



# Advent, Christmas, & Epiphany '25-'26



Christ & St. Luke's  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# At-a-Glance Calendar

## November 2025

### Sun, Nov 30 – The First Sunday of Advent

- Adult Formation: Advent with *The Saint John's Bible* – 9:15 a.m.
  - Advent wreath making – 11:45 a.m.
  - Advent Lessons and Carols – 5:30 p.m.
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## December 2025

### Sat, Dec 6

- Quiet Day: Advent Quiet Day with Hannah Anderson – VA Wesleyan – 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

### Sun, Dec 7 – The Second Sunday of Advent

- Guest Preacher: Hannah Anderson, 8 a.m. & 10:15 a.m.
- Adult Formation: Hannah Anderson adult forum, 9:15 a.m.
- Christmas Pageant Rehearsal – 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Virginia Chorale Concert – 4:00 p.m.

### Wed, Dec 10

- Christmas Pageant Rehearsal – 5:00–6:00 p.m.

### Sun, Dec 14 – The Third Sunday of Advent

- Adult Formation: Advent with *The Saint John's Bible*, (second session) – 9:15 a.m.
- Cocoa & Caroling – 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. (meet in the lobby)
- CSL Youth Group Meeting – “Christmas Morning” with pancakes, pajamas, a gift exchange and Christmas movies- 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

### Tues, Dec 16

- VOCES8 Concert – 7:30 p.m.

### Wed, Dec 17

- Christmas Pageant Rehearsal – 5:00–6:00 p.m.

### Sun, Dec 21 – The Fourth Sunday of Advent

- Adult Formation: Advent with *The Saint John's Bible* (third session) – 9:15 a.m.
- Christmas Pageant Rehearsal – 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Blue Christmas Service – 6:00 p.m.

### Wed, Dec 24 – Christmas Eve

- Family-friendly Eucharist featuring the Children's Christmas Pageant – 4:30 p.m.
- Musical Prelude with flute and harp – 9:30 p.m.
- The Feast of the Nativity service including traditional carols and candlelight with full choir and brass – 10:00 p.m.

### Thurs, Dec 25 – Christmas Day

- Christmas Day Service including traditional carols – 10:15 a.m.

### Sun, Dec 28 – The First Sunday after Christmas

- Christmas Lessons and Carols – 8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. services

## January 2026

### Sun, Jan 4 – The Second Sunday after Christmas

- Epiphany Potluck – 5:00–7:00 p.m.

### Sun, Jan 11 – The Baptism of Our Lord

- Adult Formation with Rabbi Michael Panitz: “Taking shelter under the wings.” – 9:15 a.m.

### Fri, Jan 16

- Midday Music: Messiaen's *La Nativité du Seigneur* – 12:00 p.m.

### Sun, Jan 18 – The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

- Adult Formation with Rabbi Michael Panitz: “That which endures.” – 9:15 a.m.

### Sun, Jan 25 – The Third Sunday after the Epiphany

- Adult Formation with Rabbi Michael Panitz: “Three routes to awareness of God.” – 9:15 a.m.
  - Orchestral Eucharist, 10:15 a.m.
  - Annual Parish Meeting – 11:45 a.m.
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## February 2026

### Sun, Feb 1 – The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

- Adult Formation with Rabbi Michael Panitz: “In the Valley of the Shadow.” – 9:15 a.m.
- Epiphany Service of Light – 5:30 p.m.

### Sun, Feb 8 – The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

- Guest preacher: Rabbi Michael Panitz – 8 a.m. & 10:15 a.m.
- Adult Formation with Rabbi Michael Panitz: “Perfecting society.” – 9:15 a.m.

### Sun, Feb 15 – The Last Sunday after the Epiphany

- Adult Formation with Rabbi Michael Panitz: “The gates of Prayer”. – 9:15 a.m.
- Treblefest, featuring youth choirs from the region – 5:00 p.m.

### Tues, Feb 17 – Shrove Tuesday

- Pancake Supper – 5:00 p.m.

