

# St. Augustine of Canterbury Episcopal Church

A Mission of the  
Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina



“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.”  
Isaiah 40:1 (RSV)

December 16, 2021  
6 PM

**Welcome to St. Augustine's**

*A special welcome to those who are visiting via our on-line service. We welcome the addition of your praise and thanks to God this day. If you are seeking a church home, you are welcome here.*

*As we are in a pandemic, we are asking that you practice social distancing of three feet. Please sit two chairs between worship groups (singles, couples, families). Concerning masking, we ask that everyone wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status. Masks are available at the Welcome Table at the front of the church. We appreciate everyone's assistance and patience.*

**St Augustine of Canterbury Episcopal Church**

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**Clergy**

**Bishop ..... The Right Reverend W. Andrew Waldo**

**Vicar ..... Reverend Daniel A. Wagner**

**Ministers for Today**

Celebrant and Preacher ..... Fr. Dan Wagner

Director of Music ..... Matt Henderson

Church Accompanist ..... Sharon Lewis

Crucifer ..... John Donnelly

Scripture Reader ..... Gwen Blankenheim

Meditation Reader ..... Anne Keltly

Ushers ..... Jack and Susan Sadler

Altar Guild ..... Raina Knudsen and Lexie Russell

On-Line Services Director and Producer ..... Eddie George

**Mission Committee**

Senior Warden ..... Jim Moor    Outreach & Evangelism ..... James Denny

Junior Warden ..... David Busch    Worship ..... Susan Sadler

Communications ..... Eddie George    Education ..... Donna Knowles

Fellowship ..... Dottie Robinson    Treasurer ..... Joan Donnelly

Clerk ..... Joan Donnelly

Abi Elder ..... Nursery Coordinator

# ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*The congregation is assembled and quieted as the prelude music begins. Please silence all electronic devices at this time.*

## WELCOME

Welcome to this “Blue Liturgy” or “Longest Night” service. The name of this service comes from the season – Tuesday will be the longest night of the year. But the name, “Longest Night”, also describes the “blue” feeling that a number of us have during this season. In the long, dark winter nights, memories of past experiences and the pain of present experiences and situations can become overwhelming. For some, Christmas Day is the most difficult. For others, it is Christmas Eve, or New Year’s Eve, or the beginning of another lonely year. In this service, we invite you to listen. We invite you to pray. We invite you to sing or hum. We invite you to meditate upon the pain and anguish you may bring with you – and we invite you to offer your pain to the Christ child. And we trust that you will find hope and comfort in knowing that you are not alone.

### PRELUDE

*Come Just As You Are*

Sharon Lewis, Church Accompanist

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### OPENING SONG

*Come and Fill Our Hearts*

Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You alone, O Lord, are holy. Come and fill our hearts with your peace. Alleluia!

TEXT and MUSIC: Jacque Berthier, 1982 *Text and Music* ©1991 *Les Presses de Taizé* (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

## THE WORD OF GOD

### WORDS OF WELCOME

The Advent Season (the four weeks before Christmas) is one of wonder. For so many it is a time of hopeful anticipation. It is a season of promise. The longer nights and the gray clouds seem to provide the perfect background for the lights and tinsel. The decorations are everywhere we turn. For so many, this is a time of hopeful anticipation. But for many of us, especially those of us gathered here, Advent and Christmas are a harsh reminder of life that once was. So we gather, not so much in hopeful anticipation, but in the cloud of despair. While so many are ready to sing “Joy to the World”, we gather as those that mourn. We gather now to carve out a time of quiet reflection. We gather to shed tears if they come, to hold hands if they are available, and to know that we are not alone. Whether this is the first Christmas without someone you love, or if you are hurting from loss for as long as you remember, or are experiencing another kind of loss, we gather to be reminded that it is okay to mourn, even at Christmas.

*Priest* Tonight, we gather here in this place of refuge,  
*People* **for we are lost,  
we are lonely,  
we are afraid.**

*Priest* Tonight, we gather with neighbors and strangers,  
A family made one by our brokenness,  
*People* **coming with our hearts full of hope,  
and our pockets filled with doubts.**

*Priest* Tonight, we gather just as we are,  
*People* **for God has promised to meet us here  
and to welcome us as who we are.**

## SONG OF PRAISE

*O Lord Hear My Prayer*

- 1 O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. When I call answer me. O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.
- 2 The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise. All my hope comes from God. The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise. God the well-spring of life.

Words: Psalm 102:1-2; adapt. The Community of Taizé ©1991 Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, Taizé Community, France, GIA Publications, Inc., exclusive North American agent Music (HEAR MY PRAYER 5.5.6 D); Jacques Berthier (1923-1994) © 1991 Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, Taizé Community, France, GIA Publications, Inc., exclusive North American agent.

## PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO ARE STRUGGLING

*Priest* The Lord be with you.  
*People* **And also with you.**  
*Priest* Let us pray.

In this season of anticipation, we seek the comfort of the Holy Spirit. We ask for your blessing this night upon those who struggle and mourn, for the pain at Christmas seems sharper. We remember the words of Jesus, who promised comfort to those that mourn. All around us are reminders of the joy that the world tells us we are supposed to be feeling. Forgive us, O God, for not joining in the celebration with our whole hearts. Guide us now, O Holy One, that we may move in small steps from mourning to comfort. Help us to find healing in the midst of the pain, and order in the midst of chaos. Lighten our burden. Give us rest. **Amen.**

## THE LESSONS

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

*Isaiah 40:1-5*

*Reader* Our first scripture reading comes from the Book of the Prophet of Isaiah. It was written in a time when many had been taken as captives into exile in Babylon, and were feeling crushed and without hope.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.

***People* Thanks be to God.**

**THE PSALM**

Psalm 121

*Levavi oculos*

BCP p.779

*Reader* Our psalm for this evening is Psalm 121. One of the Psalm of Ascents, pilgrims would sing or say this psalm when making a religious trip to Jerusalem. This psalm reminds us to have confidence in God's care for us. The Christ Child is the fulfillment of this care.

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills;  
from where is my help to come?
- 2 **My help comes from the LORD,  
the maker of heaven and earth.**
- 3 He will not let your foot be moved  
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.
- 4 **Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel  
shall neither slumber nor sleep;**
- 5 The LORD himself watches over you;  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand,
- 6 **So that the sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.**
- 7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil;  
it is he who shall keep you safe.
- 8 **The LORD shall watch over your going out and your  
coming in, from this time forth for evermore.**

*Silent Reflection*

**GRADUAL SONG**

*Creator of the Stars of the Night*

HYMN NO. 60

- 1 Creator of the stars of night, your people's everlasting light. O Christ, Redeemer of us all, we pray you hear us when we call.
- 2 In sorrow that the ancient curse should doom to death a universe, you came, O Savior, to set free your own in glorious liberty.

## THE GOSPEL

*John 1:1-18*

*Priest* ✕ The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

*People* **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

*Priest* The Gospel of the Lord.

*People* **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

## GRADUAL SONG

*Creator of the Stars of the Night*

HYMN NO. 60

- 3 When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in splendor bright, not as a monarch, but the child of Mary, blameless mother mild.
- 4 To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One, praise, honor, might, and glory be from age to age eternally.

Words: Latin, 9th cent.; ver. Hymnal 1940, alt. Music: *Conditor alme siderum*, plainsong, Mode 4; acc. Bruce Neswick (b. 1956)

## REFLECTION

Fr. Dan Wagner

## CANDLE LIGHTING AND LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

*As you entered the church this evening you received a pen and paper to write down the names of loved ones, an addiction, unemployment, or any situation that is causing you pain. During the Silent Reflection time, please come forward and place your message in the manger as we entrust our sorrow, pain, and struggle to the Child who is the Light of the World.*

*Priest* We light this candle to remember those persons who have been loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices. We give thanks for the memory that binds them to us in this season which anticipates Christmas.

*People* **May God's eternal love surround them.**

*Silent Reflection*

*Priest* We light the second candle to redeem the pain of loss: the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of financial resources, the loss of health, a broken relationship, or the end of an association with a group or community. As we gather up the pain of the past, we offer it to You, O God, asking that into our open hands, you will place the gift of peace.

*People* **Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.**

*Silent Reflection*

*Priest* We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us, years of sadness. We remember the poignancy of memories, the grief, the sadness, the hurts, the pain of reflecting on our own mortality.

*People* **Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.**

*Silent Reflection*

*Priest* We light this fourth candle to remember our faith and the gift of hope. We lean on the Holy One who shares our life, promises a place and time of no more pain and suffering and who loves us unconditionally. May I not forget the One who shows the way and who goes with us into our tomorrows.

*People* **Let us remember the One who shows us the way, and goes with us into our tomorrows.**

*Silent Reflection*

## **REFLECTION SONG**

*Star Child*

1 Star-Child, earth-Child, go-between of God, love Child, Christ Child,  
heaven's lightning rod,

*Chorus* This year, this year, let the day arrive when Christmas comes for everyone,  
everyone alive!

