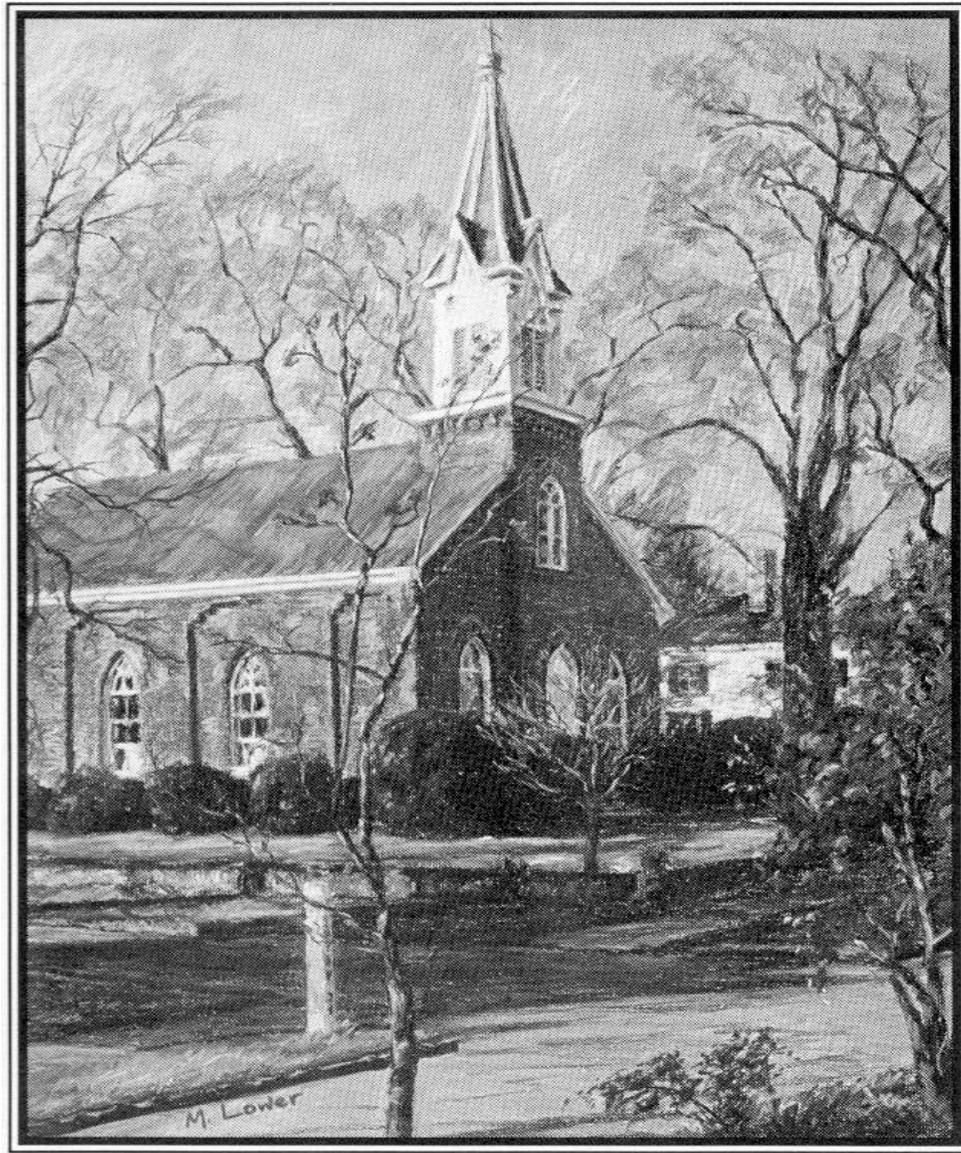


*The Episcopal Church of the Advent  
Madison, Georgia*



*Annual Meeting  
Sunday, January 18, 2026*

## Letter from Fr. Tryggvi to the Parish

### Priest-in-Charge Report

*Almighty GOD, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

Collect for II Epiphany

How fitting it is that the parish's Annual Meeting lands on the third Sunday after the Epiphany. On the Feast of the Epiphany (Sunday) we celebrated the manifestation of Christ to the peoples of the earth. The following Sunday we renewed our baptismal promises together as we celebrated the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord. And today, on the second Sunday after the Epiphany, we gather as one manifestation of the Living Body of Christ to hold our parish Annual Meeting, revisiting our common life in the year that is passed, before we turn towards the future illumined and nurtured by Jesus's Word and Sacraments.

