



January  
2026

# The Candle

## Pastor's Message

I've shared in sermons and in past newsletters that one of my favorite movie quotes of all time is "What we have here....is a failure to communicate" from Cool Hand Luke.

A new year always invites us to pause, reflect, and consider where God might be leading us next. One of my commitments moving forward is a renewed focus on how we communicate—as a congregation and as sisters and brothers in Christ.

The past few years have changed the way we live, work, and connect with one another. We learned how important communication really is—especially when we couldn't always be together in the same space. And we also learned how easily misunderstandings can happen when messages are missed, screens replace conversations, or information comes at us from too many directions at once.

Most challenges in relationships don't begin with bad intentions. They often begin with crossed signals: something said but heard differently, something shared but never received, or something assumed rather than clarified. When communication breaks down, people can feel left out, overlooked, or disconnected—even in a faith community that cares deeply for one another.

In this season of the church's life, communication is no longer limited to Sunday announcements or printed newsletters. Today we share information in many ways: through our website ([adventmentor.org](http://adventmentor.org)), email, social media, livestreams, and digital updates—alongside more traditional forms of communication. Each method has strengths, and each requires attention from both the sender and the receiver.

That's why communication is a shared ministry. We are committed to being clear, timely, and consistent—but we also ask for your partnership. Please make sure the church office has your current contact information, and let us know how you prefer to receive updates. Some prefer email. Others appreciate printed mail or text reminders. There is no "one-size-fits-all," and your preferences matter.

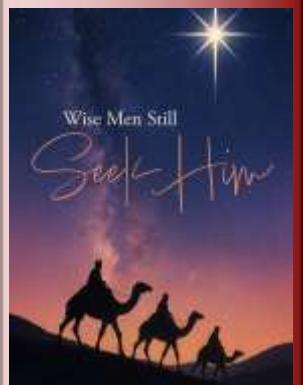
*Pastor's message continued on page 5*



Blood Drive  
January 9  
10am-4pm



Annual Meeting  
January 25  
11am



"Arise, shine; for  
your light has  
come, and the glory  
of the Lord has  
risen upon you"

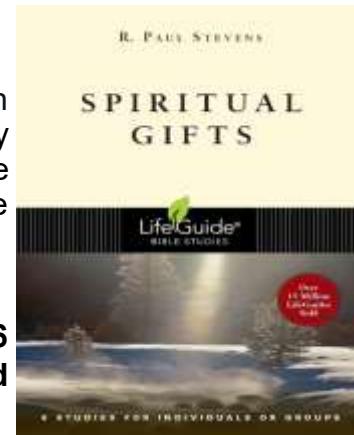
*Isaiah 60:1-6.*

## Sunday School Adult Sunday School Begins a New Study

You are unique. You have been created and invited by God to participate in his kingdom-work. Yet, you may have also experienced feelings of uncertainty about how to serve God, about what gifts you must use, and about God's purpose for your life. This eight-session LifeGuide Bible Study entitled "**Spiritual Gifts**" by R. Paul Stevens helps you to recognize your spiritual gifts and the gifts of others. The author leads you to consider how to practically use these gifts to glorify God in your relationships, your work, and your world.

**Spiritual Gifts** features easy to understand chapters which accompany study questions at the end of each section. The study guide is available through Amazon.com for \$7.90 in the paperback edition (ISBN 9780830830626) and \$7.50 in the Kindle edition.

**This 8-session study will begin on Sunday, January 4, 2026 at 10:15am in hybrid format. This means it will be conducted in-person and on zoom for people requiring remote access.**



If you are interested in joining us, please call/text Tim Krueger at (440) 391-0369 so that you can be placed on our email list (which is how the zoom information is sent out). You can email Tim at: [LTCTKRUE@aol.com](mailto:LTCTKRUE@aol.com).

### Prayer Chain

Do you wish to feel strengthened and fulfilled by offering your time to help others? Nothing could be more gratifying than lifting someone up in prayer in their time of need.

Please contact Sue Keeley @ 440.862.2790/440.257.5565 or by e-mail at [suesworkout@gmail.com](mailto:suesworkout@gmail.com)/[adventmentoroffice@gmail.com](mailto:adventmentoroffice@gmail.com) if you would like to become part of the prayer chain ministry, have a prayer request, or if you have any questions. Prayer is Powerful!!

