

Letter from the Pastor

November-December 2020

Dear Avondale Family,

Like many people, Advent is probably one of my favorite times of the year. Advent is the period that includes the four Sundays before Christmas Day. Ever since the fourth century it has been considered a time of waiting, with anticipation, for the coming of the Christ Child. But, did you know that it used to be celebrated from November 11th (the feast of St. Martin) to Christmas Day. It was a time of preparation as those new to the faith prepared their hearts, minds, and souls for their baptism on Christmas Day. You can understand why they would need seven weeks instead of four.

Today, it is still considered a time of waiting and preparing. In fact this whole year has felt like a time of waiting and preparing. We've waited for the pandemic to be over. We've waited for a vaccine to be developed. We're waiting for the vaccine to be distributed. We've waited for children to go back to school. We've waited for an election. We've waited for the church to open, and we've waited for us to be able to worship in person again so we can gather together.

In my heart of hearts I never expected for us to have to wait so long to be together. Back in the early fall when we asked you to participate in the reopening survey it was my hope that we might be able to worship together in some capacity during Advent. We explored the options for limited in

-person worship and the logistics for hosting it safely. As our committee went through the process, the numbers climbed rapidly and a new mandate from the Governor's office restricted indoor groups to 10 people. The Worship Committee concluded that the risk was still too great and now was not the time to open. On one level that was a hard decision to make, but on the level of compassion and care for one another, it was a simple decision. I was proud of our team for putting the safety of our members above their own hopes and desires.

So we wait a little longer. But as we do so, we do it not in despair, but with hope and anticipation just as the season of Advent teaches us. For as people of faith we have an assurance, a divine assurance, that all is well because Christ is coming. After all that is the Good News of the season isn't it? The Messiah is coming, Emmanuel, God is with us.

In the meantime, even though we can't worship side by side, we are still striving daily at Avondale to do the Lord's work. We have been providing mission opportunities every month. We are offering learning opportunities to help folks grow deeper in their faith. We continue to check on and reach out to those who have limited mobility and continued....



...those new to the faith prepared their hearts, minds, and souls for their baptism on Christmas Day...

...we wait a little longer.....we do it not in despair, but with hope and anticipation just as the season of Advent teaches us....

Session Update

At the October 11, 2020 Stated Meeting of the Session the following actions were taken and information received:

- Approved Minutes of the September 13 Stated Meeting of the Session.
- Received confirmation of baptism of Emory Page Parks, daughter of

Chad and Kendel Parks on Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 4:00 PM in the Sacred Garden (Baptism was previously approved and subsequently delayed due to quarantine).

- Received a report from the Re-Opening Task Force concerning possible reopening for in-person worship, subject to congregational input via a survey to be circulated and continued....

In this edition:

- Advent Programs and Updates
- Christmas at Avondale Birthdays & Anniversaries
- New Elders
- Avondale in Action
- A Room In The Inn Update
- Member Care
- Finance News
- Coming Soon

continued... Session Update

appropriate safety precautions.

- Received an update on the financial condition of the Children’s Center, noting that it is in a strong position.
- Received information from the Property Committee regarding the Sacred Garden. Several trees were recently removed and will be replaced soon. Concerns have been expressed over neighborhood use of eth Garden. Elders agreed that use is good and should not be restricted. However, at the request of the Session, the Property Committee will develop appropriate educational signage regarding the intent and use of the Garden.
- Received information that a Next Steps Class for new members is being planned before the end of the year.

At the November 8, 2020 Stated Meeting of the Session the following actions were taken and information received:

- Approved Minutes of the October 11 Stated Meeting of the Session and October 18, 2020 Congregational Meeting.
- Received October 2020 Church Financial Report and September 2020 Avondale Children’s Center Financial Report.
- Received a gift from anonymous donors in the amount of \$44,260.12 to establish a fund in memory of Dolie Sitton. The Domicia Sitton Youth Music Endowment Fund (aka The Dolie Fund) seeks to enhance the music program at Avondale Presbyterian Church by providing scholarship assistance to deserving children and youth members of Avondale to attend church music and worship conferences and workshops.
- Approved a fundraiser by the Mission Ministry Team to raise funds during Advent 2020 to pay for continued hot lunches for children from the Alliance Center for Education (“ACE”) (formerly the Bethlehem Center) on Avondale’s campus each week.

