



Church of the Advent

Advent Advisor

December 2023

Looking Back, Looking Forward

The Church of the Advent is a body rich in diversity comprised of wonderful folks variously trying to discern and respond to God's call. Success is measured not by the world's standards but by faithfulness often more nebulous than luminous, but faith nonetheless, real honest-to-God faith. What we do to draw nearer to God and deepen our life in community are essentially what early Christians did according to the Evangelist Luke in Acts 2:42: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Think about that in the context of our life together, and you likely will agree that God's Spirit is at work in us.

The average Sunday attendance in an Episcopal parish is 24.

That's our average, smaller than we'd like but not below average. If everyone who attends regularly was present on a given Sunday, there would be twice that number. We are small but are not too small to

make a difference. We need to grow. In fact, we have added some new members, but lost some as well. I am convince that the key to growth is evidence that we are a community activated by love for love, so earnestly giving ourselves over to love and making a difference in the lives of our neighbors that we become a vital force for the growth and welfare of our community. It is good and right to fling open our doors, extending genuine hospitality by welcoming our neighbors. But we need to realize that God needs us in the mission field that is entered as we go out through the door.

This past year, Kit Reddick has led our efforts to give comfort and relief to our neighbors. Among the

ways we have touched the lives of others through outreach are by participating in Blessings in a Backpack and contributing to other programs that fight hunger. We provided Christmas gifts to children, and, at other times when a need was made known, gathered essentials for children and adults. We tried an initiative to add to some Christmas cheer for youngsters by a reading of a time-honored Christmas story and presenting simple refreshments and gifts. It was not well-attended, but we may try again. Frankie Biggs collected and sent in our annual United Thank Offering pledges.

Music has not only enhanced worship but also has been an instrument of outreach. The process of upgrading the organ, with the vestry's ongoing support, has opened up many new opportunities. The highlight, orchestrated by Brandon Woody with the assistance of Kim Fay and the full participation of our choir and other musicians, was last spring's presentation of a wonderful cantata. Another event showcasing the instrument's improved capability was an organ recital. Addressing the need for voice instruction for area children, Brandon, again assisted by Kim, has begun to teach music to about a half dozen young choristers. The children thrilled us with their angelic voices as they joined the parish choir at a recent evensong. Several of our members have provided suppers and helped in other ways to support the music school. The program shows promise of expanding in scope and size. As liturgist, Brandon regularly meets with me to plan appropriate liturgy for celebrating special occasions. We are hoping to provide

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*State of the
Church of the Advent*



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a diversity of music and feature our accomplished instrumental musicians often. Our trumpeter Kim Fay creates a festive mood with her talented playing. Bob Greene's lovely rendition of "Silent Night" is a Christmas tradition. And, now that we have heard Michael Biondi on the guitar at his grandson's baptism, we hope we will hear more from him.

Eucharistic ministers, worship leaders and those offering reflections, lectors and ushers serve faithfully, and trained Eucharistic visitors are ready to call on persons who want home communion. The Altar Guild, under the direction of Lori Taylor, tends the altar, chancel and sanctuary with devotion and hard work. They also provide everything needed to transform the pavilion at Trinity, the altar or other designated space at Green Acres and various venues into sacred space for worship. John Price and Johnny Miller are master floral arrangers.

Soon to come will be an expanded role for Jane Chapman Jernigan. In response to the accolades about her reflections during Morning Prayer, I asked Bishop Skirving to license Jane as preacher. His consent means that she is permitted to preach during Holy Eucharist while I celebrate.

Jim Allen is particularly sensitive about and responsive to the pastoral needs of parishioners and has formed relationships with several whose presence among us we miss. He also has taken on the task of identifying potential security risks and will determine what remedies may warrant attention.

We grieve the loss of any member who has died or can no longer be with us. Lucia Peel's death has been especially difficult. We have not yet figured out how to tend to all the things she did, but we are trying to be creative as we make adjustments. Kit has convened a group, and some persons already have stepped in and ably managed important aspects of parish life. Fellowship is happening, and it's a wonderful thing! Our new model is having a point person for each occasion, and hope that people will step forward. The point person would organize everything start to finish by delegating, and, if there is insufficient interest in helping, that event would not happen. As ECW representative, Kit is willing to take the lead in organizing those who readily volunteer to host receptions after funerals as has been a customary function of ECW.

