

**Advent Lutheran Church**  
Melbourne, Florida

History 1982-2013

# Advent Lutheran Church History

In 1977, the American Lutheran Church through its Regional Director of Outreach, the Rev. Fred Moore, purchased 3.5 acres of the Suntree Planned Unit Development (PUD) for a Lutheran ministry in this newly developing community of North Melbourne, Florida for \$80,000.00.

## 1982

### THE REV. JACOB E. KNOEDLER WAS THE FOUNDING AND FIRST PASTOR

In 1982, the Rev. Dr. David Wolber, Bishop of the Southeastern District of the A.L.C. extended a *“Letter of Call”* to the Rev. Jacob E. Knoedler to be the Founding Pastor of the *“Mission at Suntree.”* Jake and his wife, Dinah, established their residence at 712 Medinah Road, Suntree. Pastor Knoedler gathered 16 interested people on July 25 at their temporary location at the Boyd-Scarp Realty office and selected **the title “Advent Lutheran Church”** and **the logo of a burning sun against a blue sky** to depict **the Advent Theme of Jesus’ first and second coming.** They selected **a basic Biblical Passage, Malachi 4:2, “But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings”** and **a Motto, “Live Love Everyday”** which summarizes what Jesus lived and taught his disciples. On August 1, ten people attended the first Sunday School at 9:00 a.m., followed by the first Worship Service at 10:15 a.m. attended by 19 adults and 5 youth. The first Advent Youth meeting was that evening at 7:00 p.m. with five youth attending. On Sunday, August 8, approximately 50 people from the community and local Lutheran Churches attended *“The Dedication of Advent’s property and newly erected sign”*. On October 4, an Organizational Task Force was formed to prepare for Advent’s Organization at Suntree Country Club on December 11 and 12 at which time we passed a resolution to organize with 48 baptized members, of which 34 are confirmed; adopted our constitution, elected our first Church Council with Mr. Ray Alfred as Chairman, passed a resolution to incorporate, and called and installed Rev. Jacob Knoedler as the first pastor. Advent’s 1982 receipts were \$30,648.00 of which \$26,075.00 came to us as A.L.C. Mission Support. Our Benevolence to the A.L.C. was \$282.00 Average attendance was 27. We were off to a slow and yet good start in the small and growing community of Suntree.

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## 1983

In 1983, Advent congregation continued to meet in the Real Estate office with Ray Alfred as chairman and Jake Knoedler as Pastor. Average attendance increased to 42, which led to two services: 8:00 and 10:30. We held our first Lenten Services on Wednesday evenings under the theme *“God Ministers to Us, So We Can Minister To Others.”* We held our first Passover Meal Lord’s Supper at the Knoedler’s residence with 43 people attending. We joined the Methodists for our first Easter Sunrise Service at 6:00 a.m. at the Suntree Country Club. The service was momentarily interrupted when the automatic sprinkling system came on. Harry Cannon Jr, David Bartz, and Marjorie Stephenson were our delegates to the A.L.C. Southeast District Convention in Atlanta where Advent was officially recognized as a congregation. Advent applied for and received its IRS Employment Identification Number 59-2256683 for government and business purposes. The A.L.C. Stewardship Counselor Program resulted in 19 families committed to \$13,546.00 for the General fund and \$11,466.00 for the Building Fund. A Building Task Force was organized, and Suntree Architectural Committee approved our Master Building Plan. A loan of \$335,000.00 was available from the A.L.C. and Vislay, Cantelou and Herrera Architectural Firm was hired. Advent organized its first Softball Team and successfully challenged several local Lutheran congregations. We held our first Vacation Bible School in cooperation with Suntree United Methodist Church at the Wildlife Nature Center on Wickham Road since neither of us had church buildings. Advent participated in the Joint Reformation Hymnfest and Festival Vespers with other Space Coast Conference and Missouri Synod Lutheran Churches. Over 200 people attended the Christmas Eve Service held jointly with Suntree United Methodist Church at the Suntree Country Club. Our 1983 budget was \$43,000.00 of which we received \$28,000.00 as Partnership Funds from the A.L.C. Benevolence increased to \$1,525.00. Advent had grown to 75 baptized members of which 54 were confirmed from 33 families. The average attendance increased to 42 per Sunday.

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## 1984

In 1984 Advent Congregation moved to a large construction trailer on our site at 7550 N. Wickham Road as we began to build our worship center. We wanted the community to become acquainted with our site. The congregation grew to 45 families of 101 baptized members of which 73 were confirmed. Attendance increased to an average of 58 per Sunday, and we continued our schedule of 8:00 am Early Worship, 9:15 am Sunday School, and 10:30 am Late Worship. At its first Annual Congregational Meeting on February 2<sup>nd</sup> the congregation applied for a \$335,000.00 loan from the A.L.C. to build our first unit. Officers were Paul Nemitz, President, Carol Tangen, Secretary, and Frances Keefe, Treasurer. The Building Committee became very active under the direction of Harlan and Audrey Nassen. A Ground-Breaking Ceremony was held on March 20<sup>th</sup> with over 100 people attending from Advent, Space Coast Conference Lutheran Churches, and interested persons from the community including Mr. Joe Wickham, the Brevard County Supervisor. The Boyd-Scarp Construction Company was hired as well as the Architectural Firm of Vislay, Cantelou and Herrera. Thursday Evening Lenten Services were held followed by choir practice led by Marjorie Stephenson. The Advent Women began blanket quilting for Lutheran World Relief. Pastor Knoedler held instruction classes for new members and Confirmation Classes. The Altar Guild and Ushers Club were formed and developed. "The Advent Advocate" became the title of our monthly newsletter. Pastor Jacob Knoedler celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination at the home of Bob and Joyce Twiggs. He was thrown into their swimming pool while still wearing his robe. This became a feature article for "Florida Today" newspaper and attracted some new members. Our first Church Picnic and Rally Day for Sunday School was held on September 9<sup>th</sup> at Paradise Beach along the Atlantic Ocean. Advent became a recipient of a grant of \$15,000.00 from the "Mission Partners Program" of the American Lutheran Church. Our land at 7550 North Wickham Road was cleared for construction in September. Our Advent Women held a Tupperware Part at Mary Ellen Fielder's home to raise money for items in our new kitchen. Pastor Knoedler began the "Bethel Bible Series" in September with 20 adults doing an intense study of the whole Bible. Dick Vogel volunteered to put on computer all expenses for our new building so that there would be no liens against our property when the building is finished. Sue Cannon became our representative to the All Lutheran Social Ministry Conference to propose ideas for Advent to become socially involved. We began advertising "Lutheran Vespers" on WCIF-FM for the sick and shut-ins. Our Advent Sunday School children presented our first Children's Christmas Program entitled "The Christmas Tree." Total receipts for 1984 were \$75,930.00 of which \$32,000.00 were A.L.C. Partnership Funds. Our A.L.C. Benevolence was \$2,397.00 plus \$941.00 for Mission Partners.