- Received a Letter of Transfer for Jack and Betsy Gustafson to First Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC.
- Received a report from elders Nancy Bohrer and Amanda Shanks of the recent Presbytery meeting.
- Received a draft Church budget for 2021 for review with Ministry Team leaders.
- Received a report from the Re-Opening Task Force concerning results of the recent congregational survey and ongoing discussions of the Task Force.

continued... Pastor Letter

family support. And all season long we are hosting an outdoor Advent Walk to coincide with our on-line worship services. All of this is because of the tireless work of our leadership teams.

I am grateful and deeply thankful for our Staff, our Session, our Ministry Leaders, and for You our members, who have supported us and been so patient under these circumstances. My prayer is that you and those you love have a very Merry Christmas and I look forward to seeing all of you in the New Year!

Grace & Peace, Jim

Elders Elected

We had a quorum for the Congregational Meeting on October 18, 2020 and elected the Elders for the class of 2023: Arthur Baum; Cheryl Judd-Magee; Lynn Daniel; and Katherine Baloga, who will serve as Youth Elder, a one year term, class of 2021. Thank you for your participation and service to our Congregation.

[Read about them here.](#)



Member Concerns

If you know of any member concerns or needs, please do not hesitate to [email Rev. Jim.](#)

Memorials & Honorariums

In Memory of Tova Gunter

Given by Linda Haigh

In Memory of Jim and Lue Singer

Given by James Singer and Nancy Destasio

In Memory of Bordie McCloskey

Given by Jacqueline Smith

In Honor of Lyn Sweet and Family

Given by Linda Haigh

In Honor of the Avondale Adventures Youth Volunteers

Given by The Masonis Family

In Honor of Janet Harrison and Family

Given by Linda Haigh

Outreach & Next Steps

Avondale has found ways to be a community that congregates differently - and that also means reaching out to those beyond our members. Among the challenges the pandemic poses, there certainly are some blessings too. We know our online worship services are often drawing a bigger crowd over time than our brick-and-mortar services. Some of those are people who are finding Avondale for the first time. We want to get to know them. We now have an online form they can fill out to learn about Avondale and provide a way for us to follow up and welcome them. We've already had one person request to join the Next Steps class in December through this portal. We've also had a few new faces in our online Bible study classes. If you know of anyone doing some seeking during these times, please share with them these opportunities - and the Outreach team would love to know about them too!

Our Next Steps class took a hiatus these past few months. (In fact, we were planning one in March, the same weekend everything shut down). But it's starting up again with our next session scheduled for December 6 and 13 via Zoom. We have about a dozen people who want to participate, including a few who have found Avondale in recent months. We look forward to getting to know them better and sharing with them God's work at Avondale.

2020 Stewardship: Raising The Consciousness

\$ Pledges



115 Families Pledged
61 Pledge Increases
16 New Pledges

\$7,876 average received weekly

as of 12/01/2020



In case you missed it...

All Saints' Day

[Link](#)

A Prayer for Healing & Wholeness following the Election

[Link](#)

A Thanksgiving Message

[Link](#)

Advent Music & Meditation

[Link](#)

Stewardship & Finance

Year-End Contributions

Trying to make those last contributions for tax year 2020? Checks dated and mailed during the last week of December will be counted Tuesday, January 5th to allow for USPS delay. PayPal automatically time stamps donations, if you prefer to contribute online through December 31st.

As 2020 draws to a close, Jacqueline is available to provide instructions for stock gift transfers as well as to answer any questions such as pledge contribution progress since Q3 giving statements were distributed.

jacqueline@avondalepresbychurch.org

Your Bank Draft- Renew or Begin!

If you currently give via bank draft, your drafts *do not* automatically continue into 2020 unless you submit a 2021 pledge! Contact Jacqueline to give via draft on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis.

