

*Friends in Christ. Serving Together with Love*

# Saints Alive!

December 2024 | Volume 22, Issue 10

## **Wet Paint**

*By Rev. Dr. Kristian Bendoraitis*

At some point soon, there will likely be wet paint in my office. Currently there is a beautiful lemon crème color that is reminiscent of the soft golden sunlight at dawn or a bridesmaid's dress from the late 1960s (yes, I have been looking at old pictures recently). Nevertheless, it is a color that was chosen many years ago. It is in need of a touch-up and also of being revisited to see if it is still the right color for where we are now.

The color might change, but not the walls. And yet, even if the walls were to change, the function of the pastoral office would not. It is a place to work, pray, study, talk, listen, write, read, laugh, cry, and have fun. No matter what color is chosen for the walls, or what location the bookcases or desk

end up, the function of the office is sustained.

Some of you might have noticed some changes to the bulletin or the order of the service. On a few Sundays, we have done some of the prayers differently or sung a few less songs. The "color" of the service may be shifting, but the function of what the service is about has not. Every week, great care goes into crafting each service so that the heart and purpose of the service stays centered on our corporate worship and experience of the living God. As a staff, we are working hard to remain faithful to the meaning of the liturgy while being flexible with the form.

For the moment, we are still putting up "paint swatches," experimenting with what works for other elements in the

service. Have patience with us as we try new things, laugh with us when things clash unintentionally, and celebrate with us when we hit the mark, finding the harmony between liturgy and worshipping God.

Who knows, I might keep the yellow in my office, knowing that is a good color that a lot of people enjoy. (I might change only one wall or leave one yellow wall; time will tell.) Sometimes what you have is still really good because it works. In the meantime, we're going to see where our creative ideas take us so long as they don't take away from the purpose and meaning of our activity and keep us centered on God. Come on this journey with us, seeking God's heart and responding to Jesus' invitation to, "come, follow me."



# Contents

Did you wonder what happened to all the beautiful crochet and knitted hats and scarves from ALPC's Yarn Ministry that were displayed a few weeks ago? Well, last Wednesday, I delivered four boxes of those items to Church of the Redeemer in Lorain. They are working with two other churches to give away those hats and scarves at their community meals and food pantries.  
-Kathy Navarino

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Perk up with a cup of joe at our Coffee House! Sundays at 10 a.m., worship services are live-streamed so you can watch from the comfort of the couch while enjoying a hot beverage, a donut, and of course, fellowship. If you prefer worshipping in the sanctuary, coffee and tea are always available after the service.

## Mission Statement

In awe, we Receive God's Grace and Gospel.  
In gratitude, we Respond with Worship and Servanthood.  
In love, we Represent Jesus Christ as we minister to transform lives in family, community, and the world.

*If you would like to be a worship service volunteer, please contact the head organizer of the position you're interested in.*

**Worship Assistants:** Sherry Spenser, sherryspenser@hotmail.com

**Greeters:** Lee Lohr, LeelaAnn60@gmail.com

**Ushers:** Kathy Hamilton, kmhamilton228@gmail.com

**Communion Servers:** Lee Lohr, LeelaAnn60@gmail.com

**Coffee Servers:** Cris Till, b.cristill17@gmail.com



# Deacons' Report

Submitted by Sybil Wendling

Our ALPC Deacons spent our last meeting planning fun activities through the summer as well as discussing how we can revamp our formal congregational care program. We've used a variety of models for congregational care over the years — from matching up Deacons with members of the congregation to establishing teams of people to help others with immediate emergency needs or ongoing issues. We're looking forward to working with Kristian to take great care of our congregation. If you have any suggestions or want to be part of this

ministry in the future, please grab a Deacon and let them know.

As we're heading toward a season of more challenging driving conditions, please remember that the Deacons are happy to provide rides to and from church services. If you need a ride, contact the church office at 440-933-6240 or Sybil Wendling. Don't let a lack of transportation stop you from getting to service.

Our Deacons also deliver Bill Till's delicious home-cooked meals on the fourth Sunday of each month to ALPC members who don't get out as much as they used to, who are having health

challenges, or who would just enjoy a meal and a smile. If you'd like a meal, don't hesitate to mention it to Kenzi in our church office, Deb Reichlin, the Hamiltons, or the Tills. Deacons can always use help delivering meals, too. If you'd enjoy being part of this ministry, please let Sybil know.