### Wed, Feb 18 – Ash Wednesday

- Ash Wednesday Services with the Imposition of Ashes– 12:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service for Families, 7:00 p.m. (with incense)



# An Advent Reflection



*Fr. Jared Grant*

It is a longstanding tradition for many to keep an Advent calendar during the season of Advent. They take many shapes and forms. An Advent wreath is a form of a calendar, with each candle marking another week closer to Christmas. Other calendars are daily, and help us keep the season of Advent present in our hearts amidst the hustle and bustle of a busy time of year. Perhaps you've had the candy ones, with each day presenting a delicious treat. This year, we're trying a new calendar in my household: Lego.

*Continued overleaf*



My boys are at an age where there are few things that spark as much joy as a new Lego set. So the Lego Advent calendar is really a perfect Advent devotional that meets my boys where they are. The fact that I, too, will delight at the many adventures waiting patiently in the Lego Advent calendar box is merely a happy coincidence. That's what Advent is really all about: paying attention to the sparks of joy that showcase God's love coming to meet us wherever we are.

The duality of Advent is that we await the beauty of the incarnation at Christmas, all while we anticipate and articulate our well-founded hope that God will meet us in the here and now. Especially in challenging times, it is not a small act to look for joy. It is not a small act to center ourselves on the promise of God's goodness throughout history. It is not a small act to hold on to the knowledge that God has seen the chosen people through difficult times before.

Throughout this season, we will hear from the Prophet Isaiah in our lectionary readings. Isaiah's words are the perfect reminder of how God's people have held onto hope amidst the challenges of their lives. They are a reminder of how God's people have looked for joy, even when it seemed like there was no joy to be found. Isaiah speaks of a child being born, who will be called Immanuel — which literally means, "God is with us." A foundational belief of our faith is that God is with us. God is here. God is among us.

This Advent, be bold enough to look for joy in the world around you. Be bold enough to believe that God loves you enough to meet you where you are, in whatever state you find yourself. If joy comes to you in candy or Lego form, rejoice! If joy comes to you in lending a hand to those who need support through the challenges of our times, again I say rejoice! There is no limit to joy, because there is no limit to God's love. In paying attention to God's love that surrounds us, we will join the countless throngs who have taken the smallest sparks of joy and kindled them into a blazing light of transformation and change.

**This Advent, be bold enough to look for joy in the world around you. Be bold enough to believe that God loves you enough to meet you where you are, in whatever state you find yourself.**

# Advent Quiet Day

There is a paradox to the season of Advent. On one hand, it is a season which asks us to pause and reflect on our life and to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ. On the other hand, it is inevitably one of the busiest seasons of the year, with all the holiday preparations and celebrations that need to be attended to. This year we invite you to push back against the busy-ness of the season and carve out some space for reflection and spiritual growth.

We have invited the spiritual writer **Hannah Anderson** to guide us through an Advent Quiet Day. Hannah's writing beautifully blends the personal story of one's life with deep, highly informed theological and biblical analysis. She has won acclaim for such works as *Made for More*, *Humble Roots*, and *Turning of Days*.

Drawing on her Advent devotional book "Heaven and Nature Sing," Hannah will lead us into a reflection on the season of Advent grounded in God's renewal and redemption of all of creation through the act of incarnation. Join us for a chance to breathe, and think deeply about all that this season teaches us about life. Space is limited, so RSVPs are required. Please sign up at [christandstlukes.org/adventquietday](http://christandstlukes.org/adventquietday).

Hannah Anderson will also be our guest preacher on Sunday, December 7th, and will be leading our adult forum that day.

