



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Atlanta Christian Church

December 7, 2025

God Moves On The Water

Of all the seasons in the church year, Advent may be one the oddest one. Its darker colors and themes don't feel very much like Christmas. The whole season feels jarring and surprising, and part of that has to do with the central figure of the season: John the Baptizer. Maybe you've heard of this man, the relative of Jesus who spent his days in the wilderness lamenting the state of the world, and the faltering faith of his own people, Israel. We get two Sundays with this guy in Advent, two weeks of hearing him bemoan what he sees. He's a prophet, and they're not always the most cheerful people. Important to the Christmas story, he is the herald of the coming Christ, the one commissioned to announce his arrival and to call people to a life of preparedness, to a life that makes room for the presence of Christ. Advent call us, once again, to consider what it means to make room for Christ in our lives, what it means to "prepare the way of the Lord."

IT RAINED REAL HARD AND IT RAINED FOR A REAL LONG TIME,
SIX FEET OF WATER IN THE STREETS OF EVANGELINE.

Randy Newman, "Louisiana 1927"

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 Second Sunday of Advent and that means our first encounter with the firebrand prophet called John the Baptizer. When you get a nickname like "the baptizer," you know there's a good story to be told! **Derek Sweatman** has the sermon today, one titled: "God Moves On The Water," coming from today's Gospel reading in **Matthew 3:1-12**. Yes, plenty of song references in this one, so try and keep up.

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

Coming Events & Gatherings

- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **Young Adults Eastside Christmas Dinner Party** - Plan on being at Cortland & Lacey's place on Sunday, December 21, at 4:00 PM. Movies, puzzling, and cookie decorating. Open to anyone 18-39.
- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **Sunday, January 4: Parent Coffee & Fellowship Hour** - Come and hang out with other parents in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 AM and enjoy some good conversation, fresh coffee, and a light breakfast. Childcare provided.
- ▶ **Thursday, January 15: Lunchbox Kids** - Do you work near the church? Need some company during lunch? Come and eat lunch in the Fellowship Hall at 11:30 AM with others from the church (and the church staff...we eat, too). Just bring your own food and we'll provide the tables and chairs, and some drinks, too.

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 for Lazarus Homeless Mission

Join us in collecting the following needed items to support the work of Lazarus ministries among the unhoused here in our city.

- ▶ **Cold Weather Kits:** Fill up a one-gallon Ziploc bag with new socks, knit hat, gloves, hand warmers, and a note of encouragement.
- ▶ **Blanket Drive:** Donate a blanket or two to help with those who are sleeping outdoors during the colder months.

All donations go in the large bin located in the front lobby. We are collecting through Christmas Eve, December 24, with weekly deliveries until then.

About Lazarus

Founded in 2002, Lazarus ministries is committed to being present with the marginalized, restoring dignity within the context of relationship. We promote the fostering of relationships to transcend social and economic divides. We do this because, whether serving or being served, when we choose to be with those at the margins, we are all changed in meaningful ways. We have seen from experience that it is in relationships that our physical, emotional, and spiritual needs are met.

From their website at www.wearelazarus.org.

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

Prelude Music by Claudia Harris

Opening Procession: "Prepare Ye The Way"

Song: All Creatures of our God and King

All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing
O praise Him alleluia
Thou burning sun with golden beam
Thou silver moon with softer gleam
O praise Him O praise Him
Alleluia alleluia alleluia

Let all things their Creator bless
And worship Him in humbleness
O praise Him alleluia
Praise praise the Father praise the Son
And praise the Spirit three in One
O praise Him O praise Him
Alleluia alleluia alleluia

Thou rushing wind that art so strong
Ye clouds that sail in Heav'n along
O praise Him alleluia
Thou rising moon in praise rejoice
Ye lights of evening find a voice
O praise Him O praise Him
Alleluia alleluia alleluia

O alleluia alleluia
O alleluia alleluia
O alleluia alleluia
O alleluia alleluia alleluia

CCLI Song #3608102
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Written by St. Francis of Assisi, CE 1225

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 second Sunday of Advent.
Everyone: Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *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: Build My Life

Worthy of ev'ry song we could ever sing
Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring
Worthy of ev'ry breath we could ever breathe
We live for You

Jesus the name above ev'ry other name
Jesus the only one who could ever save
Worthy of ev'ry breath we could ever breathe
We live for You
We live for You

Holy there is no one like You
There is none beside You
Open up my eyes in wonder
and show me who You are
And fill me with Your heart
And lead me in Your love to those around me

I will build my life upon Your love
It is a firm foundation
I will put my trust in You alone
And I will not be shaken

CCLI Song #7070345, © 2016

You may be seated for the reading of the scriptures.

