

# THE MESSENGER

August 2025

## *A Word From Our Pastor*

***It is interesting how the opportunity for evangelism comes at the strangest times.***

Now, by “evangelism,” I mean its truest sense, and that is to spread the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These opportunities sometimes come when we are not at our best, we are seemingly unprepared for a conversation about Jesus, or when we are just plain ole’ tired out from the day. I remember one of these opportunities.

One day, many years ago, Angela and I went to get massages as a treat for ourselves. As I lay on the table, the masseur asked what I did for a living and I responded that I was a Pastor in the E.L.C.A. Now, usually, this response creates awkward silence and a quick change of the subject, so I thought to myself, “Well, that will be the end of this conversation.” But it wasn’t.

As he worked, he began to talk about his spiritual journey through different denominations and religions,



and frustrations that he had experienced with the exclusiveness of Christianity.

He spoke about his refusal to accept the angry and retributive God of the Old Testament, he spoke about his confusion at the need to prove ourselves to God, and he even questioned the general anger toward Judas, the apostle who betrayed Jesus, because after all, we needed Judas to help fulfill the prophecy!

So, I listened and talked with him (in-between groans of pain and sighs of relief) and at the end of the session, I looked at him and thanked him for opening up to me. I reminded him that the Scriptures of the Old Testament were not to be dismissed, for they are integral in understanding our relationship with God. I then offered to him, that even though the God of the Hebrew Bible seemed harsh and angry,

that through Jesus Christ we now understand that our God is love; true and powerful love beyond our understanding.

I invited him to check out the E.L.C.A. online if he was interested in learning about a Church that is inclusive and active in its communities and I offered him a small blessing as I left.

I am reminded of the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids. Matthew 25: 1-13 outlines for us a need to remain prepared and vigilant in our faith, so that the opportunity to see Jesus will not be missed. I’ll let you read it on your own, but usually, this parable is interpreted as an example of our entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Today, however, I have a new understanding from this; that the Kingdom of Heaven is here with us.

The opportunity to see Jesus is not only in our Heavenly existence at the end of days, but in the interaction between people here and now. *We don’t have to wait to see Jesus; rather we can see him now.* “Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” Keep awake, remain prepared and vigilant in faith, because the opportunity for evangelism comes at the strangest times.



BY PR. LARRY GRUNDEN

# SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:00 & 10:30 AM

**IN PERSON & ONLINE**

**SAVE THE DATE**

## August 4<sup>th</sup>

Fellowship Ministry @ 1pm

Property Board @ 6pm

Youth Board @ 6pm

Finance Committee @ 6:30pm

## August 6<sup>th</sup>

Quilters (FH) @ 9:30am

Community Care (Parlor) @ 1pm

Trunk Or Treat Planning meeting (FH) @ 5pm

## August 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>

Adult Bible Study (Parlor) @ 10am

Gentle Yoga (FH) @ 5:45-6:45pm

## August 8<sup>th</sup>

FAMILY GAME NIGHT (FH) 6-9pm \*UNO night!

## August 9<sup>th</sup>

Property Work Day @ 8am

## August 10<sup>th</sup>

Rally Day

Volunteer Appreciation

Back to School celebration

## August 11<sup>th</sup>

MESSENGER DEADLINE @ 3pm

Executive Committee Mtg. @ 6pm

## August 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>

Quilters (FH) @ 9:30

Stephen Ministry (Parlor) @ 2pm

## August 18<sup>th</sup>

Council Meeting @ 6pm

## August 8<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>

FAMILY GAME NIGHT (FH) 6-9pm

*We ♥ our  
Volunteers*



**Facebook Live:**

[www.facebook.com/pg/adventlutheranop](https://www.facebook.com/pg/adventlutheranop)



**TRUNK-OR-TREAT  
PLANNING MEETING**  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6<sup>TH</sup>  
@ 5PM

BRING YOUR SPIRIT OF SERVICE FOR  
COMMUNITY & CHURCH!  
BRING YOUR IMAGINATION!  
LET'S MAKE THIS TRUNK OR TREAT  
EXTRA SPECIAL FOR OUR LOCAL  
CHILDREN & FAMILIES!

**PROPERTY  
WORKDAY**

**Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>  
@ 8am**

**GAME  
Night**

**August 8<sup>th</sup> UNO.  
chicken sandwiches**

**August 22<sup>nd</sup> BUNCO.  
salad-themed potluck**

**August 29<sup>th</sup> BINGO.  
potluck!**

*bring a side dish/dessert*

# giving

Total Receipts through June 30, 2025 \$260,996.74

Total Expenses through June 30, 2025 301,986.32

YTD Deficit

\$ -40,989.58

Please remember to include your giving to Advent in your summer plans.

