



**The Episcopal Church of the Advent**  
**December 10, 2025 Newsletter**  
**Second Sunday of Advent**



**First Advent gathering – December 3**

**Kim's reflection on Sunday's sermon – Matthew 3:1–12: Lighting the Candles of Hope and Peace**

On the Second Sunday of Advent, the candles of Hope and Peace were lit, and we were expecting gentle comfort. Instead, the Gospel hurled us into the harsh Judean wilderness to meet a wild-eyed, camel-hair-clad prophet, John the Baptist, who was eating locusts and shouting about axes, fire, and winnowing forks. Not exactly the cozy Advent scene we pictured! Yet every single Gospel insists we cannot get to the manger without first passing through John the Baptist. That is no accident.

“Why the wilderness?” Rev Tryggvi asks us. “Because in Jesus’ day, ordinary people had no weekends, no vacation days, no casual strolls into the desert. To leave the grind of survival and walk miles into a place of danger, thirst, and exposure meant something urgent was pulling them. The wilderness strips away every illusion of self-sufficiency. No savings account, no quick fix, no reputation to hide behind. There, only the Word of God finally gets a clear shot at us.” And today, this is still where God tends to speak most unmistakably.

We are told to repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near. “We usually hear 'repent' and brace for guilt, shame, and a lecture about being bad,” remarked Rev Tryggvi. “Our modern ears translate it as ‘Feel terrible, try harder, be good enough.’ Many of us have given up the word entirely because it has been weaponized to control rather than liberate.”

Through John, we are introduced to the Greek word *metanoia*, which is presented as a core message. “Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” says John. However, *metanoia* isn’t just regret; Rev Tryggvi explains that it is “a fundamental ‘change of mind, heart, and direction—not just feeling sorry but turning away from sin and toward God, literally 'change of mind,' a complete re-orientation, a U-turn of the heart.” And the bombshell is the order of the sentence: we do not repent to make the Kingdom come. We repent because the Kingdom has already come near. The nearness of God is the cause; our turning is the response. “Repentance, then, is not the price we pay to earn God’s favor. It is the gift we receive because God’s favor has already crashed the party.”

Yes, Jesus will come with a winnowing fork in his hand (v. 12). The image is severe: wheat kept; chaff burned. But notice who holds the fork. Not us. Jesus has control of the winnowing fork. We are not called to swing it at one another. We are the threshing floor. Our job is to lie open and let the stronger One do the separating.

What is chaff? The dry, empty husk that, from a distance, looks like grain. Repentance is the gentle, relentless wind of the Spirit blowing away everything in us that is hollow, so that what remains is the real, nourishing kernel that God intended for us to have from the beginning. This is our original blessing.

Rev. Tryggvi offered this beautiful re-framing: “Repentance is not primarily about guilt; it is about hope. It is less about where we’ve been and more about where we’re headed. It is not self-improvement; it is self-recovery—returning to the truer, deeper self we almost forgot was there. It is not being replaced by someone better; it is becoming more fully the person we already are, at the core. Every U-turn is an invitation to put on ‘the wardrobe of God’—love, mercy, healing, forgiveness, generosity, wisdom, peace, joy, compassion—clothes that actually fit the person we were created to be.”

We are told that John the Baptist stands at the edge of Advent, yelling not to shame us, but to wake us up to what is already true: the Kingdom has come near—closer than our breath. “Hope and Peace are not rewards for getting our act together. They are the very air of the Kingdom we are invited to breathe right now,” said Rev. Tryggvi.

“So, this Advent, let’s make the hard journey into whatever wilderness will strip us bare enough to hear the voice. Let’s dare to believe that repentance is God’s mercy in motion, clearing away the husks so the real wheat—the original beauty planted in us at creation—can shine. With repentance, the wardrobe of God is ours, and it fits! We can wear it well.”