Reading from Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

Everyone: Thanks be to God.

Collective Reading of Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice. May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor. May he live while the sun endures and as long as the moon, throughout all generations. May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth. In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

Everyone: Thanks be to God.

Reading from Romans 15:4-13

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles and sing praises to your name"; and again he says, "Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles; in him the gentiles shall hope. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

Everyone: Thanks be to God.

Song: 'Tis So Sweet To Trust In Jesus

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus
Just to take Him at His word
Just to rest upon His promise
Just to know thus saith the Lord

Jesus Jesus how I trust Him
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er
Jesus Jesus precious Jesus
O for grace to trust Him more

O how sweet to trust in Jesus
Just to trust His cleansing blood
Just in simple faith to plunge me
'Neath the healing cleansing flood

I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee
Precious Jesus Savior Friend
And I know that Thou art with me
Wilt be with me to the end

Yes 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus
Just from sin and self to cease
Just from Jesus simply taking
Life and rest and joy and peace

CCLI Song #22609
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Please remain standing for the reading of the Gospel.

Leader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Everyone: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Reading from Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’ ” Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.
Everyone: Praise to you, Lord Christ

Sermon Sketchpad

Title: God Moves On The Water
Preacher: Derek Sweatman
Text: Matthew 3:1-12

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 our 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 art 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 lead 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 Suffering”

Devotional Guide by Ryan Snider



I don't think I need to convince you that we've sentimentalized Christmas. Our houses are strung with lights; trees stand tall in living room windows. We sing, we eat, we snuggle, we watch classic Christmas movies. Even strangers to Christianity want to come near the church—to touch her protruding stomach. All of this can be good—and needed. We are, after all, a people desperate for hope and looking for stars; Christmas promises that help is on the way. However, I wonder what we miss when

we follow the star to an over-priced family photo shoot where we pretend we are happy. Think about this: Christ was born in a stable—it was a raw, terrifying, and vulnerable place to bring God into the world. Giovanni Papini writes, “A real stable is the house, the prison, of the animals who work for man. The poor, old stable of Christ's old, poor country is only four rough walls, a dirty pavement, a roof of beams and slate. It is dark, reeking. The only clean thing in it is the manger where the owner piles the hay and fodder.” The height of the heavens entered into the depths of the world's mess. During our Advent study, Cheryl Johnson shared the tradition of El Caganer—a figurine depicting a shepherd in the act of defecation that is commonly placed in Nativity scenes throughout Spain. El Caganer preaches a profound truth: there was more dung at the first Christmas than we prefer to imagine. The Christmas story marks Jesus' radical entry into a world fracturing under political, personal, and social weight. It challenges the “peace” of Emperor Augustus—maintained through domination and taxation—and the murderous insecurity of Herod against the arrival of the true King. It simultaneously zooms in on the intimate turmoil of a frightened teenager and a mistrusting partner. Strip away the tinsel, and you find a story of gritty survival: homelessness in a barn, working-poor shepherds on the outskirts, and a family forced to flee across borders. Christmas is “God with Us” in the realities of injustice and human suffering. In other words, Christmas takes place in the real world. It's not yet the world where “our troubles will be out of sight.” It's not yet a world where a big-city lawyer saves a small-town bakery and finds a soulmate in ninety minutes flat. Sentimentality can't save us. But the hope of Christmas is that Jesus meets us in the trenches of our actual lives—amidst all our fear, heartbreak, pain, and even the dung.

Reflection Questions

- ▶ Where is the un-romanticized stable in your own life right now? Where is the place of poverty, messiness, or shame that God longs to enter?
- ▶ What is the danger of focusing only on a sentimental version of the story, and what do we gain by embracing this more raw, difficult, “un-romanticized” narrative of God's arrival?

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www.atlantachristianchurch.org