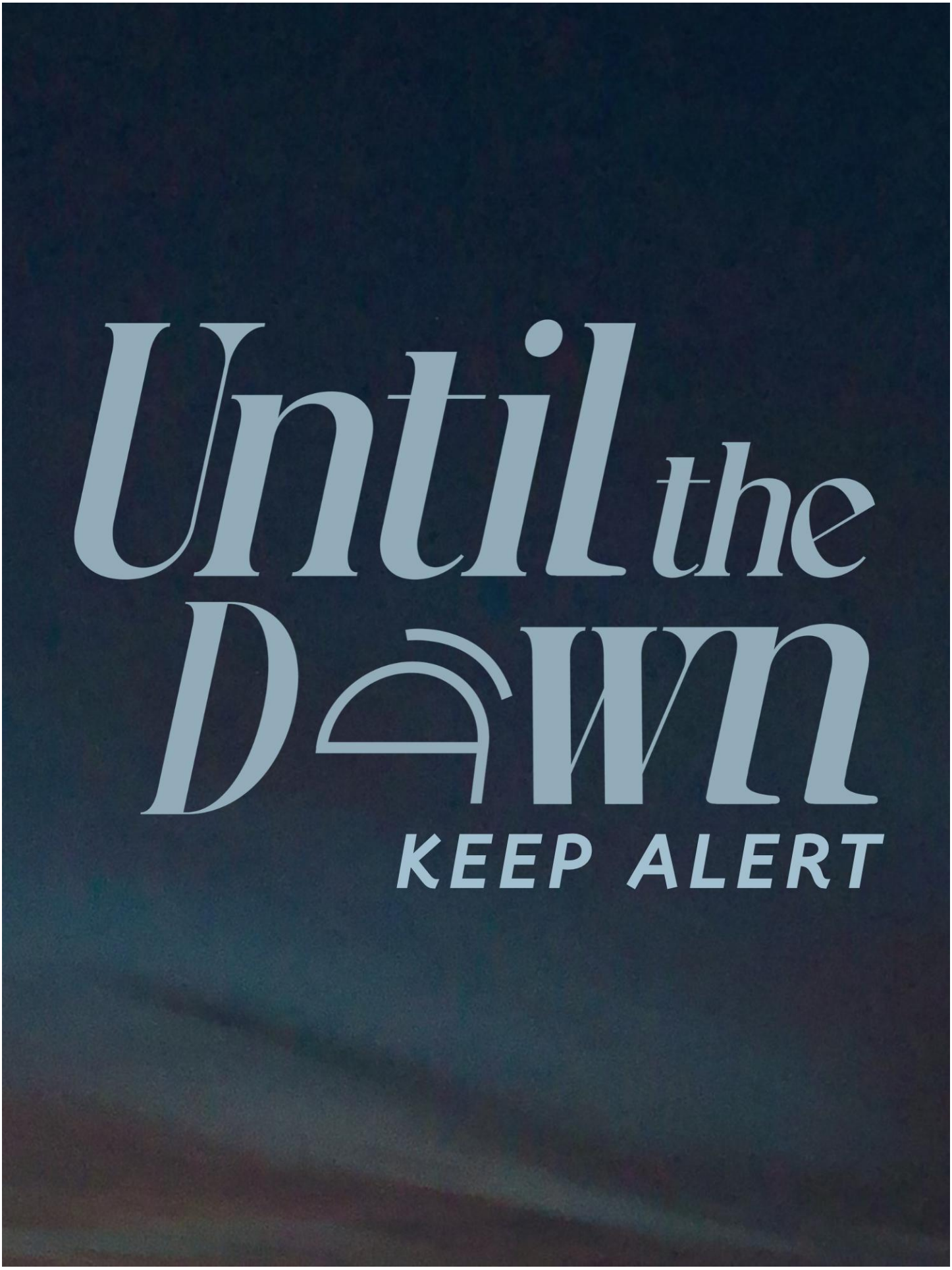

Until the Dawn
KEEP ALERT

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.

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 29, 2026

Prelude *Veni Emmanuel*

Marilyn Biery

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 Neal Flum and Jeanne Baker

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 Hilda, Erica, and Ethan Jowers

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.

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

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.

Lighting the Advent Wreath—Hope

Song of Presence *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

arr. M. Vaughn

Lighting the Candle of Hope Rose and Margaret Weaver

When the nights are long and the roads are hard,

we turn our eyes to the stars.

When the work is demanding and injustice unending,

we stand together, arm in arm.

When fear looms large and grief weighs heavy,

we cry out to God without holding back.

And when the dawn of tomorrow feels far away,

we gather together to light the candle of hope.

The candle is lit.

