

News from Advent Lutheran Church

the Adventurer



January 2026

STAFF

Pastors

Jason Peterson
Andrea Windsor-Peterson

Organist & Music Director

R.J. Thomas

Financial Secretaries

Steve & Debbie Merzlak

Church Council

President

Joan Kruscavage

Vice President

Kath Gamlen

Secretary

Phil Hanes

Treasurer

Debbie Merzlak

At Large Members

Gina Hammock
Jamie Sadenwasser

**Ministry
Chairpersons**

Christian Education
Heather Herrmann

Evangelism
RJ Gentry

Fellowship
Joan Kruscavage

Property
Mike Gamlen (PM)

Service
Gina Hammock

Stewardship

Worship
Pastors

Youth
Carolyn Weeks

A Word from the Pastors

“When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage.” Matthew 2: 10-11

The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.

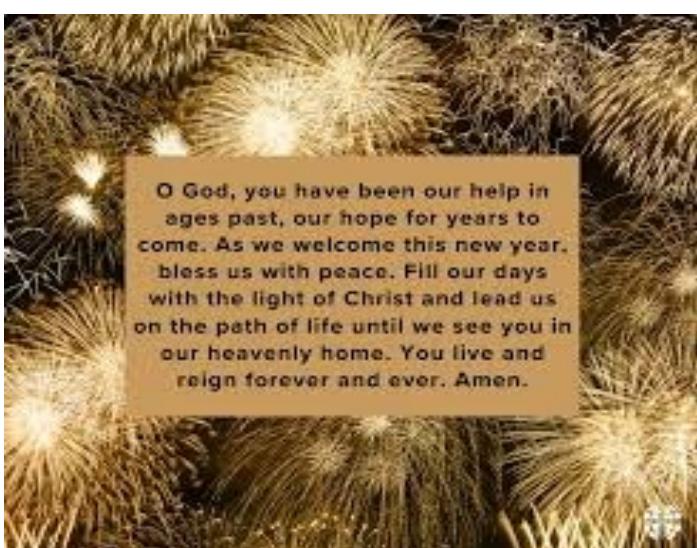
As we conclude the Advent and Christmas Seasons, we too are kneeling down paying homage and thanking God for the gift of Jesus and for our pastoral call to Advent Lutheran Church.

