



The Episcopal Church of the Advent
January 8, 2026 Newsletter
The Feast of the Epiphany



The Athens Chamber Singers, Sunday, December 4

The Athens Chamber Singers, directed by Dr. Kevin Kelly since 1994, sang a marvelous grouping of sacred music centered around the Epiphany. Several Advent parishioners were the readers. Instruments included flute, harp, guitar and piano, all played by member Singers. The selections were from different points in time, some ancient, some more modern. A number of the songs were arranged by Dr. Kelly. The Singers have been coming to Advent for many years, and they have told us that the Advent service is the highlight of their singing year. A reception followed the performance in the parish house. We are so very grateful to the Adventers who provided the food and drink for the Singers! Not only do they look forward to the performance every year, but also the reception!

In May 2026 the Athens Chamber Singers will be taking a choir tour of the Isle of Man, a small Celtic nation in the Irish Sea. Their repertoire consists of Manx folksongs arranged for choir & harp by director Kevin Kelly. On Sunday April 19, 2026, 4:00 PM the Singers will give us a preview concert of their tour music. The concert is free but donations towards travel expenses will be gladly accepted. For more information about the Athens Chamber Singers or to donate to the group, you can find them at <http://www.athenschambersingers.org/>

Episcopal 101 – Wednesday evenings!

Wednesday evenings of light supper and Episcopal 101 during the season of Epiphany: We will gather at the Parish House for light supper (soup) followed by conversation about our Anglican tradition. An offering for new members, seekers, and longtime Episcopalians alike we will look at the different components that make us who we are as Episcopalians; i.e. Holy Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer, the sacraments, prayer and worship, and our tradition. We will meet from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Please RSVP for the meal by Tuesday. Click here: [\(rsvp link\) https://adventmadison.org/advent-episcopal-101-supper-rsvp-form/](https://adventmadison.org/advent-episcopal-101-supper-rsvp-form/)

Soup sign-up for Wednesday nights

Would you be willing to team-up with a fellow parishioner to prepare a soup to serve 20 +/- people for our Wednesday nights? As we proceed with our Episcopal 101 - Wednesday evenings, we are looking for volunteers willing to make and serve soup. Dates to sign-up to serve: January 14th, 21st, or 28th. February 11th. **Sign-up link:** <https://adventmadisonga.com/advent-episcopal-101-soup-volunteers/>

Parish Annual Meeting – January 18

Church of the Advent - Parish Annual Meeting will be held in the Parish House on Sunday - January 18th at 11:45, (immediately following the 10:30 service). Please bring side dishes.

Nominations for the Vestry Class of 2026

We are now receiving nominations for parishioners to be considered as nominees of the proposed slate of the Vestry Class of 2026. Vestry members serve for three years. The proposed Vestry slate will be voted on at the Parish Annual Meeting on January 18th. All parish members in good standing are eligible to serve on the Vestry. Communicant in good standing is one who is baptized, confirmed, or has been received into the Episcopal Church, attends church regularly, and has made a financial pledge to the work and ministries of the parish within the last six months. Members can nominate themselves. Please make sure that the parishioner whose name you submit has agreed to be considered as a Vestry nominee. Please submit names to adventmadison@bellsouth.net by January 15th.

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

This Sunday, on the Feast of the Epiphany (January 6, 2026), Father Tryggvi's sermon invited us to linger in the profound mystery of the Wise Men who journeyed from the East to visit the infant Jesus, as recounted in the Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12.

Scholars have long pondered the number of the Magi, their precise role in Matthew's narrative, and the symbolic meanings often assigned to their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Yet, as Father Tryggvi pointedly asked, "What happened to those gifts after they were presented in Bethlehem? If the Magi brought gold—real wealth—along with costly frankincense and myrrh, how is it that Mary and Joseph appear so poor throughout the rest of the story?" These are questions many of us have never thought to ask, so captivated are we by the familiar beauty of the Nativity. The Magi remain enigmatic figures: travelers from the East, guided by a star, perhaps along the perilous Silk Road. We picture them on camels, bearing treasure chests guarded against bandits. Yet Matthew tells us remarkably little about them—who they were, whether they knew one another before the journey, or why they alone noticed and followed that extraordinary star.

As Father Tryggvi observed, "The Magi have captured our imagination precisely because they are mysterious. They possess knowledge whose significance they clearly grasp. They see the star and follow it. They appear out of nowhere and then vanish by another route. Only Matthew mentions them, and he tells us only what he intends us to know." Rather than focusing on Matthew's theological purpose, generations have filled the gaps with legend, art, song, and story. By the sixth century, Greek manuscripts gave them names: Balthazar from Arabia, Caspar from India, and Melchior from Persia. Over time, "Wise Men" became "Kings," drawing on Old Testament imagery of rulers bringing tribute from afar. Yet, as Father Tryggvi reminded us, we know no more than what Matthew chose to reveal—and he could scarcely have foreseen the elaborate traditions that would grow around his brief account.

Matthew, the most Jewish of the Gospel writers, includes the Magi for a deeper reason. Their visit serves as one bookend to his Gospel: Gentile seekers from the East are the first to recognize and worship the Messiah. The other bookend comes at the very end, when the risen Jesus commissions the disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations." The Magi foreshadow the universal reach of the Good News.

Filling in names, titles, and origins was never Matthew's aim. Instead, these mysterious visitors invite us into a faith that is alive and open. They challenge us to notice God's signs in unexpected places, to step beyond comfort and familiarity, to remain attentive to the Holy Spirit's fresh movement in our lives.

Father Tryggvi closed with these stirring words: "The Magi lead us on a path deeper than our own personal faith, reminding us to ask what their homage to the Godchild might say to us today. Have we allowed our image of God to become fixed, a mere consequence of habit? Is our faith confined to creed or dogma? Or do we give it room to breathe—to inhale the fresh air the Holy Spirit sends our way continually? Do we still believe God has something new in store for us? If we feel fully satisfied and answers-complete, perhaps it is time to look up, seek a star, and follow wherever God leads us in this new year."

Amen.

Question for Reflection: Like the Magi, who left the familiarity of their homeland to follow a mysterious star, what "star" might God be placing in your life right now—an unexpected sign, a new opportunity, or a quiet prompting—that invites you to step out in faith and discover something fresh about God's presence and purpose for you in this new year?

In Peace and Joy, Kim

Request for Volunteers! 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 First Sunday after the Epiphany

January 11, 2026

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

1st Reading: Crown

2nd Reading: Simpson

Altar Guild: Abbott-Yost-Strickland

Flower Guild: Branch

Organ Tech: M Dartnell

Vestry of the Day: Horton

**Readings for the First Sunday after the Epiphany
January 11, 2026**

[Link to readings](#)

First Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalm 29

Second Reading: Acts 10:34-43

The Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

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, Marcy Lay, 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, Laura, Caroline

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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