



**The Episcopal Church of the Advent**  
**December 23, 2025 Newsletter**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**



**Christmas Services**

**December 24, Christmas Eve: service at 5:00 PM and 11:00 PM**

**December 25, Christmas Day: service at 10:30 AM**

**ROTA for Wednesday, Christmas Eve, December 24, 5.00 pm**

- Vestry Person of Day: Elizabeth Branch
- LEM: O. J. Booker
- 1st Reader: Kate Booker
- 2nd Reader: Kim Jackson
- Organ Tech: Maryann Dartnell

**ROTA for Wednesday, Christmas Eve, December 24, 11.00 pm**

- Vestry Person of Day: O. J. Booker
- LEM: Paul Roman
- 1st Reader: Richard Simpson
- 2nd Reader: Treadwell Crown
- Organ Tech: Betsy Quillin

## **ROTA for Thursday, Christmas Day, December 25, 10.30 am**

—Vestry Person of Day: Annie Hunt Burriss

—LEM: Tim Pridgen

—1st Reader: Vic Jackson-Lewis

—2nd Reader: Beth Pridgen

—Organ Tech: Richard Simpson

### [Link to Readings for Christmas I](#)

Isaiah 9:2-7

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14(15-20)

Psalm 96

### **Sermon Synopsis: The Fourth Sunday of Advent (Matthew 1:18–25)**

Father Tryggvi began his Sunday sermon by noting the beauty of the three-year cycle of the Revised Common Lectionary, which allows us to read nearly 90% of the four Gospels over time. On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, the spotlight turns away from Mary—prominent in Luke’s account with the angel Gabriel’s visit—and toward her betrothed, Joseph, a descendant of the House of David who might seem a minor character in the familiar Christmas story.

Yet Matthew’s Gospel reminds us that Joseph’s role was not indispensable. The Gospel opens with Jesus’ genealogy, tracing the promised Messiah’s lineage through David down to Joseph: “an account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” It falls to Joseph, a righteous man devoted to God and concerned with rightful living, to confer legitimacy on Mary’s child. If he refuses, the ancient prophecies remain unfulfilled.

“We meet Joseph as an honest, hard-working carpenter seeking an ordinary, uncomplicated life. Then one morning, his world is turned upside down: Mary is pregnant, and he knows he is not the father,” Father Tryggvi explains. “Her options are grim—public exposure could lead to stoning under Levitical law; quiet divorce would leave her destitute, reduced to begging or worse. If he marries her anyway, he accepts an heir who is not his own biological son and opens himself to lifelong scandal for embracing what others would see as Mary’s blasphemy in claiming the child’s father is God.”

Father Tryggvi invited us to feel the depth of Joseph’s anguish, drawing on the second-century Protoevangelium of James (not in our canon but illuminating), where Joseph weeps bitterly, confronting Mary: “How could you betray both God and me?” Though Scripture is silent on their conversation, it is not hard to imagine the pain, doubt, and humiliation Joseph endured. He did not believe Mary’s implausible story until the Angel Gabrielle appeared to him in a dream. Why would he? Why would anyone?

“We must not treat Joseph’s struggle lightly or pretend acceptance came easily, as on a Hallmark card,” says Father Tryggvi. “God never promises wealth, health, comfort, or ease to those He calls. In choosing Joseph, God led a righteous man straight into doubt, shame, and the need to rethink everything he understood about fairness, justice, purity, and goodness. Joseph became the talk of the town—not favorably. He had to embrace a mess he did not create, love a woman whose story he could not yet comprehend, protect a child he did not father, and raise an heir who was not his own.”

This, Father Tryggvi observed, is why Joseph’s obedience gives us such hope: he is profoundly human, just as we are. He wrestles, swallows pride, and fears the unknown—yet says yes. His story echoes through Jesus’ flawed ancestors listed in Matthew’s genealogy: Abraham, who twice endangered Sarah and abandoned Ishmael; Jacob, who deceived his brother Esau; and David, who committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged Uriah the Hittite’s death. God could have chosen a spotless lineage, but instead wove salvation through a long line of brokenness, dishonor, scandal, and second chances—models of restoration and healing.

In the Christmas mystery, God works in surprising, even shocking ways: through a young woman whose unbelievable story required an angel’s credibility; through a well-meaning man who had to let go of conventional righteousness to

follow God; through a helpless, vulnerable child born under the shadow of illegitimacy. No wonder the angel's first words to Joseph were, "Do not be afraid."

Father Tryggvi concluded with this message: "If we want to enter into God's messy world, then we should listen to these words – 'Do not be afraid.' When God's work does not look the way we thought it would. When God upends our cherished assumptions about our own righteousness. Do not be afraid when God asks us to stand alongside those who are an embarrassment, the deprived, the scandalous, the shamed. When he asks us to love something or someone more than our reputation, don't be afraid of the impossible. Of the mess. Because that mess is where God chose for his son to be born into this world."

As we prepare for Christmas, Joseph invites us to trust God amid our own doubts and messes, remembering that Emmanuel—God with us—enters the world not in ease, but in the midst of real human struggle and astonishing grace. Rejoice in the Lord always!

Kim

*Question for reflection: Like Joseph, we all face moments when God's call disrupts our plans, challenges our sense of righteousness, and invites us into a story that feels impossible, humiliating, or unfair. Where in your own life has God asked you to let go of what seemed just or comfortable to say "yes" to something larger—perhaps embracing a mess you did not create, trusting a truth that others might not believe, or loving across doubt and fear? How might the angel's words to Joseph—"Do not be afraid"—speak to you in that situation today?*

### **Athens Chamber Singers – Lessons and Carols performance**

The Athens Chamber Singers, a renowned choral group from Athens, will treat parishioners and the community to a wonderful epiphany service of lessons and carols on **Sunday, January 4th, at the church at 4:00 PM**. A reception will follow the performance in the parish house. The Hospitality Committee asks for food contributions to the reception. There will be more information as we get closer to the event. More information about the Athens Chamber Singers at <http://www.athenschambersingers.org/>

### **Christmas Flower Memorials**

It's not too late to 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

**Rota for the First Sunday after Christmas  
December 28, 2025**

LEM: 10:30 A.M. Roman  
1st Reading: K. Jackson  
2nd Reading: Freyer  
Altar Guild: Bennett-Roman  
Flower Guild: Eskew  
Organ Tech: Simpson  
Vestry of the Day: Branch

**Readings for the Fourth Sunday of Advent  
December 21, 2025**

[Link to readings](#)

First Reading: Isaiah 61:10-62:3  
Psalm 147 or (147:13-21)  
Second Reading: Galatians 3:23; 25; 4:4\*7  
The Gospel: John 1:1-18

**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, David Medlock, Jennifer Mize, Jennie Newton, Annette Piazza, Lynne Roach, Dick Schmidt, Kathie Schmidt, Helga H. Stefnisdóttir, Betty Thomas, Etwanda "Tink" Wade, Ellen Warren, Eric Wiemann, Jay Whitcomb

**December Birthdays:** 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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