



CHURCH OF THE ADVENT EPISCOPAL

*A bridge to a better life through
Christ*

Parish Profile 2005

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THE GREAT COMMISSION

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to obey everything that I have commended them. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” [Matthew 28: 18-20]

OUR MISSION

To be the very best we can be at implementing The Great Commission in the Northwest Valley of Maricopa County, Arizona.

OUR VISION

“Advent, a bridge to a better life through Christ” This Bridge is realized through our worship, evangelism, ministry, outreach, Study, fellowship, stewardship and social life – as a Family in Christ.

INTRODUCTION

Church of the Advent is aptly named. It was founded on Advent Sunday 25 years ago in Sun City West, Arizona. This is a planned Senior Community where retirees come to enjoy the sun, the community activities and meet like-minded newcomers from all over the nation. The planners thoughtfully provided locations where churches could be built and Advent grew out of that vision.

As our Senior Warden explained recently to a reporter for “Living Church” – “We are very forward-looking. Our second Rector retired this past fall, which prompted the entire parish to give serious consideration to our future needs and desires. They concluded that we are no longer an isolated Senior Community. Indeed, a community of younger families is growing up around us waiting to be served and embraced by the parish.”

A Parish Plan* drawn up last summer was presented to the membership at large and received enthusiastic support. It was clear to all that Church of the Advent is, with God’s help, moving forward to an exciting future. There is no doubt it may take years to accomplish, but the journey has begun.

This Profile is filled with valuable information to help you become acquainted with our church, our people, our plans and our vision for the future.

* Parish Plan 2005 - 2007 (See Appendix C to access).

THE REGION

The climate in the Valley of the Sun which surrounds Phoenix has been described as being so nice for nine months of the year, you have no need for heaven, and the other three months are so hot you will have no fear of Hell. Local residents, however, don't consider even the summer months too bad, as you soon learn to work around the heat, and every building is air conditioned. It is one of the few places in the world where you can snow ski in the morning at Flagstaff and be in Phoenix to water ski in the afternoon. There is no violent weather except for the occasional thunderstorm in the summer monsoon season. The climate the San Francisco peaks outside of and terrain of Arizona varies greatly from almost sea level near the Colorado River to Flagstaff where mountains rise to an altitude over 12,000 feet.

The Sonoran Desert is not bleak and sandy as many deserts are, but is home to dozens of varieties of trees and cacti. Agriculture is one of the cornerstones of the Arizona economy, not cactus, but citrus, roses, cotton, nuts, alfalfa, etc.

Metropolitan Phoenix is one of the five largest cities in the United States and has all the amenities one would expect to find within such a large city. There are four professional sports teams: the Cardinals football, the Suns basket ball, the Coyotes Ice hockey, and the Diamondbacks baseball. Several professional baseball teams conduct their spring training within the West Valley. There are over one hundred golf courses, and fishing, hunting, and riding make the area ideal for a variety of outdoor sports.

Cultural activities of many types are also easily available. Ballet, opera, theater and symphony orchestras all have 'seasons.' Sun City West has its own Sundome for the Performing Arts and the Symphony of the West Valley. Arizona State University, a major university of over 60,000 students is in the suburb of Tempe. The world famous Heard Native American museum is located downtown. There is no lack of entertainment or cultural activities.

Luke Air Force Base, the largest fighter plane base in the United States is located in the West Valley and has the proud record of never losing a day of flight training due to weather in WWII. Phoenix has it all! Mountains and lakes all around it, snow three hours to the north, and seashore only four hours to the south on the Gulf of California.

Another benefit of this area is the relatively inexpensive housing, with property taxes that are much lower than most parts of the United States. Higher education is readily available from ASU with three campuses. The Maricopa Community College system has twelve campuses to make a college education and life-long learning available in all local areas.

The Valley is also becoming a highly respected area for excellent doctors and medical research with the Arizona Heart Institute, Barrow Neurological Institute, and the Boswell Hospital as well as the famed Mayo Clinic.