Lowell Taylor and his team are indispensable. Lowell has given us his accounting and broader financial expertise for many years, and has not asked for remuneration. The vestry is determined to rectify that and has asked Lowell to present a proposal that at the very least accounts for costs to his firm that properly should be assumed by the Advent.



Thanks to Chloe Tuttle and Brandon Woody, we have new and improved web and Facebook pages. Take a look. Joe Jernigan is keeping us informed with "Comings and Goings," rocking the same type of humor that Lucia popularized. Joe manages all administrative responsibilities of the parish such as assigning worship participants and getting volunteers as needed for funerals and other occasions. He takes charge of compiling and printing service bulletins, calendars, rosters and other materials. Kit dedicates much time and attention to collecting and posting information, submitting and editing entries in the monthly *Advent Advisor*. Yes indeed, communications is humming!

We are fortunate to have the unwavering commitments of Senior Warden Doug Chesson and Junior Warden Michael Biondi. I am impressed with Michael's balancing the oversight of Building and Grounds and his personal responsibilities with his determination to attract others to his English as a Second Language Class. I benefit greatly from Doug's wise counsel, especially as it pertains to diocesan interface. He is a strong, decisive leader with a heart for ministry. Among other things, Doug is exploring with others the possibility of broadening options for reverently committing the remains of the deceased in our Memorial Garden.

We are abundantly blessed by the God of love. We are blessed to be a community where love is apparent. I am blessed to be part of the life and ministries of this wonderful community that is the Church of the Advent.

Keep the faith.

Connie





Musicians from the Church of the Advent will present a concert of music for the season at the Church of the Advent on Sunday, December 3 at 3 p.m. Kim Fay and Chris and Shannon Staton will play brass with Brandon on the organ. Carol singing will also be part of the program.



The Annual Parish Meeting will convene on Sunday, December 10 following the morning service. Elections will be held for vestry persons and convention delegates. The budget for 2014 will be presented along with the pledge report.

Organist and Choir will lead the Service of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 17 at 11 a.m.



Based on the medieval vigil service, this service was first instituted at Truro Cathedral in England.

The service consists of a procession, bidding prayer with the Lord's Prayer, Invitatory Hymn, nine lessons followed by appropriate carols and hymns, closing prayer, benediction, and hymn.

The service begins with the traditional opening hymn "Once in Royal David's City," calling the congregation to the story of the salvation as a story teller might with "Once upon a time..."

The lessons then go on to retell the story of the salvation with the musical selections emphasizing the previous readings.

The music includes congregation hymns, choir anthems, and instrumental music.



Reverend Connie Connelly invites you to The Rectory on Sunday afternoon or December 17 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. for an Open House. Parish Life has worked with Connie to provide a variety of food from a local caterer as well as beverages. If the spirit so moves you to bring a food offering, your offering will be gratefully received in addition to what will already be on the table.



Christmas Eve will be observed with only one service at 11:00 p.m. Special music will begin at 10:30 p.m.



YOU'RE INVITED

Do you know of someone you consider a friend of the parish? Someone who has attended other parish happenings? Would you like to invite them to the Open House at The Rectory? If so, please email the names and addresses to Kit Reddick at kit_reddick@yahoo.com so she can send a personal invitation. Or you can give the information at when you see her at church.

Altar Flowers

It is customary in the Episcopal Church to have greenery and Christmas poinsettias decorating the church as we celebrate this special holy season.

To do so, the Altar Guild is asking parishioners to make a donation in memory or honor of loved ones. We are suggesting a \$10.00 donation per honoree; however, a contribution of any amount is welcome. Make checks payable to Church of the Advent and put "poinsettias" in the memo line.

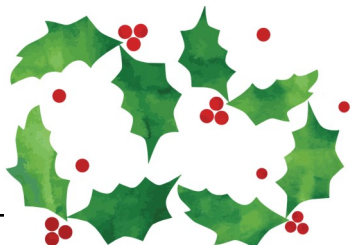
Do not put checks in the offering plate.

Honorees will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. If you would like to make a donation, please contact Joe with the honoree's name(s) by Monday, December 18.

After the Christmas Eve service, poinsettias will be available for parishioners to take home on a first-come, first serve basis.



Due to a very full December calendar at the Church of the Advent, the Church Women Christmas party and gift exchange has been rescheduled for sometime in the new year as a winter party.





Longest Night

As we near Christmas with all of its energy promoting joy and happiness and family warmth, some of us may think instead of those no longer with us.

Or some of us may be thinking of separation from family due to distance or finances or work situations. Or some of us may be thinking of other losses.