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## 1985

In 1985, all of our activities and ministries continued and expanded. The Building Committee pushed the builder so that on Sunday, October 13 we finally dedicated our 3,900 square foot first unit. It contained a worship center, Sunday School classrooms, offices, kitchen, sacristy, and rest rooms. It was designed so that future expansion could easily be achieved by flip flopping the entire unit so that it would provide a large fellowship and educational unit thus allowing the congregation to focus on a separate large worship building in the future. Our Advent women held a “Kitchen Shower” for the church to provide many items for our kitchen including chinaware and silverware. Plans were made for a Weekday Preschool. With Dr. Steve Black as our organist the Choir presented its first Christmas Cantata, “*Child Jesus*”. With a budget of over \$103,000.00, the congregation raised all of it except \$37,000.00 from A.L.C. Partnership funds. A separate Building Fund was established to enable the congregation to focus on mortgage payments of \$35,656.00 per year. In addition, the congregation contributed almost \$17,000.00 to the Gifts and memorials Fund for furnishings (altar, pulpit, baptismal font, etc). A.L.C. Benevolence was reduced to \$916,00, but our local benevolence to needy families expanded through our Serving Ministry. We grew to 112 Baptized Members of which 84 were confirmed of 52 families. Average attendance increased to 75 per Sunday.

## 1986

With our building completed the previous year, Advent Congregation could now focus on ministry. Under the leadership of Harlan Nassen as president, our weekday Preschool was begun with Paula Stewart as director/Teacher. Folding partitions were added to our Sunday School/Preschool area. An outdoor play gym was built which announced to the community that we were open to ministering to children of our congregation but also of the community. Dr. James Dobson’s Series, “*Turn Your Heart Toward God*” interested many Suntime community people. Worship services were enhanced in our new worship center and by the addition of our first Choir Director, Larry Lafferty. Our worship center could be converted into a Fellowship hall which enabled us to hold many fellowship events to get better acquainted and to invite the community: Valentines Dinner, St Patrick’s Dinner, Mother-Daughter Banquet, Father-Son Banquet, Ice Cream Social, and Christmas Bazaar. A Fellowship Table after worship services became a weekly meeting time for our members and guests. We were able to expand our Lenten events to include weekly Wednesday evening services around the theme, “*Signs of God’s Gracious Love.*” The Passover Meal/Lord’s Supper was done in a banquet style and became an annual

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event to which many visitors were brought. Good Friday and Easter Services were enhanced; we hosted the Community Easter Sunrise Service. A sound system was installed by our Advent Men. The Space Coast Conference of the American Lutheran Church Women held their spring convention at Advent with the theme, "Rape and Sexual Assault." Three of our Advent Youth went to Lutherock Camp, North Carolina with Pastor Knoedler. A Young Couples Club was started in the home of Dr. Steve and Kelly Black. Advent grew to 70 families with 144 Baptized Members of which 115 were confirmed. Average attendance increased to 86. A.L.C. Benevolence increase to \$3,232.00. Our General Fund was \$115,442.00 of which \$39,000.00 came from A.L.C. Mission Support. In addition the congregation raised \$20,200.00 toward the Building Fund and Mortgage payments of \$35,656.00

## 1987

We started 1987 off with a Pan-Lutheran Epiphany Service at Melbourne Auditorium on January 11 with Dr. Oswald Hoffman as our speaker. More than 1200 people filled the auditorium to see and hear this reputable speaker of the "*Lutheran Hour*." A joint choir of over 200 people from our Space Coast Lutheran Churches enhanced the worship. Advent led the development of a Space Coast Lutheran Softball League of Men and Women that provided a lot of fellowship between churches. A Lutheran Young Adults Group was formed among our Space Coast Lutheran churches. Additional fellowship events included a Pancake Breakfast, Chili Supper, Church and Sunday School Picnic. The Bazaar was expanded with the understanding that proceeds from the event would go to non-budgeted items (ie: communion rails, kitchen cabinets) in the church and to community charities. The constituting convention of the Florida synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was held in Orlando, Florida, on May 21-24. Donald Adams was elected President of our Church council and Congregation. Annie Lewis was hired as our part-time office secretary. Six of our ELCA Space Coast Lutheran Churches rotated in preaching at our Lenten Services. Nine preschool children were graduated from our Preschool into Kindergartens of surrounding schools. The congregation grew to 87 families of 161 Baptized Members of which 125 were confirmed. Benevolence to the ELCA was increased to \$5,000.00 in a budget of \$106,500.00. The congregation raised \$77,000.00 and assisted by A.L.C. Partnership Support of \$29,500.00. We raised and paid the mortgage payments of \$35,656.00.

