

The BELLS of St. JAMES

news, inspiration,
and opportunities
for ministry

Message from the Rector **"Slow down. Quiet. It's Advent."**

Dear Ones,

Every single Advent, at just about this point as Gaudete Sunday approaches time speeds up, Christmas services feel minutes away, and it hits me that the calendar year is almost over. In the time warp that is planning a season or two in advance, I've got one foot in the future, looking ahead to Epiphanytide services (mark your calendars now for our parish-wide Epiphany potluck and Holy Eucharist with Blessing of Chalk on Tuesday, Jan 6 at 5:45!) and inviting speakers for a Sunday Lenten series, all while trying to also keep a foot in the present and mark this holy season.

One of my favorite Episcopal Church traditions from my own life in the church is the annual Advent poster Forward Movement puts out, titled "Slow Down. Quiet. It's Advent!" (viewable at this link [Slow down. Quiet. It's Advent: A history – Forward Movement](#)), a cartoon calendar with twenty four days of scripture passages, suggested devotional practices, and more for families and individuals alike. The title usually pops into my mind at about this time, a reminder to myself as the momentum picks up for the big services at Christmas Eve and Day of what exactly it is we are doing- being intentionally counter-cultural, slowing down, finding calm, and remembering that every twinkling light, every over the top 20 foot tall inflatable reindeer or Santa in a yard, every Hallmark movie playing on repeat- all these parts of our secular holiday juggernaut exist because of a tiny cry that rang out in a lowly cattle shed in Bethlehem 2000 years ago- God become man, Jesus Christ.

The tradition of keeping Gaudete Sunday comes from ancient church practice, when the Latin Introit to the mass started with "Gaudete in Domino semper: iterum dico, gaudete..." which translates to "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say: rejoice!" In earlier church practices Advent was kept as a sort of "little Lent," a time of fasting to prepare for the anniversary of Jesus' birth.

Thursday

December 11, 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

THIS SUNDAY:
Lessons & Carols
6:30p



Sunday, Dec 14
[link to the regular
schedule](#)

Note: Book Study for adult formation, 9:30, room 205.

You're welcome, even if you have not read the book!

+

Daughters of the King
Room 205

12:15pm

+

Advent Lessons and
Carols

6:30p

The third Sunday was known as a refreshment Sunday, a time to relax the fast for a moment and build strength to finish the season. The purple or black priestly vestments of Advent were put aside for rose on this day, and the community took a break from penitence and reminded themselves of the Joy that was coming with Christ. It parallels Laetare Sunday, the fourth Sunday in Lent, another refreshment Sunday when fasts are temporarily suspended and rose vestments are worn if a parish owns a set. This is also the origin of the rose candle many churches place in the Advent wreath to light on this Sunday.

We have so much to celebrate and rejoice over here at St. James, including five confirmed at the Cathedral of St. Philip last Sunday afternoon, and this is a fine time to remind ourselves to slow down, find some quiet, and give thanks to God for all of our blessings. This coming Sunday is when we usually sing or say the Magnificat, Mary's song of praise and thanksgiving from the Annunciation, so if you need some words to help you rejoice and give thanks, I encourage you to add it to your daily prayers!

In Christ,

Mo. Mariclaire +

Photo: These kids from Wonderful Days preschool are preparing to sing for the Reach Out luncheons next Monday and Tuesday. Today they marched down the hall of the church for their first visit to the Parish Hall. They passed the Giving Tree, where gifts for them have been wrapped and labeled with stars. If you still have a gift for one of them, this Sunday is the last opportunity to place it under the tree!