Martha Smith, Treasurer

# CHURCH UPDATES



**WELCOME,  
SARAH!**



Sarah Carroll is our new Church Secretary here at Advent Lutheran. Sarah is a Jacksonville native, having proudly served in church ministries such as Sunday School teacher, Youth Director, VBS leader, and more! across Jacksonville since her youth.

Sarah's wonderful sons are Dylan (17) and Hendrix (9), and her beautiful stepdaughter Amelia (7), all members of Orange Park UMC.

Sarah and her family are new to Clay County/Fleming Island.

Sarah is a faithful servant who is excited to be a part of our mission here at Advent, and we are happy to have her with us!

Stop by and say hello anytime M-F 8:30-3:30.

email Sarah: [office@adventop.org](mailto:office@adventop.org)

**Quilters Needs:**  
COTTON BEDSHEETS,  
ANY COLOR/SIZE

## August's weekly bible lessons:

### WEEK 1:

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23  
Colossians 3:1-11  
Luke 12:13-21

### WEEK 2:

Genesis 15:1-6  
Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16  
Luke 12:32-40

### WEEK 3:

Jeremiah 23:23-29  
Hebrews 11:29-12:2  
Luke 12:49-56

### WEEK 4:

Isaiah 58:9b-14  
Hebrews 12:18-29  
Luke 13:10-17

### WEEK 5:

Proverbs 25:6-7a  
Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16  
Luke 14:1, 7-14

**HAPPY Anniversary!**

Todd & Dana Luther	3rd	29
Paxton & Stephanie Holley	4th	24
Kevin & Heather Schiffer	5th	29
Timothy & Sophie Willadsen	7th	32

**Happy Birthday**



- Scottie Williams 8/1
- Chuck Kresol 8/04
- John Shelley 8/5
- Leena Seeram 8/9
- Hank Herppich 8/13
- Gail Gercke 8/16
- Katherine Morrison 8/16
- John Redlitz 8/18
- Lynn Balma 8/20
- Daniel Flint 8/20
- Catherine Lovejoy 8/20
- Sigrid Herppich 8/21
- Kristin Solberg 8/21
- Carla Kresol 8/23
- Scott Smith 8/23
- Lois Anderson 8/25
- Cecilia Moore 8/26
- Lillian Howard 8/29
- Hunter Mizuer 8/29
- Briana Lucas 8/31
- Bernard Vallow 8/31
- Kenneth Feezor 8/23
- Robert Hudson 8/23



## ***A Letter From The President***

BY HELEN HOWARD

Now that July is behind us, with many being away taking well-earned vacations including George and myself taking a trip to Alaska, it is hard to believe that the schools will be returning right around the corner. That means our tutor program will be kicking off a new year in September. We do have a few tutors who will not be returning this year either to health concerns or relocation out of state. This has been a rewarding program that we have seen great progress with the children. So, if you feel a “tug” from the Spirit, we would love to have you join the team. In the past we have had children from kindergarten to high school attend. Which means we can use helping hands for all ages. Please reach out to me anytime for more information. The summer has also been busy for our Preschool adding three new teachers and a classroom for a third VPK class while we are hoping to expand the 2’s and 3’s classes. Spread the word we have room for more kiddos and would love to add them to our Advent Preschool family. I am also sure Lighthouse has openings for more children of all ages also.

Although we had to put the kitchen remodel on hold at this time, you will see more work going on around our campus. Please consider any extras you may have to give for the capital campaign to help fund the resurfacing and striping of the parking lot and towards the new roof will be in need.

Do you have a function in the future or know of someone who does and is need of a facility to house it? We are open to taking reservations to book it. We have the best price in town for a large space that includes a full kitchen. Please share with your friends, family, and acquaintances. Just have them call the office for availability.

We are also looking to kick off a new year in expanding our youth program and activities. Keep watch for a meeting announcement.

But most of all, keep praying God guides us in growing our church family, for many hands make for light work. Keep listening for his call for you to use your gifts to step up where there is a need. The blessings are many and the work is light when we do what he wants us to do.

