

The Call

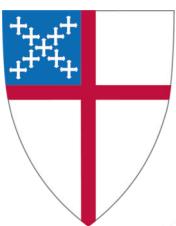
Newsletter



Shrimparoo

December 2025

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St. Andrew's
Episcopal Church





REV. LES'

RANDOM

THOUGHTS

Somewhere...

"Birds fly over the rainbow. Why, oh why, can't I?"

- "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" lyrics by Yip Harburg.

There is a song I have been afraid to play. Most of you know know that I am a ukulele enthusiast and making music for me is both joyful and prayerful. There is a song. By far it is the most popular ukulele song of all time. Every time I listen to it I am in awe. It is a cover, oddly enough, of "Somewhere over the Rainbow" performed by a masterful player and singer named Israel Kamakawiwo 'ole (or IZ for short).

If you haven't heard this version I strongly encourage you to search for it. Though IZ is a masterful ukulele player, in this song what he plays is very understated within the reach of a beginner at the instrument. Yet the combination of the simple strumming and IZ's soulful voice reveal things about that popular song that most of us missed until he sang it.

Somewhere Over the Rainbow is a hopeful song but IZ captures its sadness too. Anyone could look at the score and see the minor chords, but the way he plays them and sings the notes allows you to experience the depths of loss which always accompany authentic hope. Don't get me wrong. The song is still hopeful, happy even. But the performance is exquisitely happy-sad.

I have known for a while that I could manage to play and sing it, but I have avoided it. Both because I can't imagine adding anything to what IZ accomplished and also because it is vulnerable to open one's heart that much.

I say all this, because it is December, and there is something else that I feel many of us avoid because of its depth. The season of Advent seems to get buried deeper and deeper in the minds of Christians, but I think it is because we are afraid of it. Just as IZ revealed the depths of the overly familiar Somewhere Over the Rainbow so too Advent reveals the depths of Christmas. Advent with its longing and hope together do have this same exquisite happy-sad.

IZ showed us the hardest song to sing isn't difficult because of its complex fingering, it is hard because we are scared of being honest enough to show our loss and our hope simultaneously. That is why I am afraid to sing along. Advent shows us that the hardest prayers are not the straightforward laments, nor the the joyful Thanksgivings of Christmas Eve. The hardest prayers are the ones that you need to come true, but you aren't sure they will.

Advent only lasts four weeks in our calendar, but the longing for a Messiah lasted for centuries. Much of our lives looks more like Advent than Christmas. Yet it is as easy to avoid the happy-sad in our pray life as it is for me to just play another song on the ukulele.

So I have decided to sing Somewhere over the Rainbow. Maybe never for you, but for me and hopefully my prayer life will sing along. Hopefully our prayer life will deepen this special and easily avoided season as we name the blessings for which our soul truly longs and rediscover the beauty of hope.

Outreach Ministry



Wings of Love bags filled with items for Thanksgiving dinners

"Wings of Love Bag Ministry"

Toys for Peacemakers Christmas Store donation box created by the Sunday School, will be in the commons near the coffee table. In case you missed the opportunity. The store is open December 5th & 6th. Signup to help on Peacemakers website: <https://rockymountpeacemakers.org/donate/>

December 7, 2025 Bags go out for United Community Ministry return December 14th. Items will include toiletries, socks, gloves, hats. The Youth will create gift bags for UCM.



UCM Cookout

We had 20 volunteers with a great representation of adults and our youth group. We prepared and served 90 residents as well as the staff.