The Service of the Longest Night on Wednesday, December 20 at 6:00 p.m. — the night before the winter solstice, the longest night of the year — recognizes that Christmas does bring some sadness in the midst of all the lights, decorations, and music.

Worshippers will be given votive candles to receive the light of the Christ candle.

Bobby Green will offer the singing of “Silent Night” on his ukulele. Bandon Woody will provide quiet meditative organ music.

Come join us as we take time from our busy preparations to be quiet and feel the presence of Christ.

Come join us as we seek comfort knowing that Christ is the true light leading us out of the darkness.



Sounds of the Season

On Friday, December 8 at 7 p.m., the Reverend Jim Horton will lead the service of Evening Prayer with traditional Christmas music at St. Martin’s Episcopal Church in Hamilton. Once a mission church, St. Mar-

tin’s is now under the auspices of the Hamilton Historical Commission. A reception will follow in the home of a member of the Commission.

On Saturday, December 9 at 7:30 p.m. the Martin County Arts Council presents the Community Christmas Chorus in concert. Tickets are \$12.00. Brandon Woody is part of the chorus and can provide you with tickets.

On Sunday, December 10 at 7:30 p.m., the Chancel Choir will lead the congregation in a Moravian Love Feast and Candlelight Service at the First United Methodist Church. Kit Reddick and Brandon Woody are participating in the choir.

Looking to January

On Saturday, January 6, 2024 at 6 p.m. the members of our Choir School will lead our Feast of Lights Epiphany Pageant.

For those unfamiliar with it, the Feast of Lights Epiphany pageant is a traditional Christian celebration that commemorates the visit of the Magi (the three wise men) to the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. It is often held in Episcopal and Anglican churches and involves a dra-

matic reenactment of the biblical story. During the pageant, participants dress up as characters from the Nativity story, including Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Magi, and angels. The Magi are central figures, as they bring gifts to honor the newborn Jesus.



The Feast of Lights part of the celebration refers to the use of candles and lights to symbolize the spiritual significance of this event, often incorporating the lighting of candles and singing of hymns. The pageant serves as a way to retell the story of Jesus’ birth and to emphasize the theme of light and revelation, as the term Epiphany signifies the revelation of Jesus to the world. It is a beautiful and meaningful tradition that helps people reflect on the Christian belief in the incarnation of God in human form and the message of hope and salvation that Jesus brings.

Please join us as we rejoice, reflect, and give thanks for the light that guides us on our own spiritual journeys. We look forward to celebrating the Feast of Lights Epiphany Pageant with you..

The traditional Twelfth Night Party to raise funds for Blessings in a Backpack will be on Saturday, January 6 following the Feast of Lights Service — from around 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. — at the home of Cathy Skinner.



Like Wise Men bringing gifts to the baby Jesus, we will be asked to bring our gifts of monetary support for the children of Martin County who are served by Blessings in a Backpack.

In 2024 the Church of the Advent will partner with the First United Methodist Church to pack during the months of January and May. Recognizing that we both are small churches, we are consolidating our volunteer numbers.

The costs for Blessings in a Backpack have increased due to increase cost of food and increase number of children being served. Cost per child per meal is now \$4.13 from \$2.78. Consider the following to guide you in your giving:

- \$20.00 feeds one child for one month
- \$40.00 feeds one children for two months
- \$60.00 feeds three children for one month
- \$80.00 feeds four children for two months
- \$100.00 feeds five children for one month



Your Quick Reference to What is Happening in December at and around the Church of the Advent

Sunday, Advent 1	December	3	12 n	vestry meeting
			3p	concert by Brandon, Kim, and other brass musicians followed by reception
			5:30p	Hanging of the Greens at First Christian Church
Friday	December	8	7p	Christmas at Historic St. Martin's Episcopal Church with Evening Prayer led by Rev. Jim Horton followed by reception
Saturday	December	9	7:30p	Community Chorus Christmas Concert at Martin County Auditorium/Brandon participating
Sunday, Advent 2	December	10	11a	annual Parish Meeting combined with church service
			7:30p	Love Feast at Methodist Church/Brandon and Kit participating
Tuesday	December	12		presents for foster children due to Church of the Advent
Thursday	December	15		presents for foster children due to Social Services
Sunday, Advent 3	December	17	11a	Lessons and Carols
				Christmas Cantata at Memorial Baptist Church
			6-7:30p	Open House at The Rectory
Monday	December	18	9a-12n	Names for poinsettias to Joe at Church Office
Wednesday	December	20	6p	Service for the Longest Night
Sunday, Advent 4 Christmas Eve	December	24	10:30p 11p	prelude music Christmas Eve service
Sunday First Sunday after Christmas	December	31	11a	Morning Prayer



The Prayer List is found in the notebook marked "Prayer Lists" on the usher's table in the narthex of the church. Names may be added at any time by writing them in the notebook or calling the church office after requesting permission of those for whom prayer is requested. The Prayer List is read aloud weekly at Sunday services. Contact the church office if you wish to have a name added, re-listed, or taken off the list.