Revisiting the days and months since I accepted the call to serve you as Priest-in-Charge, starting on September 1st, *blessing* and *gratitude* are the bookend-words that hold my experiences together. I am grateful for your generous hearts and hospitality that welcomed me and continue to be the spirit with which we are propelled together in our common life.

I am grateful for the number of parishioners who serve in the various ministries in the parish. Some may not be aware of this, but there are six ministry areas that alone serve to make our worship and prayer life as fine and comprehensive as it is: Altar Guild, Flower Guild, Lay Eucharistic Ministers [LEM], Lectors, Organ Techs, and Ushers. Because of the commitments imbedded in these ministries, we are able to offer three services of worship and prayer each week: Holy Eucharist Rite I and Rite II with hymn singing on Sundays, and Morning Prayer Rite I on Wednesday mornings.

There is also the ministry of the Pastoral Care Committee whose charter was solidified by the Vestry at its September meeting. This ministry serves a critical role in supporting the priest in offering comprehensive pastoral care to the parish family and beyond. While the priest must always respond to critical pastoral needs, some including sacramental rites and others requiring confidentiality, the Pastoral Care Committee joins the priest in holding up and praying for the needs, concerns, and hopes of parishioners, assist the priest with visitations, and follow-ups and check-in with shut-ins. Committee members also organize meals for those recovering from hospital procedures and/or illness, and arrange transportation to doctor's visits.

Extensive as the ministry of the Pastoral Care Committee is to parishioners, so also is the ministry effort of outreach to the extended community of Madison and Morgan County. The allocated dollar amount to outreach from the parish's operating budget may not be among the highest in the diocese, but 10% commitment of the operating budget is; and it clearly expresses the commitment of *Advent-urers* to extend support to the marginalized and those in need. Our direct outreach commitment of talent, time, and financial support to Pup Packs, Madison Morgan Community Food Pantry, and Joseph's Coat, and the Angel Tree are ongoing, but I am also becoming increasingly aware of parishioners' commitment of time and talent, serving in the various outreach efforts in our area.

I am also grateful for the ministry of the Hospitality Committee. My very first Sunday, I sure got the taste of the delicious food, side-dishes, and hors d'oeuvres that are lovingly crafted and prepared in *Advent-urers'* kitchens and served at our receptions. I am equally appreciative of the committee's organizing the light suppers, (soups), on Wednesday nights during our Advent season, and now during this season of Epiphany, and of course the parishioners who have signed up and prepared the soups. It has been wonderful to meet on Sunday mornings for lectionary Bible study at 9:15-ish, between the 8:00 and the 10:30 services; and we've had a lot of fun. In addition, though, to have the opportunity to break bread and have soup together as a community and then have time together for faith formation on Wednesday nights is important for any community to grow and flourish. The Hospitality Committee and generous parishioners have made this opportunity possible for us, and for that I am grateful.

The organizing of the Foyer groups and First Wednesday evenings is and continues to be a much-appreciated gift and a wonderful opportunity for parishioners and newcomers to get to know each other in an informal setting.

Hardly any of these ministries, or the daily operations of the parish would be possible without parishioners' financial commitments and dedication to pledging. The hard work and efforts of members of the Stewardship Committee resulted in increased pledging, both in number of pledges and increase of operating funds. I am thankful for the work of the committee members and other parishioners who contributed to the success of this year's Tell Out My Soul stewardship campaign.

As we look forward to this new year there are exciting times ahead. Extensive work has been put into plans for the Parish House renovations, and the project will begin in the months ahead. While construction is under way, this necessary work will require some flexibility and adaptation on parishioners' part, but "can do" attitude and "ad hoc" mindset are gifts, I have learned, that parishioners are generous in sharing with each other for the benefit of our community.