Mon AND Tue

Dec 15 AND 16

Reach Out luncheon
for adults with special
needs

11a

*Volunteers welcome -
come after 9:30.*

**Wednesday, Dec 17
FINAL dinner and
midweek program of
the year!**

Dinner, evening prayer &
programs for all ages begin
5:30p

Sunday Dec 21, 4:00p
regular worship schedule

+

Holy Eucharist at
Sterling Estates

3:00p

+

**Concert & Caroling
Georgia Spiritual Ensemble**

Dr. Oral Moses, director

4:00p

reception following

Christmas Eve Services

Wednesday, Dec 24

Holy Eucharist with
pageant

4p

nursery available 3:30-

5:30p

+

Holy Eucharist
with Choir and brass

7p

+

Choir and brass,
offer special music

10:30p;

Holy Eucharist at 11p
*(incense will be used at this
service)*

Christmas Day

Holy Eucharist with Choir

10:30

office closed

Dec 28 Sunday

Holy Eucharist Rite I

8:00a

+

Holy Eucharist, Rite II
with choir and organ

10:30a

no Sunday school this

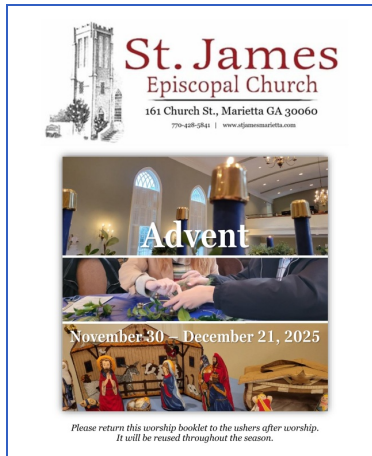
Dec 31 Wednesday
Feast Day of the Holy
Innocents transferred
 prayer service
 12:30pm
note the special time

Livestream HQ - Links & Booklets for Worship at Home

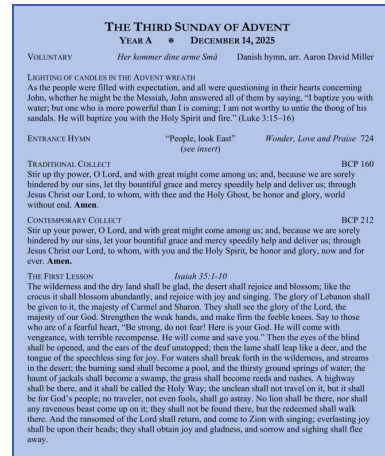


10:30 Service On Line
 Click on "live" to see a service
 live or archived.

[Link
 to livestream
 on YouTube](#)



**Worship Booklet
 for the Season**
 contains prayers, service
 music, and responses that we
 will use until the Sunday
 before Christmas.
[Link to the Worship
 Booklet](#)



The Service Bulletin,
 updated weekly, contains
 lessons, hymn numbers, and
 announcements: items that
 change each Sunday.
[Link to the Service
 Bulletin](#)



Can't see photos in *The Bells*? You never get the blue-shaded "Pulse of the Parish" at the end of this newsletter? You can tell your email service to show blocked or dropped content. Need help? Email communications@stjamesmarietta.com

Five Members Confirmed last Sunday

Five members of St. James were confirmed at the Cathedral of St. Philip in Atlanta Sunday, December 7. Nuno Nuñez sent us the photo below. Mother Mariclair and our confirmands are in the background. Closer to the camera, back to the lens, is former St. James member the Rev. Mary Grace Dupree with her new confirmands.



Mother Marclair sent this photo of our new confirmands following the service L - R Mason Williams, Elise Allen, Laura White, Molly Gribble, Patrick White.



This Sunday, long-term projects are wrapping up.

Many months of preparation by Dr. Bryan Black and the Parish Choir will come to fruition at the

service of **Advent Lessons and Carols Sunday at 6:30 .**

Last Sunday for The Giving Tree. Next week, the kids receive their gifts, so this Sunday is your final chance to add to the bounty! So far, The Giving Tree effort has brought in gifts for kids in Wonderful Days preschool, gifts for older kids in the after-school program Club 330, as well as gifts of livestock for families in rural areas around the world, and relief for the victims of Hurricane Melissa.



Crèches on Display for the last Sunday .