May the God who meets us in the wilderness turn us around again today—gently, hopefully, peacefully—toward home.  
Amen+

***Question for reflection: In this season of Hope and Peace, where is the “wilderness” in your own life right now (the place where your usual supports feel thin, your illusions of control are stripped away, and you are most open to hearing God’s voice)?***

Faithfully yours in the watching and the waiting, Kim+

### **Tonight, Dec 10<sup>th</sup> – light supper and Advent program**

During Advent, we gather at the Parish House at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday evenings (**December 10, 17**) for a light supper (soup), followed by an hour conversation and reflection on the daily Advent devotionals contained in the publication “The Weary Word Rejoices” by Kate Bowler Th.D. Start reading the devotional on December 1st. Each Wednesday we will reflect on the previous days' reflections and prayers.

[Link to the devotional](#)

[Link to RSVP to the suppers](#)

### **Athens Master Chorale sacred music performance – this Sunday, 4 PM**

The Athens Master Chorale invites the public to a spectacular afternoon of choral masterworks on Sunday, December 14 at 4:00 PM at First Baptist Church of Athens, located at 355 Pulaski Street. With free admission and free on-site parking, this performance offers an exceptional and accessible cultural event for music lovers across Northeast Georgia. O. J. Booker and Brian Easton are members of the Chorale.

Under the direction of Justin Han, the 50-member Chorale will present two of the Baroque era’s most beloved choral compositions: Antonio Vivaldi’s *Gloria* (RV 588) and George Frideric Handel’s *Dixit Dominus*.

This version of the *Gloria* is the lesser known of the two surviving Glorias written by Vivaldi. It is a radiant and uplifting setting of the traditional Latin text. Its joyful opening movement, lyrical solo passages, and exquisite contrasts of light and shade make it a perennial favorite among audiences and performers alike. The Chorale’s performance will highlight the piece’s expressive warmth—an ideal way to usher in the holiday season.

Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, written when the composer was only 22, is an exhilarating tour de force of Baroque choral writing. Known for its fiery vocal lines, intricate counterpoint, and dramatic intensity, the work stands as one of Handel's most virtuosic and ambitious early compositions. The piece demands exceptional precision, musicality, and energy—qualities the Athens Master Chorale has long been recognized for delivering.

Event Details:

Date & Time: Sunday, December 14, 2025 at 4:00 PM

Location: First Baptist Church, 355 Pulaski Street, Athens, GA

Admission: Free

Parking: Free on-site parking available

[Athens Master Chorale website](#)

### [Greening of the Church December 2025 – photo album](#)

#### **The Angel Tree deadline is tomorrow – Thursday Dec. 11**

Thursday is the date gifts are to be delivered from the Angel Tree. If you have not yet chosen a tag so you can be someone's angel, please do so quickly. Contact Elizabeth Branch with any questions regarding the tree or the gift delivery. 404-983-4296 [elizabeth@branchtimberlands.com](mailto:elizabeth@branchtimberlands.com)

#### **Christmas Flower Memorials**

It's that wonderful time of year when we invite your support for our Christmas floral decorations that help make our worship space so beautiful during the Advent and Christmas seasons. If you would like to remember or honor a loved one, give thanks for someone special, or simply contribute to this seasonal effort, please consider making a Christmas Flower Memorial gift.

Pick up one of the pre-printed green Christmas Flower Memorial forms located in the Narthex and return it with your contribution, or simply send an email directly to [adventmadison@bellsouth.net](mailto:adventmadison@bellsouth.net) with the names you'd like included and your dedication wording. The amount of your gift is entirely up to you. Contributions may be made by check, cash, or online through Tithely. Thank you in advance for your generosity—it truly brightens our sanctuary and our hearts! With gratitude, Rick

#### **Volunteer Opportunities: Lay Readers, Organ Tech, and Lay Eucharistic Ministers**

Are you interested in serving as Lay Reader, a Lay Eucharistic Minister (L. E. M.), or becoming an expert button-pusher to make the organ play? If you're ready to join as a volunteer to help by reading lessons, becoming an "organ tech", or assisting at the altar during the eucharist as an L. E. M., now is a good time to sign up — the new Rota will be put together during the coming weeks and you can join the schedule.