### Pastor Prayer Intercessors

**January 1-9**  
**January 10-16**  
**January 17-23**  
**January 24-30**  
**January 31-Feb 6**

**Sue Keeley, Fernanda Alves**  
**Jen Egner, Sandy Kehler**  
**Lida Mackey, Deb Laukiavich**  
**Barb Zahn, Bev McArthur**  
**Doreen Mattson, Elizabeth Chuba**



“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5: 17



## Points from your Parish Nurse

- ♥ Happy New Year, Advent Family! I hope you had a blessed Christmas and look forward to a healthy and joy-filled new year. January is a time for new beginnings. Wipe the slate clean and start anew. If you must look back and it saddens you, remember our Lord's promise to make all things new. Emmanuel has come! HE is with us!!
- ♥ Caregivers Support Group will meet on the second Thursday of each month at 1pm. We will meet at Advent on Thursday, January 8. If you are a caregiver or know someone who is, please invite them to join us. The meetings are informal and all information shared is kept confidential.
- ♥ Blood Pressure screenings will be held on Saturday, January 17 after the 4pm service by Mary Jo Jones and Sunday, January 18 at 10am in the Parish Nurse office. Hope to see you there.
- ♥ Advent has been providing meals for Project Hope's Families Moving Forward on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month. There are typically 8-12 persons including children in need. The calendar for January and February is up on the bulletin board waiting for volunteers. Meals are to be dropped off at 5pm at Door #4 in the back of the building. Address is 25 Freedom Rd., Painesville, OH 44077. Call or email me with any questions.
- ♥ Care Team Ministry meets quarterly on the first Saturday of the month. Our next meeting will be held on March 7 at 10am. We are always looking for volunteers. Please join us to learn how you can serve on this ministry.
- ♥ Always remember, "When in doubt, Point to the Cross!"

Your Servant in Christ,  
*Christine Noble, Parish Nurse*



## Care Team



Dec 21-Jan 3

Mary Jo Jones, Barbara Louis,

Rose Schrum

Jan 4-17

Donna Conklin, Lee Sundblom,  
Sandy Kehler, Deb Cyrus-Lutz

Jan 18-31

Denise Janosko, Bev McArthur,  
Nancy Marshaus

### Upcoming Blood Drive

Friday, January 9, 2026  
10am - 4pm

call 1.800.RED.CROSS

~or~ [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org)  
Key word: Advent



"For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment,  
You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14

Health & Wellness

# Council Minutes - November

**In Attendance:** Pastor Steve, Bob McClanahan, Andy DiLiello, Carla Colo, Christine Noble, Joan Hamm, Bob Adkins, Dave Mattson, Leesa Mecozzi, Rob Hilston

**Excused:**

**Call to Order:** 7:02pm (via zoom)

**Approval of October Council Minutes:** Motion was made, seconded, and approved.

## **Pastor's Report: verbal**

Lots going on the past few weeks.

With SNAP benefits being cut, there is an increase in need. We have been receiving many donations – both in items donated, as well as monetary donations.

Thanksgiving Eve Worship: Pastor Steve will be out of town. Pastor Rod is leading worship.

*\*\*Motion was made and seconded, and pastor's report was approved.*

## **Treasurer's Report:**

Income below -6.3% (\$15,789.77) and Expenses under budget 1.0% (\$2,793.76).

After 10 months, we are still in a downward trend. Members have cut back on donations, some not giving and some are way behind in their pledge. Times are tough with the economy right now.

Funds down approx. \$50,000.

We received word from our insurance company that they will not cover our roof in its current condition. We need new roof, flashing and soffits. We are getting a quote. This roof need will be added as an emergency addition to the parsonage Fund planning.

*\*\* Motion was made to approve the October Treasurer's report, seconded, and the October report was approved.*

## **Ministry Team Reports Received:** H&W, LBG, Finance and Fellowship (on file)

**Property:** the timer for the front and back entrance lights have been repaired and are now working.

**Outreach:** Food Pantry: there was a large increase in FP attendance during the first week of distribution (50-100%). We may be a "host" location for thanksgiving meals, the Wednesday of Thanksgiving. Pastor getting more info on this from area Lake County clergy. St. Andrew is not receiving the \$8000 grant this year for the pantry, so additional funds will be needed in support. There are 42 pantries in Lake County. Calling 211 (assistance help-line) should be made known to all who are in need. Pantries are asked to please keep them updated with current info (pantry times/days/anything additional).

