



4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
THE 21TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2025

TEN THIRTY COMBINED SERVICE

201 SOUTH MAIN STREET . GREENEVILLE, TN 37743
WWW.ASBURLIFE.ORG . (423) 798-1050

MORNING WORSHIP

DECEMBER 21, 2025

THE GATHERING

Prelude & Bringing In The Light

"Savior of the Nations,
Come" J.S. Bach

Ed Logan

The Greeting

We welcome you, and we pray that this time together
will be a blessing in your life.

† At the sound of the bells, please prepare your hearts
and minds for worship.

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

Lifting Our Voices in Praise*

"God Rest Ye /
Star of Wonder"

Praise Team

The Apostles Creed*

See Insert

UMH #881

Gloria Patri*

Glory be to the father and to the Son and to the Holy
Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall
be, world without end. Amen

Passing Of The Peace*

† Afterward, the people may be seated.

The Children’s Message

Don Stansfield III

CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS OF THE CONGREGATION

Call to Prayer

"Seek Ye First"

UMH #405

Pastoral Prayer

Bishop James E. Swanson Sr.

The Lord’s Prayer

See Insert

Bishop James E. Swanson Sr

*Please stand as you are able. Please silence cell phones and electronic devices in the Sanctuary.

| Attendance for December 14th, 2025 | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Sunday School | 5 | Livestream Views | 257 |
| Combined Service | 59 | Daycare Chapel Christmas Program | 61 |
| Children’s Church | 3 | Youth Wednesday Night | 43 |
| Morning Pointe Senior Center | 16 | | |
| Pastoral Blessing | | | |

Beloved of God, hear the good news: the God who called Joseph still meets us right where we are in the midst of our doubt and fear and leads us in faith.

In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven, restored, and sent. Go now, trusting the One who is Emmanuel—God with you in every step, every risk, and every act of faithful, joyful obedience.

And may the blessing of God—the Holy One, be with you now and in the future, regardless of the risk you my face. May God’s presence prompt you to keep taking the risk! Amen.

Rev. Sharon Bowers

***Please note: To deliver your year-end giving, a locked drop box is located outside by the office door. This is for secure after-hours delivery.*

| SCAN WITH YOUR PHONES CAMERA FOR MORE INFORMATION | | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|---|----------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| View Our Prayer List |  | View Our Coming Events |  | Give Online |  | Join our Live- stream |  |

An Advent Poem

**In the hush of waiting days,
a single flame is lifted high.
Hope trembles into brightness,
scattering the long night's sigh.
We lean toward promised dawn,
trusting light we cannot yet see.**

**Love follows like a warm wind,
softening the edges of our fear.
It moves through ordinary moments,
making holy what is near.
In its glow we remember:
God draws close in humble ways.**

**Then Joy and Peace arrive together,
gentle as falling snow—
A quiet chorus rising where weary hearts still go.
And in the center of our longing,
Christ comes as gift and guide,
The Light of Advent shining,
ever faithful at our side.**

Author Unknown

MORNING WORSHIP

DECEMBER 21, 2025

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| The Scripture Lesson* | Matthew 1: 18-23 NIV | Debby Hendrix |
| The Message | Taking the Risk! | Bishop James E. Swanson Sr. |

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Giving Our Tithes & Offerings | † An offering is collected to support the mission of Asbury UMC to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Please register your attendance in the red folder, located in your pew. Let us know if you are visiting, would like to become a member, or are interested in more information. | |
| Offertory Prayer | | Bob Leonard |
| Anthem (Organ Offertory) | "Rejoice Greatly, O My Soul" Johann Pachelbel | Ed Logan |
| Doxology | See Insert | UMH #95 |
| Hymn of Invitation* | "O Come, O Come , Emmanuel" | UMH # 211 |

SENDING FORTH

| | | |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Benediction* | | Bishop James E. Swanson Sr. |
| Peace* | Minister: The Peace of Christ be always with you. People: An also with you. | |
| Postlude* | "Hark, The Glad Sound" Heeley William | Ed Logan |

Childcare is available in the children's area , an usher can guide you.