Stewardship 2020

The Stewardship Team would like to sincerely thank each and every person who has pledged to Avondale for 2021 and continues your pledge giving in 2020. If you find you cannot complete your pledged amount for 2020, it would be very helpful if you would contact the Church office and ask for Jacqueline. Please be reminded that

the committee does not know pledged amounts and/or balances due.



Stewardship 2021

We are grateful that 66% of our 2021 pledges were an increase, even though we have had very little personal, face-to-face, in-person contact with one another. It is a testament to your faith in God and in Avondale. Thank you. If you have yet to pledge for 2021, you can mail in your pledge card or complete one online.



Birthdays in December

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Lilly Stout | 10 Megan Hunter | 25 Scott Coble |
| 2 Jay Meier | Wynanda Sutherland | Caroline White |
| 3 Jim Bowen | 11 Mac Drozd | Grace White |
| 4 Logan Harris | Wilson Reed | 26 Wilson Major |
| Walker Hipps | 12 Nell McRae | 27 Mary Margaret Martin |
| Steven Phillips | 13 Liz Davis | Robert Suydam |
| 7 Kathleen Shannon | Helen Reed | 29 Christie Flowers |
| 8 Brian Drozd | 14 Miller Boyd | Greg McKenzie |
| Margaret McGinn | 17 Elizabeth Eyer | 30 Trish Boyd |
| 9 Regina Love | 18 Peggy Simpson | Chris Gardner |
| Olivia Sutherland | 19 Sara Chelena | Lilly McDonald |
| 10 Kyle Bowen | 21 Wade Mitchell | 31 Susanne Anderson |
| Lynn Daniel | 22 Natalie Thomas | Kemper Boyd |

Wedding Anniversaries in December

Alex and Emily Freeze	December 1, 2018
Adrian and Wynanda Sutherland	December 8, 2012
Ted and Belinda Camp	December 12, 2012
Chris and Lynn Mathis	December 16, 1972
Dave and Holly Thomson	December 18, 1993
Marc and Becky Chavaree	December 29, 2010
Brad and Karey Marren	December 31, 2010

Joys & Concerns

Prayer Requests

Lee Ballard; Michael Booher; Terry Brodof; Ruby Cathey; Abigail Corriher; Cal Hamilton; Janet Harrison and family; John Merritt; Marilyn Nolan; Deidrea Pavlin; Floyd Privette; Sarah Sperry; Billy Stanley; Lyn Sweet and family; Tina Taylor; Bill Thomas; Gail Trippodo; Blake Wallen; Lynn Wilkerson.

Baptism

Baptized October 7, 2020 in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, was Emory Page Parks, daughter of Chad and Kendel Parks.

Marriage

On November 12, 2020, Rev. Jim Ewing officiated the wedding of Stephen Hill and Katy LeGrand, who plan to take the Next Steps Class to join our church.

Church Triumphant

It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of Mrs. Rachel King (Allen) who entered the Church Triumphant on November 23, 2020. We share prayers with Rachel's family and friends.

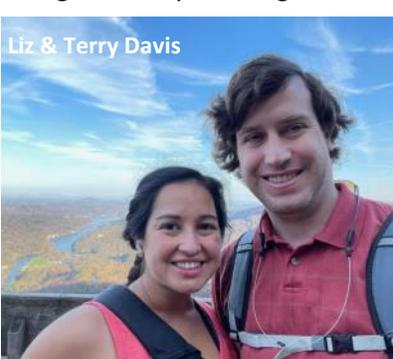


Engagement Pounding Celebration

Member Care organized a baking pantry "pounding" for Katy LeGrand and Stephen Hill. A Pounding Party is derived from Quaker tradition and similar to a housewarming party, except the soon-to-be-weds are given flour, sugar, butter and other pantry-stocking goods by the pound. Thank you to all for helping show our Avondale love and support to Katy and Stephen. A basket of pantry treasures was presented to them.