With the completion of the Parish House renovations, we will have an opportunity to reflect on ideas and explore new possibilities for the grounds. The grounds and the Memorial Garden are lovingly and faithfully maintained, and I am grateful for the care that continues to be offered.

There is nothing that needs to be changed; this is simply an opportunity for us to wonder together about what might be.

As the season of Epiphany reaches its end, and Ash Wednesday ushers us into the season Lent, I hope we can continue gathering on Wednesday evenings for light community meals and formation. For this hope to become a lasting reality, we will need the ongoing participation of parishioners willing to sign up to prepare the soups. It goes without saying that when more people share in this work, the burden does not fall on just a few, making this community-building ministry sustainable over time.

With our worship and common prayer life, the wonderful ministries that take place within our parish, and the events that afford us the gift of growing together in faith and enriching our lives, none of these would be possible without the faithful efforts and dedicated work of Debbie Permar, our Office Administrator. Neither would we have much chance to stay as connected as we are, if it wasn't for O.J. Booker overseeing our communication, and Kim Jackson assisting him in that work. For these three people, as of course with all parishioners, I am grateful. But I have felt the need to recognize their names and dedicated work. Equally do I want to thank members of the Vestry for their dedication and selfless work: our Wardens Devon Darnell and Vic Jackson, and Annie Hunt Burriss, O.J. Booker, Elizabeth Branch, and Mary Horton. Thank you!

May almighty God, in Christ Jesus and through the Holy Spirit, continue to illumine our way and empower our efforts, that we may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory as we journey together to do God's will in our community and in the world. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Tryggvi G. Arnason,  
Priest-in-Charge.

## Senior Warden Report 2025

2025 was an eventful and positive year at Church of the Advent. We were fortunate to have Father Mark Johnson remain as interim priest-in-charge for the beginning of the year. His guidance and thoughtful sermons were uplifting. The vestry continued an aggressive search for a permanent Priest-in-Charge using all tools available within and outside of the Diocese and invited a search committee from the congregation to assist with the process of finding and interviewing a new Priest-in-Charge. After losing Father Mark in May, Father Harold Lockett and Father David Powell were able to serve us as supply priests and delivered comforting services and sermons for three months. Fortunately, our very own Tim Pridgen was willing to lead services when no supply priest was available. During June and July, we received 3 applications for the vacant position and conducted an intensive interview process with all three applicants. The Reverend Tryggvi G. Árnason was offered the position as part time Priest-in-Charge and accepted. Reverend Tryggvi began leading our worship on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 and has brought a wealth of knowledge and experience (and hugs!) to our parish. We also welcomed several new members to our church during the year.

During 2025, we enjoyed fellowship events such as First Wednesdays at our homes, including a special First Wednesday of October at the Steffan Thomas Museum, Foyers Groups, and the Fourth of July gathering at the Cultural Center. We also continued engagement in several meaningful outreach missions, including Pup Packs, the Angel Tree, and supporting the Madison-Morgan Food Pantry.

Throughout the year, we've hosted many opportunities for worship and fellowship. In addition to our normal Sunday services and Sunday School led by Father Tryggvi, and Wednesday Morning Prayer led by Tim Pridgen we hosted special events such as the Athens Chamber Singers and Kevin Kelly for Lessons and Carols, the Palm Sunday Community "donkey walk" with Lightning and the well-attended Advent Supper Series on Wednesday evenings.

The Altar Guild and the Flower Guild members tirelessly delivered a remarkable and beautiful display every week, enriching our worship practice.

On behalf of the vestry I would like to thank each of you for your spiritual commitment and financial stewardship to our church, without which we would not be able to provide for the needs of our community, our staff, our commitment to the Diocese and our ability to maintain our historic buildings and grounds.

