

The background features a stylized illustration of three fish in grey outlines, swimming in a purple frame. The fish are arranged in a cluster, with one larger fish at the top and two smaller ones below it. The purple frame consists of thick, solid lines forming a partial border around the fish. There are also several solid purple circles of varying sizes scattered throughout the design.

ATHENS FIRST
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH

Second Sunday in Lent

March 1, 2026
9:30 & 11:00 A.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 Dr. Powell Stephens, Mr. and Mrs. Howell C. Erwin, Jr., Mr. Howell C. Erwin III, and Mr. and Mrs. Steve Erwin by their family.

GATHERING

The Prelude

“There is a Balm in Gilead” | Richard Proulx
Raina Wood, Organist

The Welcome and Opening Prayer | Rev. Montana Hamby

The Call to Worship

“Jesus, Lover of My Soul” | arr. Karen Roth
Rung by the Athens First Ringers; Erin Towe, Music Assistant

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

**The Processional Hymn*

UMH 479 “Jesus, Lover of My Soul” | ABERYSTWYTH

**The Prayer of Confession*

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All pray in silence.

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that proves God's love toward us. 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 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 Offering and Offertory Anthem

"Jesus, Lover of My Soul" | Philip W. J. Stopford

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

The text for this anthem may be found in the The United Methodist Hymnal No. 479.

**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 121

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

The Message | “Help Is on The Way” | Rev. Jeremy Lawson

The Second Grade Communion Milestone | 11:00 a.m.

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 formed us in your image, delivered us from captivity, and made covenant to be our sovereign God. 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. 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. 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 forever.

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 in the Narthex.

RESPONSE

**The Hymn of Response*

UMH 117 "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" | ST. ANNE

**The Blessing and 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*

"Allegro Vivace" from Sonata No. 6 'The Lord's Prayer' | Felix Mendelssohn



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 is now open. Scan the QR Code in The Steeple to let us know you are coming!

Traci Lowry, Director of Kids at Athens First
traci@athensfirstumc.org



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



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



The Heartthrobs Luncheon | March 4

The Heartthrobs will hold their quarterly luncheon on **Wednesday, March 4, at 11:45 a.m. at Hilltop Grille.**

This month's speaker is Dr. Mark Firth, an internal medicine specialist in Athens, Georgia. Dr. Firth earned his medical degree from the Medical College of Georgia and has been in practice for more than 40 years.

The cost is \$15 per person, payable by cash or check at the luncheon. Please register by **Monday, March 2.** If you have any questions, please reach out to the event coordinators

Jud Guest | jguest@ladtrucklines.com

Joe Block | joetblock@gmail.com



New Member Class | March 4

Ready to take the next step into membership at Athens First UMC? Our New Member Class is designed to help you connect, ask questions, and discern your place in the life of our church. These classes are offered monthly, alternating between Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, to make it easy to participate.

Our next class meets Wednesday, March 4, at 6:15 p.m., and will be led by Rev. Mike Selleck. You'll meet others preparing for membership, learn more about who we are, and explore what it means to a United Methodist at Athens First.

We'd love to have you join us as you take this next step!

Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby, Associate Minister
natalee@athensfirstumc.org



Choral Evensong | March 15 at 5:00 p.m.

Experience the beauty and stillness of Evensong— a peaceful, music-filled evening service rooted in the ancient Christian tradition of sung evening prayer. Led by the AFUMC Chamber Ensemble and Organist Raina Wood, this service offers scripture, prayer, and choral music that invites reflection and rest as we transition from day to the quiet of the evening.

Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship
ryan@athensfirstumc.org

MEMBER NEWS

Baptisms

We celebrate that Elizabeth Kearney Butler, daughter of Caroline and Ben Butler and granddaughter of Rev. Betsy Butler and Rhett Butler, received the sacrament of baptism on February 22.

Birthday

We celebrate that Mary Larkey will turn 100 years old on March 5.



MARCH 4: Spaghetti and meatballs served with a side salad and garlic bread.
Register by noon on Tuesday | Scan the Steeple QR Code to register online or Call the Church Office.

FINANCIAL REPORT As of February 24, 2026 (finance@athensfirstumc.org):

2026 Budget: \$3,055,000 | **YTD Actual Giving:** \$520,485 | **YTD Actual Expenses:** \$418,881

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

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.

CCS #12591 • CCLI #1097880

ATHENS FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
327 N LUMPKIN ST. ATHENS, GA 30601 • 706-543-1442 | athensfirstumc.org