



# The Candlelighter

**MARCH 2026**

Worship Time: Sunday, 10:30 AM | (706) 882-0130  
skeeladvent@gmail.com



## **2025 PHILLIPS' HOUSE MINISTRY**

Report for Annual Parish Meeting in January 2026

The Phillips' House Ministry is an important element of the community outreach programs of St. Mark's Episcopal and Advent Lutheran Churches; it is designed to help individuals and families in Troup County who, for various reasons, have faced economic difficulties. This program provides short-term assistance to clients who have experienced serious health problems (surgeries or major illnesses), job loss, accidents, domestic violence, and/ or homelessness.

Additionally, we collaborate with other outreach programs in our county to assist clients with large financial burdens. During 2025, we hosted a luncheon for clergy and volunteers from several area churches as well as leaders of community agencies such as LaGrange Personal Aid and West Georgia United Way. Furthermore, we began using Charity Tracker, a computer-based program for sharing documentation of assistance among all of these agencies and churches.

During the period from January 1 through December 31, 2025, funds amounting to \$22,485 were distributed among more than 68 households in Troup County. These funds were primarily used to help pay rent (42%) and utilities (53%). A small amount (5%) was used for other needs - such as property taxes. We began 2025 with \$3,653 in our account. Deposits during this year totaled \$20,315 (\$4,883 from Advent Lutheran; \$15,432 from St. Mark's - \$5,335 allocated in the budget and \$10,097 from the Poor Box alms and cash donations - leaving our current balance just over \$ 2,103 - much of which was distributed to clients on January 2, 2026.

Volunteers answer requests for financial aid on the last Wednesday of each month and set up interviews for the following week. The Phillips House Ministry office and waiting area for our direct contact and services with clients is located at downstairs at St. Mark's. Veteran volunteers include: Ethyl Ault, Jane Brubaker, Lou Ann Hood, Otto Korth, and Janet Morgan. New members of the team for 2026 include Tom Cheatham, Charles Ferguson, and Mike McCollum.

Thank you for the Christian love and generous financial support that you continue to share with our neighbors in need. This is truly a ministry in which those who give and those who receive are blessed.

---

## Phillips' House Ministry Quarterly Report

October -December 2025

During the fourth quarter, this community, as well as communities around the nation, faced dire needs for funds for food, utilities, and housing costs. Due to the U.S. government shutdown and delayed distribution of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) during November, many of our neighbors in Troup County had difficulty putting food on the table and making ends meet. Many individuals and organizations came together to build food banks for distribution of staple goods to meet the needs of our families.

In addition to providing assistance with rent and utilities to seventeen clients during the last quarter of 2025, the Phillips House Ministry volunteers, with help from our rector through his discretionary funds, distributed gift cards for food (Aldi, Publix, Wal-Mart, ...). Furthermore, several cold fronts put a strain on clients' paying high utility bills. Thus, approximately two-thirds of the \$5000 provided this quarter helped families with utility costs. Three of our clients had received eviction notices and needed our assistance in order to continue living in their apartments.

The Phillips House Ministry program (from St. Mark's and Advent Lutheran Churches) sponsored a luncheon for all of the clergy and volunteers from the DeCelle Program (from First Presbyterian Church), the St. Vincent de Paul Program (from St. Peter's and Christ the King Catholic Churches), LaGrange Personal Aid staff, and the president of United Way West Georgia to discuss cooperation in helping Troup County residents who have extreme financial burdens. The cooperation and networking of these churches and the local public assistance program truly represent God's love and work in this community.

For example, Phillips House Ministry volunteers worked with the DeCelle Program and St. Vincent de Paul to help with the large rent bill of a mother of a one-year-old avoid eviction. In another case, a mother of four (who had already been evicted) needed help with a short time in a local hotel and temporary housing until she could find a suitable, affordable place to live. We helped her with the deposit and first month's rent.

One of our clients had lost her partner of seventeen years and was shouldering not only the grief of the death of her loved one, but also the sole responsibility for all of the household expenses. We helped her avoid having her utilities disconnected. Several clients had undergone surgery and had missed time from their jobs, causing them to get behind on paying their utility bills. A couple of our clients this quarter were unable to drive to our church for interviews, so we made "house calls."

We are excited to have new volunteers from St. Mark's who have "joined the team" for 2026. We welcome the talents and enthusiasm of Tom Cheatham, Charles Ferguson, and Mike McCollum. Thank you continuing to support this vital outreach program of St. Mark's and Advent Churches.

Congregational Care is requesting that members bring a cup or two from home to drink from during fellowship. These cups can be rinsed and reused for fellowship each Sunday.

For now, please place your marked cup by the kitchen sink as we look into purchasing a new push cart for these cups. Thanks.

Advent's annual SPRING CLEANING has been set for Saturday, March 21, at 9:00 a.m. Everyone please plan to show up and make our property shine for Easter. A list will be available from which you may chose a task. OR we're open for suggestions of things that need to be done. Bring your cleaning supplies.



Good Samaritans will meet at Shoal Creek Baptist Church. Listed are the remaining packing dates for 2025-2026.



## 2025-26 PACKING CALENDAR

**March 7<sup>th</sup>**

**April 4<sup>th</sup>**

**May 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Meet us at 1:00pm at 1032 Youngs Mill Road on packing days! It's the building behind Shoal Creek Baptist Church.

## Look What We Accomplished Together!

In 2025, 3,159 families, 8,162 individuals were assisted by LaGrange Personal Aid, the Interfaith Food Closet, the Empty Stocking Fund, the Charles C. Maddox Veterans Assistance Program and the LPA/Circles of LaGrange Partnership.