**Witness:** not meeting this month.

*\*\*Motion was made and seconded, and the ministry reports were approved.*

## **Administration/Housekeeping Items:**

Annual reports will be due by December 1.



## **Old Business:**

**Parsonage Fund Steering Committee Update:** the team decided to postpone the Saturday November 15 workshop that was planned. This will happen after the first of the year. Thank you to the committee for all the hard work being done.

**Cameras/Security System:** is being installed this week. Wires/cables have been run. Possible "live start" on Friday this week, if all work/training is complete. Keys/fobs will need to be distributed to those receiving key fobs. It was decided to order an 8-channel server/base instead of the original 4-channel base. This will allow for additional cameras/upgrading in the future, if the need arises. Bob McClanahan asked about addition costs, per Endowment. Once totals are in, please let Endowment know.

**Election Day:** \$1466 was raised for the Food Pantries. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped that day.

**Council 2026:** 2 council members and 2 leadership positions are needed. Pastor is still working on this and needs to be finalized.

**Stewardship Campaign:** Thank you to Pastor Steve for his sermon series prior to Stewardship weekend. At present, we are 10 pledge cards shy of what we received last year. We are hopeful that more people will turn in pledges. Some members that have pledged have increased their giving for next year.

**Budget Planning Meeting:** November 19 at 7-9pm. Council and ministry team leaders are encouraged to attend. Lots of planning leadership is needed. This is going to be difficult planning for the budget for next year. Bob Adkins noted that the beginning of the planning session documents will show a \$33,000 deficit.

**Christmas Party:** December 14. Thank you to Mike and Carla Colo for hosting. Carla asked for no "hostess gifts" this year, but instead to use any money for food needs/donations.

**Quilt Raffle:** was a huge success, raising \$1040. Half of the money will go to the quilting fund, and the other half will be given to the General Fund.

#### **New business:**

**December Annual Meeting:** December 7 at 10am – immediately following 9am worship. This will be for electing new council members. There may also be a short announcement to the congregation, as prep for the budget for 2026 and where we are financially.

**January Annual Meeting:** January 25. One service that entire weekend. No Saturday service, one joint service on Sunday at 10am, followed by the Annual meeting, then potluck. This will also be RIC weekend.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Motion was made, seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 7.51pm.

#### **Lord's Prayer**

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Keeley, Council Secretary



---

*Pastor's message continued from page 1*

Most importantly, I hope we continue to practice patience and grace with one another when communication falls short—as it inevitably will from time to time. The church is not a perfect system; it is a community of people learning to live in love together.

If you have ideas, suggestions, or concerns about how we communicate as a congregation, please share them. Whether you reach out by phone, email, message, or conversation, I truly want to hear from you.

With gratitude for this community and hope for the year ahead,

**Pastor Steve**

# OK Gang

January will find the OK Gang meeting at Fuji's Buffet and Grill located at 9130 Mentor Ave. in the Mentor Commons (next to Petsmart) on January 19, at 12:45pm.

Because we might have some inclement weather, we thought we would stay in Mentor where we know the streets and the parking lots will be cleared.

Fuji's has a vast buffet featuring not only Chinese dishes but also many American entrees including many of our favorites. So plan on joining us for a fun time with good food and great friends. See you on the 19th of January.

Dear Advent Family,

Thank You for the lovely Celebration of Life, for all the cards, prayers and thoughts, upon the passing of my father.

We are so grateful for the generous luncheon and time to spend with relatives and friends.

We are/were truly blessed by our church family.

Paula & Andy DiLiello,  
for the John & Philomena Mirch Family



## Group Studies

### Men's Studies

- ♦ **Retired Men's Group** meets the first Thursday of every month at 9:30am. If you are a retired man and would like to share your thoughts and discuss a wide variety of subjects, please join us. We would welcome your participation. **\*Note: will meet January 8, not January 1.**



### Women's Studies

- ♦ **Sophia Project:** Meets on the second and fourth Saturday of each month from 10am-11am in the Fellowship Hall. Please join us.
- ♦ **Hope Circle:** Meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 9:30am. All are welcome!



