

Church of the Advent

2020 Annual Report

January 24, 2021

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Priest in Charge Report

The Rev. Jason Oden

Upon writing this report, I have now been with you, the congregation of Church of the Advent, as your Priest-In-Charge for approximately six months. I began my time with you in the midst of a global pandemic that continues on to this day. This pandemic has impacted our congregation in many ways; some that can be felt now: such as the various modes and methods of celebrating our services (Zoom, outside, and socially distanced inside) and the fact that we have not been able to consistently break bread together at the Eucharistic table or the dining room table; some we will not truly know until many months from now.

But whatever emerges in the next few months, please know that we, the Advent family, will not just survive; but we will thrive, once again. I am still learning the rich history of this congregation, but I do not have to do much research to recognize that a strong legacy has been left to us. And with that legacy, comes a responsibility to not simply continue with whatever has historically developed but to structure and position ourselves in such a way that honors the intentions, convictions, and dreams of our past parishioners; and in such a way that also addresses the needs and context of the 21st century.

Like the world at large, our country and our neighborhoods are changing and in flux. In fact, they have been for some time now. And, as our Scriptures, traditions and common prayer keep us critically planted and connected as Episcopalians—both now and for many years to come—we can be assured that change is nothing to fear. Because at the core of our Episcopal identity is the principle of the *via media*: the “middle way,” or “the both-and” principle, which not only accounts for our blended Catholic and Protestant trappings and traditions but also our ability to embrace both our *past* and our *future*. In other words, Church of the Advent will always be a confluence of **Both** what we have been **AND** what we will be—that is, what we are *becoming*.

We can truly be a parish:

- that celebrates the sacraments with **Both** traditional liturgies **And** contemporary ones
- that embraces **Both** organ music **And** guitar music
- that welcomes **Both** Republicans **And** Democrats
- that honors **Both** our past traditions **And** our new ones
- that has sacred space with **Both** pews **And** movable chairs
- that even serves **Both** third-wave coffee **And** Folgers ☺

What makes us Episcopalians is not one of these things over the other; rather, it is that we are a community that embraces **Both** the institutions of our past **And** the conventions of our present age (just like Anglicans did in the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries); and it is that we are a

community that embraces the full spectrum of the human experience, being united at the intersection of our common prayer and common mission.

Those who have joined our community in 2020:

- Dave Loder
- Brandon Porter
- Becky Frankenhoff

Births in 2020

- Sofia Cisneros

Baptisms in 2020

- Arlo Handley

Other Business Items

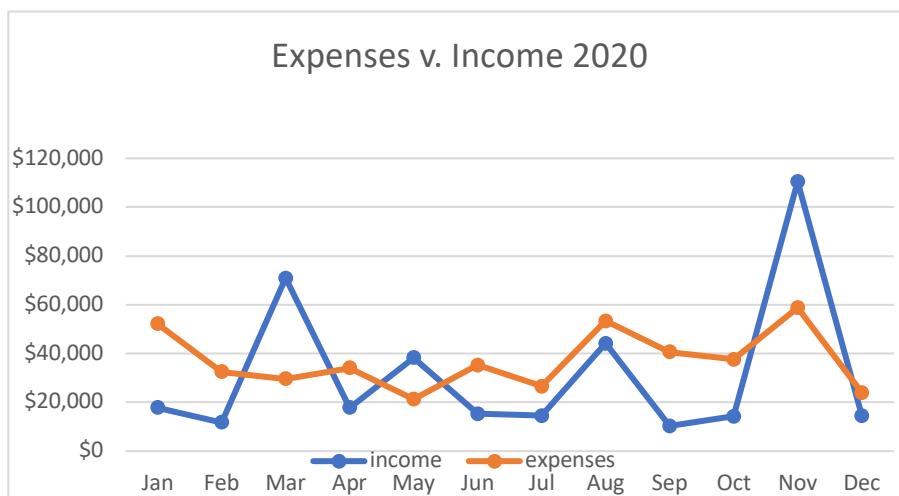
- Billie Kinley will oversee the church sign in 2021
- Many areas of the building are in need of necessary repairs or in need of updates in order to properly maintain our building and to attract and retain new members. The list below is not exhaustive but reflects some of the most pressing projects:
 - Repair to the decorative plaster in the church office foyer, as well as new paint, new flooring.
 - Repair front office doors, including adding new keyless locks
 - Haphazard wiring in the office foyer and parish main hallway (not necessarily unsafe but unaesthetic) needs to be hidden. Some wiring is now obsolete and could be removed.
 - Updates to the parish hall: remodeled kitchen, new paint, new flooring
 - New flooring in sanctuary