Prayer List

- Janie Ford
- Betty Jones
- Ann Wallace
- Jessie Critcher
- Rose Allard
- Patti Malone
- Mary Anne Crow
- Jamie Asby
- Moss Vance
- Bill Rodenbeck
- Bertha & Larry Teele
- Robert & Mary Bonner
- Kismet Matthews

Birthdays

- 9 ~ Jim Allen
- 9 ~ Kit Reddick
- 12 ~ Jeanie Sessoms
- 12 ~ Robert Bonner
- 17 ~ Anna Chesson
- 21 ~ Carroll Stanley
- 25 ~ Ann Wallace
- 29 ~ Chelsea Biondi
- 30 ~ Ann Raiford

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Dec. 3 Holy Eucharist 11:00am
- Vestry Meeting 12:00noon
- Concert by Brandon, Kim and other brass musicians 3:00pm
- Dec. 10 Holy Eucharist 11:00am
- Dec. 17 Lessons and Carols 11:00am
- Open House at the Rectory 6:00pm
- Dec. 20 Longest Night Service 6:00pm
- Dec. 24 **No A.M. Service**
- Christmas Eve Service 10:30pm
- Dec. 31 Morning Prayer 11:00am
- Jan. 7 Holy Eucharist 11:00am
- Jan. 10 Evening Holy Eucharist 6:00pm
- Jan. 14 Morning Prayer 11:00am
- Jan. 21 Holy Eucharist 11:00am
- Jan. 28 Holy Eucharist 11:00am



Church of the Advent

Founded 1850

Rev. Connie Connelly, Priest in Charge
Office Hours:

Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Other hours by appointment
Office Phone #: 252.792.2244
Cell Phone #: 704-651-0244

Doug Chesson, Senior Warden
Michael Biondi, Junior Warden

Joe Jernigan, Parish Administrator
Office Hours:

Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 12 noon
Office Phone #: 252.792.2244

Brandon Woody, Organist/Choirmaster

124 West Church Street
P. O. Box 463
Williamston, NC 27892

Email: advent1850@gmail.com
www.williamstonepiscopalchurch.com

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

*****For pastoral emergencies, contact in this order Connie, Doug, Joe, Michael.**
*****For all problems or issues dealing with the church and rectory buildings and grounds, please contact Joe and then he and Doug will determine how to proceed.**

The Church of the Advent is a nurturing, vibrant, and inclusive community inviting spiritual growth through liturgical worship, outreach, and fellowship.

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Lay Schedule

	3 <i>1 Advent Holy Eucharist 11:00 A.M.</i>	10 <i>2 Advent Holy Eucharist 11:00 A.M.</i>	17 <i>3 Advent Lessons & Carols 11:00 A.M.</i>	24 <i>Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist 10:30 P.M.</i>	31 <i>1 Christmas Morning Prayer 11:00 A.M.</i>
MP Leader					Kit Reddick
Lector	John Price	Chuck Cohen	<i>See Below</i>	Jane Jernigan	Valerie Cooke
Intercessor	Kit Reddick	Cathy Cohen		Jane Jernigan	
Eucharistic Minister	John Price	Doug Chesson		Chloe Tuttle	
Acolyte			Exum Taylor	Exum Taylor	
Altar Guild	Lori Taylor John Price				
Ushers	Jim Allen Maria Allen				

***** There is no morning service on Christmas Eve *****

Lessons & Carols Readers

1 st Lesson ~ Exum Taylor	6 th Lesson ~ Lowell Taylor
2 nd Lesson ~ Jane Jernigan	7 th Lesson ~ TBA
3 rd Lesson ~ John Price	8 th Lesson ~ Doug Chesson
4 th Lesson ~ Lori Taylor	9 th Lesson ~ Connie Connelly
5 th Lesson ~ Kit Reddick	