



CHRISTMAS

at Athens First UMC

Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 14
9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

The Worship of God

*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.

GATHERING

The Prelude

“In Dulci Jubilo” | Franz Liszt

Raina Wood, Organist

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

The Choral Call to Worship

“Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella” | arr. Alice Parker and Robert Shaw

Sung by the Chamber Ensemble; Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

*Bring a torch, Jeannette, Isabella. Bring a torch, come hurry and run. It is Jesus, good folk of the village,
Christ is born, and Mary's calling: Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Mother; Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Child! It is
wrong, when the Baby is sleeping to speak so loud; silence now, as you come near the cradle, lest you
awaken little Jesus. Skies are glowing, the heavens are cloudless, bright the path to the manger bed.
Hasten, all who would see little Jesus, shining bright as yonder star.*

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

**The Processional Hymn*

UMH 220 “Angels from the Realms of Glory” | REGENT SQUARE

The Lighting of the Advent Candles

9:30 a.m. | The Family of Sheldon and Carter Timmerman

11:00 a.m. | Leah and Andrew Brock

Loving God, we open ourselves to you, trusting that this is how you made us: you created us for joy-filled hearts and lives. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared. 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 joy, a candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy. Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow, as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.**

**The Affirmation of Faith for the Season of Advent*

We believe in God, the creator and giver of life, who brought all creation to birth, who redeems and renews us, protects and nurtures us. We believe in Jesus Christ: God born among us as a fragile baby, embodying both love and the need for love, and calling us to rest in God as trustingly as a tiny child. We believe in the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us, always drawing us on to be born again, encouraging, exhorting, comforting, nourishing our growth and inspiring our living. We believe in the reconciliation of the world to God, through Christ. Searched for at birth and lifted-up at death, Christ entered our fearful darkness so that we might enter his glorious light and share the life of his resurrection. And we believe that each new child is a glimpse of the face of God, a sign of life to come, and a call to live in peace and celebrate living together. Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth. Amen.

**The Alleluia*

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

All singing: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

**The Passing of the Peace*

The Moment for Baby Recognition | 11:00 a.m.

The Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

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 217 "Away in a Manger" | AWAY IN A MANGER

During the singing of the hymn at 11:00 a.m., children Kindergarten up to grade 4 are dismissed through the front, lectern side doors to attend Children's Church. They can be picked up at the conclusion of worship in Hancock Hall.

The Offering and Offertory Anthem

"Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day" | arr. Michael Higgins

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day; I would, my true love did so chance to see the legend of my play, to call my true love to my dance: Sing O my love, O my love, this have I done for my true love. Then was I born of a virgin pure, of her I took fleshly substance; thus was I knit to man's nature, to call my true love to my dance. In a manger laid and wrapped I was, so very poor, this was my chance, betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass, to call my true love to my dance. Then afterwards baptised I was, the Holy Ghost on me did glance, My Father's voice heard from above, to call my true love to my dance.

**The Doxology* | OLD 100TH

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.

PROCLAMATION

The Scripture Reading | Luke 1:26-38

The Word of God for the People of God. **Thanks be to God.**

The Message | Rev. Jeremy Lawson

“Hail Mary, Full of Grace”

RESPONSE

**The Hymn of Response*

UMH 218 “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” | CAROL

**The Blessing and Congregational Response*

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” | ST. LOUIS

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

**The Postlude*

“In Dulci Jubilo” | Denis Bédard

Christmas Poinsettias 2025

Each year, poinsettias are placed in our Sanctuary during Advent in memory or in honor of loved ones.

