



# CELEBRATE ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, & EPIPHANY

**Sundays in Advent | December 7, 14, 21 | 10:00 am**

*Onsite & YouTube livestream. Jesus is coming!*

**Wednesdays in Advent Evening Prayer | December 3, 10, 17 | 7 pm**

*Holden Evening Prayer by Candlelight*

*Onsite & YouTube livestream*

**Decorating the Christmas Tree | Sunday, December 7 | 11:30 am**

*Join together following worship for hospitality & decorating the Christmas tree*

**Christmas Caroling | Saturday, December 13**

*We visit homebound folks to spread the joy of Christmas*

*Time: early afternoon*

**Blue Christmas Winter Solstice | Sunday, December 21 | 5 pm**

*A service of quiet reflection in this holiday season*

*Onsite & YouTube livestream*

**Christmas Eve | Wednesday, December 24 | 7 pm**

*Onsite & YouTube livestream*

*Holy Communion & Candlelight | 7:00 pm*

*Prelude Music begins at 6:45 pm*

**Sunday after Christmas Lessons & Carols | December 28 | 10 am**

*Onsite & YouTube livestream*

*Worship together with scripture, poetry, and music for Christmas*

**Epiphany Sunday | January 4, 2025 | 10 am**

*Onsite & YouTube livestream*

*Epiphany Celebration Hospitality*

## First English Lutheran Church

3001 Whitis Ave, Austin, Texas | 512-478-1933

*Visit [felcaustin.org](http://felcaustin.org) to learn more about the FELC welcome, worship, community life, learning, engagement, racial justice, & reconciliation ministries.*



## HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER BY CANDLELIGHT

### First Wednesday of Advent | December 3, 2025 – 7 pm

### *Out of the Blue*

Evening Prayer, or Vespers, is an ancient form of daily prayer and is part of the historic Liturgy of the Hours. This was a daily prayer practice developed in religious communities that gathered at various hours throughout the day. Each of these liturgies makes use of psalms, Scripture lessons, Gospel canticles, and Prayers. They do not typically involve preaching and are separate from the eucharistic liturgy.

*For this liturgy you need an open heart, an individual candle, this worship bulletin, and Holden Evening Prayer.*

### Welcome to Community

*The assembly may stand at the sound of a singing bowl.*

### Service of Light

Procession page 2

*As you pass the light of an individual candle, tip the unlit candle.*

Evening Hymn page 3

Evening Thanksgiving page 4



*The assembly is seated. The assembly may keep individual candles lit as long as desired.*

### Psalmody, Readings, & Canticles

Psalm 141 pages 4—7

Silence for Meditation page 8

Song “Wait for the Lord” ELW 262

Lesson: Ruth 1:1-18 page 8

Response page 8

*The assembly may stand.*

The Annunciation page 8

The Magnificat pages 8—9

*The assembly may kneel, as able.*

### Litany & Prayers

pages 10—11

*The assembly may stand.*

Final Blessing page 12

Sharing the Peace

*The assembly may greet each other with signs of peace as you depart this evening. Please return the Holden Evening Prayer booklets and individual candles to a welcome table as you depart this evening.*

Leader: Betsy Appleton Letor: Anne Wiebe

# First Wednesday in Advent | December 3, 2025

Theme, Scripture Lesson, Reflection Questions

**Theme:** After what seems like the end, God’s justice offers a new beginning.

**Scripture Lesson:** Ruth 1 :1-18

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. <sup>2</sup> The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon<sup>[a]</sup> and Chilion;<sup>[b]</sup> they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. <sup>3</sup> But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. <sup>4</sup> These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, <sup>5</sup> both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. <sup>6</sup> Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had considered his people and given them food. <sup>7</sup> So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. <sup>8</sup> But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back each of you to your mother’s house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. <sup>9</sup> The Lord grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband.” Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. <sup>10</sup> They said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.” <sup>11</sup> But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters. Why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? <sup>12</sup> Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, <sup>13</sup> would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me.” <sup>14</sup> Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her. <sup>15</sup> So she said, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” <sup>16</sup> But Ruth said, “Do not press me to leave you, to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your God my God. <sup>17</sup> Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!” <sup>18</sup> When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.



## Reflection questions:

- ◆ Ruth followed Naomi; Sojourner Truth fought for Peter; Bree Newsome remembered the Emanuel Nine. For whom would you go to the ends of the earth?
- ◆ When has it felt like your life was over – perhaps in the wake of a job loss, a death, or a diagnosis?
- ◆ How did God lead you forward?
- ◆ What ghosts of the past haunt you or your community?
- ◆ What legacies need unpacking?
- ◆ Like Boaz, how does (or how could) your community help fight for the protection of vulnerable people, especially refugees, women, and people of color?

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