

grateful

Grateful because God continues to bless Advent
and Our Mission of Fishin'



ADVENT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Grateful Verse:

2 Corinthians 9:11 NRSV

**"You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity,
which will produce thanksgiving to God through us."**

"Oh, how GRATEFUL and thankful I am to the Lord because he is so good."

Ps 7:17 The Living Bible

Psalms 7:17 is a powerful piece of scripture. The Psalmist (probably King David) is at a difficult place in life. We know that David faced many difficulties, and he is thinking about them in this Psalm. But instead of being overwhelmed, he turns to God and expresses how Grateful he is for God's goodness. David understood that being Grateful is not only the right attitude toward God, it is the right attitude toward life!

Being Grateful saves us from many of the spiritual traps of life. Gratitude chases away bitterness, rescues us from self-centeredness, and guides us out of the swamp of entitlement. When we have a Grateful spirit, it opens our eyes to the blessings of God. And we have so many blessings to be Grateful for at Advent! We are Grateful for a flourishing Advent Kids ministry; Grateful for a powerful Advent Student Ministry; Grateful for the disciple-making power found in LifeGroups; Grateful for empowering worship—and much, much more! The people of Advent express over and over how Grateful they are for this family of faith. Hundreds upon hundreds of people have found a spiritual home here—so that when the front of the bulletin says "Welcome Home"—it isn't just a slogan, it is a genuine greeting.

More than that, gratitude is at the very center of the Gospel. The great gift that God has offered through Jesus Christ is the forgiveness of our sins so that we might be reconciled to God and one another. When we accept the forgiveness that comes through Jesus, we are set free from the burden of trying to earn God's approval, and instead our gratitude for what God has done for us becomes the motivation for all that we do in life. We can stop trying to be good enough to earn God's approval. Instead we become generous with our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness because we are genuinely Grateful for what we have been given.

So I invite you to enter into the Grateful initiative not as an obligation, but as a natural response to all the wonderful things that God has done for us; to embrace it as a chance to partner with God as we continue our "mission of fishin'" by providing the resources to offer the Gospel to new people; and to join with a Grateful spirit in our church's ministry as we encourage each other to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

We have so many reasons to be Grateful! I look forward with excitement to see what God will accomplish through Advent in the years to come as we discover the new reasons we will all have to be Grateful!

Blessings,

Pastor Tim

STORIES

Your generosity makes an impact in the lives of those in our community and world. Here are some of our stories.

Advent Five Forks

When we came to South Carolina and to Advent in 2004, we were unchurched but knew we needed to turn our lives over to God. Advent welcomed us immediately and began to show us what following Christ is all about. We got involved in several discipling opportunities which helped build our faith and build our Christian disciplines. The foundation we received through Advent then helped me “go out into the world” in 2010 when we were transferred away from South Carolina. That strong foundation kept me from being washed away when things got really tough. We were not only able to serve but also to lead in three other churches around the country before returning home to Advent in 2021. I will always be thankful for my strong foundation which God built in me through the people of Advent Church.

— **Steve Fogle**

When we moved here from Tennessee in 2004, we had not been going to church regularly for years. But, it felt like time for both of us to return to church and Advent quickly became our home. We were welcomed like family and given many opportunities to be involved and to serve. I will always be grateful that leaders here saw in me potential that I never saw in myself, and though I was not and will never be perfect, I would not have grown without that encouragement and guidance. Even when we were transferred away, I felt the warm Advent family embrace each time we came back to visit. Moving back to Simpsonville in 2021 was truly coming home and now I try to be that welcoming family for others.

— **Becki Fogle**



Advent Five Forks

Advent felt like our 'church home' even before our very first service. We attended the annual EggVenture event around Easter and the warmth, friendliness, and welcoming of the church staff and community was positively overwhelming. We knew no one, but felt part of the church.

After that we attended our very first service, and God began to go to work on us through Advent. First, the children's ministry is exactly what you would hope for. A comfortable, safe, welcoming place where children can be children and where they can learn and worship God on their levels. Interactive, teacher driven lessons and songs from volunteers who truly love the children they are teaching. They learn who you are, who your children are, and how they can help you all grow in your faith. The most amazing feeling a parent can have is to know that their children are loved by others the way you love them. That is what Advent Children's Ministry does, they love the way Jesus loves us. Second, Sunday worship in the Sanctuary for us is always so uplifting, open, honest, and truly come as you are. Before service begins the Pastors walk around to greet you, ask you how you are actually doing because they really want to know, and truly care. They will stop, listen, and say a prayer with you/over you to walk with you during any storm you may be facing. These actions, the heart of the Advent family, captivated our family. We wanted to come back every Sunday, we wanted to grow in our faith, we wanted to support and give what we could each Sunday to continue to grow within this church.

After attending for quite some time, our oldest daughter starting asking questions and showing interest to be baptized, as did I. Growing up myself as a Baptist, I had several questions on how this would be done with a 9-year-old and a 37-year-old who had never been baptized. Growing up watching baptisms being done in the church it was always a 'dunking' under water. Within the UMC, it was a 'sprinkling' over the head. I directed my questions to the Pastor at the time, Michael Turner, who so passionately informed me that if my daughter and I wanted to be baptized by submersion, dunking, he would find a way to make it happen. I knew early on that Advent was the place for us, but after this conversation and the passion that Pastor Michael had for us, no more thought needed to go into becoming official members of Advent.