In Memory of

Brown Gray Appleton

Bret and Gray Dillard

Derek Bain

Gail and David Walton

Mike Beckum

Michelle, Robert, and William Beckum

Mike Beckum

Carey, Stacy, Bo, and Hank Stephens

Jay Boswell

Joe, Lisa, Lucy, Joseph, and Jane Frierson

Judi Bradley

Kathy and Brian Thomas

Catherine and Frank Brim

Ray Hutcheson and Family

Punkin Brookshire

Joe, Lisa, Lucy, Joseph, and Jane Frierson

Louie A. Brown

Frances Brown

Margie Brown

Amber and Shiloh Hutton

Doris and Roger Budd

Bonnie Hannah and Family

Jane Burnette

Arlyn and Al Hawley

Sharla Campbell

The Tumbleweeds Sunday School Class

Priscilla Carroll

Archie Carroll

Armand (Toby) Chapeau

Betty Chapeau

Betty Ann Chapman

Susan and Karen Chapman and Courtney, John, and Maddie Durham

Bill Chapman

Susan and Karen Chapman and Courtney, John, and Maddie Durham

Delores Chorneyko

Gail and David Walton

Kasey Clayton

Arlyn and Al Hawley

Walter D. Crawford

Betty Chapeau

Darris Crawford

Betty Chapeau

Bryce Crawford

Betty Chapeau

Curry Cross

Susie Mobley

Bill Crowe

Gay and David Crowe

Doug, John, and Sarah Davidson

Dr. Allan Hixon

Rebecca Etheridge

Katrina and Greg Blankenship

Dr. Tom “Papa” Ferrell

The Jordan Family

Gerald Firth

The Firth and McAdams Families

Lynwood Foster

Mark, Heather, Ryan, and Anna Foster

Miriam and Adolph Fronk

The Hassemer Family

Tim Furlow

The Furlow and Parker Families

DeLois Gainey

Lewis Gainey, Molly, and Julia

Bobbie and Martin Gates

Peggy Gates

**Virginia Rhea Mathews
Gattinger**

Arlyn and Al Hawley

Carol and Gene Graf

Lisa and David Jennings

Steve Greer

Family of Steve Greer

Alton Kenneth Hall

Carey, Stacy, Bo and Hank
Stephens

Margaret and Lewis Hawley

Arlyn and Al Hawley

Evelyn and Jim Haynes

Susan and Dick Haynes

John Hill

Judy Hill

Clara and Rufus Hixon

Dr. Allan Hixon

Jackie Hixon

Dr. Allan Hixon

Mr. and Mrs. Foy S. Horne, Sr.

Martee and Foy Horne

Hank Huckaby

The Tumbleweeds Sunday
School Class

Jere Madison Pound Huggins

Lisa Huggins

Wallace Jan Hunnicutt

Theresa Hunnicutt

John L. Huntsman, Jr.

Lauren and John Huntsman

Rebecca Hutcheson

Ray Hutcheson and Family

Alice and Harold Hutcheson

Ray Hutcheson and Family

Dennis Hutton

Amber and Shiloh Hutton

Gloria and Guy Jennings

Lisa and David Jennings

Jerry Jonas

The Hackleman Family

Travis Jonas

The Hackleman Family

Mr. and Mrs. Charlie

“Granddaddy and Grandmama”

Jordan

The Jordan Family

Alex Keller

Marty, Mike, and Andy Keller

Mary Ann Kicklighter

Cindy and Bill Walker

George Kicklighter

Cindy and Bill Walker

Daniel, Glenda, and Kathy King

Dr. Allan Hixon

Carole Langley

Arlyn and Al Hawley

Queen MacMeekin

Susan and Dick Haynes

Bill Martin

The Martin Family

Glenn Mathews

Arlyn and Al Hawley

Margaret Mathews

Arlyn and Al Hawley

Larry Mathews

Arlyn and Al Hawley

Dorothy McKelvey

Ray Hutcheson and Family

Patrick (Pat) McKeown

Carolyn McKeown

Patrick (Pat) McKeown

Chris, Ashley, Todd, Keegan,
and Kathryn McKeown

Denny McKoy

Anne and David Thomson

Jose Luis Melendez

The Melendez Family

Dusty Mills

Rob, Jane Anne, Mills,
Andrew, and Davis Ridings

McClellan Mobley

Susie Mobley

Connie and John Mobley

Susie Mobley

Jack Neale

The Neale Family

Morgan R. “Bucky” Redwine, Jr.

Karen Redwine, Children, and
Grandchildren

James K. Reynolds, Jr.