“...but Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.’ Matthew 19:14

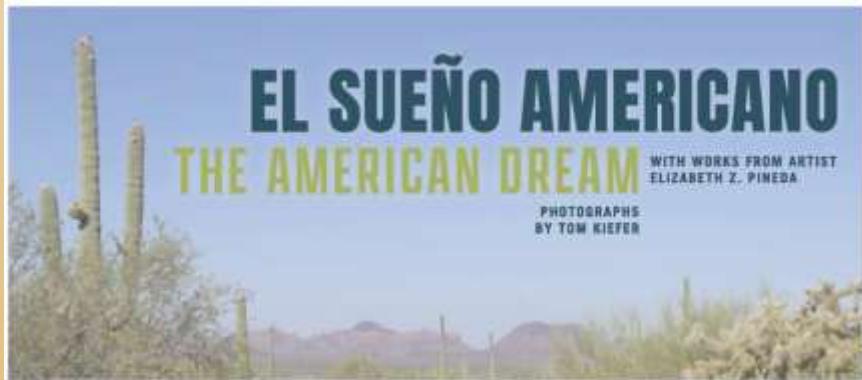


Advent Lutheran  
Church ELCA



The Loved By God committee is organizing a trip to the Maltz Museum to see *El Sueño Americano/The American Dream* on Saturday, February 7, 2026 at 11am. The Maltz Museum is located at 2929 Richmond Rd, Beachwood, OH 44122. To carpool, we will be leaving Advent's parking lot at 10:30am. Tickets are available to be purchased at the museum.

**About the exhibit:** "Photographer Tom Kiefer's *El Sueño Americano/The American Dream* is a traveling exhibition documenting the migrant experience at the U.S./Mexico border. Tom worked as a janitor at a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol facility in southwest Arizona. He photographed the items confiscated from migrants that were deemed 'non-essential' or 'potentially lethal.' Some of the items included shoes, bags, toiletries, food, and water bottles, along with family photos, heirlooms, rosaries, and Bibles. Join us, as we are asked to consider how these objects form an integral part of identity and what is lost when someone is forced to give up those objects in pursuit of the American dream."



#### Cost:

\$12 adults  
\$10 seniors (60+)  
\$10 students (12+)  
\$5 ages 5-11  
free for kids under 4



#### 2026

Leesa Mecozzi, President  
Christine Noble, Vice President

Rob Hilston  
Bob McClanahan  
Dave Mattson  
Carla Colo  
Christine Noble

Andy DiLiello  
Terry Mach  
Leesa Mecozzi

Bob McClanahan, Treasurer  
Sue Keeley, Council Secretary  
Dave Mattson, Assistant Treasurer  
Becky Spudich, Financial Secretary



"...But with God, all things are possible." Matthew 19:26



On January 25th, we will be having the 2nd half of our Annual Meeting. After our business is complete, we will be having an International Potluck meal.

Please bring your favorite international dish. Be adventurous and have fun. God gave us many things, including food and people.

Come join us for a wonderful opportunity of food and fellowship.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

God's blessing,  
*Cherie Moore, Fellowship ministry*

## Community Outreach

**Food Pantry (St. Andrew's)  
Donations:**

**January:  
toothpaste & paper towels**

**Volunteers  
Needed**



## Advent's Little Free Pantry

**Our current needs are: oatmeal,  
anything you'd like to donate**

**There is a collection box outside the  
church office. Thank You!**

Please see the Weekly News sheets each weekend for our most current pantry needs. Thank you for your support and for making a difference in the lives of those we are helping!

"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul." 3 John 2



Join us at the table in January for **Reconciling in Christ Sunday!** It is a time to celebrate and uplift our siblings in the LGBTQIA+ community, our Indigenous siblings, and our siblings of different races, ethnicities, abilities, and religious backgrounds. This year's theme is *Celebrating Diversity as God's Children*. There will be inclusive music, readings, and prayers. All are welcome here!



**Sunday, January 25 at 10am**

**Second-Half Annual Meeting**

Sunday, January 25  
11am



2026 Budget/Ministry Reports

**Council Person of the Day**

<b>January 4</b>	<b>Bob McClanahan</b>
<b>January 11</b>	<b>Dave Mattson</b>
<b>January 18</b>	<b>Christine Noble</b>
<b>January 25</b>	<b>Rob Hilston</b>

**Altar Flowers**

**January**

3/4	Open
10/11	Open
17/18	Open
25	Open



**Note:** You will be billed directly from the florist. We are now using JD Balantine Florist.

**Worship Assistants**  
We need your help!

What a joy and blessing it is to serve the Lord!

