

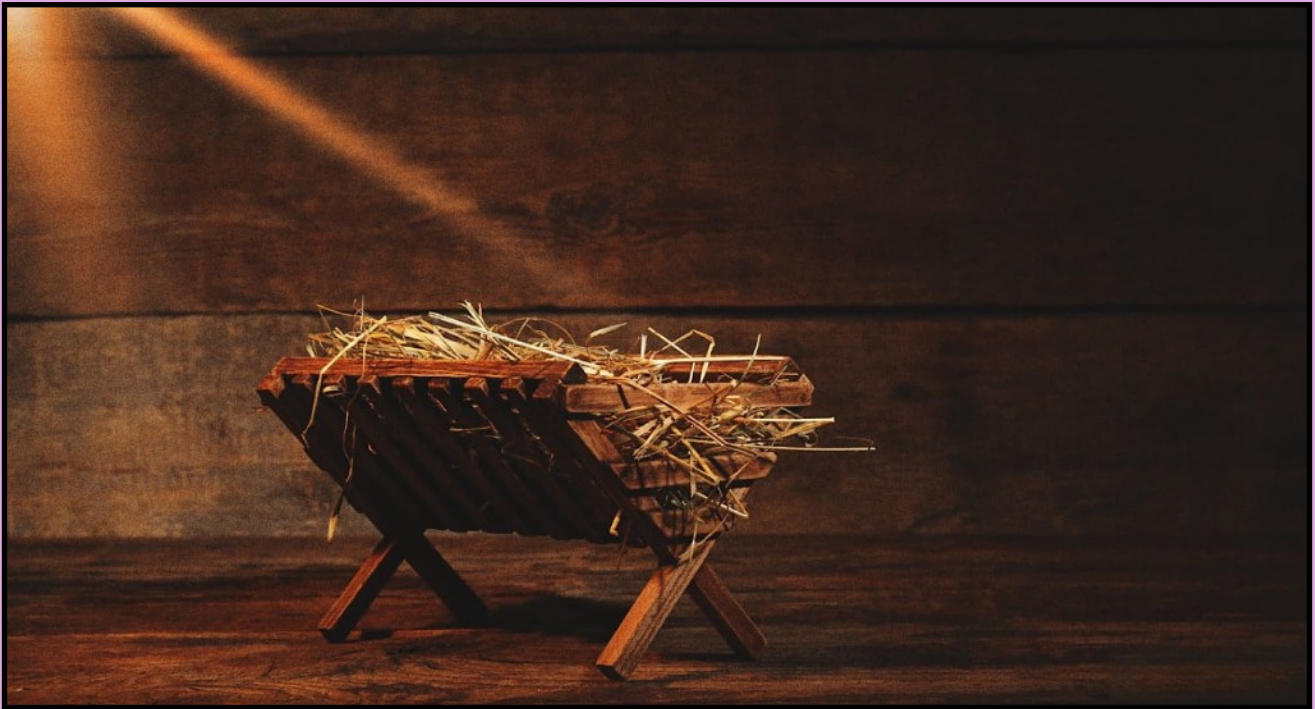
Grace Episcopal Church

Grace is a Christ-centered Community devoted to Servant Ministry and Spiritual Growth.

The Third Sunday of ADVENT

Holy Eucharist

December 14, 2025—9:30 AM



What is Advent?

Advent is the beginning of the church year. The word "Advent" means "arrival" or "coming." Therefore, during this season, we reflect on the "three comings" of Jesus: his coming as a baby in Bethlehem, his coming into the heart of each person, and his coming in glory in the new creation. In the early church, Advent was a time during which people prepared for baptism, which took place on Epiphany. For that reason, we still treat Advent a little bit like Lent: we use the color purple, we don't say too many "Alleluias," and we try our best to live quiet and simple lives as we anticipate the joy of Christmas.

THE WORD OF GOD

Celebrant Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins;
People *His mercy endures forever.*

The Celebrant and People pray together.

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.

Song of Praise My soul gives glory to my God

My soul gives glory to my God; my heart pours out its praise
God lifted up my lowliness in many marvelous ways

My God has done great things for me: yes, holy is God's name
All people will declare me blessed, and blessings they shall claim

Praise God, whose loving covenant supports those in distress,
remembering past promises with present faithfulness

The Celebrant continues.

 The Lord be with you.
People *And also with you.*
Celebrant Let us pray.