A Baby Blessing Basket

We celebrate with great joy the expected arrival of Liz and Terry Davis' first child on December 31, 2020. Member Care invites you to share in the excitement by contributing to a Baby Blessing Basket to be delivered to the



family. [The sign-up](#) includes preferred brands for diapers and wipes and their most frequented grocery stores and restaurants. Please drop-off items at the church office or the black bin at the FLC on or before December 21!



Birthdays in January

1	Lorin Bookout Jennifer Matz	15	Connie Love Betty Patterson	24	Ginny Mitchell
2	P.K. Kalevas	16	Billy Caldwell	25	Tom Cavanaugh Bonnie Howard
3	Tony McKenzie Marian Stout		Evan Wood		Andrew Patterson
7	Millie Patterson	18	Liam Platt Garrett Whitesides	26	JT Earl
8	Emma Ewing Croft Hamilton	19	Sue Haag	27	Jennifer Oglesby-Dewyer Holly Thomson
11	Thomas Lawson	20	Becky Chavaree William Doherty	28	Linda Haigh
13	Karen Eakes Marcia Halsey Leslie Saleeby	23	Ted Todd	31	Joshua Oswald Bill Thornberry Carolyn Wright

We have no Wedding Anniversaries for January to share.

Avondale in Action

Avondale Fall Picnic

A beautifully mild fall evening filled with live music, picnic dinners, pumpkin painting and trunk-or-treating was the gift in store for about 45 of us who gathered to enjoy each other's company in Avondale's courtyard. Congregational Life sponsored our first social gathering during pandemic challenged times and it was a relaxing interlude and welcome opportunity to connect with our friends. Carl and Wink were the dynamic duo who cranked out the tunes, got everyone rocking and rolling, and captured the Halloween spirit with their fog machine. Combine that with folks picnicking in the courtyard, children hand-painting pumpkins, enjoying playing in costume and trunk-or-treating and you have the backdrop for relaxed, playful moments! Thanks to the musicians, those attending and the hands and feet that coordinated details, set-up, made s'more's, and beverages as you worked to make the picnic a festive time together.

Bibles for Children

On October 13, Rev. Jim Ewing presented Bibles to 3 years old at the Avondale Children's Center. We shared pictures of the children with our October 25th service. Service

A Service for Healing...

Since our last newsletter, the U.S. President election was held. In the days following the election, we knew that many would be happy and many disappointed. A Prayer Service of Healing & Wholeness was shared in the Sacred Garden with Rev. Jim Ewing offering words and prayers to promote reflection, healing, and unity for all. Read words and prayer here.

ABC Ministry is now...

We are now the Avondale-ACE Team. You probably know why we had the name change; however, in case it snuck by you.... the Bethlehem Center of Charlotte organization changed its name to Alliance Center for Education ([ACE](#)). Going forward, you may hear ACE and ABC as we transition to the new name.

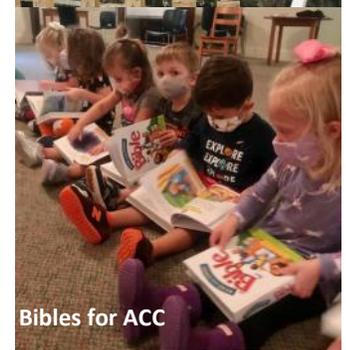
What about the ACE program right now at Avondale? Now that CMS is having in-person classes, the Avondale campus schedule for the kids is:

- Mon-Tues-Wed - all day at Avondale - Thurs-Fri - 2-6 PM
- Christmas break will be December 21, 2020 to January 2, 2021.

Our ACE Ministry is part of our Advent Mission projects. [See our website for details](#) about the Angel Tree and Christmas Stars fundraiser.



Fall Picnic



Bibles for ACC



Prayer Service after Election



Avondale Adventures

Avondale in Action



Alliance
Center for
Education

Room In The Inn

Dear Avondale,

For many years, we have served as a warm and comfortable resting place for our homeless neighbors during the winter months, through the Room In The Inn program of the Urban Ministry Center (now Roof Above). Because of the pandemic, Room In The Inn will look different this year, but there will still be plenty of opportunities to help. In lieu of hosting neighbors in churches this year, Roof Above and the Salvation Army will be operating dedicated facilities providing emergency winter shelter for men, dorm housing for working men, and emergency winter shelter for women and families. In total, these facilities will provide more beds than in a typical Room In The Inn year, while operating in a safe, socially distanced way.