To sum up, the climate, environment, cultural and sporting events, educational opportunities, medical facilities and the cost-of-living, the Phoenix area is a truly great place to live.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHURCH OF THE ADVENT

In 1978 the Del Webb Corporation completed construction of their first community built for retirees. This was Sun City, Arizona and work immediately began on their second project which was named Sun City West. Both places are still operating under the government of Maricopa County and remain unincorporated. They were designed to be operated by and for active retirees.

In April of 1979 five protestant church groups in Sun City West came together to hold a common worship service in a Recreation Center hall. Each of the five planned to build a church on land already purchased, as soon as the population was large enough to support them.

The Episcopal Diocesan Dean for Western Maricopa County, Father Henry Getz, was the 'overseer' of Advent until the church was built and a permanent vicar was chosen.

On December 2, 1979 the first Sunday of Advent, the first Eucharist service was celebrated by the Church of the Advent in the Lecture Hall of the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center. Plans for a church building were announced in May, 1984. A capital funds drive was launched to create a building fund while at the same time; a Search Committee was seeking a vibrant and dynamic priest to get the new church underway. The Reverend James Price began his ministerial duties after Labor Day that year. 'Groundbreaking' took place in late September, 1984 and the Bishop's Committee gave way to a Vestry. The beautiful Spanish Mission style church was completed, the Bishop came for Confirmation and the Blessing of our church Bell and Columbarium and our life as a Parish, rather than a mission, began in October, 1990.

Advent tripled its membership between 1985 and 2004. Members have come from virtually every state in the union, bringing with them many beliefs and levels of tradition.

A generous gift from Dorothy and Eugene Paine made possible the addition of a spacious building known as Paine Hall. This provides a large center for parish dinners, Advent Academy, all club functions, annual parish meetings, the rummage sale, choir wardrobe room, and includes a large kitchen and pantry, rest rooms and a storage area.

In 1992 a new office wing was added which gave us a narthex, library, sacristy, conference room, administrative offices, lay minister's room, and Rector's office.

The Parish is composed almost entirely of retired families, however they are not simply enjoying a quiet retirement – they 'work' at volunteering in many different ways. They teach local children to speak English, they help build houses for Habitat for Humanity, and they are very active as Caregivers, among other things.

In 25 years, Church of the Advent has grown from a small group meeting with other church groups to a mature and very active Episcopal Church with much to offer the congregation and the community. Now we hope to follow THE GREAT COMMISSION as in Matthew 28, doing our very best in the West Valley of Phoenix. We expect to practice our worship, evangelism, ministry, outreach, study, fellowship, stewardship, and fun - as a Family in Christ.

SUMMARY OF 2004 SURVEY

In December of 2004, a comprehensive survey of the congregation was conducted by the Search Committee. The actual data that are used in this narrative are contained in Appendix 2 of this report. A copy of the survey is also contained in Appendix 2. Three hundred and four of us returned our survey. At Advent 59% of the parishioners are female, our average age is 74 years, 74% of us are married, and we have an average income of \$49,000- per year. Ninety percent of us are retired and 85% of us were either a professional or in management during our working days. We have attended Advent for an average of 10 years and 87% of us were Episcopalians before we came to Advent. We tend to stay members of Advent because we feel it is a friendly, caring, comfortable, spiritual parish. Most of us are permanent residents of the West Valley with an average of 2 months of the year spent on trips and vacations. Seventy-nine percent of us attend nearly every Sunday, although 74% state that we do not attend any other Advent service during the week. A high number of us (85%) pledge offerings to Advent and 17% of us pledge to another church. Of that 17%, 78% pledge both to Advent and another church.

On the conduct of services at Advent, 97% of us prefer a traditional service from the prayer book, although we state that we (55%) would accept a non-traditional service occasionally. Eight-nine percent of us believe we should have a stronger Christian education program and 84% like informally delivered sermons that challenge and educate us.

Ninety percent of us believe that we need a strong program to train deacons and lay ministers, so they can assist the rector in his/her duties. Sixty-one percent believe that the rector should visit every member's home at least once every two years. We stated (82%) that we would support the hiring of a female rector if that individual was the best-qualified applicant. As far as the rector blessing a same sex union, 89% of us stated that we would not approve such an action. On outreach, 77% of us believe that we should strive to give 10% of our budget to outreach programs. We appear to have social needs as 77% of us believe that Advent should schedule more social events to increase camaraderie and friendships within the parish. Ninety percent of us prefer traditional, liturgical music, although 61% stated that they would accept other sacred music occasionally. Ninety percent of us believe the Parish Plan for the next three years is on target to meet our parish's needs and 77% stated the Plan motivated us to increase our pledge for 2005.

