



Christmas Eve Services
December 24

Family Candlelight Services
5:00 & 7:00 p.m.

Candlelight Communion Service
11:00 p.m.

*May the Light of the World who was made flesh to dwell
among us remind you of the hope we have in Christ.
Thanks be to God for His inexpressible Gift!*



Briarwood
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

“Unto you is born this day [literally “today”] in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord.”

Luke liked the word “Today.” For Luke, it meant “This, THIS, is the moment we have waited and waited for.” When Jesus preached his first sermon in Luke, he said this is “the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he sat down and said, *“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”* (Luke 4:18–21).

When Jesus saw Zacchaeus up in a tree in Jericho, he told Zacchaeus to *“come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”* After sharing a meal, Jesus said, *“Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham”* (Luke 19:5–9).

On the cross, Jesus told a criminal – who had just come to faith – *“Today you will be with Me in paradise”* (Luke 23:43). On the day of his death, Jesus opened the door to paradise, for all who believe.

But everything started with the Incarnation when God the Son took human flesh. The angels said “Today” the Savior, the Christ, is born. It happens “in the city of David,” because Jesus is our King, far greater than David, even though David was Israel’s greatest king.

As Savior, Jesus also surpasses the judges and the kings who delivered Israel from their enemies. Jesus saved us by defeating all our enemies – especially sin, the tempter, and death.

Jesus is also Christ; the word “Christmas” comes from the title “Christ” plus a Latin word that means “sent.” So Christmas celebrates the sending of the Christ – the “Anointed One.” He is our Savior, our King, our prophet and teacher, our great high priest, for he gave his life as the sacrifice for sin.

Since the Savior is born today, we respond in three ways. Above all, we worship and give thanks, for God sent us Jesus, Savior and Lord.

Second, we give gifts with loving hearts, because the Holy Spirit has poured God’s love into our hearts. Because he gave, it is good to give gifts. We give two things: our presents and our presence. We may give things – especially to children. We give ourselves by giving each other undiluted time and loving attention.

Third, we rest. We rest from our busy efforts to make a name for ourselves or prove our worth or do things to earn God’s favor. Moses was Jesus’ great precursor because he delivered Israel from slavery. In Exodus 5, the Egyptians told the Israelites “Work, work, WORK!” They said, “You are lazy” and “Make bricks without straw.” But God says “Rest. Rest in me. Rest in your salvation.”

So this season, I urge you to worship, to give each other presence, and to rest in your Savior and his salvation. Take the longest break you can from ordinary toils and duties and rest in all God did when he sent his Son.

Dr. Dan Doriani
Interim Senior Pastor

FEATURED EVENTS

“Hallelujah! Hope in Christ” — Briarwood Christmas Festival | December 15 *

Experience the joy of Christmas through musical and artistic presentations from the Briarwood Sanctuary Choir and the Festival Orchestra with guests, the Birmingham Boys Choir and The Briarwood Ballet in the Worship Center at 6:00 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

Christmas Eve Services — Evening Worship | December 24 *

Join us for Family Candlelight Services at 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. At 11:00 p.m. we will partake in the Lord's Supper with a Candlelight Communion Service.

MidWeek at Briarwood — Church Wide | January 8–April 9 *

Wednesday night dinners, classes and activities for the entire family. Join us for dinner in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesdays from 5:15–6:30 p.m. Classes and activities start at 6:30 p.m. Find information and register for dinners at briarwood.org/midweek.

The Lampstand Birmingham Conference — Church Revitalization | January 23–26

You are invited to attend The Lampstand Conference, a conference on Church Health and Revitalization, hosted here at Briarwood. Find details at briarwood.org/lampstand.

Women's In-Town Retreat — Women's Ministry | January 31–February 1

Ladies, join us for an In-town Retreat. This year's theme will be “By Design: The One Thread of Scripture” and our keynote speaker will be Meaghan May. Early registration cost is \$45 per person thru January 2, then \$55 through January 22. Registration opens December 16 at briarwood.org/women.

