

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

YEAR A ✠ DECEMBER 21, 2025

VOLUNTARY

In The Bleak Mid-winter
St. James Handbell Choir

Gustav Holst, arr. Thompson

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

(Luke 1:39–42)

ENTRANCE HYMN

"How brightly shines the Morning Star"

Hymnal 497

TRADITIONAL COLLECT

BCP 160

We beseech thee, Almighty God, to purify our consciences by thy daily visitation, that when thy Son our Lord cometh he may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

CONTEMPORARY COLLECT

BCP 212

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.**

THE FIRST LESSON

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."

THE PSALM

80:1-7, 16-18

Music: Jerome Webster Meachen (b. 1930)

- 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 Ma- / nasseh, *
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 your-/ self.

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.

During the hymn, children three years old to fifth grade are invited to follow the banner-bearer to Children's Church. They will return at the Peace.

SEQUENCE HYMN

"The angel Gabriel from heaven came"

Hymnal 265

THE 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.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

The Yearning

Craig Courtney (b. 1948)

There is a yearning in hearts weighed down by ancient grief and centuries of sorrow.
There is a yearning in hearts that in the darkness hide and in the shades of death abide,
a yearning for tomorrow.
There is a yearning for the promised One, the Firstborn of creation.
There is a yearning for the Lord who visited his own, and by his death for sin atoned,
to bring us to salvation.
There is a yearning that fills the hearts of those who wait the day of his appearing.
There is a yearning when all our sorrows are erased
that we shall see the One who placed within our hearts the yearning.
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, within our hearts the yearning.

(Susan Bentall Boersma)

PRESENTATION HYMN

“O come, O come, Emmanuel”

booklet p.6, Hymnal 56

After the Invitation, all baptized persons may come forward to receive Holy Communion. If you are not baptized or do not wish to receive Communion, you may come forward and cross your arms over your chest to receive a blessing instead. If you would like a gluten-free wafer, tell the priest at the communion rail. Please join the choir in singing the hymns during communion.

Hymn	“Gabriel’s message does away Satan’s curse”	Hymnal 270
Hymn	“Lord, we have come at your own invitaiton”	Hymnal 348
Hymn	“Lo! he comes, with clouds descending”	Hymnal 57

CLOSING HYMN

“Keep your lamps trimmed and burning”

African-American spiritual
(see insert)

DISMISSAL

Celebrant: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

VOLUNTARY

In dulci jubilo

J.S. Bach (BWV 729)

⌘ ⌘

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Advent greenery for the altar is provided by the Flower Guild.
- Dedicate flowers for Christmas (*use insert, or ask an usher.*) Dedications with a donation in any amount will be included in the service bulletins Christmas Eve and Christmas Day if they are received in the office by Monday, Dec. 22, at 9:00.

- The Flower Guild invites you to help them place flowers and greenery throughout the church. Join them on Dec 23, 9a-12noon. *No experience necessary.*
- **Today**
 - +Final day of the Diaper Drive for the Pantry on Church, sponsored by our Sunday School kids. Please bring diapers to the parish hall!
 - +Angel Trees are up in the parish hall. Help decorate! We need helpers of all sizes.
 - +Holy Eucharist at Sterling Estates at 3p. Please join us! *Volunteers, come 2:30.*
 - +Concert and Caroling with the Georgia Spiritual Ensemble, Dr. Oral Moses, director, 4p *Refreshments follow.*
- **Christmas Eve services Wednesday, Dec 24:**
 - +4pm Holy Eucharist with pickup children's pageant and carols. *Nursery open 3:30-5:30*
 - +7pm Holy Eucharist with choir and brass
 - +10:30pm Musical Offering with choir, brass, and carols
 - +11:00pm Holy Eucharist with choir and brass. Incense will be used at this service.
- **Christmas Day 10:30am** Holy Eucharist with choir and organ.
- Breakfast will not be served the next two Sundays Dec 28 & Jan 4.

Sundays

8am worship, Rite I

8:45-9:45 Breakfast in the Parish Hall (*not Dec 28 or Jan 4*)

9:30-10:15 Adult formation, room 205

+ Sunday school upstairs for children age 4 to grade 5 & for youth (*not Dec 28*)

9:30 nursery ages 0-5 w/ Melissa Powers & Daysi Turcios, open till 12:30

10:30 worship, Rite II with organ, choir. We invite age 3 – grade 5 to follow the banner to children's church at the Gospel Hymn.

11:45 hospitality in the Parish Hall

12:30-2:00 Youth group

Ongoing Mondays handbells 6p, tower bells 7pm **Tuesdays** Bible study 12:30p; **Wednesdays** Knitting for Charity 10a, Centering Prayer online 4p; Wednesday evening program *see above* **Saturdays** Tower Bells 10a

Wednesday Evenings

During the holidays, our usual dinner and programs are pausing. They will resume January 14.

Notice of live-streaming broadcast: Our worship services are live-streamed and posted to social media. If you have concerns about being on camera, please ask one of the ushers to show you seating with limited exposure.

St. James Episcopal Church

161 Church St., Marietta GA 30060

The Reverend Mariclaire Partee Carlsen, Rector

emergency phone or text:

for an appointment, sign up online

Dr. Bryan Black, Director of Music

Natalie Fowler, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Scott Smoot, Communications Coordinator

Office hours Monday – Thursday, 9am-1pm

www.stjamesmarietta.com

770-428-5841

rector@stjamesmarietta.com

678-369-1775

<https://calendly.com/rector-stjamesmarietta>

music@stjamesmarietta.com

children@stjamesmarietta.com

communications@stjamesmarietta.com

All music is reprinted by permission under www.onelicense.net (license number A-723405).

Music from *The Hymnal 1982* © Church Publishing, Inc.

The Book of Common Prayer is used with permission.

Sources accessed through RitePlanning.com