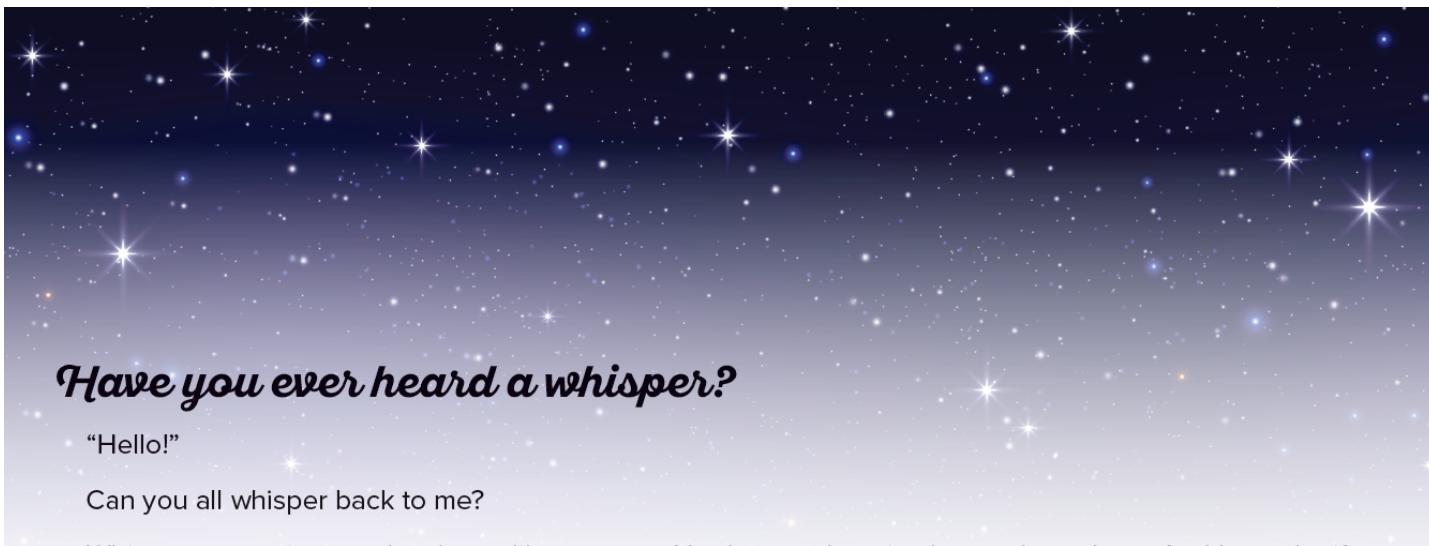
- We give all thanks and glory and honor to God for the many blessings we have here at Advent Lutheran Church. We thank our God for you, the people of God at Advent. We thank the many people here at Advent who have shared their love, gave gifts and held us in prayer during. Your love, support and prayers mean so much to us and we are forever grateful for this shared ministry. Thank you all!
- Thank you Justin Hornsby, Pam Dutch and Jamie Sadenwasser for your musical leadership at Advent during this time of transition in the music ministry. You all went above and beyond to lift our worship and music to God especially during such a Holy time of Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas! Your work as guest organists/pianist truly lifted our worship each Sunday and Christmas Eve. Justin and Pam, we cannot thank you both enough for your work with the choirs and for the special music each week and Christmas Eve. You all are truly such blessings and we give you our thanks.
- Thank you to our congregational council members, Joan Kruscavage, Kath Gamlen, Debbie Merzlak, Dr. Phil Hanes, Gina Hammock, & Jamie Sadenwasser. You continue to lead in such faithful and faith-filled ways. We have had some difficult moments this year and your leadership truly helped us listen for God and move forward in our mission and ministry at Advent. We are truly blessed to have a council of such wise and dedicated members. We value your leadership and thank God for you all.
- Thank you to all of you who serve on the Altar Guild throughout the year, but especially these past couple of months as seasons changed quickly. Each of our altar guild members give generously of their time behind the scenes. We thank you all for the ways the Altar Guild sets up and prepares the worship space each and every week, and for special worship times. We thank you for the care and reverence that is displayed as you care for the worship area.
- Thank you to the choirs for your sharing your gift of music. Thank you for all the practices you attend week in and week out, and especially the practices this past month. Your work and dedication is truly inspiring and lifts our worship to God! You all have been so faithful during this time of transition in the music ministry and our worship has not diminished, but truly grown through your sharing of musical talents!
- Thank you to all those who help to lead worship. A special thank you to all who serve as greeters, acolytes, crucifers, ushers, lectors, assisting ministers, and counters. Your dedication and use of your gifts each and every week help the whole church give glory to God.

- Thank you to all of our Ministry chairs at Advent-Mike Gamlen, RJ Gentry, Gina Hammock, Heather Herrmann, Joan Kruscavage, & Carolyn Weeks. The ministry that has been done in God's name in 2025 has been truly remarkable. From Outreach events to special seasonal gatherings and fellowship opportunities to Property improvements to educational and service events to special youth projects and more, you all have truly outdone yourselves. You truly help us live out our mission to Love God, Love People and Serve the World!
- Thank you Steve and Debbie Merzlak for all you do at Advent, but especially as Advent's Financial Secretaries. Your work is often done behind the scenes and there is always so much to do at the end of each year. Thank you for all the ways you are faithful stewards of what God has blessed us with at Advent and for the personal blessings you are to us as well.
- Thank you Gayle Ricklefs, Nancy Tokarska and Pastor Andrea for your work in the weekly prayer ministry. We thank all those who serve in the prayer adventure and prayer chain, praying for the people of Advent. As your prayers ascend for this church, community and world, we feel the Holy Spirit actively at work at Advent and in the lives of its people.
- Thank you to Advent's counters, Phil & Carol Hanes and Noreen Gaynor. Thank you Carolyn Tefeteller as you so faithfully serve signing checks while helping with the stewardship of Advent. We thank you all for your trustworthy stewardship of time and care of the offerings given to God in this place.
- We thank God for the gift of bringing us R.J. Thomas as Advent's new Organist and Music Director. We look forward to an outstanding 2026 with R.J.'s musical leadership and talent. We cannot wait to see what God has in store for us at Advent, through the music ministry of this church.
- And THANK YOU again people of God at Advent. Your continued dedication to this Church really shines through each week and your love for God is displayed in abundance. When the going was tough earlier this year, you answered God's call in abundant ways and Advent is all the stronger because of your faithfulness.

We know that God IS at work at Advent. Each time we gather together for worship or fellowship or any gathering it feels like home because we are truly surrounded by family. We look forward to a blessed 2026.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jason and Pastor Andrea





Have you ever heard a whisper?

“Hello!”

Can you all whisper back to me?

Whispers are quiet, gentle, almost like a secret. You have to lean in close to hear them. And I wonder if it's possible for the heavens to whisper at Christmas?