Contact Richard Simpson ([richardsimpson.georgia@gmail.com](mailto:richardsimpson.georgia@gmail.com), (706) 474-4821) if you're interested as a new volunteer in these various ministries. You can also talk to Fr. Tryggvi or Richard if you have questions and want to learn more about these different jobs. All are welcome and we all greatly appreciate the help our volunteers provide in making our worship happen here at Church of the Advent!

#### **Start the New Year by Joining the Altar Guild or Flower Guild**

Altar Guild and Flower Guild could always use some new members, too. Both guilds operate with teams made up of church volunteers, serving once a month. You can join either guild by contacting:

1. Altar Guild, Peggy Hawkins at [peggyminerhawkins@gmail.com](mailto:peggyminerhawkins@gmail.com), (229) 881-2584
2. Flower Guild, Rick Crown at [treadwellcrown@gmail.com](mailto:treadwellcrown@gmail.com), (706) 474-8302

## **Kitchen Spruce-Up; In Progress!**

As you may know, our Parish House renovation project will start March 2026. The kitchen and pantry will be part of that work, and thorough cleaning and removal of unneeded items must take place prior to then. If there is anything in that space that belongs to you – plates, cups, serving pieces, decorative pieces, appliances, disposables, food, drink, etc., etc., etc. – **please remove them by January 1.** Questions, contact O. J. Booker at 706-818-4308 or [info@adventmadisonga.com](mailto:info@adventmadisonga.com)

## **Rota for the Third Sunday of Advent December 14, 2025**

LEM: 8:00 A.M. Simpson—10:30 A.M. Crown

1st Reading: R Thompson

2nd Reading: G Thompson

Altar Guild: Abbott-Yost-Strickland

Flower Guild: Branch

Organ Tech: K Jackson

Vestry of the Day: Horton

## **Readings for the Third Sunday of Advent December 14, 2025**

[Link to Readings](#)

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

Psalms 146:4-9

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

The Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

## **Parish Prayer List**

Robert Boswell, Fr. Dann Brown, Susan Crosher, Liz Cunningham, Lynn Cupples, Bob Cupples, Flossie Dodge, Mary Ann Edelman, Anita Hunt, Kate Jackson, Beth Tamplin Jones, Jan Kozel, Bill Kurtz, Susan Kurtz, Kathy Lehman, Brian Lehman, Gloria Leo, Jack Leo, Jennifer Mize, Jennie Newton, Annette Piazza, Ft. John Porter, Lynne Roach, Dick Schmidt, Kathie Schmidt, Helga H. Stefnisdóttir, Betty Thomas, Etwanda “Tink” Wade, Ellen Warren, Eric Wiemann, Jay Whitcomb

**December Birthdays:** **20** The Reverend Tryggvi Árnason **21** Holly Shreiner **25** Terry Blum **28** Edward Harrell **31** Shandon Land, Carol Black

**December Anniversaries:** **28** Susan and Bill Kurtz

## **Recurring weekly calendar**

- Rite I Eucharist: Sunday, 8:00 AM
- Sunday school (adult): Sunday, 9:15 AM
- Rite II Eucharist: Sunday, 10:30 AM
- Morning Prayer service: Wednesday, 9:00 AM
- Off the Rails AA group: M, Tu, Th @ noon
- Madison AA group: Th, F, Su @ 7:00 PM

**Pastoral Care Requests:** email [pastoral-care@adventmadisonga.com](mailto:pastoral-care@adventmadisonga.com) for:

- Additions to the Prayer List

- Inquiries about weddings, baptisms, or funerals
- Use of the Memorial Garden
- Requesting Eucharistic visits
- Short-term meals following surgery or during illness

**Morgan County Transit System** provides transportation to local addresses to include grocery stores, workplaces, doctors' appointments and others. \$2.00 per person/ \$1.75 for seniors 60 and over. Advanced reservations are required. For detailed information see <https://www.morgancountyga.gov/158/Public-Transportation>

### **The Episcopal Church of the Advent**

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