

2024 Lenten Preacher Biographies • Cathedral Church of the Advent

Ash Wednesday, February 14 – Glenda Curry

Glenda Curry was invested as the 12th **Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama** in January 2021. She had been consecrated as Bishop Coadjutor in June 2020. Prior to her election as bishop, she served as Rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Homewood, Alabama. Ordained in 2002, she was Rector of Epiphany Episcopal Church in Leeds, Alabama, until her move to All Saints in 2004. Prior to her call to ordained ministry, Bishop Curry worked at the University of Alabama at Birmingham's nursing school before she became Dean of Nursing at Troy University. She served as President of Troy's Montgomery campus from 1992-1999, becoming Alabama's first female president of a four-year public university. She and her husband William have two adult children.

Thursday-Friday, February 15-16 – Ken Jones

Ken Jones has served as **Senior Pastor of Glendale Baptist Church in Miami, Florida**, since 2010. He is also co-host of the *Saints and Sinners Unplugged* podcast. Active in pastoral ministry for 40 years, he is a frequent conference speaker and contributes to *Tabletalk* and *Modern Reformation* magazines. A native of Los Angeles, California, Mr. Jones served as co-host of the *White Horse Inn* radio program for 20 years. He has contributed to three books: *Experiencing the Truth: Bringing the Reformation to the African-American Church*, *Glory Road*, and *Keep Your Head Up*. He is married to Lisa, and they have one adult son.

Monday-Wednesday, February 19-21 – Sam Bush

Sam Bush is **Associate Rector at Christ Episcopal Church in Charlottesville, Virginia**. As Associate Rector he helps lead and organize pastoral care, jail ministry, and the church's graduate Fellows Program. After graduating from the University of Virginia, he served as Music Minister at Christ Church from 2010-2020. During this time he also directed The Garage art space. Mr. Bush graduated from Duke Divinity School in 2022 and was ordained to the priesthood the following year. His interests include songwriting, arts ministry, and birding. He and his wife Maddy have three sons.

Thursday-Friday, February 22-23 – Stu Shelby

Stu Shelby has served as **Rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Winter Park, Florida**, since 2019. He is a graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary and Samford University. He served as Curate at St. James Episcopal Church in Fairhope, Alabama, from 2005-2007. He then moved to Texas, where he was Associate Rector for Family Ministries at St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston, and then Rector at St. Richard's Episcopal Church in Round Rock, where he served until his call to Winter Park. He is married to Crissy, and they have four children.

Monday-Wednesday, February 26-28 – Mark Mattes

Mark Mattes is **Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa**, where he serves as Chair of the Department of Theology. An ordained Lutheran pastor, he served parishes in Illinois and Wisconsin before his call to Grand View in 1995. He has written several books, including *Luther's Theology of Beauty: A Reappraisal* and *The Role of Justification in Contemporary Theology*. Dr. Mattes has also co-edited or co-translated several works, and authored numerous essays and reviews. He is an associate editor for *Lutheran Quarterly* and serves on the Continuation Committee of the International Luther Congress. He and his wife Carol have three adult children.

Thursday-Friday, February 29-March 1 – Jennifer McNutt

Jennifer McNutt is **Associate Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois**, where she has served since 2008. Holding graduate degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary and the University of St. Andrews, she is a Fellow in the Royal Historical Society and an award-winning author and teacher. An ordained Presbyterian pastor, she also serves as Parish Associate at the First Presbyterian Church of Glen Ellyn. Dr. McNutt has three books coming out in 2024, including *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible and the Reformation*. She is the co-founder of McNuttshell Ministries with her husband David. They have three children.

Monday-Tuesday, March 4-5 – Malone Gilliam

Malone Gilliam is **Rector of St. George's Episcopal Church** in **Nashville, Tennessee**. A graduate of Trinity School for Ministry, he previously served at Church of the Holy Cross in Sullivan's Island, South Carolina. Born and raised in Fort Davis, a rural cattle ranching community in southwest Texas, his heritage is steeped in the independent, frontier spirit of cowboy country. Prior to his call to ordained ministry, Mr. Gilliam had two different careers: working in corporate meeting planning in the Southeast, and then with Micro Devices, an integrated circuit manufacturer in Austin, Texas. He and his wife Mary have four daughters.