In His service,  
Helen Howard

### ***A prayer from the President***

Lord, help us to earnestly look for your Kingdom today. Open our eyes to see what you see. Open our ears to hear what you hear. Open our hearts to care about what you care about. Do not let us miss what you are doing in the world around us. Amen.



hello  
AUGUST

**Advent  
Lutheran  
Preschool**  
Preschool Hours  
Mon.-Fri. 9:00am - 12:00pm

## August 2025 Preschool News

Summer vacation is nearly over, and we are gearing up for another faith filled and exciting school year. Teachers will return on August 11<sup>th</sup> with First Aid and CPR training on August 12<sup>th</sup>. Our Preschool will host an Open House for its new and returning students to meet their teachers on Thursday, August 14<sup>th</sup> and we are looking forward to another successful and exciting year which will kick off on Friday, August 15<sup>th</sup>.

This summer we started preparing our preschool for growth and creating new classrooms for teaching Gods' children. **Exciting News:** Our Early Two's and Older Two's classes are both full and have two new staff members, Ella Howard and Holly Walden. We opened a third VPK class with just a couple of spots open and are led by Traci Green, Amanda Dodds and Dawn Fulbright. We have three spaces in our three-year-old class with Ms. Kimberly Lee. We have a wonderful Resource teacher, Melissa Elsberry. who has taken on the challenge of Music, Art, Bible, Library and Science. Ms. Irene has agreed to return for "Cooking with Ms. Irene" twice a month, and Coach Sally with Jump and Learn twice a month. Pam Penn is returning to be a huge help as a class assistant, and permanent substitute. If you or someone you know is interested in our program, **please contact Martha Morrow at 904-644-7416 or [preschool@adventop.org](mailto:preschool@adventop.org) .**

Once again, funds are needed to help send children to school who might not otherwise be able to attend. Through your generosity, our sponsorship program has helped quite a few families who faced financial hardships this last year. Thank you! If you would like to contribute, please donate to the Preschool Fund.

We also updated our Amazon wish list- if you are interested in purchasing items to help our classrooms. This will be in the church office on August 17<sup>th</sup>. All our teachers spend quite a bit of their own money to outfit their rooms, so any contribution is A HUGE blessing. If you would like to help, visit our Amazon wish list or, drop off a Walmart, Dollar Tree, Michaels, or Target gift card, and we can share the love at our "Back To School" meeting on August 11<sup>th</sup>.

We would like to thank the Quilters for their continued support in making security covers for our small windows on the doors, Camden Flint for cleaning all our carpets, Jim Smith for painting the "Big Room", and other classroom touch ups, along with the property board for helping with everything else, including our WORK DAY ON AUGUST 9<sup>th</sup> to spread mulch and get the playground ready for school.

The Preschool Staff would like to thank the congregation for your generosity and support.

We appreciate all you do.

**Martha Morrow**



# **FIRST COMMUNION CLASSES**

**9/21/2025-9/28/2025**

**9:15AM**

**Please sign up with  
Lindsey Kriekel at  
315-681-0088  
or the Front Office.**

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

# Stephen MINISTRY

[www.stephenministries.org](http://www.stephenministries.org)

Stephen Ministry is a worldwide ministry with roots in St. Louis. It was started in 1975 by Rev. Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D., a pastor and clinical psychologist, who at the time was pastor of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. Fresh out of seminary, Dr. Haugk quickly discovered there were many more needs for care than he alone could meet. He drew on his background in theology and psychology and trained nine parishioners to assist in pastoral care. It was so successful that other churches became interested, and the Stephen Ministries organization was founded. Today, more than 11,000 congregations from 160 denominations are involved. Most are in the United States and Canada, but there are also Stephen Ministry churches in 24 other countries.

The people cared for by Stephen Ministers benefit greatly. They are receiving support and encouragement in their time of need. Stephen Ministers benefit tremendously too. "I've really grown spiritually and deepened my prayer life since I became a Stephen Minister," said a Stephen Minister in Illinois. "This has helped me to be a better mentor to the men I minister to. I became a Stephen Minister to help someone else, but I found that I have grown a lot too," said another Stephen Minister. "It's an amazing experience to see God work through you to change the life of another person." Pastors recognize the positive effect Stephen Ministry has on the church's ability to reach out into the community. As one Pastor stated: "Stephen Ministry is a very concrete way that we share the love and hope of Jesus Christ as we fulfill our vision."

Soon there will be the recruitment of additional Stephen Ministers at Advent. This is an opportunity for you to join the team and experience exceptional training covering topics such as; caring ministry, assertive relating, spiritual gifts discovery, grief support, and spiritual growth. Use what you learn to improve your ability to relate to and care for others, grow in faith, and journey through life crises.