If you're looking for a way to keep active this winter, remember that Sandi Seib is continuing her yoga classes on Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. No matter where you are in your fitness journey, you're always welcome. Donations support our Guatemala missions.

Save the date for these Deacon events!

 <h2>DECEMBER 15</h2> <h3>CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST</h3> <p>Join the Deacons for a delicious morning of pancakes, sausage, and fellowship. 8:30am - Choir Members 9am - General Congregation</p>		 <h3>COCOA &amp; COOKIES</h3> <p>Warm up with cocoa and cookies after the annual caroling event!</p>
<h2>JANUARY 26</h2> <h3>CHILI COOKOFF</h3>  <p>Following the congregational meeting. Dust off your recipes! Who will win the 2025 Golden Ladle?</p>	<h2>FEBRUARY 23</h2> <h3>BOWLING WITH FRIENDS</h3>  <p>at Spevok's Nautical Lanes Time &amp; Cost TBD</p>	<h2>MARCH 16</h2> <h3>π PI DAY!</h3>  <p>Following worship, it's a pie potluck! Bring your savory or sweet pies to share. Math optional.</p>
<h2>APRIL 20</h2> <h3>EASTER BREAKFAST</h3>  <p>8:30am - Choir Members 9am - General Congregation</p>	<h2>MAY 18</h2> <h3>CRUSHERS GAME</h3>  <p>Cheer on the Lake Erie Crushers as they take on the Ottawa Titans. Cost: Approx. \$15 per person Time TBD</p>	

# Session Highlights

*From the regular meeting held on November 19, 2024.*

*Submitted by Elizabeth Shoemaker,  
Clerk of Session*

- ◆ The Deacons have monthly events planned all the way until summer. Stay tuned!
- ◆ In October, expenses exceeded income again, though the YTD deficit is not as large as budgeted. Members are encouraged to help erase the deficit.
- ◆ The reimbursement forms used in the office will be modified to help track the committee budget line items the expenses are applied to.
- ◆ Some stewardship pledges have already been turned in.
- ◆ A new financial secretary may be needed in the new year.
- ◆ Office hours will be posted in the bulletin each week, obviating the need for a schedule board in the office.
- ◆ A program for direct depositing staff checks will be investigated.
- ◆ The employee manual will be updated to reflect the handling of regular and overtime hours.
- ◆ Cornerstone Preschool is willing to install awnings over the kitchen and youth foyer entrances.
- ◆ The Cornerstone Preschool tuition for the 2025-26 school year was approved.
- ◆ The Cornerstone Preschool drop-off pattern was deemed not a sufficient cause of delay.
- ◆ Our volunteers for Grandparents' Day at Cornerstone had a lot of fun.
- ◆ Pastor Kristian is encouraging Session to give thought to efficient use of our spaces.
- ◆ The Fix-it Saturdays have been very successful, with up to 12 participants fixing many things!
- ◆ Money for turkeys was donated, so the meals we donate will have turkeys this year.
- ◆ Mission has a goal to raise \$1000 for the Open Hearts program to provide for youth in foster care.
- ◆ Evangelism has plans to promote our family-friendly services at the Cornerstone Christmas program.
- ◆ New cards for prayer requests, visitors, and getting involved are being designed for the pew racks.
- ◆ A family-friendly service and a traditional service will be held on Christmas Eve.
- ◆ Sign-ups are being taken to light the Advent candles and place nativity figures. No speaking parts!





# Financial Report

Submitted by Cheryl Dean, Finance Committee Chair

As we near the end of 2024, please help us stay financially sound so we can continue to do all the good things we have been doing and be in a position to do any new things that God is calling us to do. As you can see below, this year's giving is almost \$30,000 behind our anticipated giving. Spending is about \$32,000 behind

what was anticipated, so that is helping, but we need to turn things around. Our overall deficit so far this year is about \$8,500. In the past when we have anticipated a deficit, the generosity of this congregation has kept us from having to use savings. If you have fallen behind with your giving, please try to catch up. If you can give a little extra, that would also be greatly appreciated.

Simple Give (QR code below) can be used for general giving or for giving to a specific fund. If you would like to designate a contribution to a specific fund, please contact Marcy or Cheryl to specify the fund and we will make sure it gets to the correct place.