Advent gave of itself for a baptism that had never before been done in Advent history. Items had to be brought in, borrowed, purchased. A team was put together to figure out the best way to make this happen. It took people, dedicated people, to make our baptism happen. This is what a church community does, this is why our family is a part of Advent, this is why we give, this is why we have a passion and heart for Advent. Even before they knew us, they prayed for us. They welcomed us with opened arms and let us decide for our family that Advent is where we wanted to be. We give to a church who gives back. We support a church who supports us. It is heartwarming to be a part of a community who puts people first, the way Jesus does.

My husband and I took the New Members course, and my daughter and I sat with Pastor Michael and talked through the Baptism course. Sunday, November 27th, 2022 Kiera and I were baptized in the Advent sanctuary by way of submersion and our family became official members of Advent. We are proud to support Advent with our time, gifts, prayers, and praise and be a part of this wonderful church community.

— Stephanie Fox

STOURIES

Advent Five Forks

The theme of GRATEFUL for this year's initiative sums up how I feel about Advent. I am so grateful for this group of Christians, Encouragers and Mentors. Before I came to Advent in 2010 I belonged to a church that did not seem to really care about their individual members. I chose to stay under the radar and not get involved, and no one in the church seemed to notice. All that changed, big time, when I came to Advent. I was approached the Sunday that I joined the church about singing in the Chancel Choir. Not long after that I was invited to train to become a Stephen Minister. And the list of opportunities to serve not only those in the church, but people in the surrounding communities (particularly through the GriefShare support program) continued to present themselves to me. There are so many ways to be the hands and feet of Jesus, and I am grateful that my family at Advent has encouraged me to take advantage of these opportunities. I have come to love and respect our staff members and others in leadership positions. The Great Commission to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations" is truly our theme at Advent, and for that I will always be eternally GRATEFUL!

— Dee Vaughan



STORIES

At Advent, we believe faith development happens at all ages. Our mission is helping kids and families grow in faith together. We do this when we Love God, Love Others, and Go Share.

Advent Kids

My husband and I have been serving with Advent Kids for several years now. Our kids are 6 and 7 and we feel like it's important to be good examples for them of how we can serve God through the giving of our time and our talents. They love coming to church, whether it be for VBS, Sunday Mornings, Eggventure, Midweek, or Trunk or Treat. And we know the only way that any of those things happen is because of volunteers. So we do what we can. And we model for them one of the ways we act out our faith; not just saying we believe, but doing something about it. One of the things I love most about serving is getting to see all the kids arriving and excited about being there each Sunday morning. It brings so much joy and hope to my life that I think I would easily miss in the busyness and chaos of our day-to-day lives. I get to see God working in their lives and in mine each time I help and that's something pretty special.

— Karen Olson

Over the past 4 years our family has been blessed by Kids Ministry at Advent at every turn. We are so grateful to every person who invests in our children... the leadership, Sunday school teachers, shepherds, nursery, coaches, VBS volunteers, and the numerous people who work behind the scenes to create an environment where a deep rooted relationship with Christ and others can flourish! The dynamic programs of Kids Ministry keep us coming back week after week! A couple of nights after VBS, I was tucking Colton in at bedtime and he told me he wanted to become a follower of Jesus! We are overjoyed that he has started his journey in relationship with Jesus. And I've been meaning to write and thank you specifically for all the ways you've been pouring into our family. We are so grateful that our children have the support of Advent Kids and that they feel the love of everyone whenever they enter the building or see friends around town. What a blessing!

— Lindsey Morgan



A Note to Advent Kids:

Thank you for the lovely gifts and messages which the youth prepared for this elderly, 95-year-old retiree at Rolling Green Retirement Village... Thank you Amy Duryea! The "love" wishes you wrote were well appreciated. Indeed, I was deeply moved for the time and effort to prepare such a lovely present for this elderly, retired lady. Love and best wishes to each member of the class! God Bless Everyone!

— Mildred B. Mullikin



STORIES

Advent Student Ministry believes in sharing the journey. The journey embodies faithfulness, dedication, and passion. These three words describe Advent's group of students. Each Sunday evening, youth are excited to fellowship and engage in the word of Christ. They faithfully attend worship while inviting friends into their journey. It is rewarding to see their dedication and passion about diving deeper into God's word. Advent Student Ministry provides a safe space for questions and deeper understanding about cultivating their faith. It's a program that creates young disciples for the transformation of the world. 1 John 4:19 says, "We love because he first loved us." As we walk alongside our students, we are supporting their journey by sharing a mutual love for God's purpose in each of their lives.

Advent Students

Since I started going to Student Ministry at Advent several years ago, I have always loved the sense of community. The people that are a part of student ministry are truly what keep me coming back. I also, of course, love all of the fun events we do as a group throughout the school year and summer break. The impact Student Ministry has had on my life can never be changed, and I'm so thankful for it!

— Anne Marie

I love student ministry because it brings people together. I have made so many new friends just by attending Elevate! I have also had the opportunity to help out with VBS. I love just going to Elevate to listen to the lesson and hangout with friends!

— Olivia

I love the fun activities that we get to do together. I love spending time with people talking about God.

— Mary Hart

I love Advent Student Ministries and their support because it gives kids like me an important platform to grow my relationship with Jesus. Advent Student Ministries has been a fundamental part of me developing my faith as well as some of the most genuine human connections I've ever had. Student Ministries has positively influenced my social and spiritual life as I grow.

— Lucas

I love student ministry for many reasons, but a few of my favorite things about the entire experience are the small group connections we get every Sunday evening. It just allows us to build friendships and a circle to share thoughts and ideas with one another.

— Spencer

I love that student ministries gets us involved and prepares us for activities in the future.

— Nate



I love the fact that it gives you a chance to meet new people and share a lot of amazing memories that I will never forget.

