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# ADVENT

LUTHERAN WYCKOFF

## Worship

Saturday 5:00 pm Contemporary

Sunday 9:30 am Traditional

## Sunday School 9:20 am

September – May

VOLUME 58

NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER 2019

### FROM PASTOR JOSEPH

Over the past year, I've discovered a surprising number of my clergy colleagues are Grateful Dead fans. That's probably just coincidence, but it got me thinking: What can the Grateful Dead teach us about liturgy?

Liturgy is a creative act. The Grateful Dead were famous for their live shows, which featured long improvised jams. Because the band played different songs different ways every night, there was always a sense that something new and interesting could happen whenever they played. What made the performances good or bad was the quality of the music itself, not how close it sounded to the studio recording.

We often underemphasize the creative aspect of worship. Sometimes we do that by trying to recreate a previous worship experience we've had. Other times we get so bogged down in our bulletins we forget the liturgy is not just the words on the page. Whenever we gather for worship, we should always expect something new and unrepeatable to emerge within and among us.

Liturgy involves a number of voices working in concert. One of the things that makes the Grateful Dead fun to listen to is the interaction of the band members during the jams. The lead guitar responds to changes in the rhythm guitar. The bass is reacting to the percussion and keys. Various players take leads and drive jams in different directions. It's never just one person taking the lead by themselves.

That same ethos is reflected in the way we organize our worship. One reason Jason chooses most of our hymns is so what you

hear in worship isn't just a reflection of my preferences. We frequently use prayers written by our ecumenical partners so we pray across denominational lines. We have assisting ministers, acolytes, and lectors so that we hear different voices. Another way we do this is by letting the texts and actions we do in worship interpret one another. The liturgical scholar Gordon Lathrop calls this process "juxtaposition." The elements of worship are not a checklist we run through but are meant to illuminate, reinforce, and critique each other.

Liturgy changes but the central elements stay the same. In the three decades that the core of the Dead played together (1965-1995), the music went through a number of distinct eras: late 60s psychedelic, early 70s American, late 70s funk, early 90s MIDI guitar effects, etc. But even as the music changes, it has a core that remains recognizable.

The church's liturgy has changed vastly over the past two thousand years. Worship at Advent in 2019 looks different than the Congolese Missa Luba mass from the 1950s, Luther's own masses from 1520s Germany, or the worship described in the Didache, the oldest liturgical manual we have. But the central elements remain the same: font, word, and table. Our worship is always changing, but it is always sacramental, calling us in baptism, gathering us around the word, and sending us from the table.

Peace and courage,  
Joseph Schattauer Paillé  
Pastor



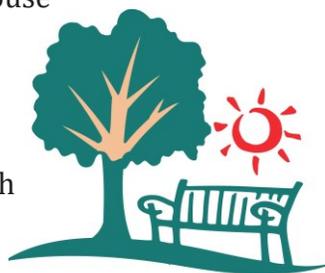
## FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT



Advent wouldn't be the community of faith that it is without volunteers willing to pitch in and get things done. Case in point: Buildings & Grounds chairman David Swenson, Peter and Christie Rutherford, Karen Arnone, Sue Brown, Elise Geiger and Pastor Joseph. More than a year ago they took on the task of renovating our Memorial Garden. Over time it had become overgrown and shabby and was no longer a place where we could feel comfortable interring the ashes of our loved ones.

The work was done with care and sensitivity. Trees and shrubs that had gotten too big were removed or pruned back and the top six inches of soil was taken up while new plantings and a sprinkler system were installed. The soil was then returned to the garden, and the badly weathered benches replaced. The new landscape provides more screening between the Memorial Garden and Wyckoff Avenue, which helps to enhance privacy and reduce road noise.

All this was accomplished with money from our Memorial Fund, plus some generous donations from Stone House nursery and families of those interred in the Garden. Take some time to see for yourself – I'm sure you'll be pleased with the improvement.