TREASURER REPORT

— CHIP CARSON

State of Church Finances

- Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Church's financial position remains solid and strong.
- We have navigated a year of severely reduced income, but we have mitigated most of those losses.
- We applied for and received a SBA PPP loan (\$61,589).
- We continue to enjoy a substantial well performing endowment.
- We are planning for continued growth and capital improvements.



Predictions for 2021

- We anticipate a similar pattern of income and expenses for at least the first half of 2021.
- We will submit application for additional PPP loan in January.
- A final budget is still in development.
- Anticipation of ambitious program of increased growth:
 - Membership
 - Expansion of ministries
 - Maintenance and restoration

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

— AMANDA GERACIOTI

2020's impact was felt throughout the world, including here at Church of the Advent. Things we treasured but may have taken for granted, from the somber stripping of the altar on Maundy Thursday to the heartfelt singing of hymns together on Christmas Eve and the whole litany of beloved milestones in our church year simply didn't happen. What would have been truly unfathomable in the past became our reality.

Despite the hardships, my focus in this Senior Warden report for the year 2020 is on the strength and resilience of Church of the Advent during the past year. Last January, we had a successful Annual Meeting without the Priest in Charge due to The Rev. Stacy being unavailable for health reasons. The congregation selected fine, committed parishioners to join the Vestry and we welcomed Paul Keller and Chip Carson for three-year terms and Paul Leffler for a two-year term; Michael Handley, Tom Cunningham and I completed the Vestry team. At this time, I offer heartfelt appreciation of Michael's service as Junior Warden and Chip's extensive and excellent work in the crucial role as Treasurer. In addition, the Annual Meeting attendees selected Paul Keller and Paul Leffler to be Convention Delegates and Jocelyn Cunningham to serve an additional term on the Endowment Committee. Sincere thanks to all who have made the commitment to serve Church of the Advent in these leadership positions.

We began 2020 knowing that big changes were in store for Church of the Advent with the planned retirement of The Rev. Stacy Salles on July 26, 2020. I am very happy to say that despite the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, we were able to celebrate The Rev. Stacy's tenure with a great outdoor celebration, including a drive-by parade. When we return to in-house services, you'll see The Rev. Stacy's portrait has been added to the Wall of Clergy in the Parlor.

With The Rev. Stacy's retirement imminent, as a congregation, we had to trust in the Diocese to guide us in filling this critical position. The Diocese presented a candidate for the Priest in Charge who met with a small, representative group of Church of the Advent parishioners and with the Vestry. With great gladness and no hesitation, we approved the Bishop's recommendation of The Rev. Jason Oden to become the Priest in Charge of Church of the Advent. God continued to be good to Advent, with almost no break in clerical leadership before The Rev. Jason assumed his new position on August 1, 2020. He clearly articulated a love of Church of the Advent and desire to serve in this role, demonstrated by his actions, examples and words.

The Rev. Jason's commitment to Advent has been proven by his determination to keep us connected in so many ways, included adoption of outdoor services, bonding over espressos and cappuccinos, the launch of a highly informative and useful newsletter, and the switch to virtual

church through Facebook Live and Zoom. Certainly, we have felt the impact of losing the opportunity to gather together face-to-face, especially with those who have not been able to connect virtually; **we miss you**. Despite this adversity, I feel confident that Church of the Advent, under the leadership of The Rev. Jason, will continue to grow and be a significant part of the dynamic Walnut Hills' community. I urge you consider how our church withstood the disastrous effects of the 1918 pandemic, which claimed over 2,200 lives in Cincinnati. We face this new church year together, more nimble, humble and resolute for our beautiful and beloved Church of the Advent and for each other.