* Nursery is available for select events upon reservation at briarwood.org/nursery.
Stay up-to-date with upcoming events on the Briarwood App.

IN THE BRIARWOOD BOOKSTORE

The Briarwood Bookstore is a wonderful place to shop for gifts for everyone on your list. We carry a wide array of books and gifts including items made from local artists and artisans. Boxed Christmas cards are still well stocked along with Advent wreaths, candles, and calendars. Books ranging from historic fiction to systematic theology, devotionals, books for men, and more are carefully selected for sound theology and Bible-based themes. Journals, planners, kitchen items, and note cards make great gifts or stocking stuffers. 'Tis the gifting season, so come visit us and shop local!

One Small Donkey: A Christmas Story

by Dandi Daley Mackall | Featured Children's Book

This heartwarming Christmas book shares the nativity story from the experience of a tiny donkey who shows that God has big plans for little ones. Though this little donkey wasn't the biggest, fastest, or strongest of all the animals, he had an important job in carrying Mary, Jesus' mother, to Bethlehem. Board Book: \$8.99, Hardcover: \$12.99

Featured books are available to purchase online at briarwood.org/bookstore.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Local Ministry Prayer Time — Sunday, December 15 at 5:00 p.m. in G103. You are invited to prayer to lift up our ministry partners and their work in spreading the love of Christ throughout Birmingham.

Trailblazers Christmas Sing-A-Long — Thursday, December 19 at 10:00 a.m. Meet us at Cahaba Ridge Retirement Community to sing familiar Christmas songs with Hunter Goff. Sign up online at briarwood.org/trailblazers or email sjohnston@briarwood.org.

Communion — The sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be celebrated on Tuesday, December 24 in the 11:00 p.m. Candlelight Service. An alms offering for the Mercy Ministry will be received. Elements are gluten-free.

PCA Offering — Special offering envelopes will be placed in the pews on Christmas Eve. Through the Ministerial Relief Fund, the Christmas Offering provides monthly, supplemental income to our retired and disabled pastors, missionaries, church lay workers, their widows and dependent children who have low income and meet the Relief Fund guidelines. More information at briarwood.org/pcaoffering.

Ambassador Holiday Soccer Camp — December 27–28 from 9:00 a.m.–noon. Camp for boys/girls ages 7–12. Register at briarwoodsoccer.com. Open to the public.

Year-End Giving — The Accounting Office will close for the year on December 31 at 5:00 p.m. Contributions received in the mail must be postmarked or canceled by December 31 to qualify as a gift in the year 2024. Contributions with January 2025 postmarks will be considered 2025 contributions.

Securities Stewardship — When giving gifts of securities, please notify Matt Moore at the time of your gift so that your contribution may be processed accurately and efficiently. Contact Matt at 205-776-5205 or bscruggs@briarwood.org.

Elders and Deacons Elected — In accordance to the Book of Church Order the following men were elected by members of Briarwood Presbyterian Church on December 8, 2024.

Elders: (Class of 2027) Steve Abernathy, Bobby Bardin, Ed Chan, Dave Cooper Jr., Al Craig, Chase Crawford, Glenn Draper, Jeff Dunn, Dave Giddens, David Harris, Carter Harsh, George Hodges, Zach Ivey, Tom Jackson, Sam Mooney, Loring Muir, Mike Mungenast, Don Murphy, David Myers, Tripp Reid, Tom Rivers, Nathan Sasse, Tom Smitherman, Bobby Welch, Bob Zachow