2 Street child, beat child, no place left to go, hurt child, used child no one  
wants to know,

3 Grown child, old child, mem'ry full of years, sad child, lost child, story told  
in tears,

- 4 Spared child, spoiled child, having, wanting more, wise child, faith child,  
Knowing joy in store,
- 5 Hope-for-peace Child, God's stupendous sign, down-to-earth Child, Star of  
stars that shine,

*Celebrating Grace Hymnal 145* © 1994, 1997, Hope Publishing Co.

## THE PEACE

*Priest* The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*The Minister and People will remain in place, but wave/recognize others in the name of the Lord. After exchanging the peace, the Minister may offer this or some other suitable offertory sentence.*

*Priest* Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

*In The Episcopal Church, all baptized Christians are welcome at the altar for Holy Communion or to receive a Blessing. Due to the on-going pandemic, our Communion practices have changed. Fr. Dan will explain Holy Communion.*

### OFFERTORY ANTHEM

*Hungry*

St. Augustine's Music Team

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### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

BCP p.361

*Priest* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Priest* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Priest* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full, full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. ✠ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

Setting from *Deutsche Messe*, Franz Peter Schubert (1797-1828); arr. Richard Proulx (b. 1937)

*The bell is rung.*

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

*At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or to lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.*

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

*The bell is rung.*

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

*The bell is rung.*

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us ✠ also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

*Priest* And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,  
*All* **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, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

*Priest* Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. BCP p.364  
*People* **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

## THE FRACTION

HYMN No. S-161

*All* **Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.**

Setting: From *New Plainsong*; David Hurd (b. 1950)

*Priest* The Gifts of God for the People of God.

*Fr. Dan receives communion. Then, at the direction of the ushers, individuals or family groups will come forward to receive communion or a blessing. When approaching the altar, remain socially distanced. Fr Dan will place the host in your hands. Please turn from the altar and consume the consecrated host and return to your space.*

*Come now to the Altar of Christ, for all things are ready. After you receive Holy Communion, you are invited to pick up a candle, light it from the candle of Love, and place it in the container of sand as a sign of sorrow and struggle you have given to God's Son, Jesus the Christ.*

## COMMUNION SONG

*Praise and Glory to the Lamb*

1 You formed me in the darkest place, where no eye could see. You find me in the hardest times, where you wait for me.

*Chorus* Praise and glory to the Lamb! Praise and Glory to His name! Holy is the great I Am!

2 You found me in my loneliness, where You first loved me. You hold me in my brokenness, and make a way for me.

3 You opened up my eyes to see, You in all kindness. You opened up my ears to hear, You calling my name.

4 You share with me Your peace and Joy, kingdom's come in me. You put a song into my heart, my soul has to sing....

*Priest* Let us pray.

*People* **Almighty God, we thank you that in your great love you have fed us with the spiritual food and drink of the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ, and have given us a foretaste of your heavenly banquet. Grant that this Sacrament may be to us a comfort in affliction, and a pledge of our inheritance in that kingdom where there is no death, neither sorrow nor crying, but the fullness of joy with all your saints; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

### THE BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

*Priest* The manger full of our sorrows, pains and struggles is a reminder that God is a loving God always drawing us closer. The love of God is present here, with our sorrow and pain and we are bound more closely to God because we have joined together. Go now into the night knowing that you need not go alone. Go now into the night knowing that dawn is coming. Go now into the night knowing that love endures forever. Go now into the night knowing that the Christ child will come. Go now, and may the peace of Jesus Christ, the peace that surpasses all understanding, be with you. **Amen.**

*Priest* The blessing of God Almighty, ✠ the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

### CLOSING MEDITATION

*When the World was Dark*

When the world was dark  
and the city was quiet,  
you came.  
You crept in beside us.  
And no one knew.  
Only the few  
who dared to believe  
that God might do something different.

Will you do the same this Christmas, Lord?  
Will you come into the darkness of tonight's world;  
not the friendly darkness  
as when sleep rescues us from tiredness,  
but the fearful darkness,  
in which people have stopped believing  
that war will end  
or that food will come

or that a government will change  
or that the Church cares?

Will you come into that darkness  
and do something different  
to save your people from death and despair?

Will you come into the quietness of this town,  
not the friendly quietness  
as when lovers hold hands,  
but the fearful silence when  
the phone has not rung  
the letter has not come,  
the friendly voice no longer speaks,  
the doctor's face says it all?

Will you come into that darkness,  
and do something different,  
not to distract, but to embrace your people?  
And will you come into the dark corners  
and the quiet places of our lives?  
We ask this not because we are guilt-ridden  
or want to be,  
but because the fullness our lives long for  
depends upon us being as open and vulnerable to you  
as you were to us,  
when you came,  
wearing no more than diapers,  
and trusting human hands  
to hold their maker.