Liturgy For Worship

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;*
the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic** church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

**Universal

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise him all creatures here below,
Praise him above the heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Advent & Christmas at Asbury

- * Blue Christmas Service
Dec 22 | 6:30–7:30 pm | The Asbury Chapel
- * Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion (Traditional)
Dec 24 | 5:00 pm | Sanctuary
- * Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion (Contemporary)
Dec 24 | 11:00 pm | Fellowship Hall
- * Christmas Day | Dec 24–26 | (Office Closed) Best Wishes for Family & Friends
- * Year-End Worship & Testimony Service
Dec 28 | 10:00 am | Traditional Service
Dec 28 | 11:00 am | Contemporary Service

Asbury Church Office Holiday Hours

HAPPY New Year

New Year Holiday Hours

| | | |
|-----------|--------|--------|
| Monday | Dec 29 | Closed |
| Tuesday | Dec 30 | Closed |
| Wednesday | Dec 31 | Closed |
| Thursday | Jan 1 | Closed |
| Friday | Jan 2 | Closed |

Reopen Monday Jan 5th Regular Hours
If you have an emergency, you may call
Pastor Bowers at (423) 480-3751

Christmas Holiday Hours

| | | |
|-----------|--------|-------------|
| Monday | Dec 22 | 8 am - 4 pm |
| Tuesday | Dec 23 | 8 am - 4 pm |
| Wednesday | Dec 24 | Closed |
| Thursday | Dec 25 | Closed |
| Friday | Dec 26 | Closed |

Reopen Monday Jan 5th Regular Hours
If you have an emergency, you may call
Pastor Bowers at (423) 480-3751

Small Group Gatherings

Children’s Ministry

Wednesdays

5:15–7:00 p.m.

Asbury Fellowship Hall

3 Churches 1 Mission / Asbury-Pruitt Hill-Tate Chapel

Rotating Locations

Growing Kids in Christ Together

Community Outreach Initiative:

Morning Pointe Senior Center

Morning Glory: *Faith for the Journey*

Thursdays | 10-10:30 a.m. Come share scripture and encouragement with our beloved seniors.

Bible Studies Coming In January

- ***Wrestling with Doubt: Finding Faith*** by Adam Hamilton
A small-group study that creates a safe space for the honest questions many Christians carry quietly, offering guidance for discovering a deeper and more resilient faith.
- ***Spiritual Practices for Soul Care*** by Rev. Dr. Barbara L. Peacock
For those longing for a richer experience of God, this study introduces forty practices that help integrate spiritual disciplines into everyday life.
- ***Pursued: God’s Relentless Love for You*** by Jennifer Cowart
Explore the sweeping story of Scripture to see how God faithfully and lovingly pursues His people throughout biblical history—and continues to pursue us today.
- **When Christians Get It Wrong** by Adam Hamilton invites believers to take an honest look at ways the church has misrepresented Jesus through judgment, exclusion, and fear. With grace and clarity, Hamilton calls Christians back to the heart of the gospel—love of God and neighbor—challenging readers to live out a faith marked by humility, compassion, and Christlike integrity.

Prayer of Confession

Based on Matthew 1:18-23

Liturgist:

Holy and gracious God of surprise,
you come to us in unexpected ways,
calling us to trust when the path is not illuminated
and to obey when the sacrifice feels too costly.

People:

Forgive us, O God, when the future
promises of our faith gets clouded by
fear and doubt.

Liturgist:

Like Joseph, you invite us to take holy risks, to believe your word, to welcome what we do not fully understand, and to trust that you are working all things together for our good.

People:

Yet, we confess that we often choose
the known over the unknown, safety
over obedience, comfort over courage,
and certainty over uncertainty.

Liturgist:

Your message is clear, “Do not be afraid,” and yet
we tremble despite your promise to be with us always.

