

# CHRISTMAS UNWRAPPED

LESSONS AND CAROLS  
DECEMBER 8, 2024 | 9:30 AND 11:00 A.M.



ATHENS FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# *The Worship of God*

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\*Please stand as you are able. The congregation speaks the text in **bold** type.

Large print hymnals are available in the Narthex. Please ask a member of our Welcome Team for assistance.



**THE FLOWERS IN THE CHURCH ARE GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD**

**In loving memory of** Donna Gresham Ethridge given by her family Michael, Neila, Henry Neil, Vivien Pierce, and Wilkens Ethridge Grimsley.

## **GATHERING**

### *The Prelude*

“People Look East” | arr. Sondra K. Tucker

Raina Wood, Organist; Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

Brandon Craswell and Tyler Jones, trumpets; Peter Riggs, horn; Thomas Minor, trombone;

David Stone, euphonium; Jackson Riffle, timpani

*The Welcome and Opening Prayer* | Rev. Natalee Dukes Hamby

## *The Choral Call to Worship*

9:30 a.m. | “God Will Send a Savior” | Ruth Elaine Schram

Sung by the Cherub, Sonshine, and Joy Choirs

Leaders: Patti Pitts, Beth Rector, Lauren Ellison, Amy McCollum, Ashleigh Woodruff, Steven Dasher, Audrey Vazquez, Jessie Wood, Gail Walton

Youth Helpers: Olivia Tucker, Avery Rook, Becca Brodrick

*God will send a Savior, God will send a child. Mary will be his mother mild. You will call him Jesus, Mary's little boy. He will bring hope and peace and joy.*

11:00 a.m. | “Come, Lord Jesus” | arr. Jim Ailor

Sung by the Lyric and Celebrate Choirs | Natalie Smith, flute

Leaders: Erin Towe, Josh Luke, Cathy Felton, Megan Presley, Sylvia Arant

Youth Helpers: Abigail Cook, Grady Huestis

*Come, Lord Jesus, come to dwell with us. How we need Your presence near. Come to guide us. Come to save us. Come, O come, we welcome you here. Alleluia! God is with us. Alleluia! Emmanuel. Angels are praising and shepherds are bowing. God is with us! Sing Noel!*

## **PRAISE & THANKSGIVING**

### *\*The Processional Hymn*

UMH 211 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” | VENI EMMANUEL

Verses 1-4

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;  
to us the path of knowledge show and cause us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to thy tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times did give the law in cloud and majesty and awe.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree, an ensign of thy people be;  
before thee rulers silent fall; all peoples on thy mercy call.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

## *\*The Lighting of the Advent Candles*

9:30 a.m. | The Family of Madison and John Reed

11:00 a.m. | Elizabeth Babalola, Claire Power, Isaiah Sims, and Young Adult Ministry

**Loving God, in this time of preparation and planning, we thank you for the hope and peace you unfailingly offer us. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.**

**Sing: A candle is burning, a candle of peace, a candle to signal that conflict must cease. For Jesus is coming to show us the way; a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.**

## *\*The Passing of the Peace*

### *The Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer* | Rev. Jeremy Lawson

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## *The Hymn*

UMH 211 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" | VENI EMMANUEL

Verses 5-7

**O come, thou Key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home.  
The captives from their prison free, and conquer death's deep misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thy justice here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, Desire of nations bind all peoples in one heart and mind.  
From dust thou brought us forth to life; deliver us from earthly strife.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

# THE LESSONS AND CAROLS

## THE GREAT “O” ANTIPHONS OF THE MESSIAH

**O WISDOM** *who came forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end, and ordering all things mightily and sweetly. Come and save us, O Lord, our God.*

### *The Lesson* | Isaiah 11:2-3

The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

### *The Carol*

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten” | arr. Katherine Crosier

**Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he; Of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore.**

Choir Only: O ye heights of heaven adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing; powers, dominions, bow before him, and extol our God and King; Let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert ring, evermore and evermore.

**Christ, to thee with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanksgiving, and unwearied praises be: honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory, evermore and evermore. Amen.**

**O ADONAI** *and Leader of the house of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the flames of the bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come, and with your outstretched arm redeem us.*

### *The Lesson* | Isaiah 11:4-5

But with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.