One silent night, far away, in a town called Bethlehem, the stars twinkled brighter than ever. And the angels were there, too. It was as if the whole sky was whispering: “Something wonderful is happening ...”

Let's all look up at the ceiling like we're looking at the stars.

Can you twinkle your fingers like stars?

Now let's whisper together, “Something wonderful is happening ...”

The heavens weren't shouting. They weren't making a big noise. They were whispering, because whispers make us stop, listen and pay attention.

And what was the whispering about? A baby. A tiny baby lying in a manger.

His name was Jesus.

Can you pretend to rock a baby in your arms?

The night Jesus was born, the shepherds heard the whisper in the sky when the angels sang. The Wise Men sensed the whisper in the star that guided them. And Mary and Joseph felt the whisper in their hearts: “This child is special. This child is God's gift.”

Sometimes we think God only speaks in loud voices or through big miracles. But Christmas reminds us that God often whispers. God whispers love and kindness and peace.

Can you think of one kind thing you could whisper to someone this week?

So, this Christmas, listen closely. The heavens are still whispering: “Jesus is here. God loves you. Share that love with the world.”

Let's all whisper together: “Jesus is here.”

Now say “God loves us” in a joyful voice!

Amen.

The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

January Worship Schedule

Sunday, January 4th

Epiphany Worship with House Blessing with Installation of R.J. Thomas as Advent's Organist & Music Director

9:30am Worship with Holy Communion
10:45am Luncheon Meet and Greet with R.J.Thomas and Epiphany Flammimg
Cherries Jubilee

Sunday, January 11th Baptism of our Lord

9:30am Worship with Holy Communion
10:45am Ministry Morning

Sunday, January 18th Second Sunday After The Epiphany

9:30am Worship with Holy Communion
10:45am Sunday School

Sunday, January 25th Third Sunday After The Epiphany

9:30am Worship with Holy Communion
10:45am Sunday School

MUSIC MINISTRY

Thank you so much to the Bells and Choir for all of your beautiful music this Advent and Christmas season. The talent in this congregation musically is truly a gift from God and in our music God was glorified. We thank Pam Dutch, Jamie Sadenwasser and Justin Hornsby for all they did to lead the choirs and worship each and every week these past two months. During this time of transition, the music ministry at Advent did not miss a beat. Each week our worship was lifted by weekly anthems from the bells, choir and special music selections from Advent members. It truly has been a Holy time and we look forward to what God has in store for the next chapter in the music ministry at Advent.

Beginning January 1, 2026, we welcome R.J. Thomas as Advent's new Organist and Music Director. January 4, 2026 we will install R.J. Thomas in this new role and look forward to our first worship together.

Tuesday, January 6, 2026 will be the first choir practice with R.J. Thomas. Bells will be at 6pm and the Choir at 7pm.



Getting Organized for 2026

Property Ministry will meet **Saturday, January 3, at 8am**. We invite all ministry chairs and anyone willing to help organize and declutter rooms to prepare for the new year. We really can use many hands and voices to help us organize areas of Advent to better welcome visitors and guests.





Christians
confronting emptiness
choosing compassion
creating community

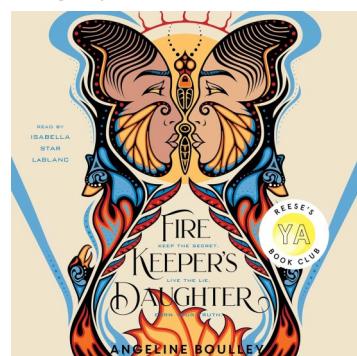
January GAP Donations – Peanut Butter or Alternatives!

- Please place items in the box in the narthex!
- Great Peanut Butter Alternatives (Sunflower Seed Butter or Soy Butter):



ADVENT BOOK CLUB 2026

Meetings are on the 4th Monday of the month at 11am unless otherwise noted.



Join us on Monday, January 26th at 11am
in the Adult Sunday School Room as we meet to
discuss the book, "Fire Keeper's Daughter" by Angeline Boulley.

The Discussion Leaders for January will be
Lillian Essaf & Ingrid Zamecnik. All are welcome!

Help Keep the Little Free Pantry Stocked

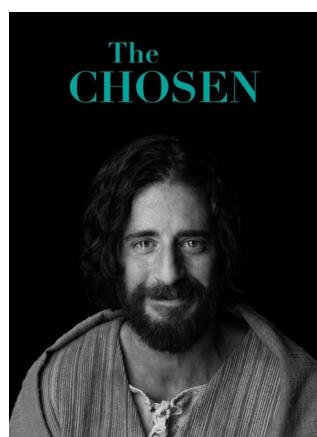
Donations are always welcomed. Please place items on the table in the hallway near the fellowship hall.