Will you come into our lives,  
if we open them to you  
and do something different?  
When the world was dark  
and the city was quiet  
you came.  
You crept in beside us.

Do the same this Christmas, Lord.  
Do the same this Christmas.  
Amen.

- 1 Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas; Star and angels gave the sign.
- 2 Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine;  
Worship we our Jesus, But wherewith for sacred sign?
- 3 Love shall be our token, Love be yours and love be mine;  
Love to God and neighbor, Love for plea and gift and sign.

Words: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), alt. Music: *Gartan*, melody from *Petrie Collection of Irish Melodies, Part II*, 1902; harm. David Evans (1874-1948)

## THE DISMISSAL

*Priest* Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

*Depart in Peace.*

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Liturgy sources: Cloth For the Cradle, Wild Goose Worship, *The Book of Common Prayer, 1979*.

Cover Artwork Taken from Christ Church Episcopal, Greenville, SC.

## ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

St. Augustine of Canterbury Episcopal Church is a twenty-nine year-old Mission Congregation of the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina. In the early 1990s, the Diocese wanted to have an Episcopal presence on the south side of Aiken. After some study and discernment, ten acres on Silver Bluff Road were purchased. Over time, the Sanctuary, two wings, a columbarium, and a parking lot have been constructed.

The members of St. Augustine of Canterbury work hard to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the Aiken community in a variety of ways. Our three main areas of service are outreach, hospitality, and worship. We support local non-profit groups quarterly, contribute to ACTS, and have an annual yard sale (quite popular and well attended!) with all of our proceeds to go toward our outreach efforts. Internationally, we support Episcopal missionaries in Quito, Ecuador. We seek to offer hospitality so that our guests will receive the warmest of interaction, as we play host to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our worship style is fairly relaxed, but reverent. Our music is a balance of renewal/Cursillo/Contemporary Christian music and traditional hymns. We follow the rubrics (directions) of the *Book of Common Prayer (1979)* of the Episcopal Church. Our bulletins are full text, including music, so following the service is not a difficult endeavour.

We welcome you to our church home. We pray that this service is an offering to the Aiken community and can help all those who struggle during this time of year.

### UPCOMING SERVICES

- December 19 Advent IV Service, 10 AM
- December 24 Christmas Eve Service, 6 PM
- December 25 Christmas Day Service, 10 AM (without Music)
- December 26 First Sunday After Christmas Service, 10 AM
- January 2 Second Sunday After Christmas Service, 10 AM
- January 6 The Feast of The Epiphany Service, 6 PM (Thursday)

## IN-PERSON INSIDE WORSHIP UPDATE, EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 21

We have updated our worship requirements, as based on the health situation for our community. We will:

- Continue our 10 AM Sunday service.
- Continue to socially distance at **three feet** before, during, and after the service.
- **Have all persons on campus wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status.**
- Continue to sit two chairs apart between worship units (singles, couples, or family).
- Use Pew One for Outreach Donations.
- Receive Holy Eucharist in one kind (Consecrated host only, administered by priest).
- **People can now sing, while still masked.**
- Limit movement within the church before and after the service, being mindful of others' level of comfort.
- Limit fellowship opportunities until January.

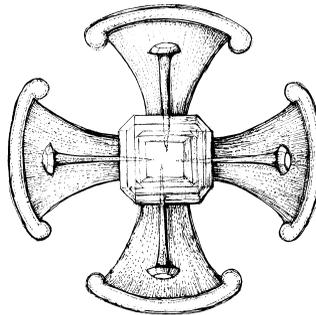
Helpful Reminders:

- If attending a service and later become sick, and tested for the Corona Virus, and test positive, alert Fr. Dan immediately.
- Alert Fr. Dan if not attending in-person worship so he can provide pastoral care to parishioners not attending in-person worship.
- Remember, Fr. Dan does not “force” or “expect” people to attend in-person worship. This is especially true if people have health issues or are over the age of 70.

# St. Augustine of Canterbury Episcopal Church

Aiken, South Carolina

## Weekly Worship Schedule



Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist (With Music)
Wednesday	12:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist

**Spiritual Direction and Confession available by appointment.**

### **WELCOME NEWCOMERS**

We welcome all newcomers to St. Augustine of Canterbury! We love to greet and interact with you. You will find warm and friendly faces are present to answer your questions and help you to feel welcome. They can respond to any questions you may have about our church. We can also assist you in getting further involved in the church by connecting you with the right people in the area in which you are interested, such as Outreach, Music, Fellowship, Christian Education, and other ministries.