— **Eliza**

What I love about student ministry is that it is a place that I know will always welcome me no matter where I am in life. Whether or not I have had an amazing day or an awful day, I know I can come to Elevate or Youth Group and be around a group of people who want to love me and worship God with me. I love the support that student ministry gives each and every one of its students, and I love knowing that within student ministry, I have a Christ-led family for me to depend on and share my life with.

— **Mackenzie**

I love how Advent Student Ministry helps me meet a whole new group of girls my age, and I love how they also connected me to many leaders who helped me on my faith journey.

— **Delaney**

What I love about student ministry is all of the friends I have made and coming together at Elevate to learn about God.

— **Carolyn**

There are so many fun opportunities to grow your faith, and you can build strong relationships during Elevate as well.

— **Mollie**

One of my favorite memories of Student Ministry is the Salkehatchie trip during the Summer. You bond with so many new people during this time. The “mega cookie” is also a plus!

— **Madeline**

Advent Students

To me, Student Ministry is family. It's coming home to one of the best parts of my week. When I first started coming, I didn't have anyone. I hated it... but, then I met the girls in my small group, and they have become some of my best friends! God has really shown up in my life through Advent and youth group, and I'm extremely grateful. I hope new students can have a similar experience to what I have felt being a part of Student Ministry.

— **Emma Jean**

I love student ministry because it is a second home where everyone is always welcome as they are. I've met my best friends here and have grown so much in my faith through life groups. I also enjoy the great events and retreats.

— **Ansley**

I love Student Ministry because I am able to worship God with my friends that I don't see on a daily basis. I love that I am given opportunities to worship God with loving and involved people that are my age.

— **Abby**

I love Student Ministry because I get to see friends that I don't see at school. Plus, I love learning about God and getting to share that with people at church and during Elevate.

— **Emily**

Student Ministries gives me a great place to connect with others!

— **Ethan**

I love worshipping with my friends!

— **Tracy**





I like Student Ministry because I get to do things that connect me with God. One of my best memories is going to Salkehatchie!

— **Conor**

One of my favorite things about Student Ministry is that I get to learn about Jesus more and spend time with my friends. It's a great time to learn, to be humbled, and have fun!

— **Joshua**

I love how Student Ministry is a place where I can see some of my favorite people, talk about things happening in my life, and worship God ALL in one place.

— **Kate**

I love student ministry because I get to make new friends while we worship and learn about God together.

— **Emaree**

I love that I've gotten very close with my family group. I feel like I can talk to them about anything.

— **Brayden**

Student Ministry is a place where I can be myself and others can see me for who I really am.

— **Jillian**

Student Ministry is fun because we learn about Jesus while doing fun activities with friends!

— **Ali**

What Student Ministry means to me is learning more about Jesus!

— **Ella**

I really love the family-like dynamic of our small group!

— **Meredith**

I really like getting to know my leaders!

— **Adam**

I love Devotion & Donuts!

— **Tucker**

STOURIES

STORIES

At Advent our Mission is Fishin'. Here are some of the ways we are Grateful to be in service to the communities around us:

Advent Missions

By partnering with Set Free (formerly Water of Life), Advent has given 21 villages the gift of clean water. Through these new water wells, lives have been changed completely in the name of Jesus. Children are no longer tasked with having to collect dirty water for their families from nearby rivers, giving them time to go to school. Fathers are no longer too sick to go to work to support their families. Mothers no longer have to worry about the health of their families. Here's just one impact story of a village changed forever through Advent's support:

My name is Abdu. My village and I used to rely on water from a small swamp located in the forest 2 miles away. This swamp was contaminated by animal waste and dried up for several months of the year. When the swamp was dry, my children would travel 3.5 miles to the nearest river. They dropped out of school, so they were able to collect enough water for our family. Their childhoods were lost for water that more often than not made us sick. Everything changed when I met the drill crew and pastor in the nearby village. They were showing a film about Jesus. When I heard the word of God in my very own language, I was excited! I was moved by the story of Jesus' life and love and asked the drill crew and pastor if they would come to my village so that my village could learn too. I also explained the dirty water problem in my village and how it was a huge burden to all families in my village. I couldn't believe it when the drill crew and a new pastor showed up in my village just a few days later. We all gathered to watch The Jesus Film and many rejoiced that they too were able to hear the story of Jesus in their own language. The next morning, the drill crew began drilling a well in the center of the village. They explained that this clean water is a gift from God. After the completion of the well, we rejoiced and gave thanks to God. The pastor that arrived with the drill crew made his home in our village so he could continue to teach us The Good News each week. Now, my children are able to return to school, my family isn't sick from dirty water, and many gather together for worship and nightly Bible studies! None of this would have been possible if it weren't for the love shown by the drill crew and pastor in the name of Jesus. I am eternally grateful.

— Sarah Kelley, CEO - Set Free Alliance



"Helping families move from homelessness to transitional housing to independence."

The country of Haiti continues to struggle with issues hard to imagine here in the states. The current climate continues to be unstable and tense, so much so that recently the US government ordered all non-emergency personnel at the US Embassy to be evacuated. The alarming statistics also continue: Countrywide inflation at 30-40%, still no president or working government, country is controlled by 3 rival gangs, no social services available for citizens and the list goes on.

How are we making a difference?