I would like to thank our prior senior warden Elizabeth Branch and Junior Warden Vic Jackson who will be rotating off the vestry for their service, as well as vestry members OJ

Booker, Annie Hunt Burriss and Mary Horton for their hard work and commitment throughout the year. A special thank you goes to Debbie Permar for her thorough work as treasurer, for producing the weekly service bulletins and managing the church office so well. And finally, welcome aboard, Father Tryggvi! We're thrilled you've joined us at Advent!

Respectfully submitted,  
Devon Dartnell  
Senior Warden

### **Hospitality Committee Report 2025**

The mundane and sometimes perfunctory tasks of care of linens tackling round tables whose stability is at time suspect, and querying over just how much food is needed for an event are just a few of the topics that come under the auspices of the hospitality committee. With dedication, determination and a wonderful esprit de corps, the Advent hospitality committee is a viable entity.

The hospitality committee at Advent is reinvigorated, energized and committed to executing the services that this important church ministry requires. We have a core group of twelve volunteers and would gleefully welcome more.

As committed as we are, we could not do many of our tasks without the wonderful support that the congregation provides. Our requests for main dishes, sides and desserts have been met with an unsurpassed generosity of deliciousness. We are so grateful and humbled to parishioners who help make our hospitality presentations complete.

Advent is initiating new opportunities for hospitality expansion. We are excited about the expansion and welcome the possibilities for increased camaraderie and fellowship.

Respectfully submitted,

Vic Jackson

## **Buildings and Grounds Report 2025**

2025 was a relatively light year for Buildings and Grounds (B&G) activity. Much fabulous work had been done the prior year on the church under the Vestry's capable leadership.

In 2025:

- Thermostats were replaced in both church and parish house (PH)
- A severe plumbing problem at the PH was temporarily corrected
- Lights were replaced at the church.
- Several outlets in the PH were replaced.
- Some work was done on the entry canopy at the rear of the church.
- The organ was tuned in November.
- The front boxwoods were cut back.
- Parishioners represented Advent during the public Q&A on the city-wide transportation project.

Much work went into the planning for the PH renovation project, which was in the works in 2024 and prior. The Vestry spent hours with the construction consultant and architect reviewing and tweaking plans and ensuring the best use of funds for the project. Project plans were presented to the parish. Construction will begin in early 2026. A new roof, two new handicapped restrooms on the first floor and one upstairs, storage for tables and chairs, light renovation of the kitchen (including new flooring) and the addition of a covered deck on the back are major parts of the project. We anticipate being able to use the PH during construction.

There were no grounds workdays in 2025. We recommend at least two in 2026, the most pressing being clearing out the Little House so that we can store materials located in the PH closets, which have to be emptied prior to construction. We also recommend a workday before Palm Sunday (and bird nesting season).

While not related to B&G, the website was updated and maintained, adding a new feature, "News", where all the newsletters are posted. Sections were added to the Ministries page for the Memorial Garden and Pastoral Care. For the administrative side of the website, Teclaz, a website traffic tracking solution, was donated to Advent by its creator and fellow parishioner, Ricardo Urena. The software allows us to see our website traffic and better

judge its effectiveness. Advent newsletters were sent every week of the year. Many parishioners contributed to its content. 5 subscribers were added in 2025.

Also not related to B&G, the ministry to recovery groups was robust in 2025. Advent has long been a host to the Madison and Off the Rails AA Groups. In a year, both groups held over 300 meetings in the parish house with an average attendance of 10. Many newcomers have attended their first meetings at Advent, providing them a cornerstone of recovery.

Respectfully,

O. J. Booker

### **Church of the Advent 2025 Vestry**

-O.J. Booker and Mary Horton (terms end Jan. 2028)

-Devon Dartnell and Annie Hunt Burriss (terms end Jan. 2027)

-Elizabeth Branch and Vic Jackson-Lewis (terms end Jan. 2026)

### **Registrar's Report 2025**

In 2025 Church of the Advent welcomed Everett Clark Yost and Jameson Michael Kovar through the Rite of Baptism.

Seven people transferred their membership to Church of the Advent. One person transferred out.

