

Adventurer

Christmas

OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF THE ADVENT • BIRMINGHAM, AL



Vol. 49, No. 45

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Week of December 21, 2025



News & Events

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Christmas Service Schedule

Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24

3:00 p.m. Family Service

Preacher: Will Fagan

5:00 p.m. Holy Communion (Nave)

Preacher: Dean Smalley

Livestream available at
AdventBirmingham.org/Live

5:00 p.m. Holy Communion (Refectory)

Preacher: Canon Young

8:00 p.m. Holy Communion

Preacher: Dean Smalley

Rebroadcast of 5:00 Nave service available

11:00 p.m. Holy Communion

Preacher: Bishop Curry

Rebroadcast of 5:00 Nave service available

Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25

10:00 a.m. Holy Communion

Preacher: Vice Dean Murray

Livestream available at
AdventBirmingham.org/Live

See page 2 for more information.



A Word from Canon Young

Familiarity breeds contempt. Or so the saying goes. I think about our cultural Christmas season and wonder what is going on in the hearts and minds of people as we frantically shop and fill our calendars with events in anticipation of the season. I become aware of how busy and full December feels. I wonder what spiritually is happening to me, to us, when we are bombarded by the commercialized and sanitized energy of cultural Christmas. What apathy has ensnared my heart? What groove has become so worn in my soul that the Nativity is either a sweet saccharine memento or, even worse, background decor for my otherwise interesting lifestyle?

My family watched the delightful movie, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, and it was jarring to see myself in some of the film's characters. It's a parable of sorts of just how incredibly powerful and beautiful the gospel story really is – the wonder of Christ coming among us. It depicts a family of hooligan children who take part in the annual Christ-

mas pageant, much to the chagrin of some of the well-mannered church folk. The Herdman children were rowdy, crass, and unkempt. Their surprising presence in the pageant had people anticipating the worst.

The oldest sister, Emma Jean, plays Mary in the pageant, and is seen weeping silently over the baby-doll Jesus. The narrator relates what happens in a pivotal scene as the unruly Emma Jean "had caught on to the idea of God and the wonder of Christmas... Christmas just came over her all at once, like a case of chills and fever." The pageant's audience, previously skeptical of the Herdman's participation in a sacred church event, watched in awe as the fresh and tender message of the Incarnation washed over her, moving her to tears. There's something alluring and delightful about how beautiful the story of Christmas is for a weary world like ours.

Martin Luther wrote, "All praise to Thee, eternal God, who, clothed in garb of flesh and blood, dost take a manger for Thy throne, while worlds on worlds are thine alone." May the wonder of the babe in the manger once more draw us more deeply into faith in God's saving power.

- Adam

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

- Luke 2:16-17

This Sunday:

December 21, 2025

7:30 a.m. Holy Communion

Preacher: Vice Dean Murray

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer and Pageant

In the Nave. Preacher: Mary Ann McCarty

11:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

Preacher: Vice Dean Murray

We will not hold the 9:00 a.m. Refectory service this Sunday due to the Christmas Pageant at the 9:00 a.m. Nave service.

We will livestream the 9:00 a.m. Nave service and the 11:00 a.m. service.

Visit AdventBirmingham.org/Live, Facebook Live, or YouTube to access our stream.

Adult Education (10:15-10:50 a.m.):

The Dean's Class (Refectory) – *Ero Cras: Tomorrow I Come* – Dean Pinter

The Thrilling Monotony of Christmas (Assembly Hall) – Gil Kracke

20s and 30s Class (Lower School Library) – *Advent at the Advent: Don't Throw Your Tree Out on Friday! (Enjoying This a Minute Longer)* – Elizabeth Fagan

Children's & Youth Education:

Our 3s and 4s classes meet at 9:00 a.m. Kindergarten through 3rd grade start the 9:00 service in church before leaving during the children's dismissal for Children's Church. 4th grade through 6th grade and Jr. and Sr. High youth have classes between the 9:00 and 11:00 services. See Sunday's worship bulletin for locations.

The Nursery opens for our Infants, Toddlers, and 2s classes at 8:45 a.m. The Nursery is open for ages 6 weeks-5 years during the 11:00 service.



GET INVOLVED! SEE WHAT'S GOING ON!



worship

Christmas Pageant



Annual Service Is this Sunday at 9:00

Continuing an Advent tradition, our 5th and 6th graders will bless our 9:00 a.m. service in the Nave with the annual Christmas Pageant presentation this Sunday, December 21.

Lighting the Advent Wreath

This Sunday, December 21, the Norwood family, Charlie and Kelley, Ellis (11th grade), Sellers (9th grade), and Louise (6th grade), will lead the lighting of the fourth candle on our Nave Advent wreath at the beginning of the 9:00 a.m. service.

Christmas Child Care

Nursery Schedule for Christmas Services

Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24

3:00 p.m. Family Service	Nursery for 2s class and younger
5:00 p.m. Holy Communion	Nursery for ages 5 years and younger
8:00 p.m. Holy Communion	Nursery closed
11:00 p.m. Holy Communion	Nursery closed

Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25

10:00 a.m. Holy Communion	Nursery closed
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Lectionary

Sunday, December 21: Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18 • Isaiah 7:10-16
Romans 1:1-7 • Matthew 1:18-25

Christmas Eve, December 24: Isaiah 9:2-7 • Psalm 98
Titus 3:4-7 • Luke 2:1-20

Christmas Day, December 25: Isaiah 9:2-7 • Psalm 98
Luke 2:1-14



making music

Music on Christmas Eve

The Cathedral Choir and organ, joined by the Ambassador Brass Quintet and timpani, will lead music at the 5:00 p.m. (Nave), 8:00 p.m., and 11:00 p.m. services on Christmas Eve. The Advent Band will lead music at the 5:00 p.m. service in the Refectory.



serving & outreach

Advent Inreach

Volunteers Needed to Deliver Poinsettias Christmas Day

Spread the joy of the birth of our Savior by bringing personal Christmas greetings to those who may not have been able to attend Christmas services. Poinsettias can be picked up, along with addressed cards, following the Christmas Day service, which is on Thursday, December 25, at 10:00 a.m.