You are invited to join our Stephen Ministry Team. Do you have the desire to help another person struggling with a life crisis and unsure how to help? The Stephen Ministry training equips you. Stephen Ministers know that God is the *cure* giver; we are the *care* givers, bringing God's love to those suffering and fostering hope. Contact the church office or our Stephen Leader, Ruth Johansen (904-214-5120), she will welcome your call. Please feel free to speak with Ruth after church service.

# Community Care Team

*“As you did to the least of these you did so to me.”*

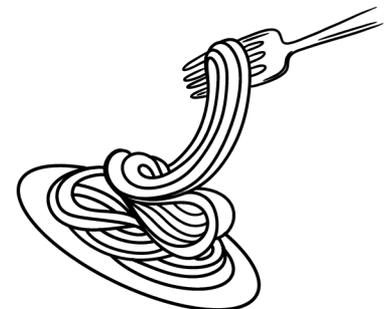
Matthew 25:40



Greetings Advent and many thanks. You continue to follow the words of Jesus. Your continued support of Advent Groceries and Advent Showers has been wonderful. Since Clay County opted out of the summer lunch program, the 400 homeless children in our county really need the support. Working in collaboration with the Clay County food pantry is what makes all this work. Team Work.

Special welcome To Sharon Fischl, new church member and new member of our Team. Sharon will be bringing donated groceries weekly to the food pantry to help keep their shelves full. We are also researching other feeding programs in the county. One church in Middleburg fed over 250 folks in July with over 178 senior citizens. The need is great. Mark your calendars for the next Care Team Event...the Community Spaghetti Dinner on September 19<sup>th</sup>, rumor has it there will be a Surprise Special Guest providing entertainment. You won't want to miss it.

**COMMUNITY SPAGHETTI  
DINNER  
September 19<sup>th</sup> 5-7pm**



# STEWARDSHIP

## What is Church Stewardship?

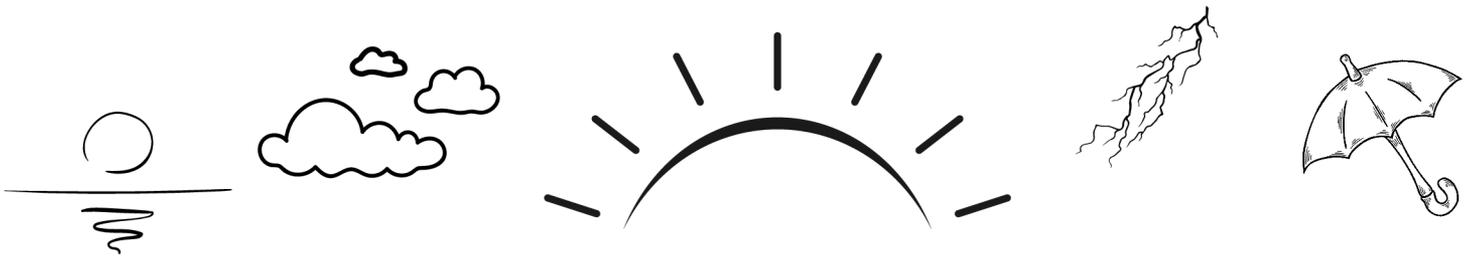


Simply put, stewardship is the responsible management of the resources God has provided (whether managing the church budget, our volunteers, or the mission and vision of our local body). This goes deeper than helping the church make more money or managing finances according to church financial best practices. We are called to use our time, talents, and treasure in a way that honors God and furthers His kingdom.

Church stewardship is not a new term. There were stewards in the bible. We can look back to Genesis to see an example of stewardship. Joseph was the steward for Potiphar. We see this in Genesis 39:4. Joseph was a servant and an overseer, put in charge of all that Potiphar owned.

Church stewardship is not a “nice to have” for churches... Scripture addresses church stewardship many times. The very first command Adam and Eve received in the garden was about stewardship. “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26-28)

Note that God didn't just give all of creation to mankind and say, “Here, it's yours now, I don't want it.” All of creation still belongs to God, everything is His. God simply gave us authority to care for it. He entrusted it to us to look after it. He wants us to be faithful stewards of everything on the earth and take care of it until He returns. (Luke 19:12-13).



