



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Atlanta Christian Church

November 30, 2025

So This Is The New Year

Advent is the four-week season leading up to Christmas and is known for its themes of waiting and anticipation. Advent is also the first season of the Christian Year, so Happy New Year, everyone! One of the things you'll notice about Advent is how much it doesn't feel like Christmas, like not at all. The tones of the season are darker, all during this darkest time of the year. The colors of the Church have changed to dark navy or purple, the same as the season of Lent. There is a little bit of Lent in Advent, inviting us into deep reflection on the hard parts of what it means to be human and of learning to trust God, to "hold to God's unchanging hand" as the old hymn says. The manger scene is just down the road, but Advent takes us there more slowly than our department stores do. Enjoy the ride.

"THE EXTRAORDINARY THING THAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN IS MATCHED ONLY BY THE EXTRAORDINARY MOMENT JUST BEFORE IT HAPPENS. ADVENT IS THE NAME OF THAT MOMENT."

Frederick Buechner

Welcome to Atlanta Christian Church

If this is your first Sunday with us, welcome in! Our weekly services follow the pattern of worship from the *Book of Common Prayer* and includes music and singing, prayers, readings from the Bible, a sermon, and the communion (also called the Lord's Supper, Mass, or the Eucharist). If you'd like to let us know you were here today, you can use the QR code below for our digital guestbook. There's the analog version newcomer card in the pew racks as well. Coffee and donuts are in the cafe, which is just through the door to the right of the stage. Our bathrooms are located in the main lobby. If there is anything else you may need while you're here, simply ask one of our host team volunteers, and they'll help you out.

Everything you need for today is in this bulletin. All the songs, the readings, the prayers, the announcements, and some other fun things too. If you don't plan on taking it home with you, just toss it back in the baskets in the lobby or by the stage entrance, and we'll add it to the recycle pile here in the office.

So glad you're here today,

Derek Sweatman
Pastor



Digital Guestbook

On Tap Today

Today is the first Sunday in the Advent season, so we're starting our journey to the Christmas story that lies a few weeks down the road. **Alyssa Elliott** is bringing today's sermon from the selected readings for this Sunday. All of today's readings are printed inside this bulletin, plus a page to take notes. We've also provided a take-home devotional guide in here, so take advantage of that sometime this week.

If you used a mug from our cafe this morning, just place it in one of the mug buckets (in the lobby and cafe) before you leave today. Thanks!

Coming Events & Gatherings

- ▶ **Saturday, December 6: High School Christmas Party** - Hosted at the Nadell's in Brookhaven at 5:00 PM. Games, food, white elephant gifts, and more. For more details, reach out to Lindsey Self at lindsey@atlantachristianchurch.org. Use the QR code below to RSVP.
- ▶ **Sunday, December 7: S'Mores Sunday** - We're opening up the Fellowship Hall at 9:00 AM for our annual S'Mores Sunday. Come early and piece together your best S'More, sit around with friends over coffee, and enjoy the goodies. Excellent event for kids, obviously, but everyone is invited.
- ▶ **Sunday, December 7: Longest Night Service** - We recognize that the Christmas season isn't a cheery time for everyone. If you find the holidays difficult, or if you simply desire a quiet service of reflection, please join us for "The Longest Night" at 7:00 PM here at the building. It is a time to find solace and the comfort of God's promise that we are never alone.
- ▶ **Saturday, December 13: Children's Christmas Performance** - Make plans to come out and be a part of this year's Christmas program—all are welcome, whether you have kids performing or not. Everything starts at 3:00 PM with a reception to follow.
- ▶ **Sunday, December 14: Bridge Christmas Party** - If your child is in 5th or 6th grade, we're hosting our Bridge Christmas Party at 11:45 AM at the Quiggle's home. For more on this event, email Lindsey Self at lindsey@atlantachristianchurch.org. Use the QR code below to RSVP.
- ▶ **Wednesday, December 24: Christmas Eve Service** - Doors open at 5:00 PM for cookies, coffee, and hot chocolate in the Fellowship Hall, and the service begins at 6:00 PM here in the sanctuary. If you can help by baking cookies for this event, let Laura Kerby know at admin@atlantachristianchurch.org.

Christmas Eve will be our last service of the year. We'll see you back on Sunday, January 4, 2026!



Event Sign-Ups



Advent Playlist

LAZARUS COLLECTIONS

Here are three ways to serve the unhoused of our city this coming season. Donations can be dropped off at the church on Sundays from November 2 through December 24.

1. Cold Weather Kits

Fill up a one-gallon Ziploc bag with new socks, knit hat, gloves, hand warmers, and a note of encouragement.