Roof Above seeks help from churches primarily through providing food and item donations (volunteers at the shelters will primarily be professional staff, for safety reasons). Avondale will continue our monthly "lunches for the homeless" ministry through the winter months. In addition, look for opportunities in the near future to make donations of needed supplies for our homeless neighbors. Blessings, Mission Ministry Team

Youth Fall Retreat

Hello! What a weekend we had at Camp Grier! We played games, worked on a project for the camp, hiked to the fire tower, ran while we screamed, swam (some of us!) in the chilly lake, chilled by the fire, ate tin foil dinners, told stories, saw shooting stars, heard the story of Stripe and Yellow from Hope for the Flowers (our program), raked and blew leaves, picked-up sticks, worshiped in the woods and by the lake, and slept like rocks, and probably lots of other things! Thanks for trusting us with your youth and for the flexibility required to have a trip like this during the era of Covid. We spaced out as much and as often as possible and we were outside the majority of the time. We lucked out with amazing weather. Hope you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday and we look forward to seeing you again December 6th! Thank you! Zach, Meg, Court and Shea P.S. Thank you for supporting our youth through the Holiday Sale!

ACC in Action

Our Avondale Children's Center has been busy - as always! Families did their annual paperwork updates and reviewed the Sick Policy. There were many fun Halloween activities for the children and a staff Pumpkin Contest. There were traffic drop-off/pick-up procedures, picture days, staff changes, staff anniversaries, facility and compliance reviews, and more. Fun was had kicking-off the annual Book Fair, "Time Machine," celebrating our love for books. (Last day to order is December 3.) We shared with families the ways shopping could benefit the ACC, with Harris Teeter and Amazon Smile programs. In addition to the few things mentioned, the ACC implemented new software - KinderPass! Most importantly, the children learned, had fun, and were well-cared for.



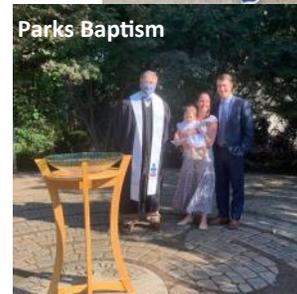
Avondale Adventures



ACC fun!



Member Care



Parks Baptism



Youth Group @ Camp Grier



Viola's birthday!

Avondale in Action

Advent Walk

All our ministry teams participated in the planning of our Advent Walks, shared every Sunday in Advent, to provide a meaningful Advent experience for our congregation and the community. Member Care will connect with members unable to come. Outreach will reach out to neighbors and greet guests. The season brings Mission opportunities to give back and an Advent Devotional the whole family will enjoy.

2nd Annual Avondale Christmas Marketplace

Avondale is holding the 2nd Annual Christmas Marketplace, this year it is online! From November 15 to December 18, Avondale is showcasing local artisans, highlighting 15 people with online exhibits for shopping. People place their order online then pay for and pick-up their items via drive-through at Avondale on the Saturday following. [Check out our market](#) and we thank you for supporting and celebrating the gifts of our local artisans.

Property Work Day

On Saturday, December 12, the Property team is planning for a mini workday to spread pine needles. This will be the only task! Grab your gloves and join us between 9 AM and 12 PM.

Mission: Lunches for Neighbors

Our first three Lunches for Homeless Neighbors events were a great success--it was so good to see each other and to provide some much-needed help for the 70 working men at the Roof Above dorm. Each time, the men were so appreciative of our efforts. We now have three additional dates, on December 29, January 26, and February 23.