### For example:

- 508 families had light, propane, heat or cooling due to assistance provided through our utility assistance programs. This number includes utility assistance provided through our partnership with the SHARE & Round-Up programs of the City of LaGrange.
- 7 people received utility deposit, rental deposit and/or rent and utility assistance as they exited the program at Circles of LaGrange.
- 26 children received school supplies and new book bags.
- 35 people received fills or refills of medicine through our prescription assistance program.
- 225 families received new or good used clothing, including 86 homeless people, through a referral we provided for a visit to the Helen Jabaley Clothing Center. Coats and clothing also available on a rack in our hallway during times when the clothing center is not open.
- 11 families received rental assistance when they were out of work due to medical leave.
- 302 people who were homeless were assisted by LPA with clothing, a warm coat, personal care items, food, drink, a blanket or a bible.
- 15 senior citizens or persons with a medical need received nutritious milk and juice and/or Ensure monthly through our Milk Fund.
- 69 people received free eye exams and glasses through our screening program for the Lions Club of LaGrange.
- 4,683 people received food, baby formula and personal care items from our Interfaith Food Closet.
- 35 people received free medical care through our screening service for Troup Cares Medical Clinic.
- 38 Veterans were provided with rent, prescription, car repair and utility assistance through our Charles C. Maddox Veteran's Assistance Program.
- 52 people were given a new super giant print bible. Through this program, an opportunity to read God's word again is given to people who are elderly or have vision problems.
- 732 children received toys, puzzles, games and books through the LaGrange Empty Stocking Fund. Over 2,000 toys were donated to the City of LaGrange Police Department Holiday Movie and Toy Giveaway, and the Griggs Center.

Any remaining toys, puzzles, books and craft items were given to children who came in with their parents throughout the year. We also make toys, books and stuffed animals available to officers of the LaGrange Police Department, Troup County Sheriff's Department and Troup CASA when they have need of them due to family emergencies, house fires or other situations.

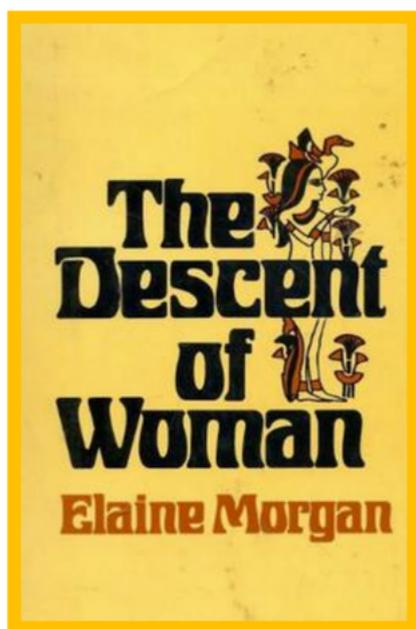
People in need also received assistance with utilities, rent or other needs through our Church Benevolence Funds Distribution Program. We partner with four local churches who want to help persons in our community but are not able or prefer not to provide direct service of their own.

Our Information & Referral program provided 1,501 people with information about assistance available in the community, or referrals to organizations who provide those services. 2026 is our 103rd year of service to our community. We hope you will continue to support us, both financially and with your prayers. Together we are making a difference in the lives of people in need in our community. Thank you and God Bless You from all of us at LaGrange Personal Aid.

## Advent Book Club List

**The ABC Book Club will meet March 19 at 6:00 PM.**

The book to be discussed is "The Descent of Woman" by Elaine Morgan.



The Descent of Woman, by Welsh writer Elaine Morgan, is a groundbreaking 1972 book that challenges traditional theories of human evolution by arguing for the equal, rather than secondary, role of females in our ancestry, proposing the "aquatic ape hypothesis" as a key explanation for human development. It became a feminist classic, sparking debate and influencing anthropology by suggesting that a semi-aquatic phase was crucial for developing traits like bipedalism, and that women were not merely an afterthought to man.

## **DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR NEXT MONTH'S CANDLELIGHTER - March 30, 2026**

If you have a questions or concerns that you'd like to share with the Council, please contact one of the members. Council meetings are usually held the second Sunday of each month after worship in the Conference Room.

Check weekly announcements for any date changes. The council meetings are open to all who wish to attend.

Our 2026 Council and staff are currently being updated and the full list of officers will be sent out within the next few days. Thank you.

The Candlelighter is a monthly newsletter of Advent Lutheran Church. Currently the church hours for the office administrator, are:

**Monday—Thursday: 10:00 am—3:00 pm.**

The phone number with a 24 hour answering machine is 706-882-0130. You may email the church office at [skeeladvent@gmail.com](mailto:skeeladvent@gmail.com)



**Advent Lutheran Church is a congregation of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and The Southeastern Synod. The Synod is comprised of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee.**

It is one of 65 synods of the ELCA, and made up of 170 southeastern congregations with more than 62,000 baptized saints.

**The Rev. Kevin Strickland, Bishop mailing address:**

ELCA Southeastern Synod,  
P. O. Box 400 Decatur, GA 30031

**Physical address:**

**ELCA Southeastern Synod c/o,  
St. John's Lutheran Church 1410 Ponce de Leon Avenue NE Atlanta, GA 30307**

**Our Partner Churches are:**

Diocese of Augsburg, Bavaria Germany, Lutheran Church in Malaysia, Lutheran Church in Singapore, Lutheran Church in Ethiopia and Lutheran Church in Guatemala

**Synod Web Site:** [www.elca-ses.org](http://www.elca-ses.org)

**ELCA Web Site:** [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)

**Advent Lutheran Church website:** [www.adventlutheranlagrange.com](http://www.adventlutheranlagrange.com)

**Advent Lutheran Church Facebook page:**

[hwww.facebook.com/AdventLutheranChurchLaGrange](https://www.facebook.com/AdventLutheranChurchLaGrange)

