesitate to commit ourselves fully to the joy of the moment. For every birth there is a death.

There is a myth told of a king who loved riddles. He gave this decree: half my kingdom to anyone who can present me with a gift that, when I am sad will make me happy, and when I am happy will make me sad. All over the kingdom there was a flurry of searching and hunting for this one thing, this gift that would cheer the king when he was cheerless, and would pain him when he was contented. An endless assortment of treasures and diversions and entertainments were eventually

(Continued on page 5)

paraded past the king but no one could claim half the kingdom. That is until a poor young woman, a goldsmith, presented the king a simple iron ring washed with silver. The king picked up the band and inside read the engraved inscription: *This, too, shall pass.*

We are always looking beyond the now to a new moment, a better moment perhaps, or a worse moment, but at least it's not *this* moment. It is the human condition: even when it comes to the presence of the divine in the world. We imagine God must be any other place, with any other person, at any other time, than right here, right now, with me.

And this is where I wonder if we sometimes don't get the Christmas story all wrong. For Luke it wasn't "The Christmas Story" it was just ordinary folk going about their ordinary business in an ordinary census year. That *WAS* the miracle.

Swami Vivekenanda, says:

After long searches here and there, in temples and in churches, in earths and in heavens, at last you come back, completing the circle from where you started, to your own soul and find that the One for whom you have been seeking all over the world, for whom you have been weeping and praying in churches and temples, on whom you were looking as the mystery of all mysteries shrouded in the clouds, is nearest of the near, in the depth of your own Self, the divine is to be discovered in the reality of your essence, your life, your very body.

Right here, right now, it's Christmas – whether you're leaving tonight's worship to go back to a group of people who couldn't be bothered coming to church; whether, because of death or divorce, you are going to spend Christmas with a different kind of family than you had last year; whether tonight you'll quietly tuck just yourself into bed. Right now, right here it's Christmas. And what is more, it's Christmas every night of the year.

Hafiz writes:

Like two lovers who have become lost
In a winter blizzard
And find a cozy, empty hut
In the forest,
I now huddle everywhere
With the Friend.
God and I have built an immense fire
Together
We keep each other happy
And warm.

Merry Christmas,
Michael

ADVENT'S FINANCIAL POSITION

At 30th November, 2007

Our Revenues

Summarized as follows is Advent's giving to 30th November, 2007, as compared to the period to 30th November, 2006.

ADVENT'S GIVING TO 30/11/07

Commitments	Received to 30/11/2007	Rec 1-1-06 to 30/11/2006	Difference
Current, Festival & Loose	\$70,223.36	\$73,774.83	-\$3,551.47
Mortgage	\$3,769.00	\$5,384.84	-\$1,615.84
Sunday School	\$21.67	\$174.00	-\$152.33
Sub-total	\$74,014.03	\$79,333.67	-\$5,319.64
Facilities	\$59,949.73	\$50,490.87	\$9,458.86
Regular Benevolence	\$9,096.00	\$9,832.83	-\$736.83
Total Received	\$143,059.76	\$139,657.37	\$3,402.39
Other Giving			
Global Hunger	\$4,173.00	\$4,578.33	-\$405.33
40th Anniversary	\$4,224.62	\$4,996.42	-\$771.80

The monthly totals are as follows:

Item	Nov/07 Giving	Nov/06 Giving	Increase
Current, Festival and Loose	\$ 6,265.65	\$ 5,948.80	\$ 318.85
Mortgage	\$ 292.50	\$ 320.50	(\$ 28.00)
Sunday School	\$ 0.00	\$ 14.00	(\$ 14.00)
Sub-Total	\$6,555.15	\$ 6,283.30	\$ 271.85
Facilities	\$ 4,687.05	\$ 2,742.25	\$1,944.80
Regular Benevolence	\$ 938.00	\$ 799.00	\$ 139.00
Total Received	\$12,180.20	\$ 9,824.55	\$2,355.65
Global Hunger	\$ 290.50	\$ 508.00	\$ 217.50
40 th Anniversary	\$ 212.20	\$ 514.65	\$ 302.45