Any financial questions may be addressed to Marcy Uhl, Treasurer, or to Cheryl Dean, Finance Committee Chair.

	Oct. YTD Actual	YTD Budget
<b>Income:</b>		
Congregational Giving	\$204,918.48	\$233,333.33
Other Income	21,764.88	19,816.67
Total Income	<u>\$226,683.36</u>	<u>\$253,150.00</u>
<b>Expense:</b>		
Staff Expense	\$156,016.41	\$188,619.64
Worship & Spiritual Life	6,515.13	6,791.66
Christian Education	2,485.10	3,416.67
Stewardship & Mission	4,078.67	4,291.66
Property	36,530.95	41,666.66
General Expenses	20,657.78	19,666.68
Per Capita Expense	8,968.00	8,968.00
Total Expense	<u>\$235,252.04</u>	<u>\$273,420.97</u>
Net Income (Loss)	-\$8,568.68	-\$20,270.97



Using the camera app on your smart phone, aim your camera at this QR code. A link for SimpleGive will pop up; click the link and you will be taken directly to ALPC's online donation platform. You can scan the code from anywhere - paper bulletins, wall projections during worship, even right here as you read!

# Christian Education

By Emilee Oliva, Director of Christian Education

This past month has flown by remarkably quickly. Revival Youth enjoyed a delightful evening of fellowship, graciously hosted by the Brunner family, who welcomed us into their home to make cookies. The youth packed those cookies into lunches for the Haven House, and they also had the chance to earn funds for additional activities. We extend our gratitude to everyone who purchased cookies; the youth raised a total of \$133 from this initiative.

Meanwhile, the Sunday school children have completed their “Follow

Me” curriculum and are now engaging with their Advent curriculum under the guidance of their dedicated teachers.

As we navigate this busy season, let us remember to slow down and appreciate the blessings God has placed before us. Advent provides an ideal opportunity for reflection, reminding us to dive deeper into our faith and values. It is a time to strengthen our connections with family and to engage more intentionally with God.

Our Advent study this season serves as a testament to strength, resilience, and fearlessness as we explore the profound narratives surrounding those

who contributed to the birth of Jesus. If you have not yet enrolled in the class, that is perfectly acceptable! We still strongly encourage you to purchase the book *Calling All Angels* to embark on this enriching journey at your own pace.

Let this time be a testimony of your faith and a reminder of the beautiful work of God. We are profoundly grateful for each of you and hope you recognize how deeply you are cherished. Your lives hold significant purpose, and as we age, let us unite during this time to celebrate the birth that embodies the profound essence of our faith.



*Youth Revival had a wonderful evening of fellowship at host Shannon Brunner's house. The resulting cookies were sold as a fundraiser as well as donated for Haven House lunches.*

# Missions

*“There are only two seasons, winter and baseball.” -Bill Veeck*

*Submitted by Beth Janis, Mission Committee Chair*

There is absolutely no doubt that ALPC is a Mission Outreach church! Our budget was nearing zero in November. But, our church members provided turkeys and grocery money to insure the families that needed some help got all they needed for a harvest feast. And, of course, all the donations from Cornerstone families and ALPC members and guests are a blessing.

This December we have three opportunities for meaningful gift giving. The first is **Operation Open Heart**. Kathy Leopold will share their story Sunday, December 1. This group has mentored kids in foster care for more than sixty years! We would like to help them this Christmas with funds to buy a gift card for each child in the program. Donations may be made payable to ALPC noted “Operation Open Heart.”

**Christmas Joy** is a PCUSA annual offering that focuses on retired

pastors, church workers, and their families. Please take a look at the flyers with your December bulletins. Like many of us, it’s hard to put aside money to cover unexpected illnesses or injuries. Pastors and church employees often have a more difficult time because pensions and benefit packages are not “standardized.” This special offering is a way to help the people that have committed their time and talents to others. There are special envelopes for your donation or you can write “Christmas Joy” on your check or deposit.

The third way to help others is our **Christmas Eve offering for the Mission Outreach fund**. Mission Outreach is the “budget” for mission activities like the sixty brown bag lunches and 60-80 hot meals each month for families residing at Haven Center shelter. The shelter is for people without housing (including single women). We also help support Lorain Cooperative Ministries (LCM) which includes sister churches in

Lorain County. They provide food pantries, help with documents like birth certificates, transportation help, medical help including medicine and even a low-cost or free clothing store. Valor Home and Community Resource Services (CRS) are also part of our donation group.