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## 1988

Under the leadership of Harlan Nassen as President, Advent had another good year in 1988 growing to 88 families of 206 Baptized Members of which 151 were confirmed. Worship attendance reached an average of 109 per Sunday. We re-wrote our "Mission Statement" which is carried out through all our ministries: *"We are Christ's disciples who are on His mission to proclaim and share Christ's love and life to others."* Our Sunday School and Preschool have grown so a porch was added on the east side to provide additional space. Mrs. Chris Quavillon became our Preschool Director. Our choir and worship have developed and a new Rogers Organ and Kimball Piano were purchased thanks to generous donations by our members. New choir robes were purchased from the proceeds of our Bazaar. A new, lighted sign was purchased and located near Wickham Road to better announce our services, activities, and events to the community. Our ELCA Benevolence was \$4,827.00, but an additional \$1,000.00 was spent on local benevolence. A friend of the congregation installed and donated a sprinkling system for our grounds. A Nursery Attendant was paid on Sunday mornings. The Advent Women revised their constitution and hosted the Space Coast conference Spring Assembly. Toward a budget of \$126,610.00, the congregation raised all but \$27,780.00 of ELCA Partnership Support.

## 1989

A great deal of time and energy were spent in 1989 to write our new constitution in cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Advent grew to 100 families of 237 Baptized Members of which 176 were confirmed. Worship attendance grew to an average of 120 per Sunday that caused parking problems and led to the appointment of a Long Range Planning Committee. Additional risers were added to provide space for a growing choir. The congregation grew in stewardship and became more self-sustaining by raising all the money to make mortgage payments of \$36,656.00. Toward a total budget of \$126,586.00 the congregation raised all but \$19,560.00 of ELCA Partnership money. ELCA Benevolence was \$4,715.00, but Local Benevolence increase to over \$4,000.00 with donations toward Hurricane Hugo Relief and Resurrection Ranch. All of our ministries are working hard and involve a lot of volunteer hours to maintain a well-balanced ministry to carry out our mission.

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## 1990

Under the continued leadership of President Harlan Nassen, Advent Congregation became better organized in 1990. An inventory of all our properties was developed by Harlan for insurance purposes. Guidelines were established for ushers, altar guild, and lay readers. Requisition forms were provided for Church Council Members. The Church Library was established and developed. Harry Cannon was hired as a part-time secretary. A Church Painting Party was held on a Saturday morning and the outside of the whole church was painted by noon because of the large number of volunteers. The Advent Women served us lunch. We all worked hard but had a good time and became better acquainted with many people. A Clown Ministry was started by Don and Kim Gothard to visit area hospitals and put on skits. We hosted the Newberry College Choir which enhanced our worship in April and gave our teenagers the opportunity to get acquainted with one of our church colleges. Advent Evergreen was organized as an opportunity for senior members to get acquainted and have fellowship each month. Because of several break-ins, an alarm system had to be purchased for our building. Advent Men organized the Space Coast Lutheran Golf Tournament to raise money for youth at camp and Resurrection Ranch. Stephanie Mitchell was hired as our Choir Director. Our Sunday School has grown to such an extent that every available space is being used for classes including two in the church and one in the office. A new education building is badly needed. Proceeds from the Annual Bazaar enabled us to purchase a computer to enable us to be better organized for growth and development. We received our last support check from the ELCA, so we are now on our own financially. We donated \$6,856.00 to ELCA Benevolence and \$186.00 for local benevolence. We received only \$15,000.00 from the ELCA Mission Support and the remainder of the \$121,856.00 budget we raised ourselves. We are now a fully developed congregation which is in ministry and mission for our Lord Jesus Christ. We have grown to 114 families of 278 Baptized members of which 212 are Confirmed Members. Our average Sunday Attendance is 155.

## 1991

Advent Lutheran Church proved that it was a mature congregation in 1991 by receiving NO Synod Support and giving beyond our Current Operating Budget of \$131,356.00 that included Building Fund Mortgage Payments of \$35,656.00. This increase enabled us to add staff of Full-time secretary, Harry Cannon, Part-time Choir Director, Stephanie Mitchell, and Part-time Janitors, Luz and Mike Wrend. In addition we raised \$7,270.00 to Florida Synod Benevolence and \$2,636.00 for Local Benevolence. A three-year fund drive entitled "*Build, Grow, and Serve*" laid the solid financial foundation on which to



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build a new Education Building to meet our expanding needs for space. Advent congregation responded with a three-year commitment of \$270,000.00, well beyond the Resident Stewardship Challenge of \$240,00.00 for our Building Fund. This enabled us to enter into contract with Islandia Builders to build our new education building. During this time, the various ministries of Proclaiming, Nurturing, Fellowship, Worshipping, Managing, and Serving were very active so that our facilities were strained to hold all of our activities and events. The congregation grew to 341 Baptized Members of which 260 were Confirmed Members from 150 families. The average weekly attendance increased to 182. We were indeed blessed by the Lord in ministry and growth. This completed an excellent four-year term of office for our President, Harlan Nassen.

## 1992

\$2,200.00 to Christ, the King, Lutheran Church in Sebastian FL, a sister mission congregation.