Presents we bring.... Mission Update

Angel Tree Gifts

All gifts have been claimed
Bring your gifts to the Walk
Dec 6 & 13

Christmas Stars for ACE

Last day to purchase-Dec 13
Pick-up your Star Kit at the
Walk, assemble it and bring
back to Walk or office

Blessing Bags for Roof Above Program

Bags are due Dec 6
Please bring to the Walk or
contact office to turn in
earlier

A Morning Devotional

Our Morning Devotional online, that began September 14, continues. You can join in weekdays at 7 AM for a short devotion and time with others. We are following along with Bob Goff's, "Live in Grace, Walk in Love: A 365 Day Journey." The book is not required. Can't do 7 AM? Find the devotional video on our Facebook page and YouTube channel. [Contact the office](#) for the Zoom link to join!



DECEMBER

- Dec 1** - Taizé Prayer Service
- Dec 2** - Pop Tabs due to Brenda or Avondale
- Dec 3** - ACC Book Fair last day to place order
- Dec 5** - Youth Holiday Sale order pick-up from 9 AM to 12 PM
 - Christmas Market order pick-up from 10 AM to 12 PM
- Dec 6** - Second Sunday of Advent
 - Next Steps class 1 of 2
 - Advent Walk "Peace"
 - Christmas Marketplace Week 4 begins
 - Blessing Bags are due
 - Angel Tree Gifts drop-off at Walk
 - Music by *kNOW Greater Love* at the Advent Walk
 - Advent Walk pick-up your Contribution Envelopes, Devotionals
- Dec 9** - Avondale Social on Zoom
- Dec 12** - Property "Mini" Work Day 9 AM
- Dec 13** - Third Sunday of Advent
 - Next Steps class 2 of 2
 - Advent Walk "Love"
 - Christmas Marketplace Week 5 begins
 - Angel Tree Gifts due
 - Christmas Star Kits last day to order
 - Music by the *Avondellers* at the Walk
- Dec 20** - Fourth Sunday of Advent
 - Christmas Joy offering
 - Advent Walk "Joy"
 - Music by *Avondale Choir* at the Walk
- Dec 21** - Avondale Baby Blessing Basket gifts due
- Dec 23-25** - ACC Holiday Closure
- Dec 24-25, 28** - APC Office Holiday Closure
- Dec 24** - Christmas Eve
 - Christmas Eve Candle Lighting at the Advent Walk
 - Christmas Star Memorials & Honorariums
- Dec 27** - Guest Pastor
- Dec 29** - Lunches for Homeless Neighbors





Avondale Presbyterian Church
2821 Park Road
Charlotte, NC 28209

Newsletter Publishing Schedule

Avondale Avenues is published every other month on the last Tuesday of the month. Content deadline for the next newsletter is a week prior to publication. Send submissions to caroline@avondalepresbychurch.org.

Advent, Advent Walk & Advent Mission

Advent asks us to open our hearts to God. Each year at Avondale, there are ways to rejoice in the season through worship, devotional, music, and programs. Our worship theme is "A Different Sort of Christmas." Our Advent Walk this year is an outdoor event on our campus on Sunday afternoons. We invite you to learn more about our family-friendly Advent Walk on our [website](#).

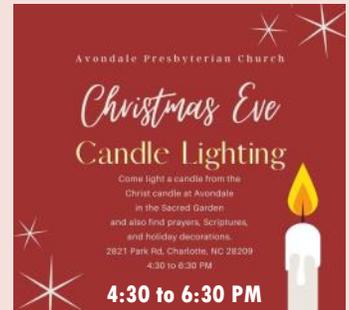
We also share the joy of giving. Our mission programs are: Angel Tree; Christmas Stars benefiting ACE, Blessing Bags, and the PC(USA) Christmas Joy Offering. For details on these opportunities and all of our program of Advent, [see our website](#).

Christmas Eve

Our Christmas Eve Candle Lighting service is part of our [Advent Walk](#). Drop-in to the Sacred Garden to light a candle and view our large Advent Wreath. Scripture and prayer will also be available.

Christmas Market

Friends and family are invited to shop our 2nd annual Christmas Marketplace. This year, the market is online with 15 local artisans over 5 weeks, going through December 18. Check out our online store as we celebrate the gifts of our community. [Link](#)



www.avondalepresbychurch.org