**We need ushers, lectors,  
and communion assistants**

**Please see the sign up board in the Narthex or you may call the church office to sign up.**

**Upcoming Communion Bread Bakers**

**January**

**Carla Colo**

**Thank you for your ministry!**

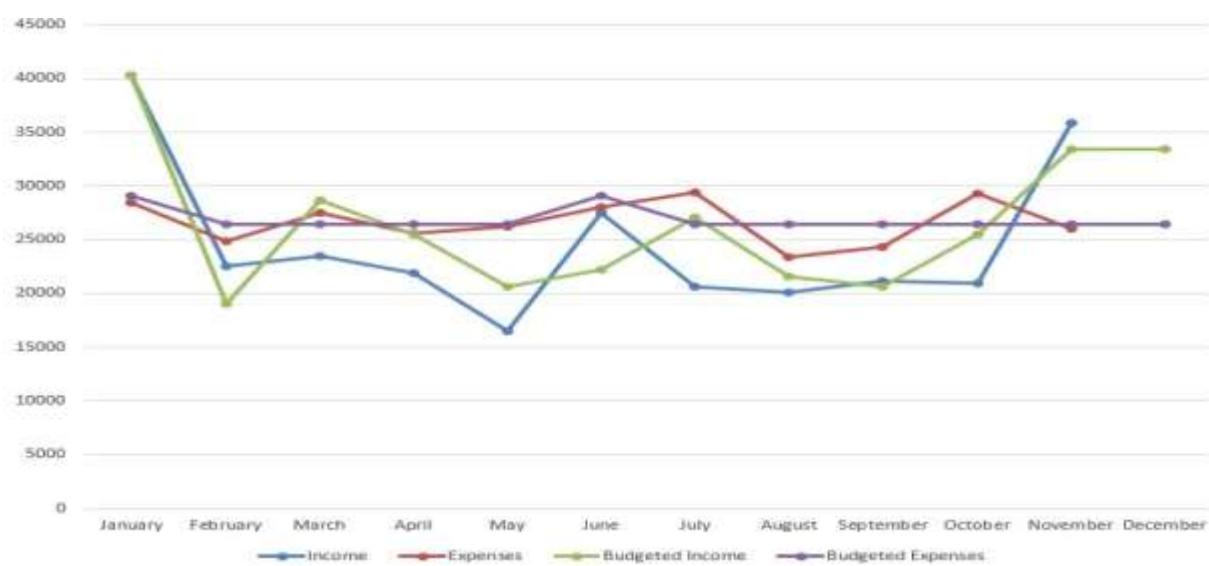


# Finance Update • November 30, 2025

GENERAL FUND	ACTUAL	BUDGET	DIFFERENCE	Year-to-Date...
Balance 1/1/25	\$ 26,472.96	26,472.96		
Income	271,365.83	284,526.00	\$(13,160.17)	We've spent \$21,853.32
Expenditures	293,219.15	295,940.00	2,720.85	more than we've received
<b>Ending Balance November 30, 2025</b>	<b>\$4,619.64</b>	<b>\$15,058.96</b>	<b>\$(10,439.32)</b>	
DESIGNATED/ RESTRICTED FUNDS				
Balance 1/1/25	\$442,480.61			Treasurer's Report with Fund Balances are posted at the end of each month on the council bulletin board outside the church office.
Income	41,299.97			
Expenditures	57,050.59			
<b>Ending Balance November 30, 2025</b>	<b>\$426,729.99</b>			

## Advent 2025 Financial Performance

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Income	40,302	22,554	23,445	21,930	16,522	27,541	20,612	20,143	21,119	20,948	35,899		
Expenses	28,482	24,862	27,458	25,644	26,177	27,995	29,443	23,406	24,330	29,271	25,972		
Project Income	40,302	19,080	28,620	25,440	20,670	22,260	27,030	21,624	20,670	25,440	33,390	33,474	318,000
Projected Expenses	29,125	26,464	26,464	26,464	26,464	29,125	26,464	26,460	26,464	26,464	26,464	26,464	322,886



**Online Giving:** If you would like to support Advent's ministry electronically, scan this QR code to visit our online giving page. Thank You!