Church of the Advent lost two members through death, as well as our previous Deacon Dutton Morehouse.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Permar

Registrar

## 2026 Budget

### General Fund – Income

4030 Pledges	180,980.00
4040 Open Plate	18,670.00
4050 Music/Flowers/Memorials	1,000.00
4510 Interest	250.00
4560 Parish House Usage	3,000.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>203,900.00</b>

### General Fund – Expenses

5051 SP Salary	42,000.00
5053 SP Pension	8,200.00
5055 SP Health Insurance	15,048.00
5056 SP Continuing Education	500.00
5057 SP SECA	3,200.00
5058 SP Dental	636.00
5059 SP Term Insurance	330.00
5060 SP Travel/Auto Allowance	1,800.00
5155 Secretary	20,000.00
5195 Payroll taxes	3,600.00
5196 Workers Comp Insurance	600.00
5197 Payroll Service Fee	700.00
5205 Office Supplies	1,000.00
5207 Postage	500.00
5211 Bank Charges	50.00
5215 Professional Services	2,500.00
5216 Online Giving Fees	800.00
5221 Telephones	2,000.00
5222 Website	250.00
5230 Computer Hardware	500.00
5232 Copier Lease/Maintenance	2,500.00
5320 Electricity – Church	3,700.00
5320 Electricity – Parish House	3,600.00
5320 Electricity – Little House	650.00
5325 WGS – Church	1,500.00
5325 WGS – Parish House	2,500.00

5355 Building Insurance	10,500.00
5361 Cleaning Service	10,400.00
5363 Repairs/Maintenance	250.00
5364 Grounds Maintenance	3,120.00
5415 Outreach	16,500.00
5435 Supply Priest	1,600.00
5436 Supply Priest Mileage	600.00
5440 Worship Supplies	2,000.00
5445 Study Materials	500.00
5455 Music Expense	300.00
5480 Kitchen Supplies	900.00
5510 Diocesan Pledge	15,500.00
5520 Convention/Meetings	500.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>181,334.00</b>

## Outreach Report 2025

The Outreach Committee met on December 10 to discuss donation priorities on behalf of the Church of the Advent. Committee members include Genia Bennett, Sue Baldwin, Beverly Abbott, Peggy Hawkins, and Elizabeth Branch.

During the discussion, the committee unanimously agreed to focus the majority of donations on local organizations, as we believe this approach allows for the greatest impact and accountability. The following contributions were approved for 2025:

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Boys and Girls Club	\$ 2,000.00
Camp Twin Lakes	\$ 2,000.00
Caring Place	\$ 500.00
Circle of Love	\$ 1,000.00
Habitat for Humanity	\$ 1,000.00
Morgan Cares	\$ 1,000.00
Madison Morgan Community Food Pantry	\$ 2,000.00
	<b>\$ 10,000.00</b>

In addition to financial contributions, the Outreach Committee supports the Angel Tree ministry during the Christmas season. Vic Jackson provided the Angel Tree, and our generous parish members donated gifts for 25 residents of Madison Health and Rehab. Thank you to all who participated in this meaningful outreach!

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Branch

## **Pup Packs Report 2025**

Pup Packs served approximately 135 children per week during 2025. Packs were provided to students in Pre-K through second grade at Morgan County Primary School. In addition, Pup Packs supplied unpacked food to the elementary school, which was distributed by school counselors as needed to children experiencing food insecurity.

Financial contributions from outside the church were received from several individuals, Kiwanis, and the Harris Family Foundation. In-kind support was generously provided by the following partners: St. James Catholic Women's Group (one Friday per month); Rutledge United Methodist Church (one week of bags per semester); Sandy Creek Baptist Church (one week of bags); First United Methodist Church Preschool (one week of bags and food donations); Brownwood Baptist Church (one week of bags per semester); Madison Presbyterian Church (two weeks of bags); Fusion Church (one week of bags per semester); and the Morgan County Primary School PTO (one week of bags per semester).

Twenty volunteers faithfully served as shoppers, packers, or both throughout the year.

Thank you to all who helped make this special ministry possible!