Current, Festival and Loose collections tell us how much we are donating to support our everyday operations (i.e. pay our bills). As I noted in the previous Report, there was a substantial decrease in current, festival and loose giving in October, 2007 vs. 2006, partly attributable to the fact that there were 5 Sundays in October, 2006 and 4 Sundays in October, 2007. However, the decline was substantial, and although November was an improvement, this year over last, our 2007 year-to-date position remains \$3,551.47 below 2006. Hopefully, we can make up some of the shortfall in December, since there are 5 Sundays in December, 2007 vs. 4 Sundays in December, 2006.

Although there was an improvement in November, 2007 over November, 2006, Regular Benevolence for the year remains down significantly from 2006. **Remember, we are committed in our 2007 Budget to a Regular Benevolence commitment of \$12,500 for the year. Any shortfall in Benevolence giving to the \$12,500 commitment will be topped up through our general revenues.**

The Roof

Total cost of the roof is \$92,092.60 (taxes included). To 30th November, 2007, total Advent donations have been \$15,006.61, or about \$665.00 in November alone. Thankfully, we have received a generous contribution of \$5,000.00 for our roof from one of our users, the Worldwide Church of God, bringing our total to date to \$20,006.61. In addition to our regular monthly payment on the roof of \$1,667, an amount of \$3,998 will be applied to pay down the loan.

Further, there are two GIC's coming due on 3rd December, 2007, totaling \$10,000. Proceeds of these GIC's are also to be put toward the principal of the loan.

A concerted fund-raising program for the roof is anticipated for the new year. **In the mean time, keep making your donations as you are able.**



Draft 2008 Budget

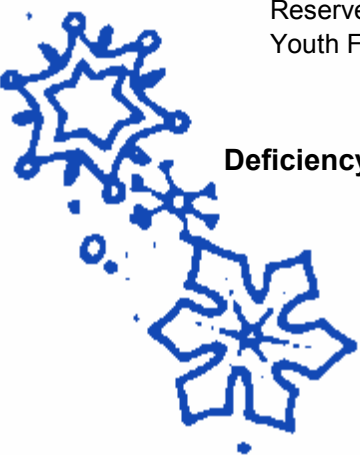
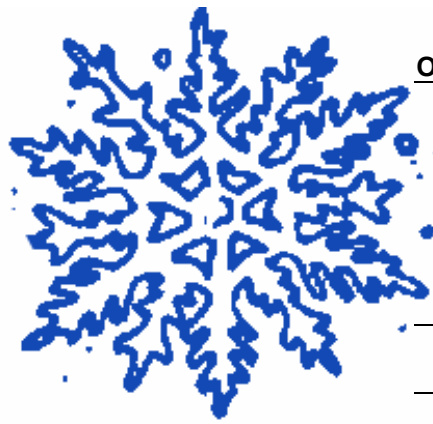
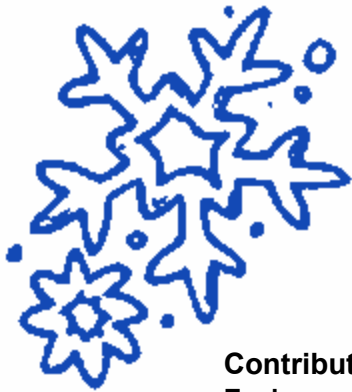
Also included in this Report is the Draft Budget for 2008, as passed by Council on Monday, November 26th. Items of note are as follows:

- Pastor Mike's total proposed compensation is \$76,966, an increase of 1.7% over 2006
- Fran has retained a husband-and-wife janitorial team for our janitorial service, which will likely reduce our costs to \$10,000 in 2008 from the budgeted amount for 2007 of \$12,500
- Regular Benevolence contributions are estimated at about \$10,000 for 2007, well below our commitment of \$12,500. The commitment for 2008 has been reduced to \$10,000 to reflect the Congregation's general donation level for Regular Benevolence

Envelope donation requirements to balance the proposed Budget are roughly in line with the October, 2006 to September, 2007 collections of \$78,386.