Mr. John Reynolds was our President in 1992 which was a tremendous year of building and growth to celebrate our **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**. After a ground breaking in January, the chief event of the year was the “Dedication of our New Education Building” on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. followed by an “Open House” for the community to visit us and our facilities. The building offers seven additional classrooms for Sunday School, Preschool, Vacation Bible School, and Adult and Family Classes in the evenings. It also provides a Youth Room for their educational classes, meetings, and activities. The Choir and Music Room provides space for the choir(s) to practice and warm up before singing at services, and provides space for choir robes and music. This new Education Building really provided many opportunities for people of all ages to grow in faith and knowledge. Another large room also provided adequate space for an Infant Nursery. Since this was our Tenth Anniversary, the Fellowship Ministry organized a social event each month culminating in a Christmas Dinner-Dance which enabled our members to grow better acquainted with each other. Advent also grew in its Serving Ministry to others: \$8,200.00 to ELCA Benevolence, \$2,800.00 for Victims of Hurricane Andrew, \$1,310.00 for Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Florida, and \$500.00 for Lutheran Ministries of Florida. Our first Congregational Pictorial Directory occurred during this year and further enabled everyone to be better acquainted. We grew in Stewardship with people fulfilling their pledges to the Building fund and contributing generously to the General Operating Fund in the amount of \$136,855.00. Advent grew in membership to 379 Baptized Members of which 293 were Confirmed Members from 168 families. Our Worshipping Ministry produced wonderful worship services that resulted in an average attendance of 213 per Sunday. It truly was a year of living out our Tenth Anniversary and our theme “*Build, Grow, and Serve.*”

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## 1993

In 1993, our leadership was abruptly changed when Retired General William Glasgow died, but his committees and goals were in place so that when Dennis Knutson assumed the presidential duties the council and congregation proceeded well. We grew to 426 Baptized members of which 322 were Confirmed from 220 Family Units. With a large gift from Bob and Ginny Monjar, we were able to purchase 2 ¾ acres of land adjoining our property to the north. With our average attendance increasing to 220 per Sunday and classrooms bulging, the Church Council established a Long Range Planning Committee chaired by Roger Dobson to make plans for a new and larger Worship Center so that the present one could be used for fellowship. A new staff position was created and Carol Maynard was hired as Administrative Secretary to lighten the administrative load of the pastor. This was accomplished by our Pastoral Assistance Committee headed by Lars Lonnquist. Mr. Harry Cannon was moved to a new position of Parish Worker so that he could help with the Serving Ministry to assist those who come to the church for aid and assistance and also to help Pastor Knoedler in the visitation of the Sick and Shut-Ins at home and at the hospital. This emphasis completed our three year theme: *"Build-Grow-Serve."* With our focus on Serving, our ELCA Benevolence increased to \$11,600.00 and Local Benevolence raised to \$670.00. In addition one of our members, Mr. James DuMond felt called by God to the parish ministry. He entered Lutheran Southern Seminary, and Advent's Congregation made a three year commitment to the Seminary for \$1,500.00 for each year. In this way we were serving the ELCA at large by providing one of our young men for ministry and helping to financially support his education. In 1993, our offerings to the General Fund were \$166,223.00 plus \$78,486.00 to reduce our combined mortgage of \$350,000.00. A new computer was purchased, and the exterior of the church was painted.

## 1994

Dennis Knutson completed his term of office in June and Bob Prais was elected President. The Building Fund was completed with receipts of \$82,452.00 and the General Operating Fund received \$215,880.00. Of that \$12,048.00 was sent to ELCA Florida Synod, \$1,325.00 for Local Benevolence, \$1,079.00 to Resurrection Ranch, \$476.00 for Lutheran Ministries of Florida, \$535.00 for Habitat for Humanity, \$2,303.00 for ELCA World Hunger indicating the congregation's desire to expand its ministry to assist other. A complete set of Bells was donated along with tables, pads, and music stands. The Bell Choir was organized and greatly enhanced our worship services with Gary Hildreth directing. At the Annual Congregational meeting, the congregation approved a new Constitution and Bylaws in line with the ELCA guidelines. The annual financial reports are to be presented at the January meeting and the election of officers and Commission Reports are to be given at the May meeting. The Fellowship Commission saw the need for more social groups in our congregation to enable people to get better

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acquainted. The Evergreens was formed to enable those 40 years of age and over to meet monthly for meals and socialization. The Advent Men's Breakfast and Fellowship met the third Saturday of each month for breakfast, fellowship and devotions. A Junior Youth Group was formed for monthly events for the 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The Advent Christmas Bazaar was expanded under the leadership of Evelyn Welker. A Singles group was begun for Young Adult Singles. Bob and Ginny Monjar made a large gift to the church which enabled us to get a new, larger copier that was capable of copying on both sides without reloading the paper and at a faster speed. The Long Range Planning Committee completed the exchange of land with Southern Bell to enable us to have a more regular plot of land for future development. The Advent Library was established under Jane Eller and Susan Cannon. A Liturgical Dance Group was started and developed by Patty Burke. In addition to Vacation Bible School, a Day Camp was added in the afternoons for grades 1 through 6 and led by Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Florida and our Parish Worker, Harry Cannon. A Shepherding Program was begun and headed by Harry Cannon with lay volunteers as Shepherds to contact up to 12 families to inform them of ministries that are occurring, and to hear any needs or complaints. Gloria Domsch, Commissioner of Evangelism began the use of Attendance Registration Booklets at each row of chairs as a means of tracking the attendance of members and visitors so that evangelism calls could be made. A Staff support Committee was ordered by our new constitution and appointed by our Congregation Council. Under the chairmanship of Shirley King, the Staff support Committee evaluated the performance of the new Parish Worker, Harry Cannon, and Administrative Secretary Carol Maynard, both of which had performed very well. The Staff Support Committee made recommendations and an Action Taken sheet for them. It also recommended an additional staff position of Youth Director as soon as possible. The Long Range Planning Committee planned and executed an All-Day Retreat for the Congregational Council members to introduce the book and concepts of *"Twelve Keys To An Effective Church."* Advent Lutheran Church Men organized and ran the Space Coast Lutheran Golf Tournament, the proceeds of which were to go to the ELCA mission called "Sunrise" at Port St John and the Missouri Synod Mission in Palm Bay. The congregation grew to 443 Baptized members of which 341 were Confirmed from 196 Families. The average worship attendance increased to 229 per Sunday.