Emily H. Reynolds

Hal Seaton

Jane Seaton

Betty and Bill Simpson

The Tumbleweeds Sunday
School Class

Geoff Smith

Andrew and Campbell Smith

Alice and Rob Snyder

The Nickelsen Family

John Spratlin

The Charles F. Elder Family

John Spratlin

Kathryn Spratlin

**Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Wade
Stephens**

Carey, Stacy, Bo, and Hank
Stephens

Bonnie Storey

The Neale Family

John Storey

The Neale Family

Bruce Tanner

The Nickelsen Family

Jackie Thomas

Kathy and Brian Thomas

Marie and Jim Thomson

Anne and David Thomson

Dr. B. P. Tillman

Gay and David Crowe

Olin Trammell, Sr.

Martee and Foy Horne

Jo and Roger Treadwell

JoAnn, Whitney, Kery, Mary,
and William Webb

Carolyn Sue Trigleth

William T. Trigleth, III

Jack A. Turner

Muriel, Jackie, Mary,
Chandelle, and Sandi

Helen and Leon van Devender

Brian and Kathy van
Devender

Bayley Walker

Cindy and Bill Walker

Virginia Warnock

Holly and Bob Warnock

Ernest, Pearl, and Walter Webb

JoAnn, Whitney, Kery, Mary,
and William Webb

Michael David Webb

JoAnn, Whitney, Kery, Mary,
and William Webb

William Larry Webb

JoAnn, Whitney, Kery, Mary,
and William Webb

Anne West

Anne and David Thomson

Bob Williamson

Lisa Huggins

In Honor of

Jamie Leigh Aldridge

Victoria and Worth
VanLinden

Madeline and Harry Barrow

Leland, Jill, Hagan, and
Caroline Barrow

Jill Bateman

Julie and Oscar Webster

Rosemary Belger

The Disciples Sunday School
Class

Laura and Mike Burrell

The Powells and Thomases

**Sara Beth and Meriwether
Burrell**

The Powells and Thomases

Rev. Betsy Butler

The Bluebirds

Katherine and Frank Chandley

Charlotte Chandley English

**Kay, Chuck, Cary, Katie, and
Collin Elder**

Kathryn Spratlin

**William Chandley, Chandler
Brown, and Katherine Ann
Elizabeth English**

Charlotte Chandley English

Cathy Felton

Felton Family

Joy “Kiki” Ferrell

The Jordan Family

Doris Firth

The Firth and McAdams
Families

**Chan, Sarah, Drew, and Zach
Freeman**

Cyndy Harbold

Peggy Furlow

The Furlow and Parker
Families

Barbara and Gary Guyer

Your children and
grandchildren

Hannah and Walls Families

Bonnie Hannah and Family

**Jon, Raegan, and Graham
Harvey**

Jane Harvey

Landon Heath

Janeanna and Landon Heath

Robert Heath

Janeanna and Landon Heath

Leigh and Chris Holland

The Melendez Family

Lisa Huggins

Lucy Ullrich

Mary and Hugh Larkey

Mark, Heather, Ryan, and
Anna Foster

Carolyn Lindsay

Tammy and Duke Lindsay

Jan Lord

Your children and
grandchildren

Condit and Bill Lotz

The Powells and Thomases

Janis Maxwell

The Melendez Family

Pat Neu

Tammy and Duke Lindsay

Bertha Novoa

The Melendez Family

Sara and Bill Powell

Your loving family

Gwynn Powell

The Powells and Thomases

Lourdes Prieto

The Melendez Family

Carol Seawright

Leland, Jill, Hagan, and
Caroline Barrow

Kathryn Spratlin

The Charles F. Elder Family

Hannah Stubblefield

Cason and Avery Rook

The Bluebirds

Melanie Zack and Angela
Henson

Tina and George Thomas

Nan and Drew Thomas

Nancy Tompkins

The Powells and Thomases

Dianne Wall

Circle 3

The Walton Family

Gail and David Walton

Leo West

Julie and Oscar Webster

Serena Windham

Christy and Jimmy Lovett and
Olivia

THE STEEPLE

December 14, 2025



Handel's Messiah | Tonight at 7:00 p.m.