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Branch

## Building Endowment Fund Report 2025

The Church of the Advent Building Endowment Fund is an irrevocable, perpetual trust established from the sale of the old Methodist parsonage. The parsonage, purchased for \$5,000 in 1963 was sold to the Clarks for \$50,000 in 1980. The proceeds of the sale, plus \$3,000 from ECW, formed the principal fund. Up to 85% of the income may be used every year, at the discretion of the board, for the maintenance, repair, development and upkeep of the physical plant, buildings and grounds of the Church.

A five-member board meets at least once a year to oversee the management of the fund. The Trustees nominate new members and elect officers in accordance with the Trust Agreement. Current members are:

Richard Best - Chairman-2026, David Buck - Vice Chairman-2029, Genia Bennett – Treasurer-2031, Charlie Hawkins - 2029, Maryann Dartnell – 2030.

12/31/25 Assets: All of funds are deposited at Bank of Madison

\$210,019.40 CD matures 01/17/26

\$22,036.67 Money Market Account (includes 2025 donations)

Total assets: \$232,056.07.

Donations received by the trust in 2025 were in the amount of \$1,300 in memory of Janet Mason.

Annual Interest through 12/31/2025: \$8,737.11.

Distribution will be made to the parish, per charter, on or before Jan 31, 2026: \$6,552.75, for maintenance of building and grounds. This represents 75% of earnings in 2025. The 2024 distribution to the parish was \$4,627.27. The 2023 distribution to the parish was \$3,148.70.

Please consider donating to the Church of the Advent Building Endowment Fund to help secure our historic and beautiful building and grounds for future generations. All donations made through the parish are tax deductible and greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted, Genia Bennett, Treasurer and Richard Best, Chairman

## Altar Guild Report 2025

The Altar Guild at Advent is composed of a group of faithful members who set the altar for communion and prepare the church for regular Sunday services as well as for any baptisms, weddings, funerals, and other services during the Church year. Groups consist of two to four people who serve one week each month, alternating the duties between them.

Members of the Altar Guild for 2025 included Mary McCauley, Martha Harrell, Annie Hunt Burriss, Beverly Abbott, Rebecca Strickland, Dianne Yost, Frannie Hilsman, Janel Urena, Vic Jackson, Peggy Hawkins, Chandler Pike, Genia Bennett, and Paul Roman. Peggy Hawkins served as chair with much guidance from Julie Jenkins, who served as altar guild chair for many years, and Mary McCauley, who does a great deal of behind the scenes work for altar guild, including but not limited to cleaning and ironing all altar linens and ordering many of our supplies. Julie Jenkins has stepped down from regular altar guild duties but is still involved as an advisor and helps out with special services and is always available to lend a hand. We thank her for her many years of dedication to Altar Guild.

In 2025, we were pleased to welcome Janel Urena to our guild, joining the week 3 team.

This year we will be updating our Altar Guild book and guide, which includes excellent instructions and illustrations on how to prepare for each service. We will continue to update the book as new circumstances arise and when Father Tryggvi offers suggestions and recommendations.

The Altar Guild will be meeting as a group after church on Sunday, February 1st to discuss our ministry in the church and ways in which we can improve.

Serving on the Altar Guild does not involve much time, and it is a rewarding and meaningful way to take part in our Church life. Anyone wishing to become part of this group please contact me, and we will happily train you. We are currently recruiting and would love for you to join this wonderful ministry!

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Hawkins

Chair

2026 schedule for Altar Guild:

1st Sunday: Mary McCauley, Annie Hunt Burriss, Martha Harrell

2nd Sunday: Beverly Abbott, Becky Strickland, Dianne Yost

3rd Sunday: Peggy Hawkins, Frannie Hilsman, Chandler Pike, Vic Jackson, Janel Urena

4th Sunday: Genie Bennett, Paul Roman

## Flower Guild Report 2025

We come together in good fellowship to adorn our sanctuary to the glory of God, using locally available materials as much as possible, continuing the very green, engaged, and thrifty tradition set forth at Advent's beginning.