## 1995

In 1995, Bob Prais continued as President and the congregation grew to 461 Baptized Members of which 358 were Confirmed coming from 206 Families. We also grew in stewardship under Jim Eller and the total contributions were \$281,253.00 of which \$53,791.00 was for Debt Retirement. The member's three year pledges came to an end and we paid off the Education Building. Our AAL Mortgage was reduced to \$229,990.00. Our Benevolence to the ELCA increased to \$12,480.00 plus \$484.00 to Lutheran Ministries of Florida, and \$1,463.00 to ELCA World Hunger. Local Benevolences included \$560.00 to Resurrection Ranch, \$300.00 to Brevard Shares, \$300.00 to Habitat for Humanity, \$300.00 to Serene Harbor, \$240.00 to Daily Bread, \$1,142.00 to helping various and many families, and \$1,000.00 to Pastor's Discretionary

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Fund to help special needy persons and families. The Congregation Council decided that the profits from our Annual Bazaar would be divided one half to our congregation for non-budgetary items and the other half to help other individuals or organization outside of our congregation. The Long Range Planning Committee continued to study Dr. Callahan's book, "*Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*," and to draw up some prioritized goals for the future. A new sound system was acquired to enhance our worship especially for those who are hard of hearing, but also to enable us to tape our services for the homebound. And with the widening and raising of Wickham Road, a new, bigger and taller, lighted sign was erected for Advent by Rene Malanga and her family in memory of her late husband George Malanga. Our average worship attendance dropped slightly to 225 per Sunday. New robes and table covers were purchased for the Bell Choir.

## 1996

Under our new constitution, Bob Prais continued the first six months and Roger Dobson served the last six months as President of Advent Council and Congregation which saw us grow to 465 Baptized Members of which 364 were Confirmed from 214 Families. A Contemporary Worship Service was added at 9:35 am that moved the early service from 8:30 to 8:15 and the 11:00 service continued at the same time. Tim Liscum was hired as our new Music Director. This Contemporary Service was made possible by the addition of Lisa Hill as our Youth and Family Developer Staff Person and Michelle Moyer, an interested and enthusiastic member. This service attracted new and younger persons and families so that our average weekly attendance increased to 234 per Sunday. Our staff had now increased as follows: Pastor - Jacob Knoedler, Administrative Secretary - Susan Nichols, Parish Worker - Harry Cannon, Youth and Family Developer - Lisa Hill, Preschool Director - Chris Quavillon and her staff of one Teacher and three Aides, two Sunday morning Nursery Attendants, Janitor, Lawn Service, Music Director, and Organist. We upgraded our computer system under the guidance of Jay Zinsser. The Long Range Planning Committee and Building Committee acquired ¼ acre on the East side of our property from Brevard County at no expense to us. The Property Commissioner, Jim Neal, had a busy year replacing the church roof due to hurricane damage and planning for a new sanctuary and additional parking as part of our long range plans for a growing congregation. With the addition of Lisa Hill, as Youth Staff, working with Pat Haniford, Youth Commissioner, our Youth Program expanded. Many more Youth Events were held with greater attendance. Our Sunday morning Fellowship became more organized under Bernadine Blumhagen, enabling our members to get better acquainted and visitors to become better known. Under Linda Mauger-Harnish, our Christian Service Commissioner, our outreach to the community expanded with \$400.00 to fix and paint transitional housing for Domestic Violence

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Victims, \$2,532.00 to build a Lutheran House for Habitat for Humanity under the direction of Don Rydeen, \$1,298.00 to the Space Coast Early Intervention Center, \$400.00 to the Bristol family and their home of handicapped children, \$721.00 to Resurrection Ranch, \$260.00 to Brevard Share, \$376.00 to Daily Bread, and \$600.00 to SHARE. Lois Smedley, a registered nurse, volunteered as our Parish Nurse to assist the pastor with visits to our sick and shut-ins and those in the hospital. In addition we sent \$17,396.00 for ELCA Benevolence. Our total income for 1996 was \$300,422.50 of which \$47,436.00 was for Debt Reduction.

## 1997

Roger Dobson completed his term of office the first six months and Daryl Bishop served as President for the remainder of 1997. The staff remained the same as the previous year. Advent congregation grew to 473 Baptized Members of which 378 were Confirmed Members from 227 families. Our average worship attendance increased to 245 per Sunday with the 9:35 Contemporary Service showing the greatest growth. With the use of memorial Funds, a new Kurzweil 2500 Keyboard was purchased. Tim Liscum played the keyboard both with the Chancel Choir during their Cantatas and with the Praise Singers during the Contemporary Services providing dynamic live music to enhance the service. Our Youth Director, Lisa Hill, led our youth in interpretative dance numbers at several services. The congregation graciously responded to raise funds to replace several air conditioners that made our worship area more comfortable. Our organist for the traditional services, Jeane Reding, became seriously ill and was replaced by Paivi Duke. Our worship services also were further enhanced by the singing of Carpenter Tools International and Dana and Sue Talley. The Advent Lutheran Church Men became fully organized with a constitution and officers. With the leadership of their new chairman, Dennis Knutson, they assumed responsibility for the Space coast Lutheran Golf Tournament with 144 golfers participating. Proceeds went to the "Lutheran House" at Resurrection Ranch to provide more housing. Pastor Knoedler taught the "Bethel Bible Series" to 25 adults, and he served as Spiritual Director to a Women's Via de Cristo weekend. Five of our youth, our Youth Director, and the Pastor attended the ELCA National Youth Convention, "River of Hope," in New Orleans. Advent Lutheran Church, led by the Advent Women, hosted a "Community Corn Roast" for the Suntree Area Churches. Lisa Hill's band and our youth put on a very successful Mardi Gras Party which was well attended by both young and old. The Congregation Council accepted more funds and a proposed drawing and location for a Memorial Garden where members cremains may be placed. Our people contributed very generously during this year for a total of \$328,429.00 of which \$44,390.00 was for reducing our mortgage to \$163,511.00. Once again Advent congregation was generous in its gifts to others: ELCA Synod Benevolence - \$19,223.00, Resurrection Ranch - \$500.00,

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Daily Bread - \$400.00, Habitat for Humanity - \$400.00, Serene Harbor - \$400.00, Sunrise Lutheran Church - \$1,200.00, Seminarian Jim DuMond - \$1,500.00, Haitian Ministry - \$500.00, and over \$1,000.00 in local benevolence to help local people and families. An agreement was made with our neighbor to the west to be able to flow our excess land water to his proposed lake. This is very important to the development of our land for a new larger sanctuary for worship.

