



What do you fear?

INSISTING ON HOPE THIS ADVENT

Restrooms

If you need a restroom, exit the sanctuary through the door at the front to the right of the pulpit. The women's restroom is just off the foyer. The men's restroom is down the hallway from the foyer on the right.

Nursery

We welcome children of all ages in worship; however, a nursery is available for infants and toddlers under four years old who may need it. Please see an usher for assistance.

Hearing Support

We have hearing assistive technology that connects via bluetooth available. Check with an usher for an instruction card to help you connect.

Visual Support – Large Print Hymnals & Bulletins

Large print hymnals and bulletins are available. The hymnals are located on the side table to the right of the pulpit at the front of the sanctuary. Ushers can help you locate both the hymnals and the bulletins as needed.

Connect + Grow + Serve



Use this QR code (or www.AvonUMC.net/HereIAm) to go online to let us know you're here, enter a prayer request, and/or make a contribution. You can also access volunteer opportunities and wish lists to support our local outreach as well as sign up to provide flowers in honor/memory of someone one Sunday on the altar in worship.

Worship Credit

Our Worship Series for Advent and Christmas, which includes prayers and artwork, is inspired by A Sanctified Art LLC (sanctifiedart.org).

The Hanging of the Greens

First Sunday of Advent | November 30, 2025

Prelude

Fantasia on Veni Emmanuel

Alec Rowley

Chiming of the Hour

Prayer of Invocation

Rev. Malinda Weaver

*** Hymn No. 202**

People, Look East (v. 1, 2, 4)

BESANÇON

The Beginning and the End

Scripture Reading – Revelation 22:12-13, 16

Kay Knowlton

Changing the Paraments

Barbara Lee, Nancy Morrison, Pam Carter

Purple, the color for penitence and royalty,
is used to mark the seasons of Advent and Lent,
the times of preparation before Christmas and Easter.

Becoming Present

Blessing the Advent Wreath

Katie Loggins

Christ came to bring us salvation and has promised to come again.

Let us pray that we may always be ready to welcome him ...

Come, Lord Jesus.

That the keeping of Advent may open our hearts to God's love ...

Come, Lord Jesus.

That the light of Christ may penetrate the darkness of sin ...

Come, Lord Jesus.

That this wreath may constantly remind us to prepare for the coming of Christ ...

Come, Lord Jesus.

That the Christmas season may fill us with peace and joy

as we strive to follow the example of Jesus and to be messengers of his peace...

Come, Lord Jesus.

* Please stand as you are able in body and in spirit.

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Song of Presence

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

arr. M. Vaughn

Receiving the Presence

Rose Weaver

In a world full of fear, where do you see hope?

We see hope when we look to the next generation.

We feel hopeful when we gather together.

We know hope, deep in our bones, when we dream of a better world.

You are right. Even in a fearful world, hope is all around us.

Today we light the candle of hope as a reminder of this good news.

May this flicker of light help us remember that we have reason to hope.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Song of Presence

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (v. 7)

**All: O come, Desire of nations bind
 all peoples in one heart and mind.
 From dust thou brought us forth to life;
 deliver us from earthly strife.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

The Prophet Declares a Child Will Be Born

Scripture Reading – Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Jordan Morrison & Paisley Gross

Hanging the Wreaths

We hang wreaths of evergreens shaped in a circle,
which itself has no end, to signify the eternal reign of Jesus, the Christ.

Anthem

The Holly and the Ivy

Traditional English Carol

The Gift of Children

Neal Flum

*Following the Children's Moment, the children will return to sit
with their parents and remain in worship today.*

Hymn No. 196

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

The Word Present Among Us

Prayer of Illumination

Steve Thomas

Scripture Readings

Lamentations 3:55-57 | Luke 1:5-13

Sermon

Longing for God to Break In



Depths

by Carmelle Beaugelin Caldwell | inspired by Lamentations 3:55-57

Pastoral Prayer | The Lord's Prayer

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, forever. Amen.

Offertory

Savior of the Nations, Come

Paul Manz



Giving our time, talents, and money is our natural response to an understanding of the generosity of God. Click the QR code to go online to let us know you're here, enter a prayer request, and/or make a contribution. Or go to www.AvonUMC.net/HereIAm.

* Doxology

THE FIRST NOEL

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

praise God, all creatures here below;

praise God above, ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Noel, noel, noel, noel, cometh the King of Israel.

Jesus Was Born to Save

Scripture Reading – Isaiah 41:17-20

Hilda Jowers

Hanging the Chrismons

We decorate this Christmas tree with signs and symbols
of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and his heavenly kingdom.

Hymn No. 204

Emmanuel, Emmanuel

MCGEE

(Everyone is invited to place a Chrismon on the tree)

The Mystery of the Incarnation

Scripture Reading – John 1:1-5, 9-14

Pam Carter

Lighting the Tree

Chelsea Lima

Wherever you see a candle or a lighted Christmas tree,
let it call to mind the One who brings light to our darkness,
healing to our brokenness, and peace to all who receive him.

Prayer of Blessing

*** Hymn No. 203**

Hail to the Lord's Anointed (v. 1, 2, 4)

ELLACOMBE

*** Benediction**

*** Choral Benediction**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

*** Postlude**

Toccata on Savior of the Nations Come

Paul Manz



MUSIC NOTES

This morning the choir sings an arrangement of the quintessential Advent hymn, *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*. Though the original Latin text can be traced to the 8th century, the history of the tune is not as well documented. Long thought to be an ancient Hebrew melody from Biblical times, recent research suggests that it perhaps originated in 15th century France. Nonetheless, it remains a beloved part of our Advent tradition. Today's second choral piece, the British carol *The Holly and the Ivy*, is particularly appropriate for our Hanging of the Greens ceremony. Since medieval times holly and ivy have been associated with Christmas: the holly symbolizing Jesus and ivy representing the Virgin Mary. Additionally, the sharpness of the leaves helps to recall the crown of thorns worn by Jesus; the red berries serve as a reminder of the drops of blood that were shed for our salvation; and the flame-like shape of the leaves signifies God's burning love for His people. As with *O Come, O Come*, the origins of the carol are murky. The words first appeared in print in the 18th century, though they are thought to be much older; while the simple tune familiar to most of us today seems to have come from the 19th century. Like most carols from the 18th century and earlier, it mixes sacred and secular imagery.