DIOCESE OF ARIZONA

The Diocese of Arizona was established by General Convention in 1959, but its history began 100 years before that as part of the vast Northwest Diocese. In 1892 Arizona became a separate missionary district of the church. Seventy years later, the first diocesan bishop, Joseph Harte, was elected by Diocesan Convention. We recently enthroned our fourth Bishop, Kirk Stevan Smith.

The diocese covers 89,000 square miles, and is one of 19 western dioceses in Province 8 of the Episcopal Church. Arizona is one of only a few dioceses with its own Cathedral. Trinity Cathedral in downtown Phoenix was founded in 1885 and was formally dedicated as the Diocesan Cathedral in 1991.

Since assuming his full responsibilities for the diocese, Bishop Kirk has laid out a very aggressive plan for expanding the Episcopal Church in Arizona. Two of his recent appointments include The Reverend Canon Chuck Robertson, PhD, Canon for Congregational Development and Stewardship and the Reverend Canon Earl Gibson, responsible for Youth Ministries. Another important role is filled by Canon Bill Greeley, Deployment Officer and Interim Dean of Trinity Cathedral.

For more information on the Diocese of Arizona, follow this link <http://www.episcopal-az.org>.

WORSHIP MINISTRIES

SERVICES: Regular Sunday services are held at 8 and 10 a.m. The 8 o'clock service draws a regular segment of the congregation who prefer a service without music. Holy Eucharist Rite II is celebrated at the 10 o'clock service, with the singing of traditional hymns and an offertory anthem rendered by the choir. Holy Eucharist Rite I is used at both services during Lenten and Advent seasons.

Since many in the congregation travel to cooler climes during the summer months, one service is held at 9:00 during June, July and August. A Holy Eucharist and Healing Service is celebrated at 5 p.m. every Tuesday. During Lent, the service is preceded by Stations of the Cross. Morning Prayer is read Monday through Saturday at 8:00 a.m. Evening Prayer is read at 5:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. These services are conducted by Lay Ministers.

LAY MINISTERS: Advent has nineteen certified lay ministers, seven of whom are Lay Eucharistic Ministers. Four assist the Rector at Sunday services, weddings, funerals, and other special services. Positions served by the four Lay Ministers' are crucifer, acolyte, and two lay readers. The Lay Eucharistic Ministers provide a valuable service by visiting and taking communion to members unable to attend church services.

ALTAR GUILD: A dedicated Altar Guild, comprised of 15 active members, plus a group 'in training', cares for the Rector's vestments, and prepares the altar for all Sunday, healing, funeral and memorial, wedding and baptism services. Their duties include the laundering of all altar linens and the ordering of wine, host and candles. One member is responsible for altar flowers and another for ironing the fair linen.

GREETERS AND USHERS: A group of volunteers serve as ushers and greeters at Sunday services. Greeters bear the oblations to the altar and ushers pass the offering plates.

MUSIC: We are blessed with an active and dedicated choir under the leadership of Yvonne Reed, Choral Director. The Organist, Alban Gray, and Yvonne both have considerable professional musical backgrounds. Most of the Sunday songs are traditional favorites from the Hymnal, but the choir often sings American folk melodies and spirituals, as well as patriotic and seasonal music.

Each year the Choir and the congregation look forward to special musical programs prepared for important Church periods such as Advent, Christmas and Easter. This year the "Winter Rose" cantata was performed at Advent and the "Requiem" by Faure was performed during Holy Week. The Choir is off during the summer months when many members are out of town. The organist provides service music and soloists offer anthems at most Sunday services.

The Parish is most grateful for the important services and commitment to the Advent community of the choir members as well as the Choir Director and Organist. They inspire us all to an ever-greater appreciation of our musical heritage.