Fred Roth,
Treasurer

	12 Month Oct - Sept 07	(unaudited) 2007	(unaudited) 2008
	Actual \$	Budget \$	Submitted \$
General expenditures			
Pastor			
Salary	35,475	35,700	36,600
Housing allowance	21,973	22,100	22,650
Books/education	1,500	1,500	1,550
	<u>58,948</u>	<u>59,300</u>	<u>60,800</u>
Pension, retirement and group benefits	8,096	8,000	8,296
Health and dental premiums	4,278	5,000	4,416
Employer's portion of payroll taxes (CPP & EI)	2,998	3,000	3,044
Workers compensation premiums	396	400	410
	<u>74,716</u>	<u>75,700</u>	<u>76,966</u>
Property			
Janitorial service	8,623	12,500	10,000
Utilities	9,199	9,400	10,000
Outdoor maintenance	9,519	8,800	10,000
Insurance	3,926	4,000	4,000
Supplies and indoor maintenance	5,920	4,000	5,500
Non-structural building repairs	3,286	4,000	4,000
Flower beds	163	200	200
	<u>40,636</u>	<u>42,900</u>	<u>43,700</u>
Music and worship			
Organist	6,438	6,500	6,750
Bulletins	968	855	900
Communion supplies (wine and cups)	133	575	700
Pulpit supply	400	300	650
Other	295	650	1,075
	<u>8,233</u>	<u>8,880</u>	<u>10,075</u>
Parish administration			
Travel Expenses	2,550	3,700	3,700
Communications	1,144	2,250	2,200
Convention delegate	1,129	1,250	1,250
WebPage	16	70	60
Advertising	101	110	110
Bank service fees	132	110	130
Council Retreat	860	1,000	500
Other expenses	1,115	730	1,450
	<u>7,046</u>	<u>9,220</u> #	<u>9,400</u>
Total general expenditures	<u>130,631</u>	<u>136,700</u>	<u>140,141</u>
Current Fund Appropriations (net of revenues)			
Sunday School & adult education	184	530	555
Evangelism Social Outreach (E.S.O.)	217	550	810
Stewardship and finance	303	300	300
	<u>704</u>	<u>1,380</u>	<u>1,665</u>
Total Current Fund expenditures	<u>131,334</u>	<u>138,080</u>	<u>141,806</u>



	<u>Oct to Sept 07</u>	(unaudited) <u>2008</u>
	Actual \$	Submitted \$
Contributions		
Envelopes		
Regular benevolence	9,604	10,000
Festival services	1,210	1,500
Remaining envelopes	78,386	78,956
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Loose	3,121	3,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
User fees	62,054	65,500
Income from other sources	60	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	154,435	158,956
Operating expenses		
General expenditures (Schedule 2)	(130,985)	(140,141)
Current Fund appropriations net of revenues (Schedule 2)	(704)	(1,665)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(131,689)	(141,806)
Distributions		
Regular and special benevolence	(12,500)	(10,000)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	10,247	7,150
Interfund transfers		
Interfund transfers from Current Fund		
Reserve Fund	(6,754)	(7,000)
Youth Fund	(150)	(150)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(6,904)	(7,150)
Deficiency after interfund transfers	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,342	-

Cranberry Book

The Cranberry Book is in the pews. We have been using it for all of the hymns since the beginning of October and every Sunday morning an ad hoc group of the faithful have been practicing liturgies. So far it looks like Setting VI is going to be the liturgy we adopt in December. We will also be using Setting X for variety. (Setting X is composed of known hymn tunes so it doesn't require extra practice.) The choir will be helping us learn setting VI during Advent – they deserve a word of thanks for all of their hard work.

