

Independent Presbyterian Church

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA



Service for the Lord's Day

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

DECEMBER 21, 2025 | 8:45 A.M. AND 11:00 A.M.

Welcome to IPC!



FOUNDED IN 1915, Independent Presbyterian Church has long held a commitment to glorifying the triune God through worship, the use of beauty and the arts, and serving our community in Jesus' name. From the beginning, our founders sought to establish a church reflecting God's love for humanity and humanity's love for God.

Today, we continue this legacy by cultivating meaningful worship, nurturing our congregation to grow as disciples of Jesus, and engaging in acts of service that reflect Christ's command to love God and love our neighbors. Whether you are a life-long follower of Jesus, a new believer, or still curious, know that all are welcome here.

If this is your first visit, you are invited to join us at the Welcome Table in the Parlor following the service. We look forward to meeting you and sharing more about the life of our church.

Children are always welcome to worship with us in the Sanctuary. Materials to build a Worship Bag are in the Parlor before each service. Please replace the items when the service ends. Children kindergarten age and younger may follow the acolyte down the center aisle to the Ground Floor for childcare at the time noted in the service.

We are so grateful that you are here. Please sign the friendship pad located in the pew racks, so we know you are worshiping with us today.

THE COVER features a 2018 acrylic painting of IPC's exterior by McKenzie Kirk Brannon (1960–2025), a beloved friend of IPC whose spirit and art touched the heart of Community Ministries for many years.

The Gathering for Worship

We gather as a Family of Faith and prepare our hearts to worship God.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Make it all new to us, O Lord, all new and fresh and sweet and wonderful. Show us the star again and the Wise Men and the shepherds on the hill. Part the veil of the sky for us and let us hear the song of the angels once more. Bring us from all our wanderings to kneel in simplicity and trust before the newborn King. Amen.

from "Beginning the Day" by Henry Edmonds

PRELUDE

"Prelude in G"

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

The service of worship begins with the music of the organ. Through its power and brilliance may you feel the majesty and glory of God; in its quietness, His peace.

INTROIT

"In the beginning was the Word"

George Thalben-Ball

In the beginning was the Word: and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: and we behold his glory, full of grace and truth.

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

(8:45 a.m.) **The Deer Family**

(11:00 a.m.) **The Beasley Family**

❖ HYMN 107

"Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"

REJOICE, REJOICE

❖ PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Clayton

Lord Jesus, you came into this world to heal us all through your mercy, and yet we keep searching for life in other places. You have called us to prepare for your arrival, but we have been content with lesser things. Rather than preparing for hope, we have remained mired in our fear. Rather than preparing for joy, we have already crowded our lives with frantic schedules and discouraging expectations. Forgive us for living as if you will not come. Amen.

A period of silence for personal confession.

❖ KYRIE ELEISON

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

❖ DECLARATION OF PARDON

Minister: Friends, this is the good news of the gospel.

People: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

❖ THE PEACE

Minister: May the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Minister: Let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

Please exchange the peace with the words, "The peace of Christ be with you."

❖ GLORIA PATRI (HYMN 581)

"Glory Be to the Father"

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, amen.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Long

MOMENT FOR MISSION

IPC Mission Support Fund

(8:45 a.m.) **David Woodruff**

(11:00 a.m.) **Kate Mather**

The Word

*We listen for the word of God through confession, passing the peace,
Scripture, and preaching.*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Mark 10:46-52

Pew Bible, N.T. pg. 36

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM

“He Shall Feed His Flock” from *Messiah*

G. F. Handel

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Isaiah 40:11, Matthew 11:28–29

During the singing of this anthem, children may follow the acolyte down the center aisle. Children kindergarten to the 6th grade are invited to the Nativity Choir rehearsal, and children 4 years and younger will go to the Ground Floor for childcare.

The Response to the Word

We respond to the hearing of God’s word through reflection, prayer, and offering.

❖ HYMN 610

“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

AZMON

❖ APOSTLES’ CREED

Rev. Newton

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 Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven; and sitteth on 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 Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

❖ PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

To give online, text OFFERING to (205) 927-3100 and follow the steps.