OUTREACH

The parishioners at Advent practice Outreach as a part of their stewardship – the support of God’s work with their time, talent and treasure. Advent’s Outreach function is intended to identify and fill the needs of individuals, groups and organizations that will benefit from assistance, be it monetary, supportive or spiritual.

This has been an important part of Advent from the beginning. Over the years, Outreach has been offered in many forms – through the operating budget and through groups within the parish. Our Plan goal is eventually to commit 10% of the operating budget to outreach activities. The parish budget has supported outreach into the Episcopal community by its support for seminary education. The “Good Mourning Group” is a program for those suffering the loss of a spouse, child or friend and is offered to congregants as well as other people in the area. Parishioners are generous in support of missionary and diocesan relief funds. The ECW and Men’s Club are active in fund raising and in providing programs that will benefit parish members. Some examples:

- Interfaith Community Services: local social services
- Annual Food Drive: food for the needy program
- School Supplies distributed to local elementary schools
- Infant & children’s supplies to local shelters and hospitals
- Habitat for Humanity: building houses for low income people

Outreach is one key step in implementing the Great Commission. It is a cornerstone of our Strategic Plan: *A Bridge to a Better Life through Christ.*

FELLOWSHIP

Advent has many opportunities for fellowship throughout the year. In addition to the events listed below, we have a Christmas Dinner, an Easter Dinner and the Advent Birthday Party plus a Summer Picnic which is held at a local park with a catered dinner and musical entertainment.

FRIENDSHIP DINNERS: are held five times a year in the homes of members in groups of 8 to 12. The November gathering is held at the church with all participants sharing an evening meal together.

SOCIAL HOUR: is held weekly after the 10 a.m. service in Paine Hall. The hosts take turns supplying the cookies and ‘manning’ the coffee and tea lines. This is now being tried after the 8 a.m. service and is proving to be very popular.

BRIDGE: is very popular. The Ladies’ Bridge meets once a month for a sociable afternoon. Ladies’ Marathon Bridge is played in groups of four from October through April and Men’s Bridge meets twice monthly at the church.

ECW: has programs and luncheons monthly and sponsors various groups such as the “Advent”urous Bakers who bake and sell delicious goodies at bake sales throughout the year. The Crafters knit and sew and make many items for needy children. The ECW also manages the annual rummage sale that usually raise several thousand dollars for Outreach activities annually.

SINGLES CLUB: is an active group who meet for fellowship and fun.

ADVENT MEN’S CLUB: conducts monthly meetings begin with Morning Prayer service followed by breakfast, a business session and a program. They sponsor several dinners, Saturday morning golf games, and other events during the year.

PASTORAL MINISTRY

Church of the Advent has a dedicated group of caregivers who visit assigned parishioners, both the hospitalized and homebound. The caregiver maintains communication with these parishioners, provides assistance where needed, requests visits by the Rector and reports activities to the Chairman of the Caregivers. Both men and women are actively involved in this pastoral ministry.

To assist the Clergy and provide a vital ministry, Advent has a team of Lay Eucharist ministers who take communion to people who are unable to come to services. In addition, our Clergy regularly visit the home, hospice or hospital bound. Our Deacon provides training and leadership within this vital ministry.

When a death occurs, the caregiver then assists the bereaved family, as needed, with mortuary arrangements and as a liaison with the Rector in conveying the family's wishes concerning funeral or memorial services. The caregiver continues to assist the family before, during and after the service. Follow-up calls are made to check on the well being of the surviving family and to inform them of grief materials and counseling services that are available through the parish.

A Bereavement Reception Committee provides a reception following the service in accordance with the wishes of the family.

ALL SOULS MEMORIAL GARDEN

Church of the Advent provides a peaceful garden for the ashes of members to be interred. The setting is that of an outdoor chapel. There is an altar which is used once per year for the All Soul's Day Eucharist during which the interred are remembered by name and on other occasions.

In ground interment is available in the garden. Ashes are buried either directly in the ground or in an urn according to the prior wishes of the deceased or the family. A bronze plaque with the name of the interred is placed on the wall surrounding the garden. Provision is made for husband and wife to share a plaque.

