

November 30, 2025, Advent I

Advent Lessons & Carols

The Chancel Choir, Organ, Harp & Flute
Illum

Procession

“Improvisation” – Dr. Jackson Borges

Announcements - Lay Liturgist

Greeting

Welcome to Statesboro First United Methodist Church, on this observance of Lessons & Carols for Advent.

The origins of this service may be found in the late 19th century, when in 1880, Edward White Benson, the Anglican bishop of Truro, England created it, in his words, “as a response to discourage a different festive spirit found in the local Cornish pubs.” Many denominations have adopted this service and its emphasis on “preparation,” and have adapted it for their singular uses. Its more well-known counterpart, the Service of 9 Lessons & Carols from King’s College, Cambridge, was adapted in 1918 by Fr. Eric Milner-White and first broadcast to the world in 1928. Its annual broadcast on or near Christmas Eve is heard by millions of people, and has become a traditional favorite the world over.

Advent is the time the secular world assails humanity with empty offers of material gain and self-aggrandizement, tempting it with the “newest” and “shiniest.” Yet we are here, in this grand sanctuary, taking time to be holy, calming our hearts and minds so that we might be in some way changed by the gift of the still small voice of God cutting through the din of our collective existence. This is the time we ready our inmost selves, creating a home for our triune God’s transformative power. This is the time of preparation, an oasis of reflection in the desert of emptiness, a depth of calm in the shallowness of life, a heart-filled refuge of love, with Love enfolding his children.

This is the time our individual and collective communion with the Almighty prepares us to welcome that blessed stranger, the One who is called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace – all in the form of a tiny baby, the greatest gift ever given. Fellow children of God, let us join our hearts, minds, and voices this day as we ready ourselves for that glorious Christmas morn when our Savior comes to us yet again.

Welcome to Advent. May our worship reflect the light of Christ shining within us all.

- Dr. Jackson Borges

Introit

"I Look from Afar" – Dr. Jackson Borges
The Chancel Choir, Joshua Davis, soloist

I look from afar. And lo, I see the pow'r of God coming, and a cloud cov'ring the whole earth. Go ye out to meet him and say: tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel? High and low, rich and poor, one with another. Go ye out to meet him and say: hear, O thou shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep. Tell us, art thou he that should come? Stir up thy strength, O Lord, and come to reign over thy people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. I look from afar. And lo, I see the pow'r of God coming, and a cloud cov'ring the whole earth. Go ye out to meet him and say: tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel?

The Blessing of the Light

Pastor: The Lord is my light and my salvation:

People: Our God shall change the darkness to light.

Pastor: Blessed are you, Lord God, creator of day and night: to you be praise and glory forever. As darkness falls you renew your promise to reveal among us the light of your presence. By the light of Christ, your living Word, dispel the darkness of our hearts that we may walk as children of light and sing your praise throughout the world. Blessed be

God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

People: Blessed be God for ever.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Kyle & Lacy Kamppi

Carol – O Come, O Come Emmanuel, UMH #211

Vs 1,2,4,6

The Bidding Prayer - Pastor leads

Beloved in Christ: In this season of Advent, we come to worship the one who is our Judge, our Redeemer, and our Guide; our loving God, who created our world and the far reaches of the galaxy; who said, "Let there be light," and light shone forth, in order that all things might reflect the glory of God's presence.

Let us pray:

Loving God, the light of your glorious sunshine has too often been hidden by the clouds of our sin — your love we have turned to lust, your beauty to ugliness, and what you had made possible we have rendered impossible. But in the disgrace we have made of your world, your grace still shines. With all its fragile beauty your light remains a constant in our lives for your love never fails, brightening our days, casting our shadows behind us and guiding us into the new life that you have prepared for us.

Lord Jesus Christ, you are God's light in the world, and you have come among us to illuminate our path and show us the true and living way into God's presence.

Once again, your flickering light has been placed in our hands to cradle and care for, as once your Virgin Mother cradled you. May the light of the world shining in our hearts be our care and delight as we share your radiance with others. In Christ's light may we be blessed and may we bless others even in the darkest corners of the world. O Holy Spirit of God, kindle your fire of love in our hearts. That flame sees through us and reveals us as we are, but may it also heal us so that renewed in love and joy and peace we may shine as Christ's light in the world, and serve his people in God's name, for you are our God for ever and ever.

Amen.

The First Lesson – Isaiah 11:1-9

Laura Marsh, reader

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord - and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Anthem – “The Truth from Above” – Ralph Vaughan Williams, arr., Jackson Borges
This is the truth sent from above, the truth of God, the God of love; therefore don't turn me from your door, but hearken all both rich and poor. For we were heirs to endless woes, till God the Lord did interpose, and so a promise soon did run that God redeem us by God's Son. And at this season of the year our blest Redeemer did appear. He here did live, and here did preach, and many thousands He did reach. Thus God in love to us behaved, to show us how we must be saved; and if you want to know the way, be pleased to hear what God did say.