The Collect of the Day

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely
hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through
Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for
ever. *Amen.*

The First Lesson

Isaiah 35:1-10

This is the third reading from Isaiah we have heard during Advent. Each of these readings has presented a vision of "new creation," giving voice to ancient Israel's hope for deliverance from its enemies; to our hope for relief and healing in our own time; and to our collective hope for a restored heaven and earth. Notice how water plays a big role in these verses.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

Canticle 15 The Song of Mary *Magnificat*

Canticle is another word for song. Mary sings this canticle, found in the Gospel of Luke, after she learns that she will have a baby, Jesus. We are reciting this song today in response to the Isaiah reading, affirming that Jesus' birth is the key to bringing about Isaiah's vision.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
 for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
 the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him *
 in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, *
 he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
 and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, *
 and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
 for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, *
 to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Second Lesson

James 5:7-10

Waiting and patience are central Advent themes. In the days before advanced irrigation methods, a farmer would nurture his crops knowing that rain, an essential element for growth, was beyond his control, requiring patience and trust. Likewise, prophets like Isaiah and John the Baptist patiently planted and nurtured seeds of hope that would not bear fruit in the days of their historical lives.

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

Gospel Hymn 56

O come, O come Emmanuel
Please sing vs 5 before the Gospel.

O come, thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Matthew 11:2-11

As if on cue, following the reading from James, the Gospel shows us a suffering prophet, John. Notice how Jesus responds to John's request for confirmation that he is who John believes him to be. He doesn't provide a long definition or treatise about his identity as the Son of God. Instead, Jesus encourages John's disciples to tell their teacher what they see: people and whole communities are being healed by Jesus and, through him, are renewing their relationships with one another and God.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

"Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The Gospel of the Lord.
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel Hymn 56

O come, O come Emmanuel
Please sing vs 6 after the Gospel.

O come, thou Dayspring from on high, and cheer us by thy drawing nigh
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Sermon

The Reverend Danielle Thompson

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Deacon or other Leader

As we await the Advent of Christ, let us pray to God our Father saying, “Come Lord Jesus, come.”

O Wisdom from on High, you order all things in heaven and on earth: come and teach us how to live.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

O Key of David, you open doors that none can shut: come and help our parish share your love and grace.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

O Morning Star, O Sun of Righteousness: come and shine upon all who long to feel your light.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

O King of the Nations, you make opposing peoples one: come and save the men and women you fashioned out of dust.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

O Emmanuel, God among us, come and hear our prayers for ourselves and for others.

Silence

For all clergy and people, including Sean, our Presiding Bishop; Glenda, our bishop; and Danielle, our Priest.

For all in positions of authority, including Donald, our President; Kay our Governor; and local leaders throughout the Shoals.

For all whose work puts them in harm's way and for those on active duty in the military, saying together:

Taylor, Johnathan, Ben, Conner, Timothy, John Gage, Henry, Jacob, Kadin, Dustin, & Rebekah.

For those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries:

Beth Kimbrell, Jackie & Jim Noles, & Spencer Byrd.

For those who have asked for our prayers, saying together:

Ryan, Carole, Sam, MJ, Martin, Bennie, Robin, David, Wendell, Cindy, Bruce, Frances, Harold, Logan, August, Sean, Tim, Carolyn, Karen, Jim, Wayne, Rebecca, Ron, Tommy B, LaVera, Peter, & Rosie.

For those we love, but see no longer. We give thanks for the life of Patt Martin Devitt, aunt of Alice Mullen Maddox.

Silence.

O Sacred Lord, we pray to you.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

The Celebrant adds a concluding collect.

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us. We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence. We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To you we say, "Come, Lord Jesus!" *Amen.*

Confession of Sin

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Minister and People

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.

The Celebrant concludes with an absolution or a suitable Collect.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you 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.*

The Peace

Celebrant	The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People	<i>And also with you.</i>

THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Offertory

Offertory Anthem

Come, Jesus, Come

**Choral Scholars'
gift to the church**

Sometimes I fall to my knees and pray
Come Jesus come let today be the day
Sometimes I feel like I'm gonna break
But I'm holding on to a hope that won't fade

There'll be no war and there'll be no chains
When Jesus comes let today be the day
He'll come for the weak
And the strong just the same
And all will believe in the power of His name

Come Jesus Come
We've been waiting so long
For the day You return to heal every hurt
And right every wrong
We need you right now
Come and turn this around
Deep down I know this world isn't home
Come Jesus Come

Doxology Hymn 76 vs. 5

All praise, eternal Son, to thee, whose advent doth thy people free
Whom with the Father we adore and Holy Spirit evermore

The Presentation of the Gifts

Celebrant and People together

All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer B

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: *And also with you.*

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

People: *We lift them to the Lord.*

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

People: *It is right to give him thanks and praise.*

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

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:

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.

Then the Celebrant continues.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, 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, "Take, eat: This is my Body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

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

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues.