We also have an above ground Columbarium where the ashes are interred in niches. The marble face stone is engraved with the name of the interred. The niches accommodate two urns and the marble face stone may be engraved for one or two people.

There is a separate Wall of Remembrance where a small marble plaque honors a deceased member of the parish whose ashes are interred elsewhere.

LOOKING AHEAD

During the nine months preceding this document, members of Church of the Advent provided input, as detailed throughout this Parish Profile, including the desire to:

- Increase membership by 50% - from approximately 400 members currently to around 600 by the end of 2007.
- Focus on ministries and programs for seniors. Our average age is 74.
- Continue to improve and expand Pastoral services to the congregation.
- Add Adult Christian Education to existing parish programs and to expand our fellowship opportunities.

Our physical facilities and the projected population growth in the immediate geographic area during the next three years, along with the will of the current membership, indicate this Plan can and will be achieved.

STEWARDSHIP: Following five years of flat or declining membership and a corresponding decrease in our operating budget, we are now back in a growth mode that corresponds to the population growth rate of the surrounding communities. In 2003 pledge receipts were \$280,000.00 plus an open offering of another \$25-\$30,000. However, last year the numbers decreased by almost 20%.

This year's operating budget is targeted at \$300,000 plus an additional \$35,000 for projected search expenses, is expected to yield a loss of \$35,000 for the year. However this amount is consistent with projected membership growth during 2005. It will enable Advent to undertake its stated plan. The complete 2005 budget report can be found in Appendix B, which also includes a statement of our Cash Position.

We are a debt-free parish, which is exceptional. Over the next few years, the challenge is to apply our resources thoughtfully so that Advent can welcome new members with a rewarding program of services and activities. We believe that our stewardship goals are ambitious, but achievable.

A new Stewardship Committee is being formed to operate on a year-round basis, educating the congregation on the true meaning of maximizing the giving of Time, Talent and Treasure, to the betterment of Advent and our surrounding communities, as well as the Diocese of Arizona and the National Church. Our goal for combined Outreach is to direct 10% of our income to meaningful charities.

ENDOWMENT: Currently this fund contains only \$100,000.00 and needs to be increased. In our community of primarily retired persons of means, it is our plan to launch a program of education and planning services with the goal that during the next ten years this fund can be raised, to \$2,000,000.00 or more. Earnings from a substantially larger corpus will enable us to accomplish much more than Pledge, Plate and Special Gifts allow at present.

We are actively and aggressively working with the Diocesan Canon for Congregational Development and Stewardship/Endowment, to put this ministry “on track”. During 2005, the Vestry will form two commissions. “Heritage” to reconstruct where Advent has been in its first 25 years; and “Horizons” to formulate plans for the next five and ten years, including the sponsoring of another Episcopal mission in the West Valley.

With the support and leadership of our next Rector, Advent will truly become “*A bridge to a better life through Christ*”.

ORGANIZATION

THE CHURCH OF THE ADVENT, EPISCOPAL

Bishop of Arizona
Interim Rector
Deacon

The Rt. Rev. Kirk S. Smith
The Rev. David L. Thom
The Rev Jan Wilner

The church is located at 13150 Spanish Garden Dr, Sun City West, AZ, 85375.

The telephone number is 623.584.0350 and E-Mail may be addressed to:

information@adventepiscopalaz.org The Parish Website is <http://www.adventepiscopal.org>

STAFF: In addition to our Rector, currently we have a treasurer, a volunteer bookkeeper, a parish secretary, and when needed, professional auditors.

THE VESTRY: Members are elected for a 3 year term with the exception of the Senior Warden, who is appointed by the Rector and the Junior Warden who is elected for a one year term. Currently the members are:

Martha Garth	Pat Finnell
Jean Carlson	Dirk Prather
James Taylor	Gordon Williams
Ray Chapman	Warren Sax
Joan Keese	

Senior Warden: Allan Budd.

Junior Warden: Norman Gough.