Nancy Eubanks writes: It's a St. James tradition! Please join us in the Conference Room, room 127, after the 10:30 service, to enjoy crèches from all over the world! St. James' parishioners are sharing their special crèches, and the stories about them, during Advent 1-3. Bring your children and discover the many interpretations of the nativity, and various materials from which these crèches are made!

Photo: Heat from candles animates this clever model.

Youth Retreat: This is the last Sunday to resister for Winter Camp, a retreat with youth of the diocese. Friday, Jan 2 - Sunday, Jan 4, at Camp Mikell, Toccoa, grades 6-12, \$150 (scholarships available!) Sign up by Dec 14 [here](#)

NEXT Sunday the 21st is the last to contribute to our **Diaper Drive for Pantry on Church**, the last day to **dedicate flowers for Christmas** ([link to the form here](#)), and your last chance to see **The Georgia Spiritual Ensemble** in *Concert and Caroling*, Dr. Oral Moses, director.

Reach Out needs you & your cookies, Monday & Tuesday!



Two luncheons. Special for the holiday, our Reach Out ministry is serving lunch two times next week, Monday and Tuesday, December 15 and 16. The lunch begins at 11; volunteers arrive as early as 9:30 to decorate, to make sandwiches, and to arrange prizes that go to the participants.

Christmas Cookies needed. This week, Reach Out hopes to have mounds of fresh-baked cookies to distribute to the adults and their caregivers. If you can bring cookies to church Sunday, Reach Out can use them. Of course you are welcome to bring them to Reach Out in person!

Children & Youth News

Acolytes scheduled for Dec 14 : The crucifer is **Elise**. Torch-bearers are **Lauren** and

Matilda.

Human Christmas Trees. Sunday, the youth group decorated each other for the season. Mother Mariclaire was on hand to take photos.



Pageant! Our Children's Christmas Pageant is coming up on December 24th, 2025, at the 4 p.m. service. This fun and joyful tradition shares the story of Jesus' birth and lets our amazing church kids shine! Use the following link for sign up and more information. [Google Form](#).

**EYC Winter Camp
Register by this Sunday, Dec. 14**

When: Friday, Jan 2 - Sunday, Jan 4

Where: Camp Mikell, Toccoa

Who: All students (grades 6-12)

Cost: \$150 (scholarships available!)

Sign up by Dec 14 [here](#)



Contact Us

Natalie Fowler, Children's Ministry Coordinator children@stjamesmarietta.com

Keep up with the Diocesan Youth Council at <http://eycdioatl.org/>



This Sunday's opening voluntary, *Her kommer dine arme små*, is a Danish Advent hymn written by Hans Adolph Brorson (1694–1764), one of the leading Lutheran poets of the Scandinavian Pietist tradition. "We your poor little ones come to you, Jesus, and ask you: take dwelling in us."

People, Look East is an Advent text sung to a melody (Besançon) that gracefully rises and falls, revealing the folk tune's French origins. The

words were written in 1928 by Eleanor Farjeon (1881–1965) for *The Oxford Book of Carols*. Farjeon, a beloved English poet and children's author, was known for weaving warmth, imagination, and spiritual sensitivity into her writing. In this carol, she transforms familiar scenes of preparing the home, tending the garden, and lighting the hearth into metaphors for preparing the heart during Advent. She is best known for the hymn, *Morning Has Broken*.

In place of a Psalm, the *Magnificat* will be chanted by choir and congregation in Mode VIII. This flowing melodic line, characteristic of Gregorian chant, gives Mary's song a serene, spacious contour. The antiphon frames the canticle with gentle solemnity, allowing the chant to unfold with contemplative clarity.

Lift Up Your Heads, O Gates, composed in 2018 by David von Kampen, sets the triumphant words of Psalm 24:7 in a style reminiscent of Bach. The anthem captures both the anticipation and the celebratory grandeur of Advent with the evocative image of ancient doors finally yielding to receive love.