Bill Whitney, *Council President*

## FROM FELLOWSHIP

Please join us for Fellowship and Brunch immediately following the service on Sunday, September 15th. We can enjoy food and fellowship while we work on a community outreach project. **Also, PLEASE consider hosting coffee hour** on the other Sundays in September and throughout the year. As a congregation it is great to come together to worship, but it is equally as important to share in fellowship with one another. It is easy – all you have to do is provide baked goods (one gluten-free option please or fruit) and milk. We will supply the rest. Thank you in advance. *Mary Pensallorto and the Fellowship Committee*



## A NOTE FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

*A note from the music director:* As we move into fall, our choir resumes singing at Sunday worship services on September 8. If you are looking for an opportunity for ministry here at Advent, I invite you to join us on Sundays as we worship through song. We welcome singers of all ages and skill levels to join our fun group. Contact Jason for more information: 201-891-1031 or [adventlutheranwyckoff@gmail.com](mailto:adventlutheranwyckoff@gmail.com).

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## WEDNESDAY NIGHT STUDIES Begin September 11 through October 2 at 7 pm

How did a group of women having pray-ins at saloons during Reconstruction lay the groundwork for women's suffrage? Where did American fundamentalism come from? Why did some Episcopal clergy lead Martin Luther King, Jr. to write "Letter from a Birmingham Jail?" We'll answer some of those questions when our Wednesday night studies resume on September 11 with a four-week exploration of the history of the Christianity in America. We will watch selections from the 2010 PBS documentary *God in America* and read primary source documents. No advance reading is necessary, and you can come for one week or all four.

Pastor Joseph

## SEPTEMBER AT A GLANCE



**Wednesday, September 4 at 7:00 pm: Hope and Healing After an Addiction Death Vigil.** Hope and Healing will host their annual vigil at Crestwood Lake in Allendale. Even if you have not lost a loved one to addiction, I would strongly encourage you to attend. This is a very moving service of remembrance, and your presence and support can make a big difference.

**Sunday, September 8, 10:45 am: Mission, Vision, Welcome Conversations.** After worship, I will be leading a conversation about Advent's role in the community. I will walk through some results from the congregational survey that was sent out this summer and update you on the progress being made on our new mission, vision, and welcome statements. I will lead discussions like this around once a month until the annual meeting in January.

**Sunday, September 15: Rally Day.** The program year returns with a post-worship brunch. We will also participate in the Stamp Out Despair program. You can find more information about Stamp Out Despair in Susan Poff's note in this newsletter.

**Tuesday, September 17, 6:00 pm: Tour de BVMI.** The Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative has invited us to tour their facility in Hackensack. BVMI provides free health care to individuals without insurance. Their women's health initiative received a grant from our endowment earlier this summer.

**Saturday, September 21: Fall Mission Day 2019.** Last year, Wyckoff Reformed Church hosted their first mission day, sending sixty volunteers to volunteer in the community. This year, Pastor Andy and WRC have graciously invited Advent to join into an even bigger mission day on Saturday, September 21. We are still finalizing sites, but there will be a variety of local and regional projects available for a wide range of interests and skills. Last year's sites were Washington School, OASIS, and Christian Health Care Center.

### Sunday, September 29:

#### Anthony Briggs Visit.

Anthony Briggs, Executive Director of Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center, will visit Advent. Anthony will update us on some of the important work happening at Cross Roads and how you can get involved.



## SAVE THE DATES

### Upcoming Guest Speakers for the Fall



#### October 6:

Amanda Missey, Executive Director of the Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative

#### October 20:

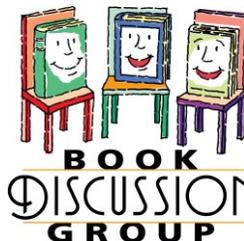
Mimi Confer, New Jersey Synod Ministry to LGBT Persons Task Force



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## SEPTEMBER BOOK GROUP

### Monday, September 16



Advent's Book Group meets at 1:00 pm in the church library. All are welcome to join in our discussion of *The Overstory* by Richard Powers.