Deacons: (Class of 2027) John Asbeck, Scott Austin, Austin Barr, Roger Bittinger, Jamie Burns, Chris Cain, Jason Cole, Ed Corcoran, Larkin Delk, David Duffee, Gary Durbin, Jordan Freeman, Harrison Godwin, Ben (Ashley) Greene, Raymond Greer, Cory Hershey, Philip Holcombe, Bryan Huffstutler, Gerald Jowers, Jonathan Kalehoff, Jon Austin Moore, Fred Morris, Richard O'Neal, Chuck Pierce, Larry Pirkle, Wes Pruet, Carter Ralph, Harris Saunders, Wes Schaeffer, Mike Stewart, Nathan Terrell, Josiah Van Puffelen, Chuck Warlick, Tate West, Bryan Wintersteen, Greg Wolchok, Lee Woodfin

Job Openings: Full-time & Part-time Staff — There are a number of ministry positions open. See all employment and job openings at briarwood.org/employment.

WEEKLY PRAYER GUIDE

Sunday, December 15 — Briarwood Prayer Focus

Pray for the Sanctuary Choir, Orchestra, Briarwood Ballet, and the Birmingham Boys Choir as they lift up His holy name in the “Hallelujah! Hope in Christ” Christmas Festival. Give thanks for all the people involved in this Christmas worship service. .

Praise the Lord for strong congregational participation in the recent survey and in the Discovery Weekend event, which has provided the Pulpit Search Committee with very helpful input. Pray for the Pulpit Search Committee as they consider the congregational input. May God guide the process and give them wisdom.

Monday, December 16 — Birmingham Prayer Focus

Give thanks for Sav-A-Life Vestavia in their mission to end abortion by continuing to transform lives through pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, prenatal care, and parenting programs. Pray for this ministry as they support women through free services, counseling, and education.

Tuesday, December 17 — Missions Prayer Focus

Praise the Lord for over 200 internationals who attended Briarwood’s Annual International Christmas Party. Pray for the follow-up and that through the Christmas events at Briarwood they would be drawn to Christ.

Wednesday, December 18 — Global Ministry Partners

Pray for Jon and Tathiana Elam with Campus Outreach SERVE serving Internationals; Ed and Silvia Emsheimer with Ethnos 360 in Brazil; Sumya and Undrakh Enkhtaivan with Cru in Mongolia; and Hector and Angelina Estrada with World Reach in Honduras.

Thursday, December 19 — National Ministry Partners

Pray for Gladys Hillman with Cru at Atlanta University Center; Scotty and Sylvia Hollins with Blueprint, Inc. at the University of Alabama; Buster and Gina Holmes with Cru/Master Media in California; Kyle and Maggie Hooper with Navigators in Virginia; and Foundations Early Learning and Family Center.

Friday, December 20 — Briarwood Officers and Staff

Pray for our elders Jeff Flannery Jr., David Moore, Jeff Olin; deacons Bob Blount, Lance Garrison, Richard McDonald; and Worship Pastor John Haines and his wife, Jenny.

Saturday, December 21 — Church Family

Pray for our hospitalized members Michelle Davis, Merle Howard, John Lathram, Janet Norden, Robert Pugh, Linda Cobb

Our love and sympathy to Joy Blazer and family on the death of her sister, Sandi Fretwell Fahey, on December 3; to Doris Davis and family on the death of her sister, Betty Egbert, on December 4; and to Betsy Gallo and family on the death of her husband, member Richard Gallo, on December 6.

...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6

Receive each day’s prayer as a notification through the Briarwood App.
In your Briarwood App settings, enable “Weekly Prayer Guide” notifications.

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THIS LORD'S DAY

Sunday Morning Worship Services:

Third Sunday of Advent

“God’s Gifts: God’s Sovereign Love”

Romans 8:28–32

Dr. Dan Doriani

Sunday Evening Worship:

“Hallelujah! Hope in Christ”

Briarwood Christmas Festival

Experience the joys of Christmas through musical and artistic presentations from the Briarwood Sanctuary Choir and the Festival Orchestra with guests, the Birmingham Boys Choir and The Briarwood Ballet.

Watch our live-stream on the Briarwood App, Facebook, YouTube or briarwood.org.

Watch or listen to previous sermons on the Briarwood App.