## 1998

Daryl Bishop continued as Advent's Council President in 1998 and consented to an additional year of service which began in July. At the Annual Meeting in January, Pastor Jacob Knoedler announced his retirement to be at the end of April, 1998. Pastor Knoedler continued his regular duties of preaching, teaching, administering, calling, counseling, and visitation of new members until his retirement. Pastor Knoedler's sixteen years of service to Advent Lutheran Church ended with full services on Sunday, April 26, 1998. A Retirement Party was held that evening at the Comfort Inn with 353 adults, teens and children in attendance. The congregation gave Pastor and his wife, Dinah, a \$10,000 gift in appreciation of their faithful service and friendship to Advent. Pastor Don Swanson and his wife, Ruth, (who is an AIM – Associate In Ministry) were appointed by Bishop William Trexler to serve as Interim Pastors for Advent.

The Advent congregational membership at the end of 1998 was 441 baptized members of which 359 were confirmed. This resulted from 55 baptized members (37 confirmed) coming to Advent with 49 baptized members (36 confirmed) leaving Advent and 38 baptized members (22 confirmed) being placed on the inactive list (having been inactive for over 1½ years with no forwarding address available).

Total contribution for the year were \$388,054.27 of which \$47,411.83 was for debt reduction. ELCA Benevolence was \$23,482.00. The estate of Walter and Marguerite Woodworth gave a gift of \$50,000.00 to Advent for the new worship center.

## 1999

Pastor Don & Ruth Swanson continued as the interim staff, while Sue Nichols, Lisa Hill, Peggy Krafft and George Richards were all part of the Support Staff. When the Swanson's left, Pastor Arnold Athey assumed the role of interim pastor and not long after that, Don Rydeen assumed the role of Council President. During the early part of the year, a Call Committee completed the task of calling Pastor James

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Kegel, who accepted the call in April, but later declined the call in May. A new Call Committee was formed, and in September, Pastor Stephen Jones was called. He accepted the call and was installed as Advent's second pastor in October. Worship attendance was 257 with 421 baptized on the role. Toward a \$215,000 budget, \$192, 800 was received and \$40,000 was offered for debt reduction. The Synod received over \$7,000.

## **2000**

The staff, under Pastor Jones' direction, remained the same until November, when Ken Marshall replaced Peggy Krafft as organist. Jim Eller took over as Council President. During the year, a \$15,000 sanctuary improvement project was completed. In addition, Holeman Sulman architects were selected to develop a design for the new sanctuary. An entire site plan was drawn up and was offered in phases. Jim Neal was the Building Committee chair and Roger Dobson was asked to lead a Capital Fund Drive. Advent's membership increased to 462 baptized, with attendance at 230. \$251,500 was given toward a \$234,500 budget, debt reduction was \$44,000, and the Synod received \$15,000.

## **2001**

During this year, the Annual meetings brought approval of the Site Development Plan, a Capital Fund Drive and the hiring of Resource Services, Inc., to lead the Fund Drive. Named "Prepare the Way", the capital campaign raised \$1,000,000 toward the first phase of the Site Development Plan. John Schweinsberg replaced Jim Eller as President of the Council. Worship times changed during the year to 8:15 and 10 am for traditional and 11:30 for Contemporary. Worship attendance was 237 and 498 baptized were on the membership roles. Approximately \$285,000 in offerings were received toward a budget of \$280,000. Synod benevolence was \$16,000, and the Building Fund received \$184,000.

## **2002**

There was a slight increase in staffing during the year as a part-time bookkeeper and Nursery attendant were hired. Lisa Hill resigned as Youth and Family Developer mid-year, and Pastor Richard Donoghue became the interim pastor in December when Pastor Jones resigned his call. Bob Menzel was Council President in a year that also included the beginning of construction of the new sanctuary. Pastor Gerald Clark was named interim Pastor to begin in 2003. Baptized membership reached 523, while attendance

# Advent Lutheran Church History

was 240. \$303,000 was given toward a budget of \$306,000. The Building Fund received \$257,000 and the Synod again was offered \$16,000.

## 2003

Pastor Clark continued in his interim role and in July, Emily Miner was hired as the Director of Christian Education. David Holub was the Council President. A Call Committee for a new pastor was established as well as a Fine Arts Committee. In August, Pastor Matthew Lash was called but soon after declined the call to come. Worship in the new sanctuary began in June with 425 at the first services. The space was dedicated on October 12 with Bishop Edward Benoway presiding. On December 7, the former sanctuary was named the Knoedler Center, honoring Advent's founding pastor. Attendance was again 240, baptized membership was 516, \$312,000 was received toward a budget of \$368,000. The Synod received nearly \$18,000 and the total Building Fund gifts were \$300,000.

## 2004

On March 22, the Rev. Richard P. Hartmann, Jr. was installed as Advent's third Pastor. Matt Miner was hired as a part time Youth Director in May, and Jon Arnold as musical accompanist in October. Both Ken Marshall and George Richards resigned in the Fall, and Jan Johns became interim director Chancel and Handbell Choirs. Toni Zahn was Council President, and during the year, the Fine Arts Board ended its work; a new worship schedule (traditional 8:15 and 10:45; contemporary 9:35) was established, and a Welcome Center was added. During the hurricane season, minimal damage occurred, so Advent was able to reach out to others in need. At the end of the year, attendance was 284, 523 baptized members and others offered \$351,000 toward a budget of the same, and the Building Fund contributions were \$178,000. Benevolence to the Synod was \$17,000.