## TO ACCOMPLISH THE IMPOSSIBLE, YOU NEED HOPE

*"Get out of bed, Jerusalem! Wake up and put your face in the sunlight. God's bright glory has risen for you." Isaiah 60:1-2*

Imagine yourself in this scenario: your people were conquered and exiled from their homeland for approximately 60 years. Most likely you are a child of one of the exiles, since life expectancy in this era was 45-50 years. Babylon is all you have ever known, yet now you are being "freed" to return to a land you have only heard tales about. Upon arrival, you will face opposition from the "locals", and will be called upon to build a new Temple and defensive wall around the city of your ancestors' birth. The only thing you can count upon is the promises of your God. Do you think these people need a little hope?

This rather unpromising situation was faced by the Jews who returned from the Babylonian "exile" in approximately 538 BCE. Against all odds, the Babylonian captors of the Jews have, themselves, been conquered by the Persian Empire. Their king, Cyrus, needs a city in the west of his new empire to protect him from an Egyptian threat, and he has chosen Jerusalem. To keep it friendly towards him, he "frees" the people held hostage for 60 years – the Jews – and allows them to return "home" and rebuild the Temple to their God.

The fact they still believe in God is remarkable. Most people kept in exile for 60 years "assimilate" and lose their particular identity. For example, the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 721 BCE and from that point the ten tribes of Israel were consigned to the "dustbin of history." The Judeans are a little different. Conquered and placed in exile they never lose their identity or fidelity to God. Instead they write down their oral history and keep their faith. They do, how-

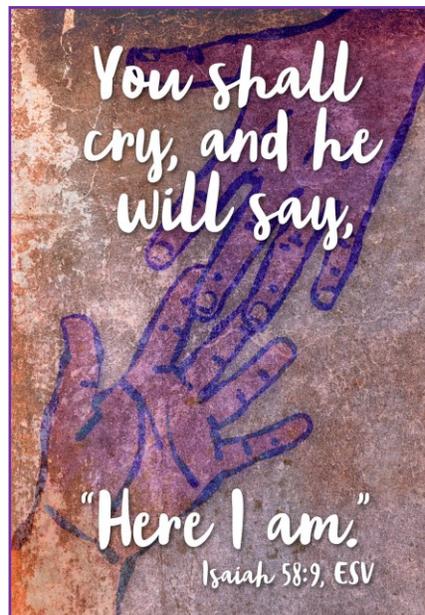
ever, need hope. That is what "third Isaiah" offers them.

In the last few months we've explored the Book of Isaiah, which many scholars believe was written in three parts. "First" Isaiah deals with conditions in Jerusalem around 700 BCE, when the original Isaiah lived. It reflects God's displeasure with and judgment upon the sinning people of Judah. This reproof comprises chapters 1-39. The "Second" Isaiah appears to be set at a later time, after Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians, and the Jews are placed in exile. Beaten down and asking themselves "why did this happen to us?" God's people need comforting which is the major theme of chapters 40-55. Little is known about the author of that era, but speculation places him as one of the exiled.

"Third" Isaiah was probably written after the exiled Jews returned to Jerusalem. The Biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah cover this period in a historical sense, but Isaiah offers the hope the people need. "Rebuilding the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem was only part of the task of resettlement. It was equally important to rebuild an identity as a people of purged sin and dedicated solely and wholly to Yahweh,"

so says scholar Thomas LeClerc. Chapters 56-66 cover that aspect and more.

Little is known about this third author who would have lived 50 or more years after "Second Isaiah." Isaiah 62:1-3 states, "regarding Zion, I can't keep my mouth shut, regarding Jerusalem, I can't hold my tongue, until her righteousness blazes down like the sun and her salvation flames up like a torch." As with most of the prophets we have considered, God had filled him so full of words that he could not keep quiet. Just when it was written is a little unsure as well. What is sure is the hope offered to Israel as they take another chance at fulfilling their covenant with God. Take for example, 62:5, where God says "you will be a



stunning crown in the palm of God's hand, a jeweled god cup held high in the hand of your God. No more will any call you Rejected, and your country will no longer be called Ruined.....because God delights in you and your land will be like a wedding celebration." Or 62:8 stating "God has taken a solemn oath, an oath he means to keep." Finally, 58:8 "Then when you pray, God will answer. You'll call out for help and he'll say 'here I am.'"