Wednesday-Friday, March 6-8 – Tim Blackmon

Tim Blackmon is **Senior Pastor of Second Christian Reformed Church**, in **Grand Haven, Michigan**, where he has served since 2022. Born in The Hague, The Netherlands, he studied at the European Bible Institute in Lamorlaye, France, and Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mr. Blackmon was a church planter in California for 15 years, before becoming the Senior Pastor of the American Protestant Church of The Hague in 2008. He also served as Chaplain at Wheaton College for five years. He is married to Betsy, and they have four children.

Monday-Tuesday, March 11-12 – Aaron Zimmerman

Aaron Zimmerman has served as **Rector of St. Alban's Episcopal Church** in **Waco, Texas**, since 2013. After growing up in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, he graduated from Harvard University. He spent two years teaching with an educational non-profit in Kazakhstan, and later worked at the Harvard Business School and H.J. Heinz. Mr. Zimmerman graduated from Trinity School for Ministry in 2008, and served churches in Pittsburgh and Houston before his call to St. Alban's. He is a contributor to the Mockingbird blog and magazine, and co-hosts *Same Old Song*, the weekly lectionary podcast of Mockingbird Ministries. He and his wife Andrea have three children.

Wednesday-Thursday, March 13-14 – Kelsi Klembara

Kelsi Klembara is a **Writer and Podcaster** for **1517**, working from her home in **Dallas, Texas**. She works as the online content manager for 1517. A graduate of Abilene Christian University and Concordia University Irvine, she hosts a videocast called *Outside Ourselves*, which features conversations about God's gift of faith and what it means for a saving faith to stand outside of our abilities and works. Ms. Klembara is co-editor of *Theology of the Cross: Luther's Heidelberg Disputation & Reflections on Its 28 Theses*. She speaks regularly on topics of assurance, the theology of the body, and Christian confession and absolution. She and her husband Doug have two sons.

Friday, March 15 – Robert Smith

Robert Smith is **Professor of Christian Preaching** at **Beeson Divinity School** in **Birmingham, Alabama**, where he holds the Charles T. Carter Baptist Chair of Divinity. He served as Pastor of New Mission Missionary Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, for 20 years. He taught at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary before his call to Beeson. He has won teaching awards at both schools, and he is the 2017 E.K. Bailey Expository Preaching Conference Living Legend. Dr. Smith has spoken at more than 135 seminaries and universities around the world. He has authored several books, including the award-winning *Doctrine That Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life*. He and his wife Wanda are the parents of four adult children.

Monday-Tuesday, March 18-19 – Anthony Bradley

Anthony Bradley is a **Research Fellow** at **The Acton Institute** in **Grand Rapids, Michigan**. He also serves as Research Professor of Interdisciplinary and Theological Studies at Kuyper College. He previously was Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Center for the Study of Human Flourishing at The King's College, as well as Theologian-in-Residence at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Lincoln Square. Dr. Bradley lectures at colleges, universities, business organizations, conferences, and churches throughout the U.S. and abroad. He has authored a number of books, and his writings on religious and cultural issues have been published in a variety of journals, including *Christianity Today* and *Al-Jazeera*.

Wednesday-Thursday, March 20-21 – Paul Zahl

Paul Zahl was **Dean** and **Rector** of the **Cathedral Church of the Advent** in **Birmingham, Alabama**, from 1995-2004. He left Birmingham to become Dean and President of Trinity School for Ministry, and later served as Rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Chevy Chase, Maryland, before his retirement. Before his call to the Advent, he served parishes in New York and South Carolina. Dr. Zahl has written a number of books, including *Grace in Practice* and his most recent, *Peace in the Last Third of Life: A Handbook of Hope for Boomers*. He is also the voice of *PZ's Podcast*. He and his wife Mary have three adult sons, all of whom serve in different forms of Christian ministry.

