



# ATHENS FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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*First Sunday in Lent*

February 22, 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 loving memory of** Barbara and Bob Carson by their family.

## **GATHERING**

### *The Prelude*

“Prelude on Psalm 118:19” | Douglas Wagner

*Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord.*

Raina Wood, Organist

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

### *The Call to Worship*

Minister: Return to the Lord your God,

**All: for God is gracious.**

Minister: Confess to the Lord your God,

**All: for God is merciful.**

Minister: Repent to the Lord your God,

**All: for God is slow to anger.**

Minister: Praise the Lord your God,

**All: for God abounds in steadfast love.**

Minister: Worship the Lord Your God.

**All: Let us worship God with humility and hope.**

## PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

### *\*The Processional Hymn*

UMH 529 "How Firm a Foundation" | FOUNDATION

### *\*The Prayer of Confession*

Let us confess our sin before God and one another.

**Forgive us, O God, for the harm we have caused others, for the times we have turned away from you, and for the ways we have rejected your love and mercy. Forty days, or even forty years would not be sufficient to make up for all the sins of humankind. But your grace is sufficient for us. Forgive us, O God, and invite us to begin again. Help us to uncover what we hide and to heal what is broken. Call us to follow you and we will accept your loving offer to become a new creation, called and reclaimed in the Spirit of your love.**

*All pray in silence.*

If we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! Glory to God. Amen.**

### *\*The Kyrie | Antonin Dvorak*

Translation: *Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.*

**Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Christe, Christe eleison. Christe, Christe eleison.**  
**Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie eleison, eleison.**

### *\*The Passing of the Peace*

### *The Sacrament of Baptism | 11:00 a.m.*

Elizabeth Kearney Butler, daughter of Caroline and Ben Butler and granddaughter of Rev. Betsy Butler and Rhett Butler

**Elizabeth, Elizabeth, God claims you, God helps you, protects you, and loves you too. We this day do all agree a child of God you'll always be. Elizabeth, Elizabeth, God claims you, God helps you, protects you, and loves you too.**

*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 452 "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" | OLIVET

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*

"Come to Me" | Dan Forrest

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir; Eunice Kang, cello; Alex Gilliam, tenor

Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

*Come to Me, all you who labor, and I will give you rest. Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and you will find rest for your souls. Come, My Child, learn my heart, for I am gentle and lowly.*

*See how great My love for you, that I have called you My child.*

Text based on Matthew 11: 25, 28-29; 2 Corinthians 6:18; 1 John 3:1

### \**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* | Psalm 32

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

*The Message* | Rev. Jeremy Lawson  
“It’s Time to Fess Up”

## RESPONSE

*\*The Hymn of Response*

UMH 140 “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” | FAITHFULNESS

*\*The Blessing*

*\*The Congregational Response*

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross” | NEAR THE CROSS

All singing: **Near the cross, O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me; help me walk from day to day with its shadow o'er me. In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever, till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.**

*\*The Postlude*

“Little Prelude and Fugue in G Major” | Johann Sebastian Bach



## Special Offering | Today

A special offering for the North Georgia Housing and Homeless Council will be taken up this morning. This administrative agency of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church works in partnership with churches and organizations to provide safe, affordable housing. One hundred percent of your gift will directly support ministries to assist individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness. A gift of any amount will help bring hope to neighbors in need as we work to ensure all individuals in North Georgia have access to safe shelter. Learn more at [www.nghhc.org](http://www.nghhc.org) and donate today.

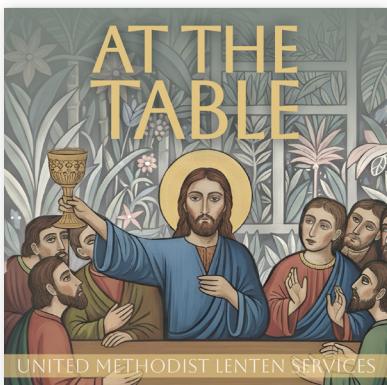


## Sungjoo Kim, Organ | Today at 3:00 p.m.

Join us 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)



## At the Table | February 25

Join us throughout Lent as we journey alongside our sister United Methodist Churches in the Athens area through a weekday sermon series titled **At the Table**. You are invited to join us each Wednesday in Lent at **noon** for a brief worship service and light lunch. This is an incredible opportunity to grow in faith together within our United Methodist connection. This experience brings us together with the congregations and leaders of Watkinsville First United Methodist Church, Tuckston UMC Athens, Johnson UMC, Princeton UMC, Winterville United Methodist Church, Bogart United Methodist Church, and Oconee Street United Methodist Church. Be sure to mark your calendars for **February 25** when Rev. Mike Selleck will be preaching at the Wednesday service hosted by Athens First UMC!

**Quick Links |** This QR code will allow you to quickly access information for events, giving, prayer, and more.



## Rainforest Falls VBS | June 1-4

Save the date for Rainforest Falls VBS! Rainforest Falls promises a week of wonder as kids explore the powerful nature of God! Through life-changing Bible stories, the coolest animal buddies, and joyful worship, they'll discover who God is and how to stay rooted in His love.

**Registration is now open! Scan the QR Code in The Steeple to register to volunteer and to participate in Rainforest Falls VBS!**

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



## Summer Music and Arts | July 6-9

Save the Date for Summer Music and Arts Week 2026! We will present the musical "Storms" by Mark Burrows! Where is God in the storms of life? This musical tells the story of a group of children who wonder if they have what it takes to weather storms in their lives. Camp dates are **July 6 through 9** from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with a performance on **Thursday, July 9, at 3:00 p.m. in Hancock Hall**. Music and Arts is open to kids in rising Grade 1 through rising Grade 6. Registration is open! Scan the QR Code in The Steeple to register!

Janis Maxwell, Director of Children and Youth Music  
[janis@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:janis@athensfirstumc.org)



## Easter Extravaganza | March 25

Join us for our annual Easter Extravaganza on **Wednesday, March 25**, at Oconee Veterans Park! Bring your picnic blanket, camping chair, family, and friends for an evening filled with fun and fellowship for all ages.

### Event Details:

**5:15 p.m.** | Enjoy a Chick-fil-A dinner, fellowship, and yard games.

**6:00 p.m.** | Children's egg hunt and Student Ministry fun begins.

**Registration will open on Wednesday, February 25.**

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

## MEMBER NEWS

### Sympathy

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to family and friends in the loss of Elizabeth Rose Fenchak on February 9.

### New Members

On February 15, we welcomed Carolyn and Doug Bieniek, Sarah Miller, Kara and Steven Purvis, Mark Stowe, Delaney Weaver, and Ann Vickers to the Athens First United Methodist Church family.

### Baptisms

We celebrate that Dewey Otis "Skip" Shurling, son of Kaeti and Nick Shurling, received the sacrament of baptism on February 8. Skip is the grandson of Tammy and Duke Lindsay.

We celebrate that Robert Miles Heath, son of Janeanna and Landon Heath, received the sacrament of baptism on February 8. Robert is the grandson of Kaki and Steve Heath.



**FEBRUARY 25: Baked Chicken** served with lima beans, mashed potatoes, and a roll.  
Register by noon on Tuesday | Scan the Steeple QR Code to register online or Call the Church Office.

### FINANCIAL REPORT As of February 17, 2026 ([finance@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:finance@athensfirstumc.org)):

**2026 Budget:** \$3,055,000 | **YTD Actual Giving:** \$431,170 | **YTD Actual Expenses:** \$392,894

### 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. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby** | Associate Minister  
[natalee@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:natalee@athensfirstumc.org) | 404-414-1701

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

**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).