



CHRISTMAS

at Athens First UMC

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

December 24, 2025 | 5:00 p.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.



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

In loving memory of Drucye and Frank Casey and Loy and Gene Miller by Laura and Jim Miller and Amanda Page Woodall.

The Pre-Service Music

“Variations on Good King Wenceslas” | arr. Charles Evans

Brandon Craswell, Tyler Jones, trumpet; Peter Riggs, horn; Thomas Minor, trombone;
David Stone, euphonium; Grayson Pruitt, timpani
Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

The Prelude

“Joseph est bien marié” | Jean-François Dandrieu

Raina Wood, Organist

The Welcome and Opening Prayer | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

Loving God, on this holy night we gather to stand with shepherds, amazed at your glory; to sing with angels, rejoicing in your work; to wait with Joseph, trusting in your promise; to sit with Mary, cradling your love. May the good news of this night inspire us to tell the world of our great joy; for unto us is born a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord. Glory to God in the Highest! Amen.

**The Processional Hymn*

UMH 234 “O Come, All Ye Faithful” | ADESTE FIDELES

Verses 1, 2, 3 and 6

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels; O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal, lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten not created; O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation; O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

**The Affirmation of Faith for Christmas*

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 the 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 ANGEL GABRIEL VISITS MARY

The Scripture Reading | Luke 1:26-33 | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

The Anthem

“We’ll Welcome Him” | Ruth Elaine Schram

Sung by the Wesleyan Youth Choir

Janis Maxwell, Director of Children’s and Youth Music Ministry; Beth Rector, piano;

Will Taylor, cello

MARY AND JOSEPH GO TO BETHLEHEM

The Scripture Reading | Luke 2:1-5 | Rev. Montana Hamby

The Hymn

UMH 230 “O Little Town of Bethlehem” | ST. LOUIS

Verses 1 and 4

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;

yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

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 BIRTH IN THE MANGER

The Scripture Reading | Luke 2:6-7 | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

The Anthem

“Silent Night” | Heather Sorensen

Sung by the Wesleyan Youth Choir with Natalie Smith, flute; Will Taylor, cello

THE ANGELS' SONG

The Scripture Reading | Luke 2:8-14 | Rev. Montana Hamby

The Hymn

UMH 238 "Angels We have Heard on High" | GLORIA
Verses 1 and 3

**Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.**

Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

**Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.**

Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

THE SHEPHERDS' RESPONSE

The Scripture Reading | Luke 2:15-20 | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

**The Hymn*

UMH 220 "Angels from the Realms of Glory" | REGENT SQUARE
Verses 1 and 2

During this hymn, Wesleyan Youth Choir Alumni are invited to the choir loft.

**Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth; ye who sang creation's
story now proclaim Messiah's birth: Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ,
the newborn king.**

**Shepherds, in the field abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night, God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant light: Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the
newborn king.**

The Offering and Offertory Anthem

"O Holy Night" | Adolphe Adam

Sung by the Wesleyan Youth Choir and Alumni; Katie McCollum ('09) and Erin Towe ('12), duet

The Christmas Message | Rev. Jeremy Lawson

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

*As the Light of Christ is passed, tilt your unlit candle
to your neighbor's upright lit candle.*

The Hymn

UMH 239 "Silent Night, Holy Night" | STILLE NACHT

**Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright round yon Virgin Mother and Child.
Holy Infant so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight; Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia! Christ, the Savior is born, Christ, the Savior is born!**

**Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light; radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

**Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light; with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King; Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

**The Hymn*

UMH 246 "Joy to the World" | ANTIOCH

**Joy to the World, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room, and Heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.**

**Joy to the World, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.**

**No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as, the curse is found.**

Interlude

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love,
and wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders, of His love.

**The Blessing*

**The Postlude*

“Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella” | Keith Chapman

Wesleyan Youth Choir students can be picked up in the Music Suite.

DATES TO KNOW

Thursday, December 25 - Friday, December 26 | Church Office Closed

Sunday, December 28 | One Service Only at 11:00 a.m.

Monday, December 29 - Thursday, January 1 | Church Office Closed

Sunday, January 4 | Wesleyan Youth Choir Winter Workshop

Wednesday, January 7 | Churchwide Chili BINGO*

Thursday, January 8 - Tuesday, January 13 | Church Photo Directory Appointments*

Friday, January 9 | Destination Known - Athens Rock Lobsters Hockey Game*

Sunday, January 11 | Student Ministry Programming Resumes*

**Register for these events by visiting athensfirstumc.org*

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

PRAYER REQUEST? | Please visit our website at athensfirstumc.org/congregationalcare and 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.

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