## Advent Quiet Day

- Saturday, Dec 6th
- 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Monumental Chapel at Virginia Wesleyan University, 5817 Wesleyan Drive, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23455



Hannah Anderson

## Concerts & Special Services

**Sun, Nov 30 at 5:30 p.m.**  
Advent Lessons and  
Carols

**Sun, Dec 7 at 4 p.m.**  
Virginia Chorale

**Tues, Dec 16 at 7:30 p.m.**  
VOCES8 Concert

**Fri, Jan 16 at 12 p.m.**  
Midday music featuring  
Messiaen's *La Nativité du  
Seigneur*

**Sun, Jan 25 at 10:15 a.m.**  
Orchestral Eucharist

**Sun, Feb 1 at 5:30 p.m.**  
Epiphany Service of Light

**Sun, Feb 15 at 5:00 p.m.**  
Treblefest

## Music

For centuries, the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany have been illuminated with choral music; the combination of text and tune provide a memorable vehicle for sharing the special message of the seasons. This year there are many wonderful ways to soak in the sounds of these special holidays. For many years, the **Virginia Chorale** has shared their holiday concert here at Christ & St. Luke's, and this year they will be celebrating four notable composer anniversaries: Arvo Pärt, John Rutter, Bob Chilcott, and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. These recognizable names make up the "soundtrack to Christmas" and it will be an afternoon of singing you won't want to miss. This year, we are especially excited to host **VOCES8**, the renowned chamber choir from England. Though a choir of only eight, their blend and intonation sound like an orchestra of voices. Their popular videos on Youtube have garnered millions of views, and rightly so. This will be the first time they are performing at Christ & St. Luke's and you won't want to miss it. Of course you will also be able to hear our dedicated and talented Parish Choir in special choral services throughout the season. There will also be a very special midday music concert on January 16 at noon. **Organ virtuoso Daniel Stipe** will play Olivier Messiaen's nine movement cycle on Christmastide, *La Nativité du Seigneur*. This atmospheric work will immerse us deeply into the sounds of the season, played by a great interpreter, on our magnificent organ. Join us!



Kevin Kwan  
Director of Music





# Adult Formation: Advent With *The Saint John's Bible*

Christ & St. Luke's is now a steward of the Heritage Edition of *The Saint John's Bible*. This Advent, we will take advantage of this wonderful gift and use it to help reflect on some of the passages central to our understanding of Advent. This forum series will combine two sacred traditions of scriptural interpretation — *Visio Divina* and *Lectio Divina*.

Using the words of scripture, and the beautiful illuminations in *The St. John's Bible*, we'll spend some time reflecting together on this season of waiting and anticipation. This forum series will be participatory, with attendees' input being central to the *Visio Divina* and *Lectio Divina* processes. We'll be aided by our wonderful Christ & St. Luke's docents of *The Saint John's Bible*, who will help unlock some of the rich meaning woven into each illumination.

**This class will meet during the 9:15 a.m. Adult Formation hour on November 30, December 14, and December 21.**



# Christmas Pageant



*Kathy Hanna*  
*Director of Family,  
Youth & Children's  
Ministries*

All children, ages 3-18 years old, are invited to participate in the **Christmas Pageant** that takes place during the 4:30 p.m. service on Christmas Eve.

The Christmas Pageant is one of the most special times of the year. It's a unique and cherished opportunity for our children to step into and retell the greatest love story ever known. Watching them live into being a part of our history, embodying the roles of shepherds, angels, and even a live baby Jesus, is moving and brings the story to life.

There's a moment, usually around the fourth rehearsal, when I look out and see those children, and it hits me: "Wait, those really are shepherds over there. Those are really angels. Look at Mary!"

In those instances, it's not just a play; it's a profound experience that reminds us all of the meaning of Christmas.

The pageant is more than just a performance; it's a vital part of our community, a tradition that brings generations together and allows us to experience the timeless narrative of Christ's birth through the innocent and joyful eyes of our youngest members. It's a beautiful way to connect with our faith and with each other.

## Rehearsal Dates

**Sun, Dec 7**, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**Wed, Dec 10**, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

**Wed, Dec 17**, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

**Sun, Dec 21**, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**Wed, Dec 24**, Call time 3:00 p.m.

The December 24th rehearsal is mandatory. Please also be sure you are available for at least three other rehearsals. Please sign up by December 3 at [christandstlukes.org/pageant](http://christandstlukes.org/pageant). Adult helpers are also needed and if you sew, some of our costumes need refurbishing.

# Blue Christmas Service

The Season of Christmas is a joyous time. But it is not always easy to participate in that joy in ways we might want to, which can make this a difficult season for many. For those wrestling with grief and loss, with anxiety and uncertainty, and for those whose experience of the holidays brings up challenging memories, it can feel overwhelming to have to try to embody the joy of the season.

