



CHRISTMAS

at Athens First UMC

CANDLELIGHT HOLY COMMUNION

December 24, 2025 | 11:00 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.

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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 has been given to the Glory of God by Arlyn and Al Hawley.

The Prelude

“The Nativity” | Jean Langlais

Raina Wood, Organist

The Welcome and Call to Worship | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light.

For unto us a child is born

unto us a Son is given.

His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Glory to God in the highest

and peace to his people on earth.

The Prayer

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 to 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 Offering and Offertory Anthem | Rev. Natalee Dukes Hamby

“O Holy Night” | arr. John Rutter

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir with Callie Waller, soprano; Rachael Fischer and Molly Schneider, violin; Rebecca Floyd, viola; Eunice Kang, cello; Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

The Scripture Reading | Luke 2:1-20

The Christmas Message | Rev. Jeremy Lawson

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets.

In the fullness of time, you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to be our Savior, and at his birth the angels sang glory to you in the highest and peace to your people on earth. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sung: **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name, who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem and there found no room, so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected. As in the poverty of a stable Jesus was born, so by the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

As your Word became flesh, born of woman, on that night long ago, so, on the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine*. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and for ever.

Sung: **Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.**

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, given for you.

Sung: **Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.**

*During the singing, those serving communion are invited to the Chancel. *In the United Methodist Church, grape juice is used for the Sacrament of Holy Communion.*

The Receiving of the Bread and Cup

At Athens First United Methodist Church, all are invited to commune at Christ's table. If you need to be served in your pew, please call this to the attention of an usher. Gluten-free communion elements are available.

The Music for Communion

"Still, Still, Still" | arr. Mack Wilberg

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir with the String Quartet

The Prayer after Communion | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. By the birth of your holy child Jesus, you have given us a great light to dawn on our darkness. Grant that in his light we may see light. Bestow upon us the most excellent Christmas gift of love to all people, so that the likeness of your Son may be formed in us, and that we may have the ever-brightening hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

*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
jeremy@athensfirstumc.org | 404-304-3574

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

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.

CCS #12591 • CCLI #1097880

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