2025

December



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 St. Elizabeth's Guild 12pm	2 Food Pantry 9- 11am	3 Food Pantry 9- 10:30am Healing Service 10:30am	4 Food Pantry 9- 11am	5 Men's Club 8am	6
7 8:00am HE Rite I 9:15am A.C.E 10:30am HE Rite II Children's Chapel	8 Food Pantry 9- 11am Book Club 10am ADK 4pm Vestry 6pm	9 Food Pantry 9- 10:30am Healing Service 10:30am	10 Food Pantry 9- 11am HOA 6:30pm	11 Food Pantry 9- 11am	12	13
14 8:00am HE Rite I 9:15am A.C.E 10:30am Pageant	15 Food Pantry 9- 11am HOA 4:30pm Finance 6pm	16 Food Pantry 9- 10:30am Healing Service 10:30am	17 Food Pantry 9- 10:30am Meals on Wheels 10am	18 Food Pantry 9- 11am Outreach 6pm	19	20
21 8:00am HE Rite I 9:15am A.C.E 10:30am Lessons and Carols Children's Chapel	22 Food Pantry 9- 11am ADK 4:30pm	23 4:30pm Christmas Eve Service Church Office Closed	24 25	26	27	
28 8:00am HE Rite I 9:15am A.C.E 10:30am HE Rite II Children's Chapel	29 Church Office Closed	30	31			



LAY/LEM Readers

December 7

8:00 Virgil Evans
Brian Westcott

10:30 Paul Stone
Brad Earle
Elizabeth Pope

December 14

8:00 Lynn Arnow
Forrest Mericle

10:30 Terry Shackleford
Martha Lamm
Michele Richwalski

December 21

8:00 George Earp
Ramona Orzell

10:30 Pete Roy
Forrest Mericle
Sandy Suggs

December 24

4:30 Paul Stone
Lisa Stone
Elizabeth Pope

December 28

8:00 Ramona Orzell
Ramona Orzell

10:30 Terry Shackleford
Brad Earle
Lisa Stone

Ministry Schedule December 2025

Acolytes

December 7

10:30 Walker Wells
Jack Lea

December 14

10:30 Christmas Pageant

December 21

10:30 The Mericles

December 24

10:30 Landon Newcomb
Jack Lea

December 28

10:30 Walker Wells
Jack Lea

Ushers

December 7

Brad Earle
TBD

December 14

Jan Arnold
John Lea

December 21

Angela Reid
Tom Jenkins

December 24

Jan Arnold
Brad Earle

December 28

Billy Suggs
Steve Thurkill

Kitchen Clean Up:

Ramona Orzell

Vestry Greeters

Lori Joyner
Leslie Hall

Pantry Volunteers

Elizabeth Mosley
Tim and Kaye Dowd

Pantry Distributers

Tuesday- Patty Kennedy
Wednesday-Rosemary Clark
Thursday- Elizabeth Hunter



YOUTH AT MEDOC MOUNTAIN



St. Andrew's Food Pantry

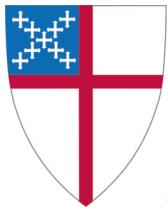


Thank you to everyone who continuously turns up to help with our food pantry packing! We are going through bags at record pace. Big thanks to Brad Earle who helps make sure we have enough supplies, Mandy Hudson who sets everything up for us, and to all our monthly helpers and volunteers who make sure our community have bags filled with food! We couldn't do this without each and every one of you!

St. Elizabeth's Guild

St. Elizabeth's Guild hosted a delicious Thanksgiving meal for the church staff. Thank you for all you do!





St. Andrew's Episcopal Church



301 South Circle Dr, Rocky Mount, NC 27804

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Return Service Requested

Our Parish Family

Advent/Christmas Schedule

Dec 7th

8am Rite I service
10:30am Rite II Service

Dec 14th

8am Rite I service
10:30am Christmas Pageant

December 21st

8am Rite I Service
10:30am Lessons and Carols

December 24th

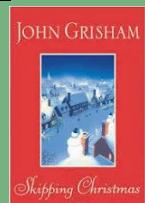
4:30pm Christmas Eve Service

December 28th

8am Rite I service
10:30am Rite II Service

We will be packing Food Pantry bags on December 7th after the 10:30am service in the Parish Hall.

Book Club is reading [Skipping Christmas](#) by John Grisham. We look forward to seeing everyone December 9th at 10am in the Parlor Room to discuss!



St. Elizabeth's Guild meets on December 1st in the parish Hall from 12:00pm to 1:00pm

All women are welcome to St. Elizabeth's Guild.



Men's Club meets Saturday, December 6th at 8am in the Parish Hall.

Church office is closed from December 24th-January 2nd. We will reopen Monday, January 5, 2026