



CHRISTMAS

at Athens First UMC

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

December 24, 2025 | 7:00 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. Natalee Dukes Hamby

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 Alleluia*

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

All singing: **Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

THE ANGEL GABRIEL VISITS MARY

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

The Hymn

UMH 196 "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" | HYFRYDOL
Verses 1 and 2

**Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins
release us, let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the
earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**

**Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King, born to reign in us forever, now thy
gracious kingdom bring. By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by thine all
sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.**

MARY AND JOSEPH GO TO BETHLEHEM

The Scripture Reading | Luke 2:1-5 | Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes 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 Hymn

UMH 250 "Once in Royal David's City" | IRBY

Verses 1 and 2

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed, where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed; Mary, loving mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all, and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall. With the poor, the scorned, the lowly lived on earth our Savior holy.

THE ANGELS' SONG

The Scripture Reading | Luke 2:8-14 | Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes 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 Anthem

"Festival First Nowell" | arr. Dan Forrest

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir with the Brass Ensemble

At the direction of the conductor, the congregation will join on the final verse.

Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heav'nly Lord, that hath made heav'n and earth of nought, and with His blood we all are bought: Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Born is the King of Israel.

The Offering and Offertory Anthem | Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby
"O Holy Night" | arr. John Rutter
Sung by the Sanctuary Choir with Callie Waller, soprano

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

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

Wednesday, January 7 | Churchwide Chili BINGO*

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

Friday, January 9 | Church Family Night at Athens Rock Lobsters Hockey Game*

Wednesday, January 14 | Wednesday Night Programming Begins*

**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
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Rev. Montana Hamby | Associate Minister
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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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