



**The Episcopal Church of the Advent
December 30, 2025 Newsletter
First Sunday of Christmas**



A Reflection on the Sunday After Christmas at Church of the Advent

Dear friends in Christ,

On the Sunday after Christmas, our beloved Church of the Advent was radiant with evergreen beauty—greenery lovingly placed by our talented flower guild and so many parishioners' hands. The glorious altar flowers resplendent with cascading Smilax from above, windows transformed with fresh arrangements, and the great Advent wreath stood as a triumphant circle of light now transformed into Christmas joy. Gazing upon it all, I felt once again why this sacred space holds such a cherished place in my heart.

And then, in this exquisite setting, we heard the soaring prologue of John's Gospel—words that never fail to take my breath away:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:1-5, continuing through verse 18)

Still lingering in the warm afterglow of Christmas, gathered in this holy place we all treasure, Father Tryggvi invited us to journey with John far beyond the manger—to the very beginning, before creation itself. There we meet the eternal Word, the sacred Logos who is Jesus Christ. For John, Jesus' story does not start with his birth in Bethlehem or with the royal lineage that marks him as Messiah. No, to John, Jesus' story begins at the origin of everything.

In contrast to Matthew and Luke—who give us the beloved Christmas narratives of angels, shepherds, and Magi—John speaks to us as a poet-theologian. He binds heaven to earth, revealing God’s presence and providence not as a static noun, but as the most dynamic verb of all. Father Tryggvi drew our attention to the Hebrew word *bara* from Genesis—the divine act of creating from nothing. This Word is God’s creative essence, continually choosing, gathering, leading, consoling, understanding, and forgiving. All creation is held in God’s tender, affectionate embrace.

Yet Father Tryggvi gently wondered: how easily these profound words can become mere background noise in our busy lives. Drawing on the insight of Parker Palmer, he reminded us that “We often speak beautiful ideals—of hope, justice, compassion—but struggle to let them take flesh in our daily actions. Fear, failure, and insecurity too often keep those words from becoming real in us.”

But here is the heart of the Gospel: “The Word became flesh and lived among us.” In the vulnerability of a child born into Bethlehem’s ordinary mess—a real story about real people in a hard and unpredictable world—God’s love took on human skin. That incarnate Word is love made visible: courage and hope, tenderness and grace, mercy and hospitality, justice and peacemaking, humility and forgiveness—even righteous anger in the face of cruelty and injustice.

As Father Tryggvi so movingly said, “If these remain only noble words, then Christmas is merely a lovely story, a fairy tale, and we are no closer to the Kingdom. But when we receive this Light, believe in his name, and dare to claim his ways of love as our own—when we show compassion to the stranger, stand in solidarity with the marginalized, offer forgiveness, and work for peace—then the Word becomes flesh again in us. We become children of God, bearers of grace upon grace.”

Dear family at Church of the Advent, may the beauty of our greened church and the poetry of John’s Gospel linger in our hearts through this Christmas season and beyond. May Christ’s light shine through our lives, incarnating God’s love in every action, great and small, until the world sees in us the glory of the One who still dwells among us. Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Question for Reflection: In the quiet afterglow of Christmas, as the greenery still adorns our church and the light of the prologue lingers in our hearts, consider this:

The eternal Word became flesh and lived among us—vulnerable, real, embodied in the mess and beauty of human life.

Where, in this coming year, is the Word seeking to become flesh in you?

In what relationship, what act of courage or compassion, what moment of forgiveness or stand for justice, is Christ inviting you to let his love take on your hands, your voice, your ordinary days—so that grace upon grace might flow through you into the world?

Take a breath. Listen. The Light still shines, and it shines in you. Amen.

In Peace and Joy, Kim

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. More information about the Athens Chamber Singers at <http://www.athenschambersingers.org/>

Hospitality Committee request: An enormous thank you to Janel and Ricardo Urena for supplying the ham for the January 4th reception. We would like to request interested parishioners to further support our endeavor with contributions of desserts, finger foods, salads or other foods of your choice that will complement a reception table. Please have your food items at the parish house on the afternoon of the 4th. The performance begins at 4:00 PM. If you have any questions, please contact Vic Jackson at (404)735-0065 or vicjackson@aol.com.

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, (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, (229) 881-2584
2. Flower Guild, Rick Crown at treadwellcrown@gmail.com, (706) 474-8302

Rota for the Second Sunday of Christmas

January 4, 2026

LEM: 8:00 A.M. Booker—10:30 A.M. Booker

1st Reading: McCauley

2nd Reading: Hilsman

Altar Guild: McCauley-Burriss-Harrell

Flower Guild:

Organ Tech: Simpson

Vestry of the Day: Burriss

Readings for the Second Sunday of Christmas

January 4, 2026

[Link to readings](#)

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-14

Psalm 84

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-6; 15-19a

The Gospel: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

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: **31** Shandon Land, Carol Black

January Birthdays: **2** David Brown, Judy Sanders, **11** Helen Harrell Horton, **14** Bill Abbott, **30** Susan Kurtz, Frank Walsh, **31** David Land, Kim Jackson

Anniversaries: **18** Bill and Beverly Abbott

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 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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