People:

Forgive us when we doubt your presence,
question your plans, or resist
the new thing you are doing among us.

ALL:

Merciful God, forgive our sins, known and unknown. Create in us hearts willing to not be afraid and to say yes to your call. Help us trust that you are Emmanuel—God with us. Even when the way forward is unknown, help us to take the risk.
Amen.

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.

| TODAY'S WORSHIP TEAM | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Preaching: | Bishop James E. Swanson Sr. |
| Liturgist: | Debby Hendrix |
| Children's Message: | Don Stansfield III |
| Organist/Pianist: | Ed Logan |
| Music: | Choir |
| Sounds/Livestream: | Christian Martin |
| ANNOUNCEMENTS | |
| Let us know you're here: Check in on the Church Center app, complete a connection card at www.asburylife.org , or sign the red registration pad in your pew. Everyone—visitors and members alike—are welcome to connect. Please let us know if you would like to become a member or learn more about our church. Visit our online church calendar at https://asburylife.org/coming-up-at-asbury . | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">We are honored and deeply grateful to welcome Bishop James E. Swanson Sr. to Asbury today as our special guest speaker. His ministry and witness have blessed the Church around the world, and we are thankful to receive the word God has placed on his he.We invite you to join us for a Blue Christmas Service at Asbury UMC. This is a quiet, reflective service offering space for prayer, scripture, soft music, and hope in the midst of sorrow. Monday, December 22, 2025, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Asbury Chapel.Join us for our Christmas Eve Service Candlelight Communion services. Traditional at 5:00 PM in the Sanctuary and Contemporary at 11:00pm in the Fellowship Hall, on Wednesday, December 24, 2025. We joyfully celebrate the birth of Christ with hearts full of wonder and praise. | |
| PRAYER REQUESTS | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Please keep the family of Mrs. Ruth Smith Woody in your prayers. Mrs. Woody, widow of the Reverend Nelson C. Woody and the mother of our former pastor the Reverend David S. Woody (First UMC, Newport, Smoky Mountain District), died on Friday, December 12, 2025. A committal service will be held at 2:00 p.m. on February 7, 2026, at Holston Conference United Methodist Cemetery, 30461 Garland Dr., Emory, VA 34327.Please pray for Nancy Worley. As of the last report She is still hospitalized with complications from the influenza A. Pray that her sodium level would increase to a acceptable medical level. Pray for her strength and peace during these difficult days. | |



Bishop James Edward Swanson, Sr. is a retired United Methodist bishop, elected to the episcopacy in 2004 at the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. He first served as the resident bishop of the Holston Annual Conference, based in Knoxville, Tennessee, from 2004 to 2012. During his eight-year tenure in Holston, Bishop Swanson provided visionary leadership that strengthened mission engagement and global outreach. Under his episcopacy the Sudan Mission was initiated, leading to the growth of United Methodist congregations in South Sudan from just three to thirty, the establishment of a residential training site for clergy and laity, and significant conference support for global ministries including Imagine No Malaria, which raised more than \$1.2 million for malaria prevention and treatment in Sub-Saharan Africa.

After Holston, Swanson was appointed resident bishop of the Mississippi Annual Conference, where he served until his retirement in January 2023 and where he became known for his pastoral care, coaching leadership style, and emphasis on connectional ministry.

Bishop Swanson's commitment to ending domestic violence is rooted in profound personal experience: at age 18, he lost his mother to domestic violence, a tragedy that shaped his lifelong advocacy. He founded a Bishop's Task Force on Domestic Violence to educate clergy and laity, develop resources, and encourage congregations to create healthy, loving, violence-free environments. Through leadership in the General Commission on United Methodist Men, Swanson championed efforts to involve men in preventing abuse, promoting awareness, and collaborating with United Methodist Women and community groups to address domestic violence as a moral and spiritual issue.

Bishop Swanson is married to Delphine Yvonne Ramsey Swanson; they are parents of six adult children and have a large extended family.