We are blessed to be able to work with organizations in Lorain County. We are currently the only Presbyterian Church in the county that does. We feel called to help locally whenever we can.

We welcome your comments, suggestions, and of course, your financial support. We meet the first week of each month.

Merry Christmas and wishes for a healthy, peaceful New Year from your Mission Committee: Sue Mabe, Michele Cold, Marian Conn, Kathy Hamilton, Beth Janis, Kathy Leopold, Lee Lohr, Kathy Navarro, and Jennifer Stryczyny.

# Property Report

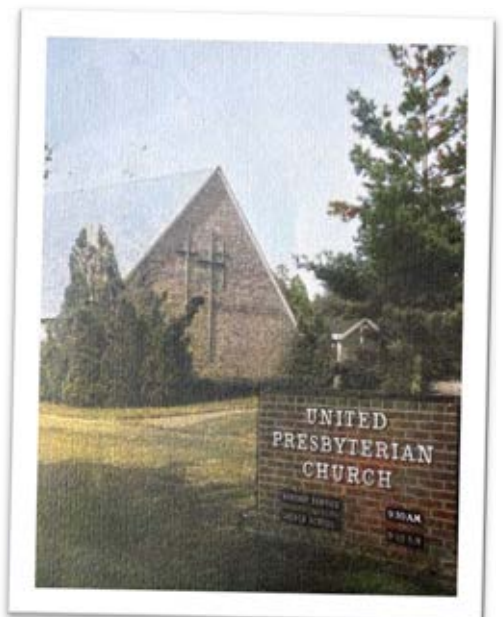
*Submitted by Jeff Spenzer*

I am always amazed by the amount of time and talent donated to keeping our church building and grounds maintained. On our November workday, many projects were completed. We would like to thank Dave Brunner, Paul Butrey, Sharon and Fred Call, Carol Nussle, John Mills, Mike Reighard, Beth and Craig Shoemaker, Jeff Spenzer, and Marcy and Gary Uhl. I would also like to thank John Weeden for cleaning our drainage

ditch. I am sure I missed many people who worked hard behind-the-scenes to keep our church running.

Our next workday will be December 14. Everyone is always welcome to come as time permits and help out or just have a donut and coffee.

Keep in mind that as the church building ages, there is always a new plumbing, heating, electrical, or carpentry project.



*ALPC is an old building, having been build in the 1950s. The Property Committee works hard to maintain it.*



# Music Notes

Submitted by Rick Fortney, Director of Music

December is a busy time amidst the Music and Arts Ministries of Avon Lake Presbyterian Church. We are looking forward to All Music Sunday on December 22 where our Music Monday Ensemble will be singing, our Handbells playing, and our Chancel Choir leading in Dan Forrest's *Carol Suite, Christmas Joy!*

All are invited to worship with us Christmas Eve. We are having a pajama Christmas celebration for

families at 4:30 p.m. and a candlelight worship service at 9:00 p.m. with *A Musical Gift to the Christ Child* prelude beginning at 8:40 p.m. The following Sunday, December 29, will be a special Lessons and Carols service. In addition, I draw your attention to the following highlighted events.

I hope each of you have a blessed Advent/Christmas season — may it be filled with music, wonderment, and awe as we celebrate Jesus and the impact He has in our lives today. Merry Christmas!



Rick and Joan joined Santa at Light Up the Park for caroling a few years ago. Come enjoy the festivities with us this year!

## Calling all Singers!

ALPC has been invited to participate in Avon Lake's Light Up the Park on December 6, 6-7pm.

Contact Rick to join the fun!

**LIGHT UP THE PARK**  
DECEMBER 6 | 5:30-8:00  
VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK

- 6:00 Avon Lake Presbyterian Carolers
- 6:00-8:00 Wild Hooves Petting Zoo
- 6:00-8:00 Ice Sculptures & Demo
- 6:55 Santa arrives in horse-drawn sleigh
- 7:00 Mayor Spaetzel "flips the switch" to light up the park!

Avon Lake Presbyterian will be leading in Christmas carols Friday evening, December 6, 6-7:30 p.m. at Veteran's Park as Avon Lake welcomes Santa Clause and lights up the park! Come join us!! We will be boarding John Weeden's bus to take us over to the festivities at 5:15 p.m., leaving at 5:30!

