



# ADVENTures *a weekly newsletter*

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May 17, 2020 The Sixth Sunday of Easter

Worship with the Diocese of Albany at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjVmrEwtur7R8akk7Drd9TQ>

## At Advent

All services at Advent are suspended until further notice. You may call the church office (440-871-6685) and expect to have your call answered between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday. If you call outside of those hours, please leave a message and we will respond as soon as we receive it. In case of emergency, please contact Dick McCormick (440-413-0189) directly.

## Grape Expectations

**John 15:5** *I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*

About a 35-minute drive southwest of London is a tourist attraction that was once a royal palace. It's called Hampton Court. It was built over 500 years ago and was a favorite residence of the infamous Henry VIII. 200 years later, during George III's reign (the King who had issues with the American colonies), someone planted the shoot of a grapevine outside the palace. That vine has grown slowly and steadily for the past 250 years. It's been cared for and pruned for so long that the stem is now about 13 feet in diameter and some of its branches are over 120 feet long. Despite its age, the vine still produces 600 to 900 lbs. of grapes per year. It is one of the oldest living grapevines in the world.

Throughout the Bible, God referred to His people as being His vineyard. Those who belong to Jesus are the vineyard. We're the branches and Jesus is the vine. A key to our branches is that we bear fruit. That is normal for a healthy branch.

To further facilitate growth and fruitfulness Jesus prunes us. Jesus said,

*Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. John 15:2*

I read this week that one expert stated that vines will produce branches called "sucker shoots." These shoots never bear fruit, they just suck away nutrients. All they produce are leaves. And so, the gardener cuts them off because they are unproductive and rob the vine of its life-giving source. Not only do gardeners prune those sucker shoots, they also cut away any dead wood because that dead wood can harbor insects and disease and can cause the vine to rot.

Going even further, gardeners also prune the live wood in order to prevent the lifeblood of the vine going into the wood instead of into fruit. In the early spring, the vineyards look like a collection of dead, barren stumps; but in the fall they're filled with grapes because they've been pruned. In times of crisis, like the present quarantine, God does a lot of pruning. How we respond to those crises determines our spiritual health and fruitfulness.

Another way Jesus helps us produce fruit is through His teachings. If you and I want to have a fruitful life, we need to listen to and obey Jesus. Bear in mind that the entire Bible holds the words of Jesus. There's not a single word in the Scriptures that Jesus didn't put there; remember that the opening of John's Gospel declares that Jesus is the Word.

Being fruitful as a disciple of Jesus doesn't mean that we escape adversity, it means that we stay close to Him through prayer, Scripture reading, fellowship (especially challenging right now), living out what I believe, sharing with those within my sphere of influence, and always depending on Him for strength and peace.

**John 14:23 (NCV)** *Jesus answered, "If people love me, they will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.*

This is the essence of remaining close to the vine!

Pastor Paul Laursen



## This Week at Advent

### Sunday, May 17

**8:00 a.m. SERVICE SUSPENDED**  
**10:00 a.m. SERVICE SUSPENDED**

### Wednesday, May 20

7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Study at Advent  
9:00 a.m. Wednesday Morning Prayer Group

### Sunday, May 24

**8:00 a.m. SERVICE SUSPENDED**  
**10:00 a.m. SERVICE SUSPENDED**

## Our Sabbath Moment . .

By Chaplain Seth McCormick, M. Div., BCC

On my runs this Spring I have come across many of these Crape Myrtle trees that to me, a clueless arborist, seem to have been hacked down to their nubs; my running buddy calls this "Crape Murder." It got me thinking about some words Jesus shared with his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful" (John 15:1-3).

Cutting off and pruning can be difficult, even hurtful, but hopefully beneficial in the long run. The owners of those crape myrtle trees hope and trust they will grow back with even more beautiful flowers than the previous year.

In many ways, for all of us, COVID-19 has pruned our lives and cut away everything, the good and the bad. To use a different analogy, in many ways COVID-19 has been a "forced shutdown," like what one has to do sometimes to their computer in order to start over fresh.

Whichever analogy you prefer, my hope, our hope, is that COVID-19 has pruned off a lot of the dead, unfruitful parts of us so that we will become more beautiful and/or more fruitful.

Think with me:

- What has been pruned in your life?
- Where do you need fertilizer and what kind?
- Where are you flourishing or hope to flourish? May the pruning that is being done now be the preparatory work we need so that we can flourish like these beautiful crape myrtles.



### Prayer Request

#### Health and Recovery

Lillian Kwasny	Dave Luptak	Joan Joye
Mary Lou Dixon	Marilyn Decker	Velta Sanborn
Bob Allen	Karen Zolar	Rose Walker
Barb Frank	Lois Zolar	Arthur Beel
Michael Uhrich	Sharon Rice	George Belinsky
Bill & Judy Arkley	Steve Boyce	Shirley Moore

#### Friends of Advent

Toni Kulma, wife of Pastor Kulma	Fr. Richard Lutz
Ken and Jim	Richard Ward, Jr
Eliza Jennings residents	
Trevor, grandson of Art Beel	
Liz Schilling, friend of JoAnn Beck	
Laura Lenis, friend of JoAnn Beck	

#### Safety Protection

David Arkley, Detective for Cleveland Police  
Son of Bill & Judy Arkley  
Rachel Moffitt, ER Nurse daughter of Bill & Judy Arkley

#### Comfort

Peter and Jennifer Meckes, at the passing of Jen's mother, Margaret Webb this past Saturday

*Please contact the church office if you would like your name added or removed from our list.*



### Calling all Graduates!

Is your son or daughter graduating this year? We will be honoring high school and college graduates from Advent when we resume services. If your son or daughter is graduating this year, submit a short bio on what they accomplished in high school/college and what their plans are for the future. This information needs to be turned into JoAnn at the Parish Office by Sunday May 24, or emailed to: [advent.church@sbcglobal.net](mailto:advent.church@sbcglobal.net)  
Thank you.