Poinsettias will need to be picked up Christmas morning around 11:00 a.m., but can be delivered any time on Christmas Day. To volunteer or for more information, please contact Robin Turner (Robin@CathedralAdvent.com, 205-226-3500).

Lenten Lunches

This Is the Last Sunday for Lunch Ticket Presales

December 21 will be the last Sunday before Christmas to purchase Lenten Lunch tickets, which make great stocking-stuffers. Tickets will be available in Clingman Commons between the 7:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. services as well as the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services this Sunday.

Tickets can also be purchased at the Advent Bookstore.

Holiday Closings

The church office will be closed Wednesday-Friday, December 24-26, in observance of Christmas. The office will reopen on Monday, December 29.

The church office will be closed Thursday, January 1, 2026, in observance of New Year's Day. The office will reopen on Friday, January 2.

Advent House: Intercessory prayer is on-going through the Advent House Prayer Ministry. To schedule a prayer session at Advent House (2317 Arlington Avenue South, 35205), call Kathy Logue at 205-410-4622.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.
- Titus 2:11-13



bookstore

Bookstore Taking Year-End Break

The Advent Bookstore will close for the holidays at the end of the business day (2:00 p.m.) on Tuesday, December 23. It will remain closed through Sunday, January 4, and will reopen on Monday, January 5, at 10:00 a.m.

Contact the store for more information (205-323-2959, Bookstore@CathedralAdvent.com).

Reminder from the Finance Office

The Advent wants to make sure that you receive proper credit for all financial gifts in 2025.

We will be able to credit your gifts in this calendar year if they are placed in the collection plate by December 28, delivered to the church office in person during regular business hours (8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.) by end of day December 31, or postmarked no later than December 31, 2025.



education

Children's Sunday School



Above: Our 3K students played with a Nativity set on the Second Sunday of Advent.

memorials:

Gifts Were Given In Memory Of:

Henry Goldthwaite Seibels, III: (Endowment Fund) by Julie Goyer • (Altar Guild) by Miriam and Clay Morris



spiritual growth & fellowship

Women's Ministry



Another Great Christ in the Christmas Crunch

On December 4, Advent women enjoyed visiting with friends over a delicious lunch and hearing the wonder of Christ's Incarnation through Scripture, reflections from Frederick Buechner's *The Magnificent Defeat*, and music from Lowana Wallace and Taylor Propp. The ladies also enjoyed shopping at the Ministry Market, which included several of our ministry partners and other fair-trade companies.



And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"
- Luke 2:8-14

diocesan staff

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Glenda S. Curry, Bishop of Alabama

advent staff

The Very Rev. R. Craig Smalley, Dean and Rector

The Rev. Canon Thomas P. Murray, Vice Dean

The Rev. Canon James "Jay" W. Gardner, III, Canon Pastor

The Rt. Rev. Brian Prior, Assisting Bishop of Alabama

The Rev. Canon Dr. Dean L. Pinter, Canon Theologian

The Rev. Canon Adam A. Young, Canon Missioner

The Rev. William J. Fagan, Curate

The Very Rev. Dr. Paul F.M. Zahl, Dean Emeritus

transitions:

Births: Louise Harriet Heekin, daughter of Lily and Andrew, on November 30; Evelyn James Carter, daughter of Brooke and Tyler, on December 2; Albert "Tripp" Whiting Copeland, III, son of Adelaide and Albert, on December 4

memorials:

Gifts Were Given In Memory Of:

Mr. and Mrs. James Geddes Baxley: (Music Discretionary Fund) by Jarman G. Baxley

The Rev. John Thompson Brown: (Cathedral Choir Fund) by Stephen G. Schaeffer

Charlotte Murdock: (Cathedral Choir Fund) by Frank A. Romanowicz

Dr. Chaney Aderholt: (Music Discretionary Fund) by Stephen G. Schaeffer

Sue Ann Karasek Jennings: (Pastoral Care) by Miriam and Clay Morris

Sarah Britton Neal: (Altar Guild) by Miriam and Clay Morris

In Thanksgiving for the Birthday of Bob Reich: (Endowment Fund) by Louise and Jimmie Wright



Cathedral Church of the Advent
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calendar:

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Dec 21 Christmas Pageant at 9:00 a.m. Nave service No 9:00 a.m. Refectory service	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Christmas services are listed on front page and page 2 Church office closed	25 Christmas Day Holy Communion - Nave - 10:00 a.m. Church office closed	26 Church office closed	27
Dec 28 Holy Communion at 7:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. - Nave	29	30	31	Jan 1 New Year's Day Church office closed	2	3

Monday-Friday (No meeting December 25-26 or January 1): AA – Coe Conference Room, noon

Pastoral Notice: If you are going into the hospital, have need of prayer or counsel, or have a family member unable to attend church, please call the Pastoral Care Office at 205-226-3500.