- *We have completed 1052 cement floor installations (since inception) & built our 122nd Safe Home organized by and completed with 100% Haitian labor and products*
- *Opened a new Love in Action Center in Me Bel Me – we now have 4 campuses in the Pignon area and are seeking land for our 5th location*
- *Now serving over 300 families through our First 1000 Days program*
- *Had a 100% pass rate in our school. The average pass rate for schools in Haiti is 60%*

In addition, we have officially expanded our mission to Abaco island in the Bahamas. Just like in Haiti, we will come alongside the people of Abaco to help them experience Life transformation through Christ. Since the start of the year we have sent over 200 people to be Love in Action through our IMPACT trips. We already have 5 full-time missionaries who are serving the Bahamian people through a variety of areas — with our early focus on education (getting into the schools and after school programs); our First 1000 Days program; and Agriculture (programs are focused on bolstering food production in Abaco through like-minded partners and working directly with farmers). There are so many ways that your partnership is helping Many Hands to expand and reach more people for the Lord, that it's hard to keep it short.

God Bless you and thank you!

— Many Hands

Advent Missions

Did you know that one in ten neighbors faces hunger in South Carolina? Odds are that someone you know at some point in time has experienced food insecurity. Whether you support Harvest Hope Food Bank through donations of food, money, or volunteer your time at the local Greenville branch, you are helping our mission to transform lives in your community by feeding the hungry, addressing food insecurity and building a healthy and hopeful hunger-free tomorrow. How has your assistance directly impacted the local community? With your help Harvest Hope has:

- Alleviated child hunger through the backpack program by providing at-risk children with nutritious food during weekends and school vacations. Your generosity has helped us feed 373 hungry children fighting food insecurity.*
- Operated emergency food pantries, like the one in Greenville, where anyone in need can get a week's supply of groceries for free. In the last quarter, we were able to serve 111,178 individuals at the Greenville location.*
- Provided food boxes to just over 2,264 seniors (60 years of age and up) in the last quarter.*

We are incredibly thankful for the generosity of Advent, and its members, in supporting our mission. You are key to helping us prevent hunger in your community and we could not do it without you!

— Harvest Hope


I don't have to worry about eating any longer. I can use my money to purchase essential medicine and to pay my household bills. It is good to be able to receive help. Many thanks to everyone for making these services possible.

— Harvest Hope Recipient

Now I am living on a fixed income, the food bank has become a lifesaver. I don't have to worry about trying to get food anymore. It's right here for me. That's what life is all about: helping each other and taking care of each other.

— Harvest Hope Recipient

STOURIES



"Our mission is that homeless children and adults receive food and shelter with compassion, hear the Good News of Jesus Christ and move toward healthy relationships and stability."

Christ tells us to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and visit those in prison.

Fyodor Dostoevsky wrote that "The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons."

Advent believes in being connected to God and to each other, and to bestowing the love of Christ on all.

All of these thoughts and empathy have called me to Kairos where I have had the good fortune to visit persons in prison. With Kairos, our discussions are about God, Christ, and self. This means the reflections are about greater than self, redemption and salvation, and our relationship to God — not just for the prisoners, but for all. We are all guilty before God [That's not just a cliché, it's true].

We meet the inmates in chapel with the intention of discussing our humanity and our spiritual existence in a Christian context. This would not be possible without the Kairos ministry.

When I hear Richard speak to us and say "I'm in here because I killed a man, but that's not what this here is about. It's about understanding the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ and the Gospel. It's about treating our fellow man with dignity and love." When I hear James say "I'm here because I was high on drugs and took a life. I confessed and I'm remorseful each day. I turned myself in for the crime and they wouldn't have even accused me but for my confession." Further, I hear a debate between Richard and James about what the afterlife will be like, based on quotes from scripture. They are living and looking forward to the fulfillment of Christ's promises!

It is clear to me that the message of Christ has made it to their hearts. Amazing how a few cookies, and a couple good meals on the Kairos walk can lead persons to Christ. Persons that give to Advent would be over-joyed to see their contributions at work in Kairos.

I am grateful to Advent for its support of and commitment to Kairos and our prisoners here in South Carolina. I pray that this commitment continues and even increases as Advent understands the wonderful work of Kairos and the Advent participants, and Advent support.

— Tom Carter, Kairos Volunteer

Advent Missions

Thank you for giving kids at STRIDES the gift of reading and math. So far, halfway through 2023, we have had 63 boys and girls, with more to come this fall and winter. Also this year we are partnering with Miracle Hill foster care, giving us even more students who need one-on-one help and mentoring to succeed at school. God bless you!

Here is a sample of the lives you have helped us change:

- *Hazel, a 2nd grader with a chromosome error, was a nonreader. After 18 mo. tutoring, she reads mid-2nd and in the fall she will leave special ed math class!*
- *Dylan, a bilingual, was very frustrated in 2nd grade. His reading rose from mid-1st to the end of 2nd in just 28 hours, and school is much easier now.*
- *Torria, age 19, left foster care with no diploma and 2nd grade math. After 18 hrs with her STRIDES tutor, she began algebra and she'll take the GED soon.*
- *Micah, a cheerful, hardworking 4th grader, struggles with language. From fall to spring, reading climbed from 2nd-4th. Confidence and comprehension soared!*
- *Maggie, a lovely 5th grader with autism, was reading only mid-2nd grade. From Sept-June, she reached 5th grade in reading and math. Her folks are delighted!*
- *Ian had a stroke at birth and received a ventilator. Age 9, he was delayed in reading by 2 grades. In just 28 hours he covered 3rd-4th, to enter 5th on grade level.*
- *Emma, a teenager, struggled with early math concepts. A difficult home life left her with anxiety. In less than a year she overcame anxiety and math to reach algebra.*

At seven Upstate locations most of our students reach grade level in 3-6 months, and then achieve independently. This is life changing. We hope Advent will continue to change the lives of Upstate children, not only for the next report card, but for a lifetime.

God bless you for making this possible,

— Dr. E. Gail Everett, Executive Director – STRIDES Tutoring

Triune Mercy Center

"Sharing Christ's love by meeting physical needs and providing life-changing opportunities for the disadvantaged."