The organ prelude is a setting of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* by the respected English composer Alec Rowley (1892-1958). The Offertory and Postlude, by American organist Paul Manz (1919-2009) are both based upon Martin Luther's 1524 chorale (hymn) *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* (Savior of the Nations, Come). In turn, Luther based the hymn on a 12th century Latin chant by Ambrose of Milan. Its popularity became such that for centuries it tended to be the first hymn listed in all Lutheran and many other Protestant hymnals and was traditionally sung for the first Sunday of Advent. (It is #214 in our hymnal.)

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS PLAYLIST

For as long as Christians have celebrated Advent and Christmas, music has been a key element. The power of music to create mood and move the emotions is integral for setting our hearts to welcome the birth of the Savior. To help enrich your observance of this holy season, Michael, our Director of Music Ministry, has put together a playlist of relevant music. Beginning on the first Sunday of Advent and continuing through Christmastide, he'll share a new selection each day, say a few words about the piece, and offer recommended listening/viewing options. If you'd like to receive each day's featured composition, simply send your email address to: mvaughn@avonumc.net.



FESTIVE FUN NIGHT

Saturday, December 13 | 6:00pm-8:00pm

Bring a crockpot of your favorite soup or chili to share as we enjoy a festive night of games and fun for all ages. Cornbread, crackers, dessert, and plenty of Christmas cheer will be provided. If soup or chili isn't your specialty but you'd still like to contribute, you're welcome to bring cornbread or dessert instead—just email Susan Harvill (susan.harvill1252@gmail.com) and let her know.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC SPECTACULAR

Sunday, December 21 | 10:00am

Join us in worship as our choir presents *Glory to the Newborn King!*—a musical journey through the true light of Christmas. Through beautiful carols, inspired new music, and thoughtful narration, this cantata tells the story of a God who comes when we least expect it, in the most unlikely of ways, to a most undeserving people. Come and experience the hope and wonder of Christ's birth—glory to the newborn King!

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION

Wednesday, December 24 | 4:00pm

This will be our traditional Christmas Eve service where we will read the Christmas story, hear a Christmas message, and end by lighting our candles as we sing together *Silent Night*.

BRUNCH & CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Sunday, December 28 | 10:00am

Our worship will look a little different on the Sunday after Christmas as we instead enjoy brunch and sing all of our favorite Christmas carols in the Fellowship Hall. Make plans to join us for this relaxed time of fellowship, connection, and celebration of the greatest gift God has given us.



all are welcome to... *connect* with God and others.
grow together in faith and love.
serve the world for Jesus Christ.

BAO BINGO

Monday, December 1 | 7:00pm

Join us as we support our friends from Birmingham AIDS Outreach (BAO) in their monthly Bingo fundraiser. The cost for a seat is \$25 at the door. Email Henry Levens (levenshenry@gmail.com) to reserve a seat at our table. BAO is located at 205 32nd Street South.

MONTHLY BOOK CLUB

Tuesday, December 9 | 6:30pm

Join us each month on the second Tuesday at 6:30pm at the church to dive into thought-provoking reads that center around faith, spirituality, religion, and more. For December we're reading fiction—*Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson—a book about a dying minister who writes a letter to his young son, reflecting on his family's legacy of faith and abolition. Come with an open mind, a curious spirit, and maybe a friend or two.

HAND TO HEART

Wednesday, December 10 | 10:00am-12:00pm

Hand to Heart, our prayer shawl ministry, meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month in the Archive Room on the first floor. This ministry is open to experienced needleworkers as well as those who want to learn. If you know someone for whom a shawl would bring comfort, contact Barb Walker (205.672.9687). We have several beautiful shawls available to give away.

WOMEN'S COFFEE

Wednesday, December 17 | 9:30am

Ladies ... come as you are, bring a friend, and let's enjoy some great company together! Our coffee gatherings happen each month on the third Wednesday at General (3813 Clairmont Avenue, Birmingham 35222).

Opportunities to Serve

Our mission arm Avondale Samaritan Place (ASP) has several great opportunities to help us reach out to our community and bring us all together as neighbors and friends.



Use this QR Code to go online to sign up for any of these opportunities to serve/donate, and to access the Amazon Wish Lists.

Questions? Email Susan Sims (ssims@avonumc.net).

CHRISTMAS VILLAGE – VOLUNTEER

Christmas Village is this week—December 1-5. This is the time of year with the halls of the ASP gym are decked to become a Christmas Village where low-income parents can shop for gifts for their children that they know they'll love. We're able to offer new toys at greatly reduced prices thanks to the generosity of our church family and larger community. We need volunteers this week to do a whole host of tasks from setting up the Village to serving in hospitality to gift wrapping to helping hand out food in Mrs. Claus' kitchen and so much more

WINTER NEEDS FOR OUR HOMELESS NEIGHBORS

In addition to the usual items we give to our homeless neighbors, we need winter items – things like hand warmers, skull caps, gloves, and warm socks. Drop off items weekdays from 8am-11am at Avondale Samaritan Place or bring them on Sunday mornings to worship. You can also donate through our Amazon wishlist and have things delivered directly to us. You can access that using the QR Code in your bulletin.



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