JUNIOR WARDEN REPORT – CHURCH BUILDING AND PROPERTY

– MICHAEL HANDLEY

The Church entered into a three-year agreement with IGS Energy for natural gas and energy supply. This provided us with a locked in rate for both services for the three-contract agreement. Based on our energy usage and rates with our past provider, the new rates given by IGS will save the Church money over the three-year period.

- Stained-Glass Window Repair - One of our windows in the apse was vandalized. Chip Carson led the effort getting bids together for professional repair companies with stained-glass experience. Architectural Art Glass (Pleasant Ridge) has been contracted to fix the window. The repair is in progress.
- Chip Carson is also leading an effort to gather bids on repairing ALL of the stained-glass windows at Advent. Some of the windows are warping, while others need new window materials or protective coverings installed around the windows themselves. It should be noted no commitments have been made. The Vestry will need to assess the bids and create a plan to move forward. We do feel that the beauty and art of the windows is an integral part to the building and the history of our congregation.
 - In 2018 the vestry received a bid from Rohlf's Stained and Leaded Glass out of New York. It is assumed this would be adjusted if we had that group come out to re-assess.
 - The most recent bid came in this month from Willet Hauser Architectural Glass and was competitive with the bid we received in the past.
- Gutters and downspouts cleaned on the West side, South side and North side of the building. Corrugated piping installed on downspouts to direct water away from the building.
- Vestibule (Sanctuary) and Apse (rear of the church) were repainted after water damage was fixed.
- Tree Health - Had many of our trees trimmed to keep the trees healthy. The company we chose also provided a treatment to our Ash tree that will keep Emerald Ash Borer beetles away from the tree.
- Block window repaired in Open Door.
- A new Ring camera/doorbell was installed at the front doors and lightbulbs with internal sensors were installed in the sconces adjacent to the doors.

OPEN DOOR MINISTRY

— JoAnn McIntosh

I will not rehash all that has happened with the year 2020 and how it turned Open Door into a different agency. We no longer have the Café open, because we only allow a small number of clients into the facility.

The food pantry went from 5 days a week to no days to 2 days back to 5 days. As it stands right now we are open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to the public. On Tuesday and Thursday, we are doing cleaning for both Open Door and the church kitchen. Staff are also doing paint touch up and we are still doing pick-ups 2 days a week. Day old bread is picked up from Costco and food is picked up from Freestore. Just an FYI we have not been paying for the supplies from the Freestore during Covid.

We served 1852 individuals through the food pantry in 2020. In 2019 we served 4495 individuals. We have learned that the families and individuals on food stamps, have received an increase this year during Covid. This may explain why we are not seeing a lot of people needing food assistance. We have seen 52 new families applying for food assistance this year.

One of our freezers broke down and the cost of repair was estimated over \$2000. After a call to the Freestore they were able to give us a brand new freezer. This helped us immensely. They did not take the old one so we are trying to find an inexpensive place to haul off the old one.

The Payee Program served 47 clients in 2020. We had a few move into a nursing home and are no longer our client. We had two new clients that entered the program and we have two awaiting a response from Social Security. Due to the Covid situation we started mailing checks to the payee clients for their spending money. We mail checks to all but four clients who have many issues surrounding the mail delivery. Those four clients come in on Friday to pick up funds.

We are looking forward to 2021 and return to normal.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

— JOCELYN CUNNINGHAM, ROY SKAGGS, TRACY MONROE

Below please find the standard performance grid that this committee has provided each year.

	Endowment	Lee Campbell	Larry Bill	Open Door
Beginning Balance (01/01/2020)	\$3,925,705	\$244,809	\$56,436	\$489,602
Balance a/o 12/31/20	\$4,162,228	\$249,750	\$64,721	\$508,946
Performance (net of fees) for 2020				
Total Account	8.19%	8.26%	14.61%	9.19%
Equities	10.33%*	9.91%	16.12%	10.09%
Fixed Income	7.06%	4.89%	4.74%	5.16%
Indices				
S&P 500 Index	18.40%	18.40%	18.40%	18.40%
Barclays Govt/Credit Interm. Index	6.43%	6.43%	6.43%	6.43%

* The net annualized performance of the equity portfolio while under this management (since 8/31/2015) has been 15.08%.