What are some of the comments we have heard so far? "I'm really enjoying the hymns. Most of the ones I liked in the Blue Book are there." "I'm really enjoying the hymns, I love the old favourites." "The music for Setting VI is growing on me. The choir is enjoying it." "I think setting X is great." "I can't do any of these." (There's one in every crowd.)



PERSONAL COPIES — If you still wish to purchase a personal copy of the new hymnal it is not too late. Just give me a ring at the church (or leave a message 416-493-1345) and I'll see that you are included in the next order. Your patience while awaiting your copy is appreciated. In order to keep shipping costs to a minimum, we are waiting for a critical mass of book requests before placing another order.

CONTRIBUTIONS — If you wish to make a contribution of new books for the church, again, please just indicate your intentions on your offering envelope. Your generosity is much appreciated. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give me a shout.

Michael



The E.L.W got off to a good start at our September Pot Luck Supper. Although we didn't have as great a turnout as we would have liked, those of us that were there enjoyed the evening – the food (as always) was good and plentiful. The fellowship was great. We racked our brains over a quiz on Canada. We made plans for future meetings. A good time was had by all.

Our Praise Offering Service was held on September 16th Sunday with members of the group participating.

At our October meeting we are showing a video on women's issues. The ELW Toronto Conference Meeting is being held at Peace Pickering on Saturday October 20th from 9:00a.m. to 2:30p.m. To this meeting we will take Health Kits which we then go to Canadian

Lutheran World Relief to be sent overseas to those who need such things. These kits consist of things we take for granted everyday, comb, toothbrush, soap etc.

In November we had a Games Night. Maybe one of our future programmes will appeal to you. Please feel welcome to join us.

Underline the first Sunday in December is the E.L.W. Bake and Craft Sale. Please bring your baking and Crafts that day.

We look forward to seeing you.
Joan Fox

The Path Ahead...

How will you help?

Have a look at the table below. You'll see a lot of blank spaces. When a volunteer coordinator asks you to help, please consider saying **YES**. If you truly are unable to meet that particular request, perhaps you could step forward and volunteer your time where you feel it will be most useful.

	ALTAR CARE	GREETER	ASST. MINISTER	READER	USHERS	COUNTERS	COFFEE HOSTS
Dec 9	Elizabeth Lancia				Heinz & Hildegard Weltner		The Schurr Family
Dec 16	Fran Brandes				Alfred & Erika Schurr		The Khan Family
Dec 23	Brit Missirlian				Guy & Elizabeth Lancia		Fran & Claus Brandes
Dec 24 7pm	Walter Rothenburger				George & Joan McLean		
Dec 24 11pm	Brit Missirlian						
Dec 25	Brit Missirlian				Heinz & Hildegard Weltner		
Dec 30	Fran Brandes		Jim Doak				Hildegard & Heinz Weltner
Jan 6	Brit Missirlian						
Jan 13	Brit Missirlian						

Shhhhh...

Fred Roth is preparing the budget for next year. Be gentle with him.

Advent Journey is created by the members of Advent Lutheran Church. Please submit your news and creations for sharing to any member of Council or email the editor directly at journey@adventlutheranchurch.ca

Next Issue: October/November 2007
Deadline for submissions: October 10,

David Rankine has graciously given us permission to reproduce his work in our newsletter.

To see more of his wonderful artwork, check out: www.davidrankineart.com/index.htm

The Buzz



MOMS AND TOTS

Know a mom who needs some time with other mom's in a safe environment where there are snacks and toys and companions for her children? Then tell her about Advent Lutheran's Mom's and Tot's programme which takes place every Friday morning. Tara Lindemann is chief cook and bottle washer for the programme and she will be glad to

BIBLE STUDY

A drop-in bible study class is offered each Sunday from 11:45-12:45 in pastor Mike's office. When you finish your coffee come and join the crew if your are interested in this informal time of study , conversation and growth in faith. Btw, in our second class we discovered from the book of Exodus that God doesn't want people to be religious, so leave your expectations at the door...

ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

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The Rev. Michael Mills, Pastor
Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m.