The closing voluntary, *Postlude on a Ground*, by Herbert Murrill (1909-1952) is built upon a repeating bass figure, or "ground," recalling the Baroque chaconne tradition while infusing it with 20th-century harmonic color. Over this steady foundation, the upper lines develop in increasingly animated patterns. Murrill was professor of composition at the Royal Academy of Music and served as head of the BBC's Music Department before his untimely death from cancer at age 43.

Each week, The Bells talks with Music Director Dr. Bryan Black about links between music for the 10:30 service and the liturgy. Email [The Bells](#) with your questions and comments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Flowers at the altar this week are given to the glory of God by **Mother Mariclaire & Mitch Partee Carlsen** in thanksgiving for their daughters, **Ruby & Maisie**.

Christmas flower donations may be given in thanksgiving for God's gifts to us or in loving memory of friends and family members. Notations will be included in the Christmas Vigil and Christmas Day service bulletins. The process to give is quick and easy. Forms are provided in the narthex. Please return the forms in person or by mail before 9am Monday, December 22. [Link here to the form.](#)

Join the flower guild in flowering the church for Christmas! We'll be working on Tuesday, December 23rd from 9am-12pm. No experience necessary.

Diaper Drive. We are collecting diapers for the Pantry on Church, a commodity in high demand. Size 6 is most-requested.



Come Decorate the Angel Trees!

Angels are the messengers of God. They are found throughout both the Old and New Testaments, and are intimately connected with the Christmas story. Since 1980 St. James Church has displayed "Angel Trees" announcing the birth of Jesus. Originally the trees were placed in the Narthex ---- recently in the Parish Hall. Angelic Ornaments were given by parishioners or organizations as memorials or thanksgivings for those who touched their lives and for the greater glory of God and in celebration of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Currently there are about four hundred angel ornaments. This year we invite you to participate by placing these angel ornaments on the trees that will be in the Parish Hall. Please come and help on Sunday December 21. All are encouraged to help -- children , young folks and those of us on canes. We need tall people for the high branches , short ones for the lower branches, and others for branches in between! If you want to add an ornament plea-ase do so. Give us your name and information about what or who the angel represents for you. Come and help to continue an old tradition.

- Blessings, Fredericka Garlinghouse



REMINDERS

Wonderful Days Newsletter. Link to the [newsletter of Wonderful Days](#) for photos and stories about the free preschool that we host and support in many ways.

Could Family Promise be YOUR ministry? Homeless shelters separate older boys and adult men from women and children; we, in partnership with a dozen other churches, have, in the past, helped to keep families together. If you are interested in helping to revive our Family Promise ministry, please complete the linked survey.

[Fill the Family Promise survey here](#)

Food Pantry next door! Our next-door neighbors have a thriving program to stock empty pantries year-round. Several of our members help. Read more at the website of First Presbyterian Pantry on Church <https://fpcmarietta.org/pantry/>

Bible Study Tuesdays 12:30pm. Come to the Conference Room, 127.

Free books! Browse the Library's table in the Parish Hall from which you may choose as many books as you'd like to take home.

Prayer list. To receive the weekly prayer list, email Cari Edwards selvine@hotmail.com Leave prayer requests in the offering plate or at the desk by the parish office. You can phone in prayer requests 770-428-5841 Mondays through Thursdays, 9-12:30.



Parking passes for St. James. During scheduled church events, Cornerstone doesn't charge for vehicles in our Polk Street Lot. Other times, we do need a parking tag to hang in our autos.

Send your name, your vehicle's make, model, **COLOR** and license plate number to Lucia Bird luciabird@gmail.com or 770.402.0024.

If your vehicle has changed since you got your hang tag, you will need a replacement, so give Lucia the information on the old hang tag, too.

Your pledge helps the Vestry plan for the year. [Pledge here.](#)

Contact Us

*Program staff available via email Sunday - Thursday;
office staff, Monday - Thursday, 9am-1pm*

Mother Mariclaire is rector@stjamesmarietta.com

- Emergency phone or text: 678.369.1775
- To make an appointment with the rector, sign up for a 15m check-in, a 30m chat, or a coffee hour at <https://calendly.com/rector-stjamesmarietta>

Natalie Fowler is children@stjamesmarietta.com

Dr. Bryan Black is music@stjamesmarietta.com

Scott Smoot is communications@stjamesmarietta.com

Phone 770-428-5841.