## 2005

Advent experienced significant growth in attendance in this year. To that end, Matt Miner became full time Youth Director and Douglas Grogan was hired to be the Chancel & Handbell Choir Director. Ron Klein took over as Council President and a 40 Days of Purpose campaign took place in the Fall to help fulfill the vision of Advent people being "connected to Christ, each other, the community and the world". Pam Hartmann became the volunteer Connections Coordinator. The Long Range Planning Committee was re-established and the constitution was rewritten and adopted. Attendance was up 37% since the end of '03, the highest percentage growth in the Synod for churches averaging over 300. The average was



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328. Baptized membership was 565. There was a budget surplus of \$30,000 at the end of the year, Synod benevolence was over \$18,000 and the debt was reduced to \$1.2 million.

## 2006

Advent's attendance again increased in 2006, and the budget plan of \$479,000 was not only met, but exceeded, once again increasing the reserve fund for the congregation. The position of "Sexton" was established, and both Tom Harrison and Don Rydeen filled the position that was of great benefit to the buildings and grounds of Advent. Highlights of the year included the commissioning of 9 Stephen Ministers; increased outreach through a number of local and global ministry agencies; 200 backpacks delivered to Melbourne's homeless; the ELCA Youth Gathering, attended by a dozen of our young people in July in San Antonio, TX; a concert by the Land of Lakes Choirboys as well as a Christmas Cantata by our own Chancel & Bell Choirs; and the first time the Oktoberfest was held on site was a rousing success! Average attendance was 355, baptized membership was 581. Synod benevolence jumped to more than \$20,000.

## 2007

Advent's attendance again increased in 2007 to an average of 425 and membership increased to just over 600. While the budget plan was for \$489,000, the year was completed with \$12,000 added to the operating reserve by closing the year with operating expenses of \$467,000 and income of \$479,000. Carol Maynard was selected to fill the new position of Parish Administrator and Pam Hartmann was selected to fill the new position of Connections Coordinator. Donald Hagen chaired a Building Committee charged with developing a building plan to support the anticipated continued growth in ministries, services and membership. To that end it developed a long range master building plan, which can be built out as the need and funds are available. The Congregation completed the year by authorizing a capital campaign to begin the implementation of the Building Plan. Synod benevolence jumped to \$25,983.

## 2008

2008 has been an eventful year at Advent with the backdrop of members suffering from the housing crisis, an economy in decline, and from significant reductions in values of retirement assets. With this as a backdrop, Advent successfully completed a capital campaign that increased the commitments for combined building and debt reduction from approximately \$325,000 to \$750,000 over 3 years. Pastor

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Hartmann resigned in June to accept another call. His departure resulted in both emotional stress and added workload on the leadership to support the Call process. In addition, Advent ran a deficit as this crisis combined with a difficult economy resulted in a decline in income. During this period of intense stress, Holy Spirit has guided the congregation and the leadership towards the vision of a continued expansion of Advent's ministries. Advent has been through crises in the past, has grown from those experiences, and understands that as we discern God's plan, this crisis will also pass. In December, the Call Committee selected the Rev. David Jahn to become the next Pastor of Advent.

## 2009

2009 was a year of transition and challenge. Advent passed a challenging budget for 2009 and the downturn in the economy along with the housing market resulted in lower congregational giving than anticipated. The end result was a 2009 deficit between the operating expenses (\$582,498) and giving (\$513,546) of nearly \$70,000 which took about 80% of Advent reserves in order to balance the budget.

Pastor David Jahn began serving at Advent in February and along with his wife Lori quickly integrated into the life at Advent. By mid 2009, at the Advent Council Leadership Meeting, Pastor Jahn stated he wanted the Advent worship services to be the very best they could be in obeying the Great Commission. In that regard, work began to raise the level of excellence of every aspect of all four Saturday and Sunday worship services. This work included recruiting, training, and increasing the use of Worship Coordinators to insure all aspects of every service were covered prior to beginning worship. By the end of 2009, the quality of all worship services had increased significantly.

Additionally, Pastor Jahn recommended that fellowship following each church service be held in the Narthex rather than the Knoedler Center in order to increase participation in Christian fellowship following each service and increase interaction between the attendees of different services. This change was enacted in September, 2009 and has proven to be a huge success.

The Fall 2009 Stewardship Campaign was titled, "Live a God-Pleasing Life" and based on the results of this campaign, the 2010 budget was developed to insure it accurately reflected the expected 2010 income. This budget was passed by the congregation in January 2010.

In early December, 2009, Matt (Youth Director) and Emily (Christian Education Director) Miner submitted their resignations effective January 31, 2010.

# Advent Lutheran Church History

## 2010

The approved Advent Operating Budget for 2010, passed by the congregation in January, was \$530,000. This represented a \$43,000 decrease from the final 2009 operating expenses, but was consistent with the estimated income for 2010 based on the fall 2009 Stewardship Drive.

January 2010 began on a sad note with the departure of Matt & Emily Miner. The Advent Council OK'd the onset of a search for a combined Youth and Christian Education Director. Due to budget constraints, Council agreed that one person would be hired to handle both positions. A combined position description was drafted by Pastor Dave and approved by the Advent Council. A Search Committee was established and efforts began to advertise, interview and hire for this combined position. The initial goal was to have this new director on-board by July, 2010 in order to help with developing the fall 2010 Sunday School curriculums. However, during the process of interviewing candidates, one person stood out as perfect for the position, but because of her excellent qualifications, the position description was expanded to include Congregation Life Director. Michelle Collins was hired and began ministry at Advent in September, 2010.

In July, 2010, Doug Grogan, Advent Choir Director, submitted his resignation to take a full-time Music Director position in Peoria, IL. Doug was much loved by all involved with the music ministry at Advent and Advent was sorry to see him go, but were happy with the wonderful opportunity in IL. A search began immediately for a replacement Choir Director and JW Snyder was hired in August to replace Doug Grogan.