A brief market commentary from our investment advisor: 2020 was a year like no other – from a human standpoint, from a global standpoint, from an economic standpoint and from a market standpoint. The US Federal Reserve acted swiftly and with scale to combat the healthcare-driven economic shutdowns by lowering interest rates dramatically and offering a number of other programs to aid both US consumers and small business. The US Congress and White House authorized funded approximately \$5 trillion aid to provide consumers and businesses a bridge to more normalized economic times. Both the Fed (via monetary response) and the Congress/WH (via fiscal response) are to be credited for providing a safety net for many. We look for a very gradual return to and normalization of day-to-day life over the first half of 2021. Global economies should also rebound and the markets are aware of this likelihood.

The dividend paying stocks in the Church of the Advent's portfolios did not keep up with the market averages this year. We believe this will prove to be temporary and look for solid total returns relative to the market benchmarks as well as a resumption in dividend growth in the quarters ahead as many of our companies are sensitive to the strength of the domestic and global economic profile.

From the committee: The \$25,000 withdrawal from September 2019 was repaid to the Endowment in January, 2020. It is noteworthy that the 18.40% return cited for the S&P 500 was significantly impacted by a narrow group of five stocks, many of which do not meet the

dividend growing criteria used by our investment manager. If this handful of stocks were excluded the index return would fall to 10.85%. We continue to meet with the investment advisor via quarterly conference calls.

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 26, 2020 ANNUAL MEETING

Present: See Guest Book for parishioners who attended.

Vestry Present: Amanda Geracioti (sw), Michael Handley (jw), Tom Cunningham, Paul Leffler (t), Ron Phillips

Absent: The Rev. Stacy Salles - had eye surgery earlier in the week

As parish members entered Hall, they were asked to sign the Guest Book.

Handouts: Annual Report,

Directory,

Agenda,

Resolution to Change Article III, Section 2 of Parish By-Laws

Ballot,

Building and Grounds 2019 Report

Prayer prior to meal:

- Celebrant Jason Leo (Canon for Transitions and Congregational Vitality) suggested the final hymn act as prayer
- **10:40** Amanda Geracioti (Senior Warden) Welcomed audience; introduced herself; explained she was stepping in for The Rev. Stacy Salles; and invited people to help themselves at the buffet.
- Amanda said an opening meditation, reviewed events that occurred at Advent during 2019, and reminded us The Rev. Stacy Salles' last day would be July 26, 2020. She then started the business meeting.

Order of Business

1. Change in Church of the Advent By-Laws - See Resolution to change Article III Section 2

- **Number of Vestry membership** would be changed from six members and two officers to a total of six with Senior and Junior chosen by Vestry Members at the February meeting.

2. Nominations for Vestry

3 year term: Paul Keller: nominated - Jocelyn Cunningham 2nd - Ron Phillips

3 year term: Chip Carson: nominated - Jocelyn Cunningham	2 nd - George Warrington
2 year term: Paul Leffler: nominated - Hanna	2 nd – Jocelyn Cunningham

3. Convention Delegates - volunteers

1. Paul Keller
2. Paul Leffler

Alternate

1. Michael Handley
2. Tom Cunningham

4. Endowment Committee

- Jocelyn Cunningham's term on the committee ended and she volunteered to another term.
 - Carol Davidson nominated her and Ron Phillips seconded the nomination.
 - Items were called to a vote and passed unanimously

5. Building and Grounds 2019 report was noted

The meeting ended at **11:10** with a prayer.

Submitted:
Paul Keller,
Vestry Secretary

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

The Rev. Jason Oden calls the Annual Meeting of the Church of the Advent to order

Priest The Lord be with you

People **And also with you.**

Priest Let us pray

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: look graciously on your church, and so guide the minds of this Congregation which shall elect faithful ministers from our parish family to serve as members of the Vestry, Endowment Committee, and as Delegates of the Church of the Advent to the 147th diocesan convention, that we may receive faithful leaders who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Priest-In-Charge presents the minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting (January 26, 2020)

- Motion to accept the minutes
- Discussion
- Vote

Election of the Vestry Class of 2021

The Priest-In-Charge calls on the Senior Warden to call for nominations

- Nominations
 - Tom Cunningham
 - Michael Handley
 - _____
- Brief speeches by nominees
- Vote on each nominee

After the vote

Senior Warden I present to you _____ and _____, newly (re)elected, to be commissioned the service of the Church of the Advent Vestry.