THE SEARCH COMMITTEE: Any potential candidate or parishioner, who may have questions about the Parish Profile or the application process, should contact the Chairman of the Search Committee:

Darryl Bach Telephone: 623.544.4583 E-Mail: search@adventepiscopalaz.org

The Parish Profile was written and compiled by the members of the Advent Search Committee, who are:

Dallas Finnell	Chuck Fowler
Alleen B. Mayo	Dirk Prather
Earl Thomas	Karen Zito

APPENDIX A:

PARISH SURVEY REPORT

Three hundred and four individuals responded to the survey. This was a 90% return from people who were given a survey after a church service in December. Some people received a questionnaire in the mail and the return rate from those was only 25%.

Following is a broad sampling of the questions and answers.

Male members	41%
Female members	59%
Average age	74.1 years
Average yearly income	\$49,000.00
(This number may not be correct as 19% of the responders opted not to answer even though the survey was anonymous.)	
Married	74%
Single	3%
Divorced	3%
Widowed	18%
Single with live-in friend	2%
Current work status:	
Full-time	4%
Part-time	6%
Retired	90%
Primary vocation:	
Professional	50%
Managerial	35%
Technical	4%
Skilled	11%
Months in the West Valley each year:	10.5 months
Number of regular services each month:	
Four	79%
Three	10%
Two	8%
One	3%
Pledge at Advent:	
Yes	85%
No	15%
Pledge at another church:	
Yes	17%
No	83%

Opinions on the conduct of services at Advent:

97% prefer a traditional service from the prayer book.

55% would accept a non-traditional service occasionally.

89% believe we need a stronger Christian education program.

94% prefer sermons that challenge and educate them.

84% prefer informally delivered sermons.

Opinions on the rector and Advent in General:

90% believe we need a strong training program to train deacons and lay ministers to assist the rector.

61% believe the rector should visit every member's home at least once every two years.

82% stated that they would support the hiring of a female rector if that individual was the best qualified applicant.

89% stated they would NOT approve of our rector blessing a same sex union.

77% state that we should set aside 10% of our budget to Outreach.

77% believe Advent should schedule more social events to promote camaraderie and friendships in the parish.

90% believe the parish plan was on target as to Advent's needs.

77% stated the parish plan motivated them to increase their pledge.

Opinions on the music program at Advent:

90% prefer traditional, liturgical music.

61% stated that they would accept occasional augmentation of the music program with other sacred music.

APPENDIX B:

Church of the Advent 2005 Budget
2005 Recommended by Finance Committee, 12/11/2004
Vestry Approval: 1/24/2005

Income		
Pledge receipts	\$	255,000
Non-pledging members	\$	37,000
Interest & misc.	\$	4,050
Total Income		\$ 296,050
Expenses		
Diocesan Assessment.	\$	42,000
Clergy Expenses:	\$	100,376
Staff Expenses:	\$	59,346
Insurance:	\$	12,119
Utilities:	\$	14,381
Prop. Maint/Repair:	\$	28,100
Office Expenses:	\$	22,050
Worship	\$	2,000
Other Expenses:	\$	18,655
 <i>Operating Expenses</i>		 \$ 299,027
Operating Profit/(Loss)		\$ (2,977)
 Search Expense	 \$	 (34,500)
Net Profit/(Loss)		\$ (37,477)

The Church of the Advent
Cash Position 12/31/2004

CASH AND INVESTMENTS		
Endowment Corpus	\$	106,268
Major Bequests	\$	185,313
All Souls Chapel Plaque Reserve	\$	16,048
Endowment Dividends	\$	1,078
Investment Money Market	\$	30,871
Bank Savings	\$	20,639
Checking	\$	2,650
Total Cash and Investments		\$ 362,867
(Less:) Funds Restricted/Designated for specific uses	\$	(298,917)
Accounts Payable & Adjustments	\$	(3,877)
Accrued Expenses/Deferred Income.	\$	(9,196)
Cash and Investments available for general use		\$ 50,877

APPENDIX 3

PARISH PLAN 2005 – 2007

Rather than attach the Parish Plan to this document, thereby increasing download time. Please go back to our web page, www.adventepiscopalaz.org, click on the button “Parish Profile & Plan” then click on the link [Advent Parish Plan 2004 Version 0.pdf](#) to download the plan. This document contains much more detailed information on Advent attendance and stewardship history as well as area demographics.