**The Florida-Bahamas Synod** have given us tips to help us **best** prepare for this hurricane season.

**Important documents to prepare in case of a hurricane:**

**1. Proof of Identity and Residency:** Government-issued photo IDs, Driver's licenses, passports, or state-issued IDs.

**Proof of residency:** Utility bills, bank statements, lease agreements, or rent receipts.

**2. Insurance Information:** Insurance policies: Homeowners, renters, flood, and vehicle insurance policies. Insurance company contact information: Agent and agency names, policy numbers, and phone numbers to report claims. ***\*\*Have these already saved in your phone along with a picture of your policy's declaration page***

**3. Financial and Legal Documents:** Bank statements/financial accounts. **Credit card information:** Account numbers, balances, and contact details. **Mortgage and loan documents:** Mortgage statements, loan papers, and related contact information. **Deeds and titles. Wills and other legal documents:** Wills, power of attorney, living wills, and healthcare directives.

**4. Medical and Health Information:** **Health insurance or Medicare cards. Medical information:** *List of medications, health conditions, allergies, and immunization records.* • **Contact information for medical professionals: Doctors, specialists, and hospitals.**

**5. Documentation of Property and Valuables:** **Home inventory:** Detailed list of possessions with purchase dates and serial numbers, and receipts for high-value items. **Photos and videos:** Document the condition of your home and belongings *before and after* the storm for insurance claims. **Receipts for repairs:** *Keep receipts for any temporary repairs made to prevent further damage.*

**6. Other Important Information:** **Emergency contacts:** Phone numbers and email addresses of family, friends, and other important contacts. **Evacuation plan:** Written plan of evacuation routes and meeting locations. **Pet information:** Vaccination records, veterinary contact information, and recent photos of pets. **Safeguarding Your Documents** using digital storage. Scan or take photos of important documents and store them in a secure online cloud service. **Physical copies:** Store physical copies of critical documents in a fireproof and waterproof box or safe. **Portable emergency kit:** Include copies of your most important documents in a "gobag" for easy access during evacuation.

***By taking these steps to prepare your essential paperwork before a hurricane, you can be better equipped to navigate the recovery process and access the assistance you may need after the storm.***

# What is LDR?

## Lutheran Disaster Relief

[www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)

Lutheran Disaster Response collaborates with other disaster response organizations and religious entities in the United States and around the world. This enables the greatest stewardship of resources and maximum impact of response.

Lutheran Disaster Response strives to help the church continue to be church in the midst of disaster – following Christ's call to share hope and healing with our neighbor in need.

Some key areas of work include:

- Providing emotional and spiritual care for people who have been affected by a disaster and for leaders who respond to a disaster
- Coordinating volunteers through our local affiliates
- Assisting refugees in a holistic way by meeting the varied needs of the community
- Promoting disaster risk-reduction by helping communities build their assets thereby reducing the effects of likely disasters
- Providing long-term recovery efforts by addressing the unmet needs months or even years after a disaster strikes

Your gifts make it possible for this church to provide fast and effective support to communities in need, whenever and wherever a disaster may strike. You may choose to designate your gift to a specific disaster or give where the need is greatest; make your choice known at the time of your donation. If you decide to give to a specific disaster, your gift will be used 100 percent for that disaster unless more funds are received than what is needed to fully fund a specific disaster response. If this happens, your gift will be used to address a similar effort.

**WAYS/HOW TO give:** *Online giving* is simple and secure. Give a monthly gift, become a monthly partner and give automatic, monthly gifts in support of Lutheran Disaster Response. Visit the Monthly Partners page, click "I would like to choose an area for this gift to support" and select "Lutheran Disaster Response."

**Mail your donation:** Make checks payable to Lutheran Disaster Response (if designated to a specific disaster, please indicate in the memo line:

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**ELCA Gift Processing Center**

**P.O. Box 1809**

**Merrifield, VA 22116-8009**

**Give by phone:** Call 800-638-3522 to make a donation with a credit card. Operators are ready to assist you Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Central Time.

**Give through your congregation:** Make checks payable to your congregation indicating Lutheran Disaster Response (if designated to a specific disaster, please indicate in the memo line) and place your gift in the offering plate.

**Leave a legacy:** The ELCA Foundation has a nationwide network of professional gift planning staff that can help you explore a variety of possibilities for making a significant gift to Lutheran Disaster Response and fulfill your legacy goals at the same time. Find the regional gift planner nearest you, or call the ELCA Foundation at **800-638-3522** for more information.



Advent Lutheran Church  
A Stephen Ministry Congregation  
2156 Loch Rane Blvd.  
Orange Park, FL 32073

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