We accept financial contributions as Flower Memorials at holidays or individually special occasions, which help cover our minimal expenses.

I have been a member of Flower Guild for over 20 years, starting out as the youngest member, growing to become the eldest, seeing our group grow and shrink, though we've never lacked for talent and good humor.

So now, especially, we need and welcome volunteers, assistance, and assistants, (no experience necessary!) especially for our big events when everyone who is able pitches in, whether arranging flowers, cleaning up, or breaking down the holiday extravaganza at the end of the season.

And currently have 2 Sunday openings:

the first Sunday of the month,

or for a less 'rigorous' commitment, those rare 5th Sundays of the month.

The Guild is structured as follows:

- \*(Available) First Sunday of the month;
- Elizabeth Branch is in charge of the Second Sunday;
- Rick Crown is in charge of the Third Sunday;
- Glenn Eskew is in charge of the Fourth Sunday;
- \*(Available) Fifth Sundays;

Hands on guidance is readily available for those who would like to give it a try, and I am currently pondering additional ideas to acquaint our parishioners with the joy and satisfaction of decorating our beautiful sacred space; think about it, and reach out to one of us, before we reach out to you...

Respectfully Submitted, Rick Crown

2026

## Pastoral Care Committee Report 2025

Mission statement (from The Pastoral Care Charter)

The purpose of the Pastoral Care Committee is to serve as a ministry of presence, compassion, and support to members of The Church of the Advent Episcopal Church during times of need, transition, or celebration. This committee will coordinate care efforts at various levels of need, ensuring that individuals and families receive appropriate and timely support. We aim to extend Christ's love through prayer and service.

In the Fall of 2024, an idea was hatched to develop and start a sustainable pastoral care program for Church of the Advent. A request for volunteers to serve on a pastoral care steering committee was presented at our Fall Ministry Fair. From that ten people agreed to serve and organize our efforts that would be presented to our church vestry for approval. Our charter group consisted of Elizabeth Branch, Norinne Hurst, Anna Maret, Penny Lyle, Paul Roman, Betsy Quillin, Fr. Mark Stewart, Janel Urena, Debbie Grainger, Beth Pridgen, Tim Pridgen, Frannie Hilsman and Jim Ross (advisor).

The committee agreed to meet once a month. The first and maybe the most important decision made by this committee was that pastoral care is not a one-person job. Leaving pastoral care to our rector alone was a recipe for failure. This idea has not only been borne out of our failure to have a sustainable program but is widely documented across every major faith in the country. Our meetings lasted until the Fall of 2025. During that time:

1. The parish prayer list was updated, consolidated and revised.
2. A sponsor on the committee was assigned to each active person in need of monitoring.
3. A Google spread sheet was developed for tracking active people in need and included additional services that people required including but not limited to meals, transportation, visits and Eucharistic visits, counseling, and additional services.
4. A mission statement and a set of By-laws were developed and presented to the Vestry for approval.
5. A core rule was established and agreed upon that all Prayer List information is and will remain confidential.

In September of 2025, the steering committee petitioned the Vestry to form the Pastoral Care Committee with the steering committee serving as the initial members of this group. A

proposed charter for the committee was drafted and submitted to the Vestry, the request was approved and our pastoral care committee was formed. The group will serve two-year terms with half of the members rotating each May. Members can serve concurrent terms with no term limits.

Since our formation, we have seen the rotation of Fr. Mark Stewart and the addition to our group of Fr. Tryggvi Árnason. Both of our past and present pastors feel strongly that pastoral care is the responsibility of the entire congregation and not solely the priest serving the church. They both agreed that our priest needs to play the major role in many of the aspects of pastoral care and as our committee's spiritual leader. However, several subcategories of pastoral care belong squarely in the role of our church community as a whole. Since our formation, we have been able to begin prayers and support for our members through the solicitation of requests, visits, and follow-up.