2. Blanket Drive

Donate a blanket or two to help with those who are sleeping outside during the colder months.

3. Christmas Dinner

Serve at this year's Lazarus Christmas Dinner on Sunday, December 7, from 3:00pm to 5:00pm at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer (Midtown).



Once you sign up for the Lazarus Christmas Dinner, we will send you their RSVP form.

Food Pantry Collections

Help us restock our food pantry using the QR code below. This will take you to our church's Amazon page where you'll find all the needed items. Our pantry operates as an off-campus location for the Georgia Tech STAR program, which assists students with emergency housing and food needs. We open the pantry two Sundays a month from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM serving upwards of 47 students per week. If you would like to help with this ministry, email Laura Kerby at admin@atlantachristianchurch.org for more details and to get on the rotation.

Donations can be mailed to:

Atlanta Christian Church
1095 State Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30318





Evensong Service

Evensong Services

Evensong is an old term churches used for a vespers service at sundown that included the readings and singings of certain Psalm, Canticles, and other Biblical songs and passages. Today, these services can be designed for reflection and prayer through music and readings and times of silence. They're also a chance for the church to gather apart from the Sunday morning experience and be together in a more relaxed worship setting, an invitation to spend an hour redirecting your heart and mind towards the grace and mercy of God. We're hosting four of these gatherings quarterly in 2026.

Wednesday, January 21

6:15 PM - Doors open for coffee and fellowship

7:00 PM - Service begins

Childcare is available upon request, so be sure to click that option on the sign up form.

Order of Service

Please stand for the procession during our opening song as our kids bring in the candlelight, the communion bread, and the Gospel for the morning.

Song: Hold To God's Unchanging Hand

Time is filled with swift transition
Naught of earth unmoved can stand
Build your hopes on things eternal
Hold to God's unchanging hand

Trust in Him who will not leave you
Whatsoever years may bring
If by earthly friends forsaken
Still more closely to Him cling

Hold to His hand, God's unchanging hand
Hold to His hand, God's unchanging hand
Build your hopes on things eternal
Hold to God's unchanging hand

Covet not this world's vain riches
That so rapidly decay
Seek to gain the heav'nly treasures
They will never pass away

CCLI Song #6103879

Written by Jennie Wilson in 1905 © Public Domain.

Welcome & Opening Acclimation

Leader: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
Everyone: And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.
Leader: The Lord be with you.
Everyone: And also with you.
Leader: Let us pray together this collect for the first Sunday of Advent.
Everyone: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor or light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.
Leader: 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. Amen.

If you are able, remain standing as we sing.

Song: I Stand Amazed (How Marvelous)

I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene
And wonder how He could love me
A sinner condemned unclean

He took my sins and my sorrows
He made them His very own
He bore the burden to Calvary
And suffered and died alone

How marvelous how wonderful
And my song shall ever be
How marvelous how wonderful
Is my Savior's love for me

And with the ransomed in glory
His face I at last shall see
It will be my joy through the ages
To sing of His love for me

CCLI Song #4674207
Written by Chas H. Gabriel in 1905

You may be seated for the reading of the scriptures.

Reading from Isaiah 2:1-5

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

Everyone: Thanks be to God.

Collective Reading of Psalm 122

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together. To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord. For there the thrones for judgment were set up, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls and security within your towers." For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, "Peace be within you." For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.

The readings for the First Sunday of Advent can be strange and even jarring, but here's the insider tip: each one looks ahead, like, way ahead, to a time when God will fix all things. So, if you tilt your head just right, you can see - and hear - the hope that each writer speaks of.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

Reading from Romans 13:11-14

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone; the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.
Everyone: Thanks be to God.

Song: Run To The Father

I've carried a burden for too long on my own
I wasn't created to bear it alone
I hear Your invitation to let it all go
I see it now I'm laying it down
And I know that I need You

I run to the Father
I fall into grace
I'm done with the hiding
No reason to wait
My heart needs (found) a surgeon
My soul needs (found) a friend
So I'll run to the Father
Again and again
And again and again

You saw my condition
Had a plan from the start

Your Son for redemption
The price for my heart
I don't have a context
For that kind of love
I don't understand
I can't comprehend
All I know is I need You

My heart has been in Your sights
Long before my first breath
Running into Your arms
Is running to life from death
I feel this rush deep in my chest
Your mercy is calling out
Just as I am You pull me in
And I know I need You now

CCLI Song #7133494
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Songs; I Am A Pilgrim Songs; Songs From Richmond Park