Priest Is it your will that you be elected to the Vestry of Church of the Advent?

Newly elected It is.

Priest to Vestry Members:

The Lord gives wisdom; from God's mouth come knowledge and understanding; God stores up sound wisdom for the upright; God is a shield to those who walk in integrity. I am your servant; grant me understanding: That I may know your decrees.

Vestry Members That I may know your decrees.

Let us pray.

O Eternal God, the foundation of all wisdom and the source of all courage: Enlighten with your grace the Vestry of this congregation, and so rule their minds, and guide their counsels, that in all things they may seek your glory and promote the mission of your Church, which is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

In the Name of God and of this congregation, I commission you each a Member of the Vestry of the Church of the Advent. May God bless your ministry. **Amen.**

Election of Endowment Committee Member

The Priest-In-Charge calls on the Senior Warden to announce the nominee

- Nomination of Tracy Monroe
- Brief speech by Tracy
- Vote on the nominee

After the vote

Senior Warden I present to you Tracy Monroe, newly reelected, to be commissioned to the service of the Church of the Advent Endowment Committee.

Priest Is it your will that you be elected to the Endowment Committee of the Church of the Advent?

Newly elected It is.

Priest to Endowment Committee:

The Lord gives wisdom; from God's mouth come knowledge and understanding; God stores up sound wisdom for the upright; God is a shield to those who walk in integrity. I am your servant; grant me understanding: That I may know your decrees.

Endowment Committee That I may know your decrees.

Let us pray.

O Eternal God, the foundation of all wisdom and the source of all courage: Enlighten with your grace the Endowment Committee of this congregation, and so rule their minds, and guide their counsels, that in all things they may seek your glory and promote the mission of your Church, which is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

In the Name of God and of this congregation, I commission each of you a Member of the Endowment Committee of the Church of the Advent. May God bless your ministry. **Amen.**

Election of Convention Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the 147th Diocesan Convention

The Priest-In-Charge calls on the Senior Warden to call for nominations

- Nominations
 - Nominees for Delegate: (2)
 - Nominees for Alternate Delegate: (2)

- Vote on 2021 delegate cohort

After the vote

Senior Warden I present to you _____ and _____ as Delegates and _____ and _____ as Alternate Delegates to be commissioned as our representatives to the 147th Diocesan Convention.

Priest Is it your will that you be elected to the 147th Diocesan Convention?

People **It is.**

Priest Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, who by the Holy Spirit presided at the council of the Apostles to guide them in all knowledge and truth: Be present with the Delegates to Diocesan Convention. In the passions of debate give them a quiet spirit, in the complexities of the issues give them clear minds, and in the moments of decision give them courageous hearts. Guide them in all things to seek only your glory and the good of your Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

In the Name of God and of this congregation, I commission you Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the 147th Convention of Southern Ohio. May God bless your ministry. **Amen.**

Treasurer's Report

Chip Carson

The Priest-In-Charge's Report

The Rev. Jason Oden

Remarks from the Senior and Junior Wardens

Amanda Geraciotti

& Michael Handley

Announcements

Amanda Geraciotti

Closing Prayer

The Rev. Jason Oden

O God, by your grace you have called us in this Diocese to a goodly fellowship of faith. Bless our Bishop(s) and other clergy, and all our people. Grant that your Word may be truly preached and truly heard, your Sacraments faithfully administered and faithfully received. By your Spirit, fashion our lives according to the example of your Son, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all among whom we live; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

As you go, tell the world 2x Tell the world about Jesus, tell them about his love 3x

The Rector recognizes the Junior Warden to call for the adjournment of the Annual Meeting

Junior Warden I move that the Annual Meeting of the Church of the Advent be adjourned