## ADVENT'S STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Steven C. Bond	440.710.4757
Office Administrator: Sue Keeley	440.862.2790
Organist: Elizabeth Sumiejski	440.255.5489
Chancel Choir Director: Doreen Mattson	216.389.7611
Praise Team Director: Tracy Ammon	440.749.0690

## VOLUNTEER CONTACTS

### Lay Assistants

Doreen Mattson ..... 216.389.7611

### Worship Assistants

Church office ..... 257.5565

### Worship Tech

Greg Preske ..... 216.317.8148

### Altar Guild Chairperson

Becky Young ..... 440.221.4531

### Sunday School

Beth Hamilton ..... 669.1902

### Service Outreach

#### Food Pantry

Dave Mattson ..... 440.897.5466

### Youth & Family Ministry

Beth Hamilton ..... 669.1902

### Prayer Ministry

- **Prayer Vigil**

Sue Keeley ..... 862.2790

- **Prayer Chain**

Sue Keeley ..... 862.2790

- **Healing Touch**

Christine Noble ..... 346.3120

### Meals for Members

Barb Caspell ..... 440.840.5393

Barb Louis ..... 352.7055

### Youth

### Memorial Gifts

Barb Zahn ..... 440.223.2852

## Funeral Luncheons

Christine Noble ..... 346.3120

Paula DiLiello ..... 290.7506

## Blood Drives

Church office ..... 257.5565

## Webmaster

Church Office ..... 257.5565

## Liturgical Arts

Fawn Patrick ..... 357.7898

## Quilting

Betty Steimle ..... 440.534.1174

## CHURCH COUNCIL

Pr. Steve Bond ..... 710.4757

Rob Hilston, President ..... 207.632.5949

Joan Hamm, Vice President ..... 440.476.1494

Carla Colo ..... 216.970.0219

Leesa Mecozzi ..... 440.231.1930

Andy DiLiello ..... 440.339.1069

Bob Adkins ..... 832.971.6414

Bob McClanhan ..... 440.867.3663

Christine Noble ..... 440.346.3120

Dave Mattson ..... 440.897.5466

## Council Secretary

Sue Keeley ..... 440.862.2790

## Treasurer

Bob Adkins ..... 832.971.6414

## Financial Secretary

Becky Spudich ..... 440.487.7897

## Asst. Treasurer

Dave Mattson ..... 440.897.5466

## MUTUAL MINISTRY

Deb Laukiavich ..... 725.4929

Cathy Doering ..... 379.7338

Jenny Helland ..... 974.1776

**Deadline Reminder:**

**Newsletter information:**

**due by the 15th of the month**



**To submit items to *The Candle*,  
contact: Sue Keeley - Office Administrator at: 440.257.5565  
You may also e-mail your information to:  
adventmentoroffice@gmail.com**

ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH  
7985 MUNSON ROAD  
MENTOR, OHIO 44060-3703

Dated Material - December 22, 2025

Smile! Know that God Loves  
You!



**ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Worship Schedule**

- ♦ Saturday's @4:00pm
- Sunday's @9:00am • Sunday's @11:30am
- ♦ Youth Sunday School • Sunday's • 10:15am
- ♦ Adult Sunday School • Sunday's • 10:15am

**ON THE WEB:** [adventmentor.org](http://adventmentor.org)  
**E-mail:** [adventmentoroffice@gmail.com](mailto:adventmentoroffice@gmail.com)  
**Pr. Steve Bond:** [pastorstevebond@aol.com](mailto:pastorstevebond@aol.com)  
**Christine Noble:** [adventparishnurse@gmail.com](mailto:adventparishnurse@gmail.com)



Rev. Steven C. Bond, Pastor  
7985 Munson Road, Mentor OH 44060-3703  
• 440.257.5565

**Advent Welcomes You!**

**Welcome!** With delight, we greet all who come to worship. You are sincerely welcomed and invited to be a regular worshipper here in God's house. If you are looking for a church home, you will find a ready welcome here at Advent Lutheran Church.

Welcome Friends



**Advent's Purpose Statement:** *"Loved by God, we share Christ's love with ALL"*