All of this hope, following reproof and comfort should make the question of "why should I care?" an easy one. Isaiah offers a comprehensive treatment of our relationship with God. Despite our ignoring him, God will still offer comfort, and ultimately hope, to those who strive to love and serve him. None of us is perfect, but God can work with those who attempt to be better. Isaiah might be a tough book to read, but it offers a powerful message of God's love for us.

*Gerry Lauro*

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## FROM SOCIAL MINISTRY

### TIME FOR CLEARING & COLLECTING!

It's Advent's  
22nd Annual  
**PRICELESS  
TREASURES!!**  
Saturday,  
October 12  
9 am - 2 pm



Please bring your gently used items starting Friday, October 4, from 7 to 9 pm. Items can be dropped off anytime the church is open or in the evenings from 7-9pm. **The final drop-off day is Thursday, October 10.**

We'll need snacks for our Bake Sale and volunteers to work throughout the day on October 12, including cleanup and disposal from 2-3 pm.

All proceeds are used to purchase books and Christmas gifts for the children of the Nurturing Place and Star of Hope Ministries. If you have questions or offers of help, contact Karen Arnone, 201-891-1031. Thanks!

## "YOU SHOULD SEE THEIR EYES LIGHT UP!"

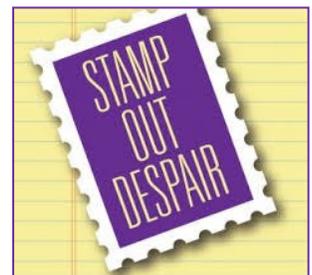
... said one of the volunteers who helped us take in the backpacks you filled for local children in need. Sixty filled backpacks were delivered to the Center for Food Action in Mahwah early in August for them to distribute before the start of school to children in their programs. The volunteer told us the children's eyes light up when they see the colorful new backpacks filled with all the supplies they'll need for the new school year.



Thanks to you, we donated 10% more backpacks this year than last. The people in administration were wowed that we brought sixty packs and asked astonished: "They're all filled?" We replied that Advent does not do "empty." We give thanks to God for all our blessings by sharing those blessings with those who most need them!

## STAMP OUT DESPAIR Program

We received a \$250 grant from Thrivent to participate in the Stamp Out Despair program that puts together packets of stationery and letters for people in migrant



detention centers. We will assemble the packets on Rally Day. **What is needed:** 5 greeting cards with envelopes and 5 blank cards with envelopes. Pastor will supply the remaining items using the Thrivent money. Our goal is to assemble 45 packets.

**Request** from St. Matthew Trinity Church's Lunchtime Ministry in Hoboken: **clean plastic** take-out containers with lids and **clean plastic** grocery bags for clients to take leftovers. There is a special collection box by the CFA shopping cart for the bags and containers. The collection is ongoing and items will be delivered to St. Matthew's on a regular basis.

## A LOOK AT BEAUTY

Remember kaleidoscopes – those tubes you hold up to your eye and point toward the light to see colorful shapes? When the far end of the optical instrument is turned, fragments of material inside an “object cell” shift and mirrors set at angles reflect light through the pieces, forming ever-changing patterns. A multi-hued flower might become sunlight through a round stained-glass window or fireworks on a clear night.



Various materials can be placed in the cell – tiny figures, twisted bits of metal, lace, viscous liquid – but often broken bits of glass are used, to beautiful effect! In fact, David Brewster, inventor of the kaleidoscope in 1817, named it after the Greek word *kalos*, for “beauty.”

Everyone feels broken, twisted, or shattered at times. But when God’s perfect light shines in and through us, reflecting among the fragments of our imperfect lives, we, too, become beautiful. Out of sinfulness and brokenness shines the beauty of compassion, kindness, perseverance, hope, love – delightful patterns to brighten this hurting world.