The Blue Christmas Service **on December 21 at 6 p.m.** is designed to be a space of quiet, rest, and contemplation, where we can bring the entirety of our being – the good, the unpleasant, the broken, the hopeful – and hold ourselves in the goodness of God's love. It is a Christmas service that helps us focus on the hope of our Christian faith. Designed with contemplative musical choices, like Taizé singing, and with lots of room for silence and reflection, this is a service that is intentionally different from the rest of our Christmas celebrations.

This year's Blue Christmas service falls on the longest night of the year, Dec. 21st. It's a reminder that though the darkness is strong now, the light is growing ever so slowly. Throughout the entirety of God's story with creation, we have seen how the love of God has brought hope and comfort even in the darkest days. Our faith in God tells us that it is not unreasonable to hold on to hope. Join us just as you are, as we give thanks for the light that is coming in.



# A Christmas Reflection



I saw Eternity the other night,  
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,  
All calm, as it was bright;  
And round beneath it, Time in hours, days, years,  
Driv'n by the spheres  
Like a vast shadow mov'd; in which the world  
And all her train were hurl'd.

– *"The World"* by Henry Vaughan



Fr. Noah Van Niel

Time does funny things at Christmas.

When I was a kid waiting for Christmas morning, time moved painfully slowly. Nowadays, the whole Christmas season is so replete with parties to attend and presents to obtain, and travel to plan, and services to perform, that the time at Christmas moves by in a flash.

Christmas has also always been a season in which time folds back on itself, layering on the memories and meaning like a Christmas trifle that gets denser over the years. The tastes and smells and rituals and traditions that are unique to this time of year immediately evoke feelings of Christmases past. Often this adds depth to the joy of the season. Sometimes it is cause for heartache.

It makes sense that time does funny things at Christmas though, because that very first Christmas was a weird and wonderful collision of different types of time. On that silent night outside the little town of Bethlehem, Eternity — that great ring of pure and endless light that sits outside of time, always calm, always bright — burst into our time-bound existence of hours, days, years that hurl along like a train, only ever moving in one direction. The Greek of the New Testament uses two different words to distinguish between these two types of time. *Chronos* was used for linear, measurable, everyday experiences of time (*"What time is it?"*). *Kairos* was what they used for the eternal: those experiences of God's time, moments of God's activity in the world (*"The time is fulfilled"*).

The moment of the incarnation, God becoming flesh in Jesus, was a moment when *Kairos* and *Chronos* collided. Time was interrupted, scrambled by the coming of the eternal one, the Christ child, who was in the beginning and through whom all things were made, and yet who broke through that perceived barrier between the realms of time, and became subject to the limitations and frustrations of *Chronos*.

Every Christmas is an invitation to allow that same collision to happen again in our lives and consciousness — to open our eyes and hearts to the activity of God breaking through. It is a chance to embrace the eternal and welcome its interruption of the one-way ride of *Chronos*, that oppressive ticking of the clock that so often blocks out the beauty of eternity, which we get to see here, and now in the face of a child lying in a manger, radiating pure and endless light.



# An Epiphany Reflection



*Judie Belka*  
*Director of Parish*  
*Operations*



By the time you read this, you will likely know I am stepping down from my post as your Director of Parish Operations. I prefer to think of it as stepping aside — I am stepping aside to allow the next person to carry the operations torch while I continue to use my gifts in other arenas. It is no coincidence that this new chapter for me opens as we enter the Season of Epiphany — a time when we often think of the Magi traipsing across the nations to offer their gifts to the Christ child.

When I reflect on the many gifts Christ & St. Luke's has to offer, it is easy for me to focus on the incredible music, meaningful formation, and striking architecture. Yet true of the most enduring gifts, the longest lasting treasures are found deep within and woven into the fabric of our community. Are you struggling with your faith? There is someone here to walk with you as you wrestle with challenging questions and ideas. Are you looking to grow as a person and follower of Jesus? There are people and processes to provide formation, feedback and spiritual support, no matter where you are in your journey. And most importantly, there is much grace here. Grace to make mistakes, grace to grasp at reconciliation, redemption and recovery, and grace for our continued journey as a community.