❖ THE DOXOLOGY (HYMN 606)

“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”

OLD HUNDREDTH

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

❖ THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION

THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Little Lamb”

Gregg Smith

Little Lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee? Gave thee life, and bid thee feed, By the stream and o’er the mead. Gave thee clothing of delight, Softest clothing woolly, bright. Gave thee such a tender voice, Making all the vales rejoice. He is called by thy name, For he calls Himself a Lamb, He is meek and mild, He became a child, I a child, thou a lamb, We are called by His name. Little Lamb, God bless thee.

William Blake

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & 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 debts; As we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil; For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

The Sending

We are sent out into the world to love God and our neighbors.

❖ HYMN 93

“Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

TRURO

❖ BENEDICTION

❖ POSTLUDE

“In Dulci Jubilo”

J. S. Bach

❖ *Rise in body or spirit.*

Flowers

The flowers in the chancel today are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of
Carleton Benners Parnell.

.....
The wreath in the chancel beginning today is given to the glory of God and in loving
memory of **Mr. & Mrs. Paul A. Porter, Mr. & Mrs. Francis Crockard, and**
Mr. & Mrs. Donald McCormick.

Announcements

Advent Sunday School Class

TODAY *Great Hall | 10:00 a.m.*

Join us this morning for IPC's annual
Christmas Carol Sing.

Children's Nativity Choir Rehearsals

TODAY *Remaining Rehearsal: Dec. 21*

Children (grades K5-6th) are invited to
sing in the Children's Nativity Choir on
Dec. 24 at our Family Nativity Service.
Rehearsals are during the 11 am worship
service. Kids can follow the acolyte out to
rehearse with Miss Beth. Parents pick up
after the service in Room 113.

For Sale in the Parlor

TODAY After each morning service, find
gift ideas that support IPC's mission and
ministry. This year's selections include:

Giving Tree cards supporting the
Children's Fresh Air Farm and Social
Services; IPC Ornaments, sweatshirts,
and cookbook from Youth Ministries; and
choir CDs or stained-glass roundels.

Table Service: Lessons & Carols

TODAY *Highland Hall | 5:00 p.m.*

Enjoy an evening filled with contemporary
Christmas music, beloved hymns, and
meaningful readings at the Table's candlelit
Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

College Christmas Brunch

TODAY *Noon | Rojo*

All college students home for the holidays
are invited to join us for brunch at Rojo
following the 11:00 a.m. worship service.

Announcements

Christmas Eve Worship Schedule

Wednesday, Dec. 24 | Sanctuary

All are welcome to celebrate Christmas Eve at IPC. Join us at 11:00 a.m. for the Family Nativity Service featuring the Children's Nativity Choir, or at 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. for the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. Childcare is available for all three services.

Church Office Holiday Schedule

The church offices will be closed Dec. 25 and 26, and Jan. 1 and 2. Offices will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Dec. 24 and Dec. 31.

Holiday Worship Schedule

Sunday, Dec. 28 & Jan. 4

We will observe our Holiday Worship Schedule on Sunday, Dec. 28 and Jan. 4, with one combined worship service at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary on these dates. Sunday School and the Table Service will resume Sunday, Jan. 11.

Montreat Meals for College Students

Help support IPC's College Ministry as our students head to Montreat Jan. 2–5 by signing up to provide breakfasts, lunches, or dinners. We are planning to feed about 20 students and will have a full kitchen, so

donations can range from tubs of chicken salad to frozen casseroles. Food pickup will be coordinated after Christmas and before Jan. 2. Sign up at ipc-usa.org on the Sign Up Links page. Questions? Please contact Cammie Ashworth at cashworth@ipc-usa.org.

Western Carolina Mission Trip

Trip: June 7–14, 2026 | Info meeting: Jan. 14

Join us as we continue relief efforts following Hurricane Helene. This hands-on trip will focus on helping families rebuild and restore their homes and communities. An informational meeting will be held Wednesday evening, Jan. 14, 2026. To learn more, contact Rev. David Seamon at dseamon@ipc-usa.org.