The program with United Ministries has allowed me to make changes in my life to become a better person. This program doesn't just give immediate assistance — it provides me with the opportunity to create a healthy, positive environment where I am able to address my own inner trauma bonds to heal & develop new much desired attributes to my life and my children. Although immediate help is important, it is the long-term help that impacts us the most and gives us time to make changes like therapy and school so we create a better future. My family has a normal life and doesn't have to stress about immediate needs at this time. Also, y'all are a whole group of amazing people who genuinely care and understand others and work with a passion to truly help and never make anyone feel like a burden or that we're asking for too much. Y'all have become the family we needed. All thanks to God for putting together this organization. He is truly using y'all to the best of your abilities. Thank you so much!

— United Ministries Family

As for me, it is difficult to overstate the impact of having a home in which to stabilize.

- One participant in an Advent house has been able to remain sober, have all of her children returned to her custody, learn financial literacy and budgeting, and have her last few years with her eldest daughter peaceful, stable, and devoted to reconnection. She has begun to trust others, as well.*
- Another participant was able to finish her degree, remarry, become a homeowner, and re-start her life. She moved into her own home in January.*
- Another participant has been able to ensure her children's mental health (and her own mental health is stable), have and maintain a job, and learn how to pay for and maintain a home on her own. She is moving into her own apartment in September.*

— United Ministries Families in Advent Housing

Mission Guatemala exists to help meet the basic needs and improve the quality of life of under-served Guatemalan people through health, education, and nutrition initiatives and meaningful missionary service. Advent plays a vital role in the work of Mission Guatemala. Mission Guatemala began almost 13 years ago with the hope of providing quality, loving, and respectful medical care to the Indigenous Maya people. Over 2500 people were treated in the past year because of you, Advent! In addition to medical care, Mission Guatemala has a nutrition program for children 6 months to 6 years of age called Niños Chispudos which means Kids with a Spark. Guatemala has been a leader of malnutrition — being ranked as high as 4th in the world. Our program helps during a child's critical early years of development when the effects of malnutrition can be especially devastating, leading to stunting, anemia, and chronic infections and sickness. Daily nutritional support is provided to 170 children because of you, Advent! The third area where we serve is in education. In Guatemala, the education that the government provides ends at 6th grade. If students choose to attend middle and high school, they must pay for their education. The "Becas con Misión" (Scholarships with a Mission) program helps provide an opportunity for students who have the determination and grades — but not the financial resources — to continue their education past the 6th grade. The cost of education is minimal—\$25 a month for a middle school student and \$50 a month for a high school student— but when a family lives on \$5-6 dollars a day, you can see that it is simply not possible to send children to school past the elementary school level. 87 students have access to continued education in middle school and high school because of you, Advent! We are so grateful for Advent and the real ways you are the hands and feet of Christ to our sisters and brothers in Guatemala!

— Leigh Randall, Mission Guatemala

ADVENT SCUFFLETOWN

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Matthew 28: 19-20

37 years ago, some leaders in the United Methodist Church had the foresight to plant a church in the middle of cow pastures on Woodruff Road, in anticipation of the growth that would take place in this community. Now, the Five Forks area has run out of room to grow, so people continue moving farther down Scuffletown Road. Even though people are moving into that area, there are very few churches, with the exception of Advent Scuffletown. We are continuing to expand our fishing efforts and make more disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Advent Scuffletown has taken the healthy Advent DNA to the Scuffletown Road area. Our worship location is at Rudolph Gordon School, which is one of the largest schools in Greenville County. We have been partnering with the school for a few years now, volunteering in classrooms, providing aid to students and families in need, supporting and encouraging school faculty and staff, and seeking to meet many of the needs in the school and surrounding community. We continue to host regular events in that area such as Christmas Under the Stars, family movie nights, Trunk or Treat and Easter Worship. We remain excited about the new faith community forming in that area.

Not only are we excited about being another faith community in that area, we also think that worshiping in a school has helped us attract people who might not feel comfortable entering a more formal church building. Your generosity enables us to continue sowing seeds in that community, and your continued investment will help us to grow and bear fruit.





When we realized that, despite its large size, Advent would become our church home, our prayer became for the church to feel smaller so that our family could develop connections. Fast forward a year to the fruitfulness of that prayer being answered, although not quite how we expected, when Pastor Laura Allen Kerlin approached us to join the core team to launch Advent Scuffletown in the quickly growing area near Rudolph Gordon School. In its short time, this campus has been a blessing to our family because it allowed us to find our purpose and our people. We get to serve the church as a family every week. We found not just a LifeGroup, but an entire community of people that does life together. The Lord answered our prayers in a way we could have never imagined. We won't lie and say that it's been easy setting up and tearing down a church every week - it's hard, there aren't many weeks off, there have been bumps in the road, and, like actual fishing, the mission of fishing takes time. But, the mission of Advent Scuffletown has served our family well and we will continue to serve that mission to reach others.