## *The Motet*

“Riu, Riu, Chiu” | 16th Century Spanish

Sung by the Chamber Ensemble

*Translation from Spanish: Riu, riu, chiu (song of the nightingale), the river bank protects it. God kept our lamb, from the wolf. The rabid wolf wanted to bite her, but Almighty God knew how to defend her. He decided to make Her impervious to sin, even original sin this Virgin did not have. This One who is born is the Grand Monarch, the Patriarch Christ dressed in human flesh; He has redeemed us by making Himself small, although He is infinite. He made Himself finite.*

Ⓞ **ROOT OF JESSE** *who stands for an ensign of the people, before whom kings shall keep silence and to whom the Gentiles shall make their supplication: Come, and deliver us and tarry not.*

*The Lesson* | Isaiah 11:1,10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

## *The Anthem*

“Ave Maria” | Franz Biebl

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir

*Translation from Latin: The angel of God visited Maria and she conceived of the Holy Spirit. Hail Mary, Full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, Holy Mary, pray for us now and in the hour of our death. Amen. Amen. Amen.*

Ⓞ **KEY OF DAVID** *and Scepter of the house of Israel, who opens and no one shuts, who shuts and no one opens: Come, and bring forth from prison the captive who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death.*

*The Lesson* | Isaiah 9:6-7

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

## *The Offering and Offertory Anthem* | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

“Lo, He Comes With Clouds Descending” | arr. Rutter

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir with the Brass Ensemble

*The text for this anthem can be found on page 718 of the United Methodist Hymnal.*

**○ DAYSPRING** *Brightness of the light eternal and Sun of justice: Come, and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.*

## *The Lesson* | Isaiah 9:1-2

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time the Lord brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

## *The Anthem*

“O Come, O Come” | arr. Emily Lund

Sung by the Wesleyan Youth Choir; Janis Maxwell, Director of Children’s and Youth Music; Vincent Tong, piano; Natalie Smith, flute

*The words to this anthem can be found on page 211 of the UMH.*

## *The Carol*

UMH 216 “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” | ES IST EIN ROS

Verses 1 and 3

**Lo, how a Rose e’er blooming from tender stem hath sprung! Of Jesse’s lineage coming, as those of old have sung. It came a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.**

**O Flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air, dispel in glorious splendor the darkness everywhere. True man yet very God, from sin and death now save us, and share our every load.**

**○ DESIRE OF THE NATIONS** *And King of the Gentiles, Cornerstone that makes both one: Come, and deliver us whom you formed out of the dust of the earth.*

## *The Lesson* | Isaiah 28:16-17

Therefore thus says the Lord God, "See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: 'One who trusts will not panic.' And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet; hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter of falsehood."

## *The Anthem*

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light" | Dan Forrest

Sung by the Combined Choirs

*This anthem has been placed in the choir library to the Glory of God and in memory of Tip Harris and in honor of those who volunteer to develop the next generation of church musicians by Deana, Steven, and Thomas Jones.*

○ EMMANUEL *Our King and Lawgiver, the Expected of the nations and their Savior: Come, and save us, O Lord, our God.*

## *The Lesson* | Isaiah 7:14

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel."

## *\*The Closing Carol*

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" | MENDELSSOHN

**Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
with th'angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King"**

**Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;  
late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th'incarnate Deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King"**



**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King"**

*\*The Blessing*

*\*The Postlude*

"Toccata on Vom Himmel Hoch" (From Heaven Above to Earth I Come)  
Garth Edmundson

*9:30 a.m. | Cherub (3s), Sonshine (4s), and Joy (K) Choirs can be picked up after worship from their Sunday School classrooms.*

*11:00 a.m. | Lyric and Celebrate Choirs (Grades 1-5) can be picked up after worship from the Music Suite. Wesleyan Youth Choir can be picked up from the Music Suite.*

# THE STEEPLE

December 8, 2024



## Candlelight Carols | December 15

Join with friends and neighbors on **Sunday, December 15, at 7:00 p.m.** to sing together our favorite Christmas carols with the AFUMC Sanctuary Choir and orchestra. Celebrate the season with a beautiful evening of music in our adorned Sanctuary, bathed in the glow of candlelight and Chrismon trees. Afterward, join us for a cookie exchange and hot cocoa reception in Hancock Hall where we can share in Christmas cheer!

Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship  
[ryan@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:ryan@athensfirstumc.org)



## Children and Youth Choirs Singing

Our children's and youth choirs have been working hard to bring the joy of music to our Christmas worship services! **Children's Choirs** will lead worship on **Christmas Eve at the 3:00 p.m. service**. Join us to experience the sweet songs of Christmas sung by our children and the holy tradition of the Nativity Processional. **The Wesleyan Youth Choir**, along with a Brass Quartet, will lead worship on **Christmas Eve at the 5:00 p.m. service**. We will be joined by many of our alumni to sing "O Holy Night", one of our favorite traditions of the year! We hope you will join us to experience the beauty of the Christmas Season.

Janis Maxwell, Director of Children and Youth Music  
[janis@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:janis@athensfirstumc.org)



## Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

We hope you will make plans to join us at one of four services:

- 3:00 p.m.** Children's Candlelight Service\*
- 5:00 p.m.** Candlelight Service | Wesleyan Youth Choir and Brass\*
- 7:00 p.m.** Candlelight Service | Sanctuary Choir and Brass\*
- 11:00 p.m.** Candlelight Holy Communion  
Sanctuary Choir and Strings

*\*Nursery care will be available during the 3:00, 5:00, and 7:00 p.m. services.*



## Final Wednesday Night Dinner of 2024 December 11

Ugly sweaters and good cheer, it's that wonderful time of the year! Join us for our last Wednesday night dinner of the year. Let's share a Christmas dinner together and some holiday festivities. Come dressed in your tacky Christmas best! The best dressed wins a prize! Your sweater might be frightful, but a holiday party is most delightful. Register today by scanning the QR code above!

Alisha Bain, Administrative Assistant | [alisha@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:alisha@athensfirstumc.org)



## The Sweet Life | December 12

Join us for our December Sweet Life luncheon on **Thursday, December 12**. The focus will be on our most loved Christmas carols under the direction of Ryan Ferguson. Lunch will be served promptly at 12:00 p.m. We will have an ornament exchange for those of you that would like to participate. Bring your ornament wrapped. We guarantee you will leave full of the Christmas spirit! Most importantly, please make your reservations by **Tuesday, December 10**, by calling the church or through our website.

Rev. Nancy Johnson, Associate Minister | [nancy@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:nancy@athensfirstumc.org)



## Women's Conference | Save the Date

We are pleased to invite you to our Women's Conference on **Saturday, January 25, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** This exciting day will be filled with great fellowship as we deepen and share our faith with one another! We encourage women of all ages to come and bring their friends and neighbors. We look forward to being with you for this special event. Please mark your calendars; you won't want to miss it!

Cindy McKoy, Director of Small Groups Ministry  
[cindy@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:cindy@athensfirstumc.org)

## MEMBER NEWS

### New Members

On November 24, we welcomed Laura Daniel and Eve Levine to the Athens First United Methodist Church family.

### Sympathy

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Ina Hopkins and her family in the loss of her mother, Ina Cook, on November 24.

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to the family of Ellen Christenberry who passed away on November 1.

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to the family of Billie Harris who passed away on November 9.



**MENU FOR DECEMBER 11: Baked Ham**, sweet potato soufflé and squash casserole.

Register by noon on Tuesday | Scan the Steeple QR Code to register online or Call the Church Office.

**LAST WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER FOR 2024!**

## FINANCIAL REPORT

**As of November 26, 2024:**

**YTD Giving Goal:** \$3,353,457

**Actual Giving:** \$2,738,587

**Current 2024 Expenses:** \$3,364,264

## WAYS TO GIVE



### OFFERING PLATE:

Fill out the envelope located in your pew.



### ONLINE:

Scan to be taken to Realm, our online giving platform.



### TEXT-TO-GIVE:

Text "AFUMCTTG" to 73256.

## FOLLOW UP WITH A MINISTER

**Rev. Jeremy Lawson** | Senior Minister  
[jeremy@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:jeremy@athensfirstumc.org) | 404-304-3574

**Rev. Natalee Dukes Hamby** | Associate Minister  
[natalee@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:natalee@athensfirstumc.org) | 404-414-1701

**Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson** | Associate Minister  
[nancy@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:nancy@athensfirstumc.org) | 762-233-4761

## REQUEST PRAYER

Have a prayer request? Scan the QR code located in your bulletin and select **"Needing Prayer"** to fill out a form to submit your prayer request. If you desire for the request to be shared with our Prayer Ministry team, please indicate that in your submission. Prayer requests can also be made directly via email [prayer@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:prayer@athensfirstumc.org).

CCS #12591 • CCLI #1097880

**ATHENS FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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