Annual Pledge: Joyful Generosity

We are so grateful for those who have given generously to support the mission of Jesus Christ at IPC. If you have not yet submitted a pledge, join us in joyful generosity as we share our gifts to bless others. Your annual pledge provides the foundation for ministry, mission, and growth. Find 2026 pledge cards at the reception desk and in the Parlor, or make your pledge online by texting PLEDGE to (205) 927-3100 and following the prompts.

Prayer List

Copies of IPC's current prayer list are available in the Parlor and Narthex. Our Intercessory Prayer Group meets each Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. in the Chapel to pray by name for those on the list. To submit a prayer request for a loved one, yourself, or any prayer need, please contact Connie Logan at clogan@ipc-usa.org.

Special Gifts Received

Kirkwood: (*Horizon Fund*) In memory of Mr. William F. Edmonds and Mrs. Julia W. "Julie" Grooms.

Give To IPC

Mail a Check:

Independent Presbyterian Church
3100 Highland Avenue S.,
Birmingham, Alabama 35205

Give Online:

Scan to give in a secure,
convenient format online.



Text to Give:

To give online, text GIVE to
(205) 927-3100 and follow the steps.

2026 Pledge:

Make your annual pledge online by
texting PLEDGE to (205) 927-3100 and
following the steps.

Thank You for Your Gifts:

Questions on how to give can be directed
to Margaret Lane Hollingsworth at
mhollingsworth@ipc-usa.org.

Watch Online

We invite you to worship with us
from wherever you are.
Join the 11:00 a.m. livestream at
YouTube.com/@IPCBirmingham

This Week At IPC

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

8:45 A.M. Traditional Worship, Sanctuary
10:00 A.M. Sunday School
11:00 A.M. Traditional Worship, Sanctuary
NOON College Brunch, Rojo
5:00 P.M. Table Worship, Highland Hall

SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 10:00 A.M.

- Christmas Carol Sing, Great Hall
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (2K-6th Grade), Ground and 1st Floors
- Nursery (6 weeks–18 months), RM G05

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22

1:00 P.M. Bridge, RM 308/309
6:00 P.M. Boy Scouts, Scout Hut
7:00 P.M. Lakeview AA, RM 307

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23

10:00 A.M. Acolyte Training, Sanctuary
11:00 A.M. Intercessory Prayer, Chapel

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

11:00 A.M. Family Nativity Service, Sanctuary
4:00 P.M. Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, Sanctuary
6:00 P.M. Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, Sanctuary

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25

MERRY CHRISTMAS Church Offices Closed

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26

MERRY CHRISTMAS Church Offices Closed

To learn more about our upcoming events and to sign up for classes, please visit ipc-usa.org.

Upcoming: Holiday Worship Schedule

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28

10:00 A.M. Combined Worship Service, Sanctuary (*No Sunday School and No Table Worship Service*)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4

10:00 A.M. Combined Worship Service, Sanctuary (*No Sunday School and No Table Worship Service*)

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICES:

The Rev. Kevin J. Long, *Pastor*

The Rev. Susan A. Clayton, *Associate Pastor, Congregational Care & Adult Education*

The Rev. D. Nicole Newton, *Associate Pastor, Discipleship*

Dr. Jeff R. McLelland, *Director of Music and Fine Arts*

Advent Wreath Lighting:

(8:45 a.m.) The Deer Family

(11:00 a.m.) Mary Beasley, Mary Stewart Beasley, and Virginia Beasley

Acolytes:

(8:45 a.m.) Mary Hanson Borders

(11:00 a.m.) Walter Grover

The Trebles of the Independent Presbyterian Church Choir

Janet Ort, Soprano

Lara Wilson, Mezzo-Soprano



I N D E P E N D E N T
P R E S B Y T E R I A N C H U R C H

3100 Highland Avenue, South
Birmingham, Alabama 35205

PHONE: (205) 933-1830

OFFICE HOURS: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays

This congregation is affiliated with The Presbyterian Church (USA)

ipc-usa.org