Song: Come Thou Fount

Come Thou fount of ev'ry blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it
Mount of Thy redeeming love

Here I raise mine Ebenezer
Hither by Thy help I'm come
And I hope by Thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home
Jesus sought me when a stranger

Wand'ring from the fold of God
He to rescue me from danger
Interposed His precious blood

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be
Let Thy grace Lord like a fetter
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee
Prone to wander Lord I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart Lord take and seal it
Seal it for Thy courts above

CCLI Song #108389

© Words: Public Domain, Written in 1758 by Robert Robinson

Please remain standing for the reading of the Gospel. The Gospel reading takes place from the middle of the sanctuary, a symbol of Christ's presence among the people. The \$2 theological term is the "incarnation" of Christ.

Leader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Reading from Matthew 24:36-44

But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so, too, will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken, and one will be left. Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Everyone: Praise to you, Lord Christ

Sermon Notes

Preacher: Alyssa Elliott

Communion Liturgy

Everyone: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart, we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Leader: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you of all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

Leader: The peace of the Lord always be with you.

Everyone: And also with you.

Passing of the Peace

Take a minute to stand, stretch, and greet those around you. Traditionally this a time when the church exchanges words of peace to one another, echoing the words of Jesus in John 20:21, saying, "peace be with you."

You may be seated during the following liturgy.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Everyone: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

Everyone: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Everyone: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Leader: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name,

Everyone: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Leader: Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all. He

stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

Leader: On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said,

Everyone: Take, eat; this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Leader: After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said,

Everyone: Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.

Leader: Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Everyone: Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Leader: We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom. All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen.

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

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

Communion Instructions

We practice intinction during communion, which means you take the wafer and dip it into the juice. Our wafers are gluten free and our table is also open to all who wish to receive. If you would like to receive communion today, walk forward down the center aisle to receive the bread, and then make your way to the right or left for the juice.

Song: O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O come O come Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear

Rejoice rejoice Emmanuel
Shall come to thee O Israel

O come Thou Dayspring come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight

O come Thou Wisdom from on high
And order all things far and nigh
To us the path of knowledge show
And cause us in her ways to go

O come Desire of nations bind
All peoples in one heart and mind
Bid envy strife and quarrels cease
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace

CCLI Song #31982
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Original song dates back 1200 years

Benediction & Doxology

Following the announcements, please stand for the benediction and closing doxology.

Benediction

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.

Song: Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above ye heav'nly hosts,
Praise Father Son and Holy Ghost.
Amen.



“God With Us In Waiting”

Devotional Guide by Ryan Snider

We are a people who don't know how to wait. Don't believe me? How many of you started rockin' around the Christmas tree as soon as the turkey was thrown into Tupperware? In a world of instant gratification, at least we still make the kids wait until Christmas to open their presents. Waiting is not instinctual; at best, it feels like a passive waste of time and at worst like a theft of control. To paraphrase Henri Nouwen: waiting is an awful desert between where we are and where we want to go. Fittingly, the word patience comes from the Latin verb *patior*, which means 'to suffer'. When a Honda hits a Kia on I-285, you are rendered powerless, left with no choice but to wait while dinner at home is getting cold. In moments of grace, you realize that your delay pales in comparison to folks who may have their lives turned upside down. Waiting reminds us that we aren't fundamentally in control.

Nouwen writes that one of the only reasons we can endure the torment of waiting is because we have received a seed of promise. In the first pages of the Gospel stories, we are thrust into two stories of pregnancy—stories of waiting. However, Mary and Elizabeth can wait because they have received the promise: a child is coming. In that sense, “Our waiting is never a movement from nothing to something. It is always a movement from something to something more.”

Advent creates a space in which we wait for that which we have already begun to receive, that which is already growing like a seed. Advent is a season of pregnancy for Christians. We're waddling around, heavy with a hope that is already kicking but not yet born. We decorate the baby's room. And redecorate it. Everyone tells us to savor the season—the anticipation, warmth, and wonder. But all we really want is to get the baby out. We're yearning and praying for this child to be born among us. The world is broken and we need a Savior—like, now. Yesterday would have been great. And yet, we must wait. However, God is with us in our waiting, shaping our imagination of how our world is about to change. We know God is going to change the world. The seed has been planted. We can see it here. We can hear it here. We can taste it here.

Questions for Reflection

- ▶ In what specific area of your life do you currently feel powerless or out of control?
- ▶ What is the "seed of a promise" that God has already planted in you, even if it's small or hidden? Take a moment to name it and give thanks for it.
- ▶ How can you name “God with us” in your waiting?

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www.atlantachristianchurch.org