To receive this newsletter by email,
please send your request to:
journey@adventlutheranchurch.ca

An Apple a Day keeps the Banker Away

Hildegard Weltner has been canning applesauce and offering it for sale at \$3.00 per jar. It's excellent applesauce and she is donating all proceeds to the roof fund. Hildegard will be nine hundred and six years old when she pays off the roof but her creative efforts will always be appreciated. Have a fun way of attacking the roof deficit? Don't hesitate

A Steel Slab a Day Keeps the Bandits Away

Remember all those break-ins a few years ago? It cost us a mint in sound system replacements. Since then Heinz Weltner constructed a steel vault-like affair to house our sound equipment. You couldn't blow it up. Last week it foiled the work of some opportunist vandals who only managed to rip off the oak veneer. Bravo Heinz!

ARE YOU ON P.A.R.?

One way to contribute to the church that I've grown to appreciate is through pre-authorized remittance (or P.A.R.). Because Sunday mornings are usually filled with conversations and appointments and pre-worship study, my thoughts are often somewhere other than on my givings for the week. With P.A.R. I don't have to worry about getting behind - my offering is withdrawn from my bank account and automatically deposited in the church bank account. You don't have to lead worship Sunday morning for P.A.R. to be a benefit, of course. But for me, pre-authorized remittance helps me be consistent in my giving. Even when I'm on holidays, I'm can be sure that my contributions continue to be made. From the administrative side of things, P.A.R. helps the church in its budgeting because it reduces the uncertainty of the offering plate. It's easy to get on P.A.R. All you have to do is talk to Claus Brandes 416-445-4810. He'll give you a form to fill out.

PRAYERS FOR OUR PEOPLE

November first, the festival of All Saints, is a time when we remember and give thanks for the saints in our parish. This prayer is from the Eucharistic prayer for the day.

It is a good and joyful thing to give thanks to you, O God of Abraham and Sarah, God of Miriam and Moses, God of Joshua and Deborah, Ruth and David, Mary and Joseph, God of our mothers and our fathers, God of our children to all generations....In thanksgiving we ask you to renew our communion with all your saints: those whom we love and who have died in you: James Barthelmy and Richard Day. May their lives give us strength. And bind us, we pray to the saints who have this year been baptized: Elizabeth Doak, Aiden Munro, Connor Neff and Avery Persaud. Even as you encourage us by the witness of those saints who have confirmed their faith, especially: Stefanie Khan. May the lives and witness of your people, the world over and in times past and present, be for us a source of courage as we seek to build a just and holy earth.

In our daily prayers we remember Evelyn Fromme, Jack Shave, Avril Latchman, Victor Munro and Gladys Ammatil who suffer ill health; and Marlene Barthelmy, Erika and Michael Day, and Brenda Kroeker who mourn. May the peace of Christ be with you always.

Congratulations!
to Stefanie Khan who
celebrated confirmation
on October 28th.
~The people of Advent.



Christmas Worship

Dec 23 (Sunday) 10:00 am

Do You Hear What I Hear?

This Christmas invite your friends and family to join Advent's own Lester McLean for a Sunday morning concert of hymns and jazz music. Once again this year Lester will be welcoming Paul Neufeld (www.paulneufeld.ca) of Rhythm and Truth. Open to everyone, this concert within our worship service is a wonderful way to enter into the Spirit of Christmas!

Dec 24 (Monday) 7:00 pm – Christmas worship for the whole family with hymns and candlelight.

Dec 24 (Monday) 11:00 pm – Quiet Candlelight Liturgy

Dec 25 (Tuesday) 10:00 am – Early Christmas Mass

Dec 30 (Sunday) 10:00 am – Sunday Worship with Celebration of the New Year (There is no service on Dec 31.)

*Christmas renews our youth
by stirring our wonder.*



*The capacity for wonder
has been called our
most pregnant human faculty,
for in it are born our art,
our science, our religion.*

~Ralph Sockman