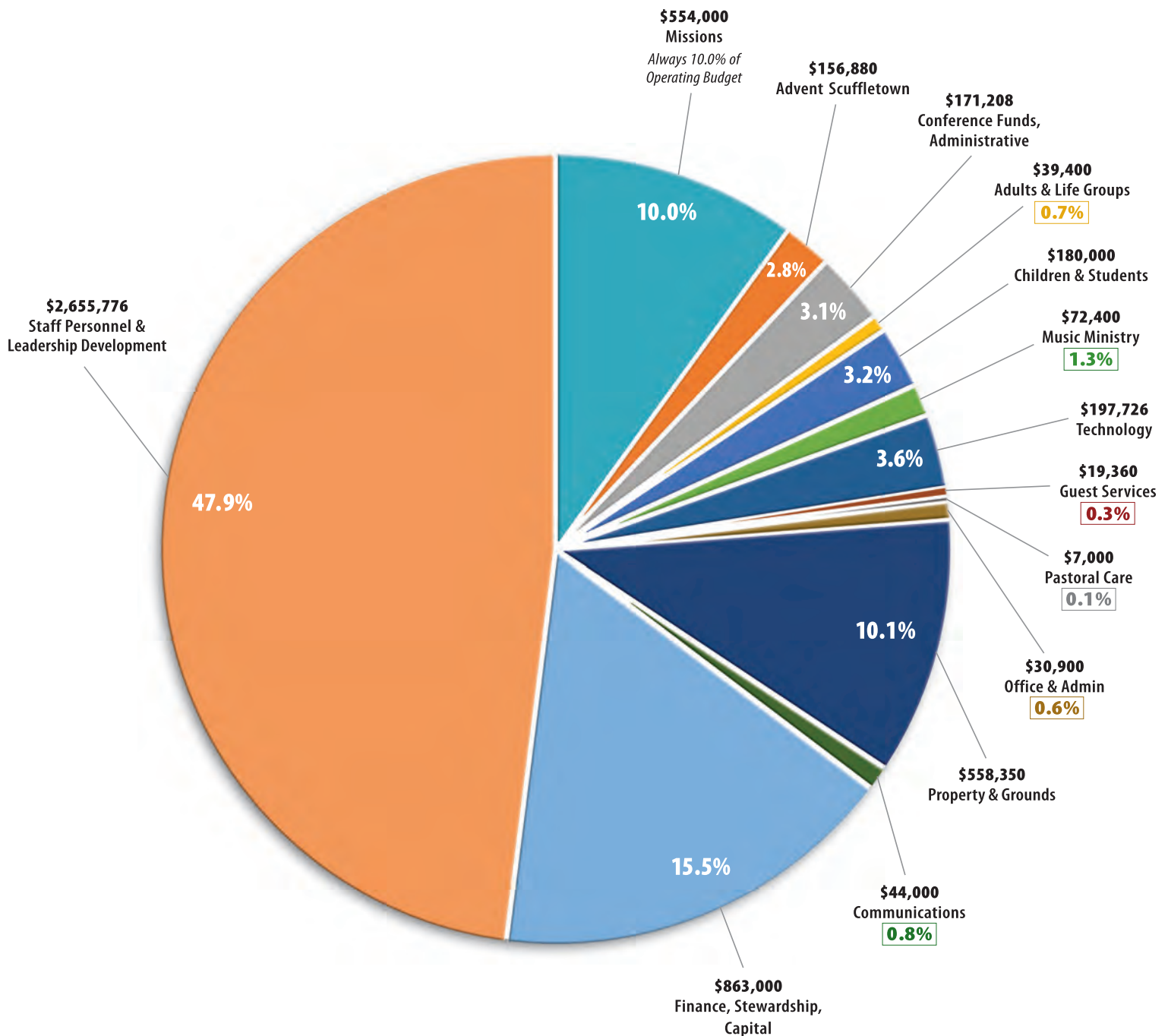
— Dena Long

Our family has definitely found a home at Advent Scuffletown. We love the smaller feel (although we do want to keep growing it) and the people. The people we have met and continue to meet have become like family to us. We feel a great sense of pride in serving this mission. We know there is a lot opportunity to reach people in this area and we want people who visit the church to feel the same love that we feel every Sunday.

— Ryan and Jen Adams

TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENSES

— FOR 2024 & 2025 —



COMMITMENT WORKSHEET

Section 1 of 3

Jesus talked about money more than he talked about anything else, because Jesus knew that money can be one of the biggest obstacles to our faith growth. We believe that if you can trust God with your finances, you can trust God with anything.

We also believe that everything we have is a gift from God. As a result, disciples are called to give a portion of what we have been given back to God. Your generosity allows the church to fulfill its mission and ministry to the world, and it helps us orient our lives and priorities toward God and His Kingdom purposes. Take a moment now to assess your current level of financial generosity by using the guide below:

Annual Personal Income #1

Annual Personal Income #2

Total Annual Household Income

A

Total financial support given
to Advent UMC in 2023:

B

Not sure? Email christi@advent-umc.org or check your giving records in Realm.

I give this percentage of my
income to Advent UMC

%

C

To calculate, divide amount in Box B by the amount in Box A. Move the decimal two places. Ex: A result of "084" would equal 8.4%.

What's My Next Step?

On behalf of the congregation of Advent, we say "THANK YOU!" Your generosity allows us to minister across our community and the world... "to make disciples of Jesus Christ".

Trusting God to provide for your needs can be challenging, especially because many of us are accustomed to having tangible safeguards we can clearly see. There are other times when we simply trust money more than we trust God. God asks us to trust Him with our lives (Prov. 3:5-6). Our finances belong to God as much as all other aspects of our lives.

Now that you have a clearer picture of where you stand in your financial generosity, let's move to the next page and take a look at the **Generosity Ladder**.