In August 2010, a Pipe Organ Committee was formed to study the feasibility of Advent purchasing a pipe organ. This study included not only engineering and cost factors, but the ability of paying for the organ without impacting the Advent operating budget.

The Fall 2010 Stewardship Campaign was a three-week program titled, "Excel in the Grace of Giving" and ended with Stewardship Sunday on November 14, 2010. Based on the campaign results, estimated giving for 2011 will be about \$545,000 representing a 4% increase over 2010 giving.

Michelle Collins became a Deaconess of the ELCA in October, 2010 and on November 21, 2010, Advent, at a special congregational meeting, officially called Sister Michelle as a Deaconess to serve at Advent.

# Advent Lutheran Church History

In November 2010, Carol Ann Maynard, Advent's Parish Administrator, resigned all her responsibilities except those of Advent Bookkeeper. Carol Stanton's responsibilities were increase from Executive Assistant to the pastor to include Parish Administrator and Nancy Malito was hired as Administrative Assistant to support Carol Stanton.

Advent membership at the end of 2010 was 559 baptized members. Average attendance for Saturday evening and Sunday services was 307.

## 2011

At the Annual Congregational Meeting held on January 30, 2011, the congregation approved 2011 Operating Budget in the amount of \$547,000.00 which represented a 3.1% increase over the 2010 Operating Budget. The 2010 Operating Budget was \$530,000 while the 2010 Operating Budget financial contributions totaled \$581,287.39.

J.W. Snyder, Advent's Choir Director, resigned effective January , 2011 and Allison Cobb filled in on a temporary basis until Kaitlin Draheim was hired in February. Following a 90 day evaluation period, Kaitlin was hired as permanent Choir Director in May.

Thrivent awarded Advent a \$5,000 Christian Service grant in January and challenged Advent to raise up to \$10,000 by the end of February which Thrivent would match. Advent raised in excess of \$10,500 which in total provided over \$25000 for Advent's Christian Service Ministry. These funds were dedicated to renovating Advent's kitchen to better serve the community. Ron Klein led the effort to redesign the kitchen which was an ongoing effort through 2011.

On February 27, 2011, Sister Michelle Collins was installed into the Deaconess Community of the ELCA by Rev. Paul L, Lutze, Assistant to the Bishop of the Florida-Bahama Synod.

The Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting was held on May 15, 2011 at which time Commission Reports were approved and new Church Council Members were elected for the 2011-2012 church year.

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, a Special Congregational Meeting was held to approve purchase of a pipe organ from the A.E. Schlueter pipe organ company in the amount of \$336,000 provided pledges in that amount could be raised. By July, over \$357,000 in pledges had been raised toward the pipe organ and on August 4, 2011 the contract for the pipe organ was signed. It was anticipated the pipe organ would be installed and operational by Christmas, 2012.

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On July 16<sup>th</sup>, the Advent 2011-2012 Strategic Plan was developed by the Advent Council at the Annual Council Retreat. The Council separated the plan into four functional interdependent areas; Programming, Administration, Facilities, & Finance.

In October & November, the Annual Stewardship Drive, “Give God Your Very Best” was conducted with Stewardship Sunday occurring on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

Total Advent baptized membership at the end of 2011 was 510. Average attendance for Saturday evening and Sunday services was 284.

## 2012

In January, Advent’s congregation passed the 2012 Budget in the amount of \$561,500 which was an increase of \$14,500 (2.7%) over the 2011 Advent Budget.

In May, Advent’s Congregation re-elected all the current council officers and members at large and all agreed to serve another term. A Constitutional Amendment was introduced related to term limits for council officers and members at large to promote continuity and stability for the council, officer terms. The Amendment was passed.

At a Special Congregational Meeting on Sept. 20, 2012, a vote on the decision to merge Advent Lutheran Church with the congregation of Grace Lutheran Church of Melbourne Beach was taken. The members of the Grace congregation approved the decision to merge at their own congregational meeting earlier by a margin of 99%. At Advent the vote was: 97 for and 52 against, with one person abstaining. The vote failed to pass by the required 2/3 majority.

On Oct. 22, 2012 the construction of the new pipe organ began at Advent and was completed on Dec. 5, 2012. Advent held its first Pipe Organ Mini Concert on Dec. 5, 2013 and continued with two more mini concerts on Wednesdays at noon time.

On December 9, 2012 we celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a celebratory service presided by Bishop Benoway from the Florida Bahamas Synod.

At the end of December, Kaitlin Draheim, left as Choir Director.

# Advent Lutheran Church History

## 2013

On January 16, 2013, Betty Jo Couch, joined the Advent Staff as Director of Choirs/Organist. Betty Jo directs the Chancel and Bell Choirs at the 11 am service. Betty Jo is the organist for the 11 am service and Lori Jahn is the accompanist on piano for the 11 am service. Jon Arnold resigned as Organist of 5 pm service and Lori Jahn has stepped into that position.

Through the month of January small group cottage meetings were held to discuss the Five Year Plan for Advent. Meetings were held twice a day morning, afternoon or evening, and weekends to allow everyone the opportunity to listen and ask questions about the Five Year Plan.

On January 27, 2013 at the Annual Congregational Meeting, Advent's congregation passed the Five Year Plan Budget plan and a merger with Grace Lutheran Church. The vote was 130 Yes to 19 No votes. A celebration concert was held at Grace Lutheran Church that evening.

On June 1, 2013, Pastor Marie Duquette, was installed as the Associate Pastor of Advent Lutheran Church. Her primary location is Melbourne Beach 75% of the time and the other 25% she will preach and preside at the Suntree location. Pastor Marie is also responsible for Pastoral care at both locations.

On July 1, 2013 the merger between Advent Lutheran Church and Grace Lutheran Church was completed.