Doors open at 6:00 p.m. with general seating. This is a free, non-ticketed event. This concert run-time will include 90 minutes of music with a 15-minute intermission.

Come celebrate the season with the AFUMC Sanctuary Choir, soloists, and orchestra as our beautifully adorned Sanctuary is filled with the glorious refrains of "For Unto Us a Child is Born" and the resounding "Hallelujah Chorus" in Handel's Baroque masterpiece, "Messiah". Invite your family and friends and join us in this inspiring and powerful presentation of the greatest story ever told.

Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship
ryan@athensfirstumc.org



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Join us on Wednesday, December 24, as we celebrate Christmas Eve together!

3:00 p.m. Children's Christmas Pageant*

5:00 p.m. Readings and Carols - Wesleyan Youth Choir and Brass*

7:00 p.m. Readings and Carols - Sanctuary Choir and Brass*

11:00 p.m. Christmas Holy Communion - Sanctuary Choir and Strings

**Nursery care available at the 3:00, 5:00, and 7:00 p.m. services.*



Church Photo Directory | January 8-13

Sign up for your family portrait today at athensfirstumc.org/photodirectory. Every family who is photographed will receive a complimentary 8x10 professional portrait and one printed directory. All appointments are on a first-come, first-serve basis, so make your appointment today by calling 1-877-896-9667 ext 360.



Chili BINGO | January 7

We are excited to host a night of fellowship and fun on **Wednesday, January 7**, with "Chili BINGO." We will participate in multiple games of BINGO while enjoying a warm bowl of chili with grilled cheese and a salad bar on the side! Dinner is \$5 per person. We will begin serving our meal at 5:00 p.m. and will continue to serve dinner throughout the evening. BINGO games will begin at 5:30 p.m.

Sign up by scanning the QR Code above or call the church office to enjoy chili and games from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. Walk-ins are welcome; however, we would love to know you are coming so we can ensure enough food for all. We can't wait to see you!

Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby, Associate Minister
natalee@athensfirstumc.org



WYC Winter Workshop

The Wesleyan Youth Choir will ring in 2026 with our annual Winter Workshop on **Sunday, January 4, from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.** We will work on winter, spring and Choir Tour music, play games and have FUN! Dinner included. We are expecting all current members of the youth choir and welcome newcomers as well! We are open to any students in grades 6 through 12. Come find your voice with the Wesleyan Youth Choir!

Janis Maxwell, Director of Children's and Youth Music
janis@athensfirstumc.org



Weekday Preschool Registration

Registration for the 2026-27 school year is just around the corner. We are excited to welcome children and families to another year of faith, friendship, and learning. Opening on January 19, 2026, for current families, and on January 26, 2026, for AFUMC members, registration information will be available on the AFUMC Weekday Preschool webpage in early December. You may also request a tour through the website.

Kay Elder, Director of Weekday Preschool | kay@athensfirstumc.org



BICENTENNIAL *prayer focus* — DECEMBER | PRAYER

With all my heart I would extol the precious gift of God in the noble art of music...Music is to be praised as second only to the Word of God because by her all the emotions are swayed.

Martin Luther

Psalm 46 | Hymnal: 110 and 515

MEMBER NEWS

Sympathy

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Ellen Hope and her family in the loss of her father, Donnie Rogers, on November 26.

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to David Steger and his family in the loss of his mother, Pat Steger, on November 26.

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Erin Rivenbark and her family in the loss of her mother, Deborah Hobbs Clark, on November 27.

FINANCIAL REPORT | As of December 7, 2025 (finance@athensfirstumc.org):

2025 YTD Giving Goal: \$3,172,105 | **YTD Actual Giving:** \$3,012,968 | **YTD Actual Expenses:** \$3,409,848

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 | 404-304-3574

Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby | Associate Minister
natalee@athensfirstumc.org | 404-414-1701

Rev. Montana Hamby | Associate Minister
montana@athensfirstumc.org | 770-633-3140

Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson | Associate Minister
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.

CCS #12591 • CCLI #1097880

ATHENS FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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