The background features a stylized illustration of three fish in grey and black outlines, swimming in various directions. These fish are framed by thick red lines that form a partial border on the left and bottom. A solid red circle is positioned in the upper left, and another is in the lower right.

ATHENS FIRST  
UNITED  
METHODIST  
CHURCH

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*Second Sunday after the Epiphany*

January 18, 2026

9:30 & 11:00 A.M.

# *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 honor and celebration of** all volunteers of Athens First United Methodist Church, who serve faithfully, bringing our ministries to life.

## **GATHERING**

### *The Prelude*

"Prelude on 'As a Star on Cloudless Evenings'" | Richard Proulx  
Raina Wood, Organist

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

## **PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING**

### *\*The Processional Hymn*

UMH 519 "Lift Every Voice and Sing" | LIFT EVERY VOICE

*\*The Affirmation of Faith | "The Apostles' Creed"*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*\*The Gloria Patri | MEINEKE*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

*\*The Passing of the Peace*

*The Responsive Psalm | Psalm 97 | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson*

*Choir: Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring. Let them resound loud as the rolling sea.*

The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!

**Clouds and thick darkness surround the Lord; righteousness and justice are the foundation of God's throne.**

Fire goes before the Lord, and burns up his adversaries round about.

**The Lord's lightnings illumine the world; the earth sees and trembles.**

The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth.

**The heavens proclaim God's righteousness and all the peoples behold God's glory.**

Sung: **Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring. Let them resound loud as the rolling sea.**

All worshippers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before the Lord.

**Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice, because of your judgements, O God.**

For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.

**The Lord loves those who hate evil, preserves the lives of the faithful, and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.**

Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.

**Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to God's holy name!**

Sung: **Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring. Let them resound loud as the rolling sea.**

### *The Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer*

**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 474 "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" | PRECIOUS LORD

*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 Room 320.*

### *The Offering and Offertory Anthem*

"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" | Eric H. Thiman

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir; Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

*The text of this anthem can be found on page 103 of The United Methodist Hymnal.*

### *\*The Doxology* | LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

## PROCLAMATION

*The Scripture Reading* | John 1:29-42

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

*The Message* | Rev. Jeremy Lawson

“Pointing in the Right Direction”

## RESPONSE

*\*The Hymn of Response*

TFWS 2130 “The Summons” | KELVINGROVE

*\*The Blessing and Choral Benediction*

“The Lord Bless You and Keep You” | Peter Lutkin

*The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord lift his countenance upon you and give you peace; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious. The Lord be gracious unto you. Amen.*

*\*The Postlude*

“Allegro” from *Concerto No. 2 in A Major* | Johann Gottfried Walther



## College and Young Adult Ministry

College and Young Adult Ministry is returning for the semester, and we can't wait to gather again. At 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings join us for our College & Grad Sunday School or our new Young Adult Sunday School designed specifically for those in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties navigating balancing work, life, and faith. Wednesday Nights our College and Young Adult Small Group returns at 6:30 p.m., with free dinner beginning at 5:30 p.m. Today, Sunday Lunch is BACK! See you at Noon in Hancock Hall for a free lunch, reflection on the sermon, and connection.

Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby, Associate Minister  
[natalee@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:natalee@athensfirstumc.org)



## WND | Cookies and Cocoa

Join us for cookie decorating and hot cocoa on **Wednesday, January 21**, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. during Wednesday Night Dinner. Come in, grab a cup of hot cocoa to warm up, have some dinner, and for dessert, decorate a cookie sponsored by Students at Athens First! Bring a friend and enjoy a fun night!

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



## Women's Conference | January 31

Join us for our Women's Conference on **Saturday, January 31, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. in Hancock Hall** with guest speaker Laura Whitaker. Laura is the CEO of ESP, Inc., Co-Founder of Java Joy, and Author of The Joy Exchange. ESP is an Athens-based nonprofit that serves individuals with disabilities and their families through inclusive programs that foster belonging, purpose, and community. A passionate advocate, speaker, and leader, Laura brings a powerful faith-filled perspective shaped by her work, relationships, and lived experience. Join us for a meaningful morning of worship, reflection, and connection as we explore how God calls us to live with purpose and compassion in our everyday lives. The cost to attend is \$20 per participant. **Register today by scanning the QR Code in The Steeple.**

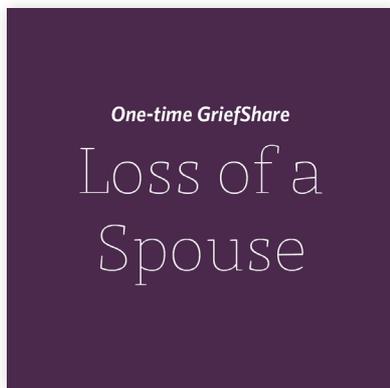
Rev. Lisa Lawrenz, Director of Small Groups | [lisa@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:lisa@athensfirstumc.org)



## Faith Milestone | February 1

All Grade 2 students and their parents or special grown-ups are invited to join us on **Sunday, February 1, at 9:30 a.m.** to learn about the meaning and history of Holy Communion. We will explore and sample the elements and make a keepsake to remember the day. Afterwards, at our 11:00 a.m. worship service, kids will join their families to celebrate Communion together. **Please register by scanning the QR Code in The Steeple.**

Traci Lowry, Director of Kids at Athens First | [traci@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:traci@athensfirstumc.org)



## Loss of a Spouse Seminar | January 25

If you are grieving the loss of a spouse, help is here and hope is possible. Join us on **Sunday, January 25**, for GriefShare: Loss Of A Spouse.

This two hour seminar offers help to grieving spouses through video presentation and group support. We will enjoy lunch together and participate in a time of learning and fellowship. There is no cost to attend Loss Of A Spouse. Register online at [GriefShare.com](http://GriefShare.com) or by calling the church office.

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



## Sungjoo Kim, Organist | February 1

Join us **Sunday, February 1 at 3:00 p.m.** in the Sanctuary for an inspiring afternoon of music with virtuoso Washington D.C. based organist, Sungjoo Kim. The program features Alexandre Guilmant's powerful *Organ Sonata No. 1 - Symphony in D Minor*, a cornerstone of the Romantic organ repertoire, along with settings of beloved hymns and works by Johann Sebastian Bach and Max Reger.

*Reception in Hancock Hall following the concert.*

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

## CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED | MONDAY, JANUARY 19

The church office will be closed tomorrow, January 19, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Regular office hours will resume on Tuesday, January 20.

## MEMBER NEWS

### Sympathy

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Rev. Richard Huycke and his family in the loss of his brother, Jay Huycke, on December 21.

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Robert Miles and his family in the loss of his sister, Bernadette Phifer, on January 6.



**JANUARY 21: Fried Chicken** served with green beans, scalloped potatoes, and a roll.  
Register by noon on Tuesday | Scan the Steeple QR Code to register online or Call the Church Office.

**HOT COCOA & COOKIE DECORATING!**

## FINANCIAL REPORT | ([finance@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:finance@athensfirstumc.org)):

As of December 31, 2025 **FINAL**

**2025 YTD Budget:** \$3,363,844 | **YTD Actual Giving:** \$3,665,096 | **YTD Actual Expenses:** \$3,598,310

As of January 13, 2026

**2026 YTD Actual Giving:** \$190,936 | **YTD Actual Expenses:** \$24,962

### 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. Montana Hamby** | Associate Minister  
[montana@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:montana@athensfirstumc.org) | 770-633-3140

**Rev. Dr. 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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