Friday, March 22 – Julie Sparkman

Julie Sparkman is a **Counselor** at **Restore Ministries** in **Birmingham, Alabama**, a counseling ministry she co-founded with Jennifer Ervin in 2012. She has been in private practice as a pastoral counselor since 1999. A frequent speaker, she is the author of three video-teaching series, including *Unhitching From the Crazy Train*. Ms. Sparkman also co-hosts the podcast *Head to Heart – Connecting What You Know to How You Live*. It's her desire that the work of Restore Ministries would be used to help people come to understand the radical and restorative impact of the gospel in their lives and relationships. She and her husband Wes have three children.

Monday, March 25 – Josh Chatraw

Josh Chatraw was appointed the **Billy Graham Chair for Evangelism and Cultural Engagement** at **Beeson Divinity School** in **Birmingham, Alabama**, in 2023. Before his call to Beeson, he served in several positions in Raleigh, North Carolina, including Theologian-in-Residence at Holy Trinity Anglican Church. Dr. Chatraw has also taught at Liberty University and served as a pastor at Baptist churches in Virginia and Georgia. He has written or contributed to eight books, including *Telling a Better Story* and *Cultural Engagement*, and is an inaugural fellow at The Timothy Keller Center for Cultural Apologetics. He and his wife Tracy have two children.

Tuesday, March 26 – Gordon Bals

Gordon Bals is **Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling** at **Beeson Divinity School** in **Birmingham, Alabama**. A board-certified pastoral counselor, he started Daymark Pastoral Counseling in 1997. He previously worked as an adolescent and family counselor and Assistant Pastor at Shades Valley Community Church in Birmingham. In addition to his counseling, Dr. Bals leads training workshops for pastors and congregational leaders. He has written two books, including *Grace From Head to Heart: Experiencing God's Kindness in a Fallen World*. He is married to Dawn, and they have three daughters.

Wednesday, March 27 – Doug Sweeney

Doug Sweeney became the second **Dean** of **Beeson Divinity School** in **Birmingham, Alabama**, in 2019. Before coming to Beeson, he taught at schools including Yale Divinity School, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and the University of Heidelberg. An evangelical Lutheran, he is affiliated with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. Dr. Sweeney is the author or editor of more than 20 books on the history of Christian doctrine, American church history, and other topics. His latest book is *The Substance of Our Faith: Foundations for the History of Christian Doctrine*, the first of two volumes on the global history of doctrine. He and his wife Wilma have one adult son.

Thursday, March 28 – James Spann

James Spann has been **Chief Meteorologist** for **ABC 33/40** in **Birmingham, Alabama**, for 25 years. He has also worked as a television weather anchor in Tuscaloosa, Montgomery, and Dallas, Texas. He has received the two highest awards in the nation for a broadcast meteorologist. One is *Broadcaster of the Year* by the National Weather Association. Mr. Spann also was awarded the American Meteorological Society's *Award for Broadcast Meteorology*. He has won multiple Emmy awards over the years. Every Sunday he leads Children's Worship at Double Oak Community Church in Mount Laurel. He is married to Karen, and they have two sons.

Good Friday, March 29 (Service begins at noon.) – Craig Smalley

Craig Smalley is **Dean and Rector** of the **Cathedral Church of the Advent** in **Birmingham, Alabama**. A graduate of The Citadel, he earned his M.Div. at Virginia Theological Seminary. After being ordained in 1995, he served churches in South Carolina and Texas before being called in 2001 to be Rector of the Church of the Ascension in Vestavia Hills, Alabama. In 2006 Dean Smalley joined the clergy staff at the Advent, where he has also served as Canon for Christian Education, Canon Missioner, Canon Pastor, and Chaplain to the Advent Episcopal School. He is married to Paula, and they have three children.