The Second Lesson – Isaiah 40:1-11

Bill Smith, reader

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

You who bring good news to Zion,
go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, “Here is your God!”
See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power,
and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Anthem – “Comfort, Comfort Ye My People” – Carlton Young

Comfort, comfort ye my people, speak ye peace, thus saith our God. Comfort, those who sit in darkness, mourning ‘neath their sorrows load. Speak ye to Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them; tell her that her sins I cover, and her warfare now is over. Hark the voice of one that crieth in the desert far and near, calling us to new repentance since the Kingdom now is here. Comfort, comfort ye my people, speak ye peace, thus saith our God.

The Third Lesson – Isaiah 7:10-15

Lynwood Herrington, reader

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, “Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test.” Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel. He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right.

Carol – Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus #196

The Fourth Lesson – Luke 1:26-38

Rev. Dr. Charles Cravey, reader

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Anthem – "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" – Johann Sebastian Bach

Jesu, joy of man's desiring, holy wisdom, Love most bright. Drawn by thee, our souls aspiring, soar to uncreated light. Word of God, our flesh that fashion'd, with the fire of life impassion'd. Striving still to truth unknown, soaring, dying 'round Thy throne.

The Fifth Lesson – Matthew 1:18-23

Suzanne Lundy, reader

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph, her husband, was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered 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 home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sin. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

Invitation to Offering- Pastor

Offertory Meditation – "A Rose E'er Blooming" – Evelyn R. Larter
Beste Toparlak, Dr. Diane Kessel, and Dr. Jackson Borges

Passing the Peace
Meditation – The Rev. Mark Burgess

The Sixth Lesson – Mark 1:1-15

Marcus Toole, reader

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way”— “a voice of one calling in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” “And so, John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Anthem – “E’en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come” – Paul Manz

Peace be to you and grace from him who freed us from our sins, who loved us all and shed his blood that we might saved be. Sing holy, holy to our Lord, the Lord Almighty God, who was and is and is to come; sing holy, holy, Lord! Rejoice in heaven all ye that dwell therein, rejoice on earth, ye saints below, for Christ is coming soon! E’en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, and night shall be no more; they need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their all!

Closing Prayer - Pastor

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world.

You scatter the shadows before our path, and
through your Holy Spirit you lead us into all truth.

May we who have been baptized in the ocean of your love,
also shine as lights in the world, become instruments of your peace,
and icons of your presence. For you are our God for ever and ever.

Amen.

Carol – O Come, O Come Emmanuel, #211

Vs 3,5,7

Sending Forth - Pastor

Postlude – “Improvisation on ‘O Come, O Come, Emmanuel’ – Dr. Jackson Borges

The Chancel Choir of Statesboro First United Methodist Church

**Dr. Jackson Borges,
Organist & Minister of Music**

Sopranos

**Jerry Singletary
Karen Gunnels
Suzanne Lundy
*Natalie Bazemore
*Hannah Brownlee**

Altos

**Janice Smith
Emily Pilarte
*Taylor Sutterfield
*Max Ezell
*Auldyn Walker**

Tenors

**Doug Hess
Bill Smith
John Tucker
*Ryan Fruchtl
*Joshua Davis**

Bass

**Lee Walker
William Amponsah
Joshua Parker
*Paul Nielsen
*Hunter Thompson**

***Denotes choral scholar**

Do you love to sing? Ever wondered what playing handbells is like? We need YOU!

**Talk to Jackson Borges or Lee Walker
to see how your talents can fit in SFUMC's Music Ministry!**



STATESBORO FIRST

United Methodist Church

101 S. Main Street

Calendar of *Events*



November 30 (Only 11AM) Lessons & Carols

December 5 Alumnae Chapter of SAI Music Event, 6PM Sanctuary

December 7 GS Choral Dept Holiday Concert, 3PM & 6PM Sanctuary

December 9 Santa is coming to the preschool!

December 10 Helping Hands Luncheon, 12PM Fellowship Hall

December 14 Children's Choir performs at 11AM service

December 18 Preschool Christmas Program

December 19 Preschool PJ Day & Polar Express

December 19 Christmas Fun Night, 5:30-8PM in 306

Ages PK - 5th grade - RSVP to Mrs. Haley

December 21 SFUMC Youth Christmas Party, 4:30 Mrs. Haley's House

December 22 - Jan 6 Preschool Closed for Christmas Break

December 24-25 Church office Closed for Christmas Break

December 24 Family Christmas Eve Service, 4PM

December 24 Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, 7PM

December 28 11AM Service Only

January 4 return to two worship services