This committee and pastoral care in general are a constant work in progress. We are actively working as a group to expand our support for our congregation and welcome any and all suggestions regarding our continued efforts. Sustainable pastoral care is not only attainable, but also imperative for the ongoing health and wellbeing of our church and community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tim Pridgen (Chairman)

Fr. Tryggvi Árnason, Elizabeth Branch, Debbie Grainger, Fran Hilsman, Norinne Hurst, Penny Lyle, Anna Marett, Beth Pridgen, Betsy Quillin, Paul Roman, Janel Urena and Jim Ross (Advisor).

## **Memorial Garden Report 2025**

The Memorial Garden is a dedicated space between the church and parish house where members of the Church of the Advent community may inter or scatter the cremains of loved ones. In 2025 the cremains of Barbara Melton Groover and Charles Hunt Brown, III were placed in the garden.

Families who choose to inter the cremains of a family member are asked to make a monetary donation for long term maintenance of the garden. These donations are deposited into the Memorial Garden designated account in our accounting system. The main expense for 2025 was the purchase of two name plates remembering those who were interred.

Maintenance of the garden was simple, with no changes to the hardscape, and minor landscape additions of bulbs (Snowflakes and Spider Lilies). Proposed additions for 2026 that will be planted this winter are a Japanese Maple and more Lenten Roses. The overall goal for the landscape is to create a landscape that is "simple and serene" while not creating a maintenance issue for the church.

Interest has been expressed to incorporate Stations of the Cross, or, Stations of the Resurrection into the garden and will be studied in 2026 for implementation later in 2026 or 2027.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard A. Simpson

## **Stewardship Report 2025**

Shelley McMillan, Beth Pridgen, and Mary Horton handled the stewardship campaign for 2025. We began the campaign on September 28 with an emailed letter from Father Tryggvi, and we followed up with a "snail mailed" letter from the stewardship chair. We organized speakers for church, and, at Father Tryvvgii's suggestion, emailed out three videos of church members speaking about stewardship. The campaign ended on November 16, 2025. A heartfelt thank you goes to Debbie Permar, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes on this project.

Total pledges were \$167,980.00 from 50 pledging units. Pledges increased approximately 12% from the previous year total and an increase of 7 new or returning pledging units.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Horton

Vestry Liaison

## **Report of the 119 Annual Council of the Diocese of Atlanta**

Resplendent with its Gothic Revival architecture and positioned at the apex of what is affectionately and reverently known as Jesus Junction, the Cathedral of St. Philip was the location for the 119 Annual Council of the Diocese of Atlanta.

The assemblage at the cathedral was visually daunting. Episcopalians as diverse as its definition implies all gathered to proclaim unity in their diversity and stalwartness in their love of Christ.

As Bishop Wright addressed the council, he emphasized the three words that constituted the theme for this year's council. Reclaim, Respond, and Rejoice were the words of which the bishop spoke. He implored us to begin to inculcate these words. He challenged us to take these words back to our parishes and to use them in our strategic planning. To further assist in the understanding of usage of the themes, the bishop used the following:

Reclaim-----Reclaim what we believe in as members of the Body of Christ.

Respond-----He cited the use of podcasts as a response during COVID. He also cited the various responses that the diocese and individual parishes make when the vagaries of life befall.

Rejoice-----He became very erudite in his discussion of rejoicing. Rejoicing is very difficult in present time disarray and despair. However, he said that despair is the absence of hope. When there is hope, there can be rejoicing.

The transition from ecclesiastical to business was almost seamless, as the walls of the hall began to reverberate with resolutions, amendments, balance sheet interpretations and finance reports. The potential contentiousness of the above topics was ameliorated by the finesse of a bishop who understands that leadership and pomposity are not synonymous.

The youth presence was very apparent at annual council, and this year they continued to assert their visibility and viability, making their presence known. Their use of contemporary music juxtaposed with traditional church music transcended the generational spectrum with sometimes awkward but enthusiastic clapping and swaying from the grey-haired tweeds. The youth truly demonstrated that faith is ageless.

Father Tryggvi, Dianne and I formed the Advent contingency at annual council. We are very honored to represent Madison.

Respectfully submitted,

Vic Jackson