How do we as a community continue to be a light long after the Season of Epiphany has passed? Keep sharing those gifts. Time and time again I have witnessed you sharing your gifts not only with me, but with one another and the community around us. In the political times in which we find ourselves, it is even more important to know what we believe and why, carefully study the words of Jesus, consider wise counsel, and to stand strong for our beliefs and values as a community of faith.

I look forward to continuing that work with you. But for now, I want to say thank you. Thank you for being that gift to me and for receiving my gifts. May we continue to be that tower of light in our community and beyond.

# Encounters, Epiphanies & Engagement

Responding to our  
awareness of the Divine



*Rabbi Michael Panitz*

The season of Epiphany is a season of divine encounter. We come face to face with manifestations of God in our life, in our world, in ways that change the way we live and thus the world in which we live. For our Adult Formation in this season we welcome back **Rabbi Michael Panitz** who will lead us through a number of Jewish resources that explore this idea of epiphany and encounter and the subsequent engagement it brings forth. **Rabbi Panitz** will also be our guest preacher on Sunday, February 8th.

## Adult Formation Sundays at 9:15 a.m.

**Jan 11** – Taking shelter under the wings of God's Presence: Jethro and Ruth in Rabbinic literature

**Jan 18** – That which endures: Thinking about God in secular times

**Jan 25** – Three routes to awareness of God: Epiphany in the thought of Abraham Joshua Heschel

**Feb 1** – In the Valley of the Shadow: Rediscovering God after tragedy

**Feb 8** – Perfecting Society: Seeking the Kingdom of Heaven by uplifting the marginalized

**Feb 15** – The gates of Prayer are always open to the voice of the oppressed

## February Events

**Sun, Feb 1, 5:30 p.m.**  
Epiphany Service of Light

**Sun, Feb 15, 5:00 p.m.**  
Treblefest, featuring youth choirs from the region

**Tues, Feb 17, 5:00 p.m.**  
Shrove Tuesday pancake supper

**Wed, Feb 18, 12 p.m., 5 p.m., 7 p.m.**  
Ash Wednesday services

# Epiphany Potluck

**Sunday, Jan 4, 5:00 p.m., Lloyd Hall**

The Epiphany potluck, formerly known as Twelfth Night Party, is a time that we gather to celebrate and learn about some traditions of Twelfth Night and the Feast of the Epiphany, and to share a meal. The Feast Of The Epiphany is when the three wise men, or magi, finally got to Bethlehem to greet the baby Jesus. We ask people to bring a dish to share for eight to ten people.

# Pancake Supper

**Tuesday, Feb 17, 5:00 p.m.**

The Pancake Supper is a delightful community event that happens on Shrove Tuesday, which some of you might know as *Mardi Gras* or "Fat Tuesday," the day before Ash Wednesday. It's that wonderful moment where our community, from the youngest to the wisest, gathers to enjoy pancakes and have one last hurrah before we begin our preparations for Jesus's journey to the cross.

It's always filled with fun, including our famous pancake races! It's a fantastic time for fellowship and a beautiful way to mark the beginning of Lent.





*Rudy and Kate Miller of Together for Kenya, with the Kenya Angel Tree*

# Kenya Angel Tree

The Kenya Angel Tree is part of Together for Kenya, which provides funding support for 11 Kenyan projects. During 2025 we have continued to supply daily porridge to more than 3,000 school children in three primary schools. We also help 100 nutritionally vulnerable families receive monthly food baskets, and we provide food baskets to nearly 250 impoverished seniors and special needs adults via several Anglican churches in Kwaïda, Kenya. We also assist Nazareth Hospital with a children's outpatient project, named "WECARE," by providing medical assistance to 20 children on a monthly basis. Community Healthcare Workers and school teaching staff are trained to work together to identify children in medical need.

**Please help us to continue to provide life-saving support for vulnerable men, women and children in Kenya!**



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