



Welcome to the Church of the Advent! If you are visiting with us, please know we are honored by your presence! We invite you to complete a guest card, which will allow us to remain in contact with you and provide you with additional information. You may place your completed card in the offering plate, or you may give it to our priest as you are leaving. On our website (www.adventks.org), you will find an up-to-date calendar of all church ministries and activities, and you may sign up to receive our weekly email. If you are interested in learning more about the Church of the Advent, the Episcopal Church, or the Christian faith, please contact our priest (Tim Johnson) at (610) 444-4624 or rector@adventks.org. **Again, welcome!**

Elementary Sunday School is on break until Sunday, January 11th.

Jr/Sr High Sunday School is on break until Sunday, January 18th.

Adult Formation is currently on break. The next adult formation opportunity is a six-week series on the “Life of Jesus” based on a book by John Dickson and led by Dan Leathers and Kathleen Rhodes, beginning January 11.

Holy Eucharist, tomorrow, at 8 am in the Chapel, for the Feast of St. Thomas

Sunday, Dec. 28, one service at 10 am (Lessons and Carols)

**THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 21, 2025 11:00 A.M.**

(Our liturgy is taken from Enriching Our Worship, an authorized supplement to The Book of Common Prayer.)

WE GATHER FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Adagio

Albinoni

OPENING HYMN

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

#265 in the **Hymnal 1982** (blue hymnal)

Celebrant Blessed are you, holy and living God.

People **You come to your people and set them free.**

Celebrant Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Lord. **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

O come, O come Emmanuel

#56, vs. 1-2, in the **Hymnal 1982** (blue hymnal)

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant & People

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

THE FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 35:1-10

Isaiah 7:10-16

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord

himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.

3 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

4 O LORD God of hosts, *
how long will you be angered
despite the prayers of your people?

5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

7 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.

17 And so will we never turn away from you; *
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.

18 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

THE SECOND LESSON: Romans 1:1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,
To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

(Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.)

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

HOMILY

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the

Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

(Please kneel or be seated for the prayers of the people and confession.)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(Response to each petition: Draw near and hear us.)

THE CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Celebrant Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(silence)

Celebrant Lord Jesus, you are the living Word who was with God from the beginning. Lord, have mercy.

People **Lord, have mercy.**

Celebrant Christ Jesus, you are the life and light of all people. Christ, have mercy.

People **Christ, have mercy.**

Celebrant Lord Jesus, your light shines in the midst of our darkness, and our darkness did not overcome it. Lord, have mercy.

People **Lord, have mercy.**

THE PEACE

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

WE CELEBRATE HOLY COMMUNION

OFFERTORY

Mary, Did You Know
Vicki Allen Malchione, Mezzo

Lowry/Greene

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS *(Please stand as you are able.)*

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow. Praise God, all crea - tures

here — be - low. Praise God a - bove, ye heaven - ly host. Praise

Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -

man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Words: Thomas Ken, 1674
Music: 15th Century French

VENI EMMANUEL
LM with Refrain

Text and tune adapted by Dean McIntyre, The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, PO Box 340003, Nashville TN 37203-0003. Telephone 615-340-7073. Website <http://www.umcworship.org>. Email address: music@gbod.org. Text and tune are public domain.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

(Eucharistic Prayer 3 from Enriching Our Worship)

<i>Celebrant</i>	The Lord be with you.
<i>People</i>	And also with you.
<i>Celebrant</i>	Lift up your hearts.
<i>People</i>	We lift them to the Lord.
<i>Celebrant</i>	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
<i>People</i>	It is right to give God thanks and praise.

All thanks and praise are yours at all times and in all places...

...we join with the heavenly beings and all creation as we shout with joy.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosana in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosana in the highest!**

(Please kneel, remain standing, or kneel for the remainder of the prayer.)

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all, your Word has never been silent...

...your earth has formed and human hands have made, we acclaim you, O Christ:

**Dying, you destroyed our death. Rising, you restored our life.
Christ Jesus, come in glory.**

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine...

...Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, we worship you our God and Creator in voices of unending praise.
Blessed are you now and forever. **Amen!**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Our Father, who art in heaven,	as we forgive those who
hallowed be thy Name,	trespass against us.
thy kingdom come,	Lead us not into temptation,
thy will be done,	but deliver us from evil.
on earth as it is in heaven.	For thine is the kingdom, and
Give us this day our daily bread.	the power, and the glory for
And forgive us our trespasses,	ever and ever. Amen.