Pulse of the Parish

from Scott Smoot, Communications Director

Do you ever feel grateful for the hard-working inanimate machines in your life? Our trusty laminating machine and our fastidious copy machine have been doing a lot of good this past week.

Of course, we're printing hundreds of bulletins and worship booklets for seasonal use. The **ushers** tell me they've run out of the service bulletins two Sundays in a row. 200 has been good enough for the last few years. That we're running out on normal Sundays is a good problem to have.



Our banner for **Lessons and Carols** went up over the Loop this week, thanks to **Erik Linso**, our building superintendent. The white sign below the banner gives the correct time for the service, 6:30. That's not what was originally engraved, so my computer digitally created a very large "6" that I then laminated and taped over the original time. Enlarged, the pixels give the "6" fuzzy edges, but few motorists on the Loop are going to get out of their cars to check it out.

Then there are the newly printed laminated signs for the restrooms downstairs. At a restaurant a few years ago, I would've appreciated such a sign when I had to assist someone in the ladies' room!

The shells that **Nuno** painted on our sidewalk along Polk Street are incorporated with a new sign that should steer first-time visitors away from the West Entrance. We don't want a guest to walk up those stairs and try the door that remains a locked on Sundays. The visitor who will "follow the shells" to the red door should be able to get in, no problem. **Ushers**, please note! I've stored the sign by the umbrella stand inside the West (railroad) entrance.

Know any good news items about goings-on in the parish? *Share them with me at the [communications](#) desk.*



Message from the Rector
Ways to keep cool in Advent

Dear Ones,
How are you keeping Advent this year? Maybe through trying on a new prayer practice, or reading a seasonal devotional like the Forward Day by Day (always available online [[Daily Prayer: A Resource of Forward Movement](#)] and in the tract rack next to our parish library).

Maybe you are revisiting books you've read in the past, like I am with the Advent scriptural meditations in Sam Portaro's *Daysprings* alongside a book of sermons and essays by Howard Thurman.

Maybe you are seeking out ways to support local charitable efforts, either financially or through volunteer service.

Maybe your Advent spiritual practice is to keep your cool and find some calm in the midst of this sometimes frantic season, of school spirit dress up days and holiday parties, work events, travel planning, gift shopping, and all the other busy-ness that goes into living in the season of Advent while the rest of the world has jumped ahead to Christmas!

During my sermon for our First Wednesday Healing Service (a Rite I spoken Holy Eucharist including anointing and prayers for healing that takes place at 12:30 on the first Wednesday of every month in the Lawrence Chapel) I mentioned a sermon I heard when I was in seminary approximately 20 years ago. It was on the occasion of a First Sunday of Advent, somewhere between 2004-2007, and its simple message of how to keep a Holy Advent has stuck with me over the decades: *study, fast, pray, give alms* (It works for Lent, too!)

Whatever you decide to pick up or set down this Advent season, I hope that you find a place of quiet within yourself to prepare room for the coming of the Christ child on Christmas Eve.

Thursday

December 4, 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, Dec 5

Film crew and trucks will use a portion of our parking lot all day.

Sunday, Dec 7

[link to the regular schedule](#)

Note: New Book Study for adult formation, 9:30, room 205. For info, email communications@stjamesmarietta.com

Monday, Dec 8

Film crew and trucks will use a portion of our parking lot all day.

Tuesday, Dec 9

Film crew and trucks will use a portion of our parking lot all day.

Wednesday, Dec 10

Dinner, evening prayer, and programs for all ages begin 5:30

Menu: Spaghetti and Meatballs, Breaded Chicken Tenders, Steamed Broccoli Garlic bread, Dessert and Salad.
[RSVP for Dinner Here](#)

You can download a PDF of this newsletter suitable for printing. [Link here.](#)



St. James Episcopal Church

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