COMMITMENT WORKSHEET

Section 2 of 3

Generosity Ladder for Grateful

This tool is designed to help you identify how you are in trusting God with your finances and help you discover what your next step might be. While we are all at different places of trusting God with our finances, we can **all** take a next step. Based on the amount you calculated for **Box C** on the previous page, and your knowledge of your own personal habits, where do you find yourself? Take a moment and answer the question: **“So where am I on the Generosity Ladder?”** (see the left side of the ladder). The next question goes beyond math or any legalistic structure someone might impose: **How much of your income could you cheerfully return to the Lord by investing in gospel ministry?** (2 Cor. 9:7) Take a moment to pray, asking God for a cheerful and generous heart. Referring to the boxes on the right of the ladder, what is the next step for you and/or your family in your faith giving?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GRATEFUL Giver I give 16%+ of my income to Advent UMC	GRATEFUL	<input type="checkbox"/> I'd like to give 16%+ of my income to Advent UMC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COURAGEOUS Giver I give 11-15% of my income to Advent UMC	COURAGEOUS	<input type="checkbox"/> I'd like to give 11-15% of my income to Advent UMC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TITHING Giver I faithfully give 10% of my income to Advent UMC	TITHING	<input type="checkbox"/> I'd like to faithfully give 10% of my income to Advent UMC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INTENTIONAL Giver I give to Advent UMC but less than 10% of my income	INTENTIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> I'd like to give to Advent UMC consistently, but less than 10% of my income
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCASIONAL Giver I give to Advent UMC but not consistently	OCCASIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> I'd like to give to Advent UMC more frequently
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FIRST-TIME Giver I have given to Advent UMC once before	FIRST TIME	<input type="checkbox"/> I'd like to give to Advent UMC for the first time

Using the amount you calculated for your annual household income (**A**), determine how much you would need to give in order to reach your generosity goal. Calculate one space higher and one space lower than your goal as well.

INTENTIONAL	4% of A <input type="text"/> yearly ÷ 12 = <input type="text"/> monthly (D)	11% of A <input type="text"/> yearly ÷ 12 = <input type="text"/> monthly (D)	COURAGEOUS
	6% of A <input type="text"/> yearly ÷ 12 = <input type="text"/> monthly (D)	13% of A <input type="text"/> yearly ÷ 12 = <input type="text"/> monthly (D)	
	8% of A <input type="text"/> yearly ÷ 12 = <input type="text"/> monthly (D)	15% of A <input type="text"/> yearly ÷ 12 = <input type="text"/> monthly (D)	
	9% of A <input type="text"/> yearly ÷ 12 = <input type="text"/> monthly (D)	16% of A <input type="text"/> yearly ÷ 12 = <input type="text"/> monthly (D)	
TITHING	10% of A <input type="text"/> yearly ÷ 12 = <input type="text"/> monthly (D)	A <input type="text"/> yearly ÷ 12 = <input type="text"/> monthly (D)	GRATEFUL

COMMITMENT WORKSHEET

Section 3 of 3

Now that you have an idea of the amount you'd like to give, over the 24 month period, it's important to make a plan for how to give. We try to make giving as easy as possible with multiple ways to give over the 24 month period.

How are you planning to give regularly?

☐ I am going to give my first and best by automating my giving.

☐ I am going set aside finances to give during the offertory on Sundays.

☐ I am going to give online.

☐ I am going to mail in my giving.

Let's put it all together

Commitment to give monthly:

\$ D

Multiply amount in D by 24 to calculate Box T.

"GRATEFUL Initiative" Total

\$ T

Divide T by 2 (years). Divide result by A (annual income).

My new annual percentage:

%

My 2023 annual percentage:

C

Congratulations!

You are using your finances to accomplish our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. THANK YOU! Your financial partnership will be a part of life changing-ministry!

We will all have the opportunity to submit our Grateful commitment cards on Sunday, November 19, 2023, or visit advent-umc.org/grateful to make your commitment online."

Ways to Give and How to Set-up Your Pledge in Realm

There are many ways that you can choose to give at Advent.
Below are some of the ways that you can use automated giving at Advent:

1. Bill Pay – If you use online bill pay with your bank, you can set Advent up as one of your vendors. Checks will be mailed to Advent UMC directly from your bank as frequently as you request (weekly, bi-monthly, monthly, etc.). Please use the following mailing address:

Advent United Methodist Church, 2258 Woodruff Rd., Simpsonville, SC, 29681

2. Automated bank draft - You can set up recurring donations by authorizing a scheduled auto-draft from your bank account on the 1st and/or the 15th of each month. Please contact Christi Yenser to complete this set-up.

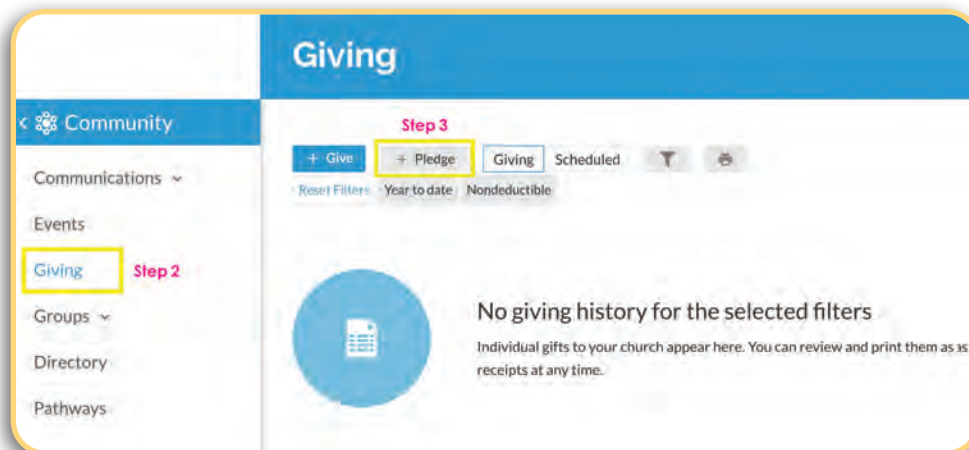
3. Realm – Realm gives you the option to make your donation via credit card or electronic check. You control the frequency of your donations and can start/stop them at any time.