Here are some suggestions but feel free to bring anything you think people might need or would appreciate.



Canned protein items such as fish or chicken
Soup packets or cans
Fruit (dried, canned or small cups)
Vegetables
Snack items (granola bars, fruit bars, protein bars)
Drinks (juice boxes, bottled water, powdered mixes)
Dried potato mixes
Pasta and pasta mixes including those with protein
Small packets of pancake mix, syrup
Peanut butter
Jelly
Crackers
Cereal (small boxes or packets)
Baby food
Diapers and wipes
Oral health items—toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, etc
Personal hygiene products—toilet paper, soap, deodorant, etc.
Feminine hygiene products

Thank you Kath & Mike Gamlen for overseeing the Little Free Pantry. Thank you both and other faithful members for continuously checking on the pantry and making sure it is stocked throughout the week.



Adult Bible Study -“The Chosen”

The Adult Bible Study will begin again on **Wednesday, January 14th**
at 10:30-11:30am.

The episode for the class will be shown at the church at 9:30am for any who would like to watch the episode before class.

We hope you will join us for this holy time in the Word.

JOIN US FOR THE 18TH ANNUAL COMMEMORATION
OF THE LIFE AND VISION OF

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

SACRED HEART
CULTURAL
CENTER

1301 GREENE ST
AUGUSTA, GA
30901

JANUARY 15,
2026

6:30 – 8:00 PM



ORGANIZED BY
THE PROGRESSIVE
RELIGIOUS
COALITION OF
AUGUSTA



Our presenter will be [Dr. Stacey Floyd-Thomas](#), a renowned scholar and educator at the Vanderbilt Divinity School specializing in ethics, inclusion, and faith. She is a leading voice in liberation theology and Christian social ethics, holding leadership roles in various organizations and contributing significantly to the fields of ethics, critical race theory, and postcolonial studies. Her work focuses on constructing a justice-seeking community through religious discourse and Christian faith.

Our program will include performances by the [Davidson Chorale](#) and the [Augusta Junior Players](#).

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 AA 8-9am	2 AA 8-9am	3 8am Property
4 Worship & Holy Communion 9:30am Epiphany Luncheon & Meet/ Greet 10:45am	5 AA 8-9am	6 AA 8-9am Bells 6pm Choir 7pm	7 AA 8-9am	8 AA 8-9am	9 AA 8-9am	10
Pastors are away 1/5-1/8						
11 Baptism of our Lord Worship & Holy Communion 9:30am Ministry Morning 10:45am	12 AA 8-9am	13 AA 8-9am Council 4:30pm Bells 6pm Choir 7pm	14 AA 8-9am Chosen Episode Viewing 9:30am Chosen Bible Study 10:30am	15 AA 8-9am MLK Service@ Sacred Heart 6:30pm	16 AA 8-9am	17
18 Worship & Holy Communion 9:30am Sunday School 10:45am	19 AA 8-9am 	20 AA 8-9am Bells 6pm Choir 7pm	21 AA 8-9am Chosen Episode Viewing 9:30am Chosen Bible Study 10:30am	22 AA 8-9am	23 AA 8-9am	24
25 Worship & Holy Communion Worship 9:30am Sunday School 10:45am	26 AA 8-9am Book Group 	27 AA 8-9am Bells 6pm Choir 7pm	28 Chosen Episode Viewing 9:30am Chosen Bible Study 10:30am	29	30	31

JANUARY

Happy Birthday

1/2 Megan Tokarska
1/2 Greg Van Bladel
1/4 Irmgard Crowder
1/9 Carolyn Teffeteller
1/11 Carol Billings
1/13 Dean Summers
1/14 Taylor Teffeteller
1/16 Jim Barton
1/16 Barbara Williams
1/18 Brent Billings
1/20 Robert Pendergrast
1/21 Kath Gamlen
1/23 Joey Tupper
1/24 Diane Aizcorbe
1/24 Kateri Engelin
1/12 Anita Fiedler
1/27 Hilda Sullivan
1/30 Jim Heaney

Happy Anniversary

1/3 Jared & Kristina Fischer
1/6 Pastors Jason & Andrea
Peterson
1/24 Steven & Helen Burns
1/26 Pastor Robin & Colt Pingilley



The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face
shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up
His countenance upon you, And give you peace.



Happy New Year



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**DATED MATERIAL
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**