



First Presbyterian Church of Athens

In response to God's grace, the mission of First Presbyterian Church is to create a community where people seek the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, rejoice in worship, and go forth sharing the love of Christ with Athens and the world!

December 3, 2017
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.
First Sunday of Advent

GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

Welcome to all who are worshipping with us. As we enter a holy space this morning, **please silence your cell phone.** The nursery is available downstairs during both services. Consult an usher if you need a personal hearing device, large-print bulletin or large-print hymnal.

Greeting

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

Prelude

Reprise

Paul Manz

Words of Welcome and Concerns of the Church

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

8:45 a.m. Charlie Logan, 11th Grader, Henry Logan, 9th Grader,
Cheryl and Chris Gazlay, Inquirers

11:00 a.m. Lorenzo Fischetti, 5th Grader,
Mike Castronis and Luke Christie, New Voices

Congregational Response

VENI EMMANUEL

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

*Hymn 2

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

HYFRYDOL

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

**O God, you promise to reveal your glory to us, but we are
distracted by our fears and preoccupied with our partisanships.
Open our eyes and hearts to the Advent blessings in our midst.
Through the guidance of your Spirit, lead each one of us in
the pathways that make for peace. In the name of Emmanuel,
God with Us, we pray.**

*Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

*Assurance of Pardon

*Those who are able may stand.

The congregation is invited to speak or sing the liturgy in **bold** type.

Please sign and pass the Fellowship Pad.

This Advent season we welcome members of our Sunday School classes and the hand-bell choir to light the Advent wreath.

FPC 2nd Graders are our Communion Helpers. Bringing