Note: Advent incurs a fee for every online transaction. The amount charged varies depending on the method of payment, but it averages out to 3% of each transaction.

How to set-up your GRATEFUL Pledge in Realm!

STEP: 1

1. Log into your Realm account.
2. Click on **Giving** on the left hand side.
3. Click on **+Pledge** in the middle section.



STEP: 2

On the Pledge Screen, you will choose...

1. How much to pledge?
2. How often you want to give that amount?
3. Click **Save Pledge**

Grateful Initiative
Advent United Methodist Church

How much would you like to pledge?

Amount
\$ **0.00** *Step 1*

Step 2

ONCE A WEEK	EVERY 2 WEEKS	ONCE A MONTH	TWICE A MONTH	EVERY 3 MONTHS	ANNUALLY
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Start Date: End Date:

SUMMARY	\$0.00 once a week	\$0.00 total pledge
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Step 3

STEP: 3 *optional*

Online Giving is available for your convenience
using a credit/debit card, checking or savings account.

If there are any questions, please feel free to contact
Christi Yenser, Senior Church Accountant,
at **864-288-8217** or **christi@advent-umc.org**.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) What is the Grateful Initiative? Why is important for me to participate?

The primary goal of the GRATEFUL Initiative is to help all of us in our growth as disciples by reminding us of all that we have to be GRATEFUL for in Christ's atoning sacrifice for us and the faithful response that that requires of us. Our hope is that everyone will take their next faith step in financial giving by placing trust in God through extravagant generosity. Sharing God's gifts enables our great church to expand ministry impact and realize all we have to be GRATEFUL for.

Your financial gifts allow Advent to share the good news of Jesus Christ as we set out to accomplish our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Your financial gift will fortify plans for fostering personal spiritual growth and expanding our ability as a congregation to make a kingdom impact in our community, region and all the world. The GRATEFUL Initiative is asking all of us to pledge our giving to our missional and ministry initiatives, multi-campus expansion, capital improvements as well as the general operating budget of Advent. This new GRATEFUL Initiative combines the needs of the annual ministry operating budget and the over-and-above giving opportunity of our congregation into one simple, straightforward twenty-four month financial commitment.

2) Why should I commit and give to the GRATEFUL Initiative?

Your giving is making an impact in your life and your faith! What we all choose to do with the money God has entrusted us with is a faith issue. These decisions require us all to trust God with something we only have a limited amount of. If we can trust God with your finances, we can trust God with anything. When you are generous, Advent is able to do amazing things that we will all be GRATEFUL for.

3) How is my giving making an impact?

Our church family's generosity is the reason Advent is able to carry out our mission and all that accompanies every discipleship effort. The founders of Advent made a commitment to dedicate at least 10% of our annual operating budget to missions. To provide a few examples, your generosity provides houses for those transitioning out of homelessness (Homes of Hope/United Ministries), meals for children who would otherwise not eat over the weekends (Backpack Blessings), provisions for our partners at Harvest Hope Food Bank, home repairs through Salkehatchie, international ministry funding with partners like Compassion International, Full Dimension Ministry, and so much more!

Your generosity also helps transformation in the lives of those in our congregation. Throughout each week discipleship happens as the Lord ministers to the hearts and minds of our children, students and adults in community with each other. You also enable events like Advent Community Christmas, VBS, Christmas Under The Stars, Student Messy Night, EggVenture, etc., all of which bring guests onto our campus and provide an entry point for them to make Advent their church home.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

4) When will the GRATEFUL Initiative begin?

Commitment Sunday for GRATEFUL will be November 19, 2023 and your commitment begins in January 2024. This is a two-year ministry plan for 2024 and 2025 that will assist with budgeting, allocating financial resources in a manner that advances our mission. Our hope is that the initiative will also become part of a life-long commitment to discipleship and growth, particularly in relation to financial generosity. We also believe that prayerfully making a commitment to the GRATEFUL Initiative represents a step in faith that the Lord will use in mighty ways.

5) Can I automate my giving?

Yes, that is our preferred method of giving. You can set up electronic payments directly to Advent. To do so, please indicate that you would like to give electronically on your GRATEFUL commitment card.

6) How do I take the next step?

This booklet includes a worksheet to assist in developing your giving plan. Advent's goal is that everyone takes the next step in their financial generosity. If you don't currently give, we hope you will begin giving intentionally, whatever the amount or percentage of your income you bless Advent with. If you already give an amount under 10%, we hope you will take a step closer to 10% of your income. Once you have made your decision, all you need to do is complete the GRATEFUL commitment card. You will have the opportunity to offer this during Advent's Commitment Sunday Service on November 19th. You may also drop off or mail your commitment card to the church office or give online by visiting advent-umc.org/grateful.

7) What is the status of the Advent Scuffletown Campus?

Advent remains committed to our multi-campus reach, as we continue with regular, in-person worship at Advent Scuffletown. This worship service takes place at Rudolph Gordon School located at 1507 Scuffletown Rd in Simpsonville, SC. Worship is on Sundays at 10am and is contemporary in style. Your financial generosity will allow Advent Scuffletown to continue our mission in a community that has been excited to participate in worship events.



grateful



grateful

Advent United Methodist Church

Five Forks | 2258 Woodruff Road | Simpsonville | SC 29681 | (864) 288-8217 | www.advent-umc.org
Scuffletown | 1507 Scuffletown Road | Simpsonville | SC 29681 | (864) 288-8217 | www.adventscuffletown.org