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

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.*

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

People and Celebrant

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant and People say together

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Facing the People, the Celebrant says the following Invitation:

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

The Communion

Please come to the altar rail to receive Communion. You may kneel or stand. Receive a wafer from the Priest by holding out your hands. To receive the wine, please dip the wafer in the chalice or drink from the chalice. If you do not wish to receive Communion, cross your arms over your chest and the Priest will offer you a Blessing.

Communion Hymn 81

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

Postcommunion Prayer

The Celebrant and People continue.

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.

Blessing

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. *Amen.*

Recessional Hymn 68

Rejoice! rejoice, believers

Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



SERVANTS TODAY - DECEMBER 14

VOD

DAVID KELLY/HEIDI VACIK GOODLOE PRIDE

SAFETY

GREETER

JANET KLAS

USHER

FRED JOLY

READER

ROB MARTIN

ACOLYTES

GEORGE YOUNGBLOOD
& JEM DAVIS

CHALICE

KELLEY WILLIAMS
& JOHN WALLS

SERVER

JOHN WALLS

CRUCIFER

JOSHUA DAVIS

ALTAR GUILD

MARY CECELIA YOUNGBLOOD, JODI MCDANIEL, BETH SCOTT, & DEBBIE THOMPSON

FELLOWSHIP

JANET & DAVE KLAS



REV. DANIELLE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT HER.

931-636-4898

THOMDL80@gmail.com



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH VESTRY 2025

MARY HOLLAND BLACK
DAVID KELLY - SENIOR WARDEN
HEIDI VACIK - JUNIOR WARDEN

LISA GARDNER
ANNIE LAURIE GRAY
JERRY SHEA

DENNIS COLE
DAVID MCKINLEY
JANET PORT - TREASURER
DARRELL TODD - CLERK



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

103 DARBY AVENUE, PO BOX 838
SHEFFIELD, AL 35660

OFFICE: 256-383-2014

TEXT: 256-335-4546

EMAIL: GRACESHEFFIELDOFFICE@GMAIL.COM

WEBSITE: GRACEEPISCOPALSHEFFIELD.DIOALA.ORG

RECTOR: THE REVEREND DANIELLE THOMPSON

PARISH MUSICIAN: CHRISTA BELUE BYRD

ORGANIST: NANCY HUGHES BOLTE

BOOKKEEPER: GAYLE OZBIRN

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR: LANE HARDISON ENNIS





Announcements

TODAY: "HALFWAY THERE" ADVENT PRAYERS – A thirty-minute prayer service to help you pause, remember what matters, and pray for the needs of others and yourself – halfway through this busy season. This brief, contemplative, and informal time will take place in the church at 4:00 PM on Sunday, December 14. Cookies and hot drinks provided next door for anyone who wishes to stay after and visit for a few minutes.

TONIGHT: AULD LANG SYNE CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE – First Presbyterian, Sheffield, December 14 at 6:00 PM. Barry Rickard and the First Pres choir always host a beautiful and reverent evening of music and fellowship!

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS – Please contact the parish office by email or phone if you would like to donate money for flowers on Christmas Eve. These flowers will also grace our worship on Sunday, Dec 28, and can be given in memory, honor, or gratitude for God and a person or people of your choosing.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP – On Wednesday, December 24, we will celebrate a quiet service of Morning Prayer at St. John's at 10 AM. ***Our main Christmas Eve service will be Candlelight Holy Eucharist at Grace at 5 PM.***

THANK YOU – Once again, you have made it possible for 32 seniors and 9 children in Sheffield to receive Christmas gifts. Each child received a few wanted items, an outfit with shoes, and a few needs. Thank you, Grace, and thank you, Natalie Richardson, for your dedication to these special ministries!

HELP HOST SHOALS SHELTER ON JANUARY 1 – Ring in the New Year at Grace, providing food and shelter to our unhoused neighbors. Check your email for a volunteer sign up or visit: <https://bit.ly/48tFill>

EPIPHANY BONFIRE & BURNING OF THE GREENS – Don't trash your Christmas tree! Bring your trees, wreaths, and garlands to Grace anytime before Tuesday, January 6 OR--better yet-- join us that night at 5 PM around our Epiphany bonfire! This tradition is a fun and meaningful way to celebrate the end of the Christmas Season. Trinity, St. Bart's , and your personal friends are invited, too!



THIS WEEK AT GRACE



MON, DEC 15

8a: Men's Bible Study
10a-3p: Regular Office Hours

TUES, DEC 16

10a-3p: Regular Office Hours
10a-1p: Learn-to-Play-Bridge Circle

WEDS, DEC 17

10a-5p: Regular Office Hours
4:30p: Weds Bible Study
6p: Choir Practice



THU, DEC 18

10a-1p: Regular Office Hours
12p: Zoom Bible Study



SUN, DEC 21

9:30a: Holy Eucharist
10:30a: Advent Fellowship