Celebrant This is the true bread which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

People **Whoever eats this bread will live forever.**

COMMUNION HYMN

E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come
Paul Manz – Advent Parish Choir

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Celebrant Let us pray.

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

WE RETURN TO THE WORLD

THE ADVENT BLESSING

Celebrant May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin.

People **Amen.**

Celebrant May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love.

People **Amen.**

Celebrant May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life.

People **Amen.**

Celebrant And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever.

People **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

Soon and Very Soon

#14 in **Lift Every Voice and Sing** (black & red hymnal)

DISMISSAL

Celebrant Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Our Father in Heaven

J.S. Bach

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*The Sanctuary Candle is sponsored this week by
Art and Jackie Holveck in
honor of their 70th anniversary.*

WORSHIP SUPPORT

Lector: Ellen Struble

Sub Deacon: Barbara Thornton

Eucharistic Minister: Diane Chun

Director of Music: Wilson G. Somers

*Pastoral Emergencies – If you have a pastoral emergency requiring the
assistance of a priest, please contact the church office during office hours.
Outside of office hours, please contact the Rev. Tim Johnson directly at
484-730-1988.*

Suggested Spiritual Practice During Advent: Read the Gospel of Luke

The Gospel of Luke was written around the end of the first century, approximately seven or eight decades after the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and it was written for a predominately Gentile (non-Jewish) community. This Gospel demonstrates that God's promises through the Prophets of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus and that these promises extend to Gentiles also. Luke invites his readers to follow the example of Jesus and care deeply for people whom we often neglect and overlook in our world, namely the poor, the ill, and the vulnerable. This concern for the neglected is present from the very beginning of the Gospel. In the first chapter, God chooses Mary, a young, poor girl of no status, to be the mother of Jesus, and in Mary's song—the Magnificat—she extols God's mercy and love for the humble and lowly. The writer of Luke's Gospel was also the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, which is understood to be the sequel to Luke's Gospel.

The Season of Advent – What is it?

To understand the season of Advent, it is helpful to understand the shape of the church year – what we call the liturgical calendar – which operates differently from the standard calendar (Jan.-Dec.) year that orders nearly every aspect of our lives. The church year is designed to help us walk through the life of Jesus each year. The church year is anchored by the two most significant events of Jesus's life – his birth (incarnation) and his resurrection – so the celebrations of Christmas and Easter give shape and structure to the rest of the church year. Christmas and Easter are so important that they are not just celebrated on single days (Christmas Day and Easter Sunday); rather, each of these events is celebrated with an entire season. The Christmas Season spans the twelve days from Christmas Eve to January 6th, and the Easter Season spans the fifty days from Easter Sunday through the Feast of Pentecost.

Each of these festive seasons is preceded by a season of preparation. In preparation for the Easter Season, we observe the season of Lent, which spans the forty weekdays (Mondays-Saturdays) from Ash Wednesday to the Saturday before Easter Sunday. In preparation for Christmas, we observe the season of Advent, which spans the weeks containing the four Sundays before Christmas Eve.

We mark this preparatory season of Advent by using either violet (purple) or blue in the hangings on the altar, counting the Sundays by lighting candles on the Advent wreath, and keeping decorations in the church to a minimum. Whereas secular society tends to start celebrating Christmas at the end of November and wraps up Christmas a day or two after Christmas Day, the church doesn't officially begin celebrating Christmas until Christmas Eve and continues the celebration until January 6th. There are two themes you will hear in the Bible readings used during Advent. The first theme is that of waiting for the birth of the promised Messiah (Jesus). The second theme you will hear in the readings is the promise that Jesus will return in the "fullness of time." So, in the season of Advent we prepare to celebrate his first coming or "Advent" at Christmas as well as look to his second coming or "Second Advent" in the fullness of time.

Three Suggestions for Observing Advent

Faithfully observing Advent is a challenge since the rest of the world has already moved onto Christmas, and let's be honest, patiently and expectedly waiting for something is not a virtue that is valued in our rather impatient culture. There are, though, some simple ways to help you observe this season. First, use an Advent wreath. An Advent wreath consists of four candles – three blue or purple candles and one pink or rose-colored candle. Each Sunday during Advent, light an additional candle. The pink/rose candle is used on the third Sunday of Advent. Second, pace yourself with your decorating, adding to your decorations each week during the season rather than putting up all your decorations at once. This approach will help you experience a sense of anticipation and growing expectation. Finally, consider adding a regular practice of prayer and/or silence to your daily routines during this season.