## AVON LAKE PRESBYTERIAN Caroling Group

JOIN US!  
**Dec 15**  
**4:00 PM**

WE WILL BEGIN & END AT THE CHURCH.  
ENJOY COOKIES & COCOA AFTER!

Sunday afternoon, December 14, 4:00 p.m., we are visiting those who are unable to worship with us in person. A wonderful time in sharing Christ's love, visiting with those many of us do not get to see on a weekly basis. Come join us!  
You don't have to be a member of the choir to sing!



# Music Monday!

Avon Lake Presbyterian Church

4:30-5:30 pm

**11.25 Kids, Tweens & Teens**  
**5th-8th Grade**

**12.2 Sing, play hand chimes, and enjoy fellowship throughout each class!**

**12.9 Learn the fundamentals of reading music and the art of singing and praising God through song.**

**12.16 Opportunities to sing in worship and outreach activities this holiday season.**

**12.23**

At Music Monday, students experience an exciting world of ministry through music and the arts. We sing, play hand chimes, and enjoy fellowship throughout each rehearsal. Emphasis is on learning the fundamentals of reading printed music, in addition to the art of singing (vocal production and singing in two- and three-part harmony), and praising God through song. All are welcome to join, ALPC families and beyond... bring your friends! The Music Monday ensemble will be sharing in the December 15 and 22 worship services, leading in a Christmas celebration at Independence Village on December 23, and participating in ALPC's candlelight Christmas Eve service at 9:00 p.m.

Some of last year's jolly carolers spreading Christmas cheer. As Buddy the Elf always says, "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear!"



Avon Lake Presbyterian Church will be hosting the TrueNorth Christmas concert on Saturday, December 21 at 7:30 p.m. Come experience glorious Christmas music and celebrate the season with the TrueNorth Chorale and Chamber Orchestra! Experience beautiful Christmas carols arranged by Dan Forrest and Mack Wilberg. Carols will include *Away in a Manger*, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, *Joy to the World*, *O Come All Ye Faithful*, *Silent Night*, *The First Noel*, and others. The string section of the Chamber Orchestra will be featured playing Arcangelo Corelli's *Christmas Concerto — Concerto grosso in G minor, Op. 6, No. 8*. The Chamber Orchestra will be performing Randol Alan Bass' *The Night Before Christmas*. Flutist Cathy Graves will join in a performance of Kevin Oldham's arrangement of *Silent Night*, a sensitive, almost restrained and ethereal rendering with simplicity and poignant clarity. The Choral and Chamber Orchestra will follow this piece by performing Dan Forrest's *Silent Night*, beginning with the smallest and simplest of musical ideas to paint, "Silent Night... all is calm," then gradually building into an overwhelming statement of the profoundest of truths: "Christ, the Savior, is born."

Another special feature will be Dan Forrest's *Let the Stable Still Astonish*. The calligrapher artist, Timothy Botts, has been commissioned to create an art piece inspired by the text and music which will be presented/premiered at this concert. "Let the stable still astonish" reminds us to find wonder in the unexpected and ordinary aspects of life, not just the grand or spectacular. The "stable" represents not just the physical place in Bethlehem, but also the humble, sometimes overlooked parts of our lives or hearts where God can be present. The word "astonish" implies a deep sense of awe and amazement. The piece has spoken to us throughout our preparation in rehearsal and we look forward to sharing it through this upcoming Concert.

TRUENORTH CULTURAL ARTS  
CHORALE AND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
*presents*  
**Let the Stable Still Astonish**  
Christmas Concert 2024  
*featuring*  
Christmas Concerto  
*Concerto grosso in G minor, Op. 6, No 8 Arcangelo Corelli*  
Randol Alan Bass Gloria  
Dan Forrest and Mack Wilberg Carols  
Saturday, December 21 at 7:30 PM  
Open Admission - Free Will Offering

# Worship & Spiritual Life

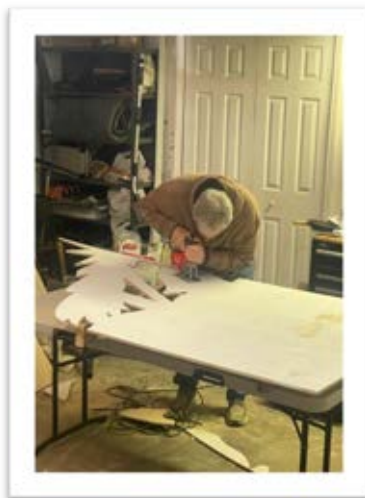
*Submitted by Lee Lohr on behalf of the Worship and Spiritual Life Committee: Lee Lohr, Co-Chair; Marcy Uhl; Janet Parker; Cris Till; AmyLynn Kaspar; Beth Shoemaker; Rick Fortney, Music Director; Kristian Bendoraitis, Pastor*

Advent is here! We tend to think of Advent as a time to prepare for Christmas. But how? Are we occupied with decorating, sending cards, making gift lists and buying gifts, baking cookies, hosting people for a holiday meal? Or do we have special devotions each day, lighting Advent candles and making room in our hearts for Jesus? Think back to what you've read in the Bible about what people did before the birth of Jesus. I don't think they did any of the previous

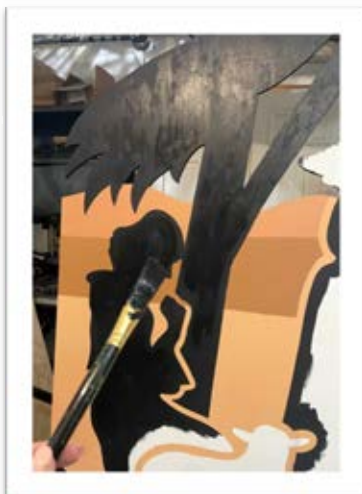
acts. Mary, Mother of Jesus, likely did the most in preparing for the birth of her son. Back then, people indeed were awaiting the coming of the Messiah. But they didn't know when he would arrive. Perhaps Advent now is actually a time of waiting. Have you considered it to be a time when we think about waiting for the second coming of Christ? That is something I have read in more than one place. What does that look like? It can be different for different people. Certainly in our congregation we decorate the church and light candles on the Advent wreath. Not because it makes our church pretty, but to enhance our spiritual experience during this time.

Starting December 1, we will be lighting the candles on our Advent wreath each Sunday. The candles stand for hope, peace, joy, and love. On Christmas Eve, the Christ candle will be lit. Families and small groups are invited to volunteer to light the candles and to bring forth elements of the Nativity while Kristian reads liturgy appropriate to each candle. If you are interested in taking part, please sing up in the narthex or contact Lee Lohr. There will be two services on Christmas Eve — a casual family service at 4:30 p.m. and a traditional candlelight service at 9:00 p.m. Please note the new times.

Have a blessed Christmas!



*Local artist Mike Kral was asked to design and paint a new crèche for our front lawn (with a little help from daughter, Kenzi Roberts). The 96" x 96" wooden silhouette was made in the same fashion as the various Santas that are displayed around Avon Lake each year; Mike is the same artist that made Snowplow Santa at the Public Works building, Police Car Santa at the Safety Center, Firetruck Santa at the Old Firehouse Senior Center, and Cowabunga Santa atop the waterslides at the Ellen Triavonovich Aquatic Center.*





# FUN & GAMES

Solve these Christmas themed Rebus puzzles!



**PAPER**

WINT**H**BLEAK**E**TER

**POULE  
POULE  
POULE**



"HELLO, SPRING!"  
"HOWDY, SUMMER!"  
"HI, AUTUMN!"  
"AHOY, WINTER!"

SE**FRANK**NSE



MAN**A**WAYGER

**ABCDE  
FGHIJK  
MNOP  
QRSTU  
VWXYZ**

BONGO, JR.

**THE  
SNHOW  
DASHING**



Our worship services begin at 10:00 am every Sunday.

Live streaming of our services is available on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/avonlakepc](http://www.facebook.com/avonlakepc)

Our Sunday services will air on ALC-TV beginning the following Wednesday, and continue every day throughout the week at 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

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ALPC Staff

Kristian Bendoraitis	Pastor
Rick Fortney	Director of Music & Arts Ministries
Emilee Oliva	Director of Christian Education
Kenzi Roberts	Office Administrator
Marcy Uhl	Treasurer
Julie Wasserman	Director of Cornerstone Preschool
Ed Homer	Lock-Up Custodian