Like the stars above, may this light shine bright.

May it guide our path. May it inspire deeper hope.

Until God's promised day, may it be so. **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 Hugh Comer and Jorge Perez

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 *Come, Light of Hope*

American Folk Melody | arr. Anna Page

Children's Moment Disney Weaver

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 Katie Loggins

Scripture Readings Mark 13:24-37

Sermon Until the Dawn—Keep Alert

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.

Prayer Response GREENSLEEVES

Incline thine ear unto my words, my soul to thee I bear.
And hear my voice, my King, my God to thee I make my prayer. Amen.

Offertory *Veni Emmanuel*

Flor Peters

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 Jordan Morrison and Paisley Gross

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 Diane Robinson

Lighting the Tree Marie Evans

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** *Rejoice!*
Traditional

*** Postlude** *Fantasia on Veni Emmanuel*
Alec Rowley

MUSIC NOTES

The haunting Advent hymn *Veni Emmanuel* (*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*), was long thought to be an ancient Hebrew melody, though recent scholarship has proven that it comes, instead, from 15th century France. The somber, plaintive quality of the tune suggests a dark world devoid of hope; a hope which comes with the exuberant outbursts of "Rejoice, Rejoice" in the refrain. This morning, we hear three modern interpretations by contemporary organists/composers, including Marilyn Biery. Dr. Biery is organist of the historic Metropolitan UMC in Detroit, where she presides over one of the largest organs in the United States.

The choir sings *Come, Light of Hope* which pairs a text adapted from the familiar words of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* with the wistful 19th century American folk-song *Wayfaring Stranger*.

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS PLAYLIST—A CAROL A DAY...

What would Christmas be without *Silent Night*, *Joy to the World*, and *O Come, All Ye Faithful*? Music is an integral part of our holiday celebrations and most of us eagerly anticipate singing the beloved, familiar carols of the season. Beginning today and continuing through December, our Director of Music Ministries will lead us on a journey through the rich storehouse of traditional Christmas carols. Each day will feature a different carol and will include information on the story/history of the music and provide a suggested playlist of recommended recordings. If you would like to receive A CAROL A DAY, see Michael after the service or simply send an email to mvaughn@avonumc.net.



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Saturday, December 12 | 4:00pm

Our children have been hard at work writing their very own Christmas Pageant, and they can't wait to share it with you! We'll enjoy a delicious dinner of soups, cornbread, and dessert—all provided free of charge—so you can simply relax and enjoy an evening with your church family. Invite a friend and celebrate the joy of the season together!

SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

Sunday, December 20 | 10:00am

During this time of worship, we will hear the scriptures read from creation to Christmas, and our choir will accompany them with beautiful songs of the season.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION

Thursday, December 24 | 4:00pm

This is our traditional service where we will read the Christmas story, hear a Christmas message, share communion, and end by lighting 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.

at AVONDALE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH all are welcome to... connect with God and others. grow together in faith and love. serve the world for Jesus Christ.

MONTHLY BOOK CLUB

Wednesday, December 2 | 10:00am

Join us each month on the first Wednesday at 10:00am at the church to dive into thought-provoking reads that center around faith, spirituality, religion, and more. Our December book is *Separation of Church & Hate* by John Fugelsang. Come with an open mind, a curious spirit, and a friend or two.

BAO BINGO

Monday, December 7 | 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.

HAND TO HEART

Wednesday, December 9 | 10:00am-12:00pm

Through stitches and prayer, Hand to Heart shares comfort with others. This prayer shawl ministry meets monthly on the second and fourth Wednesdays in the archive room (first floor) and welcomes both experienced needleworkers and those who want to learn. If you know someone who would be blessed by a prayer shawl, contact Barb Walker (205.672.9687).

WOMEN'S COFFEE

Wednesday, December 16 | 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*).

CHRISTMAS VILLAGE—THIS WEEK

This week the ASP gym will become a Christmas Village where low-income parents can "shop" for gifts for their children. We offer new toys at greatly reduced prices thanks to the generosity of our church family and larger community. It's not too late to help. You can participate by:

- Emailing our ASP Executive Director, Susan Sims—ssims@avonumc.net, to find out where and when we still need help and support.
- Bake a dozen treats this afternoon and deliver to ASP tomorrow (Monday, November 30).

WINTER NEEDS FOR OUR UNHOUSED NEIGHBORS

In addition to the usual items we give our unhoused neighbors, we need winter items—hand warmers, skull caps, gloves, and warm socks. Drop off donations weekdays from 8–11am at Avondale Samaritan Place, bring them to worship on Sundays, or send them directly to us through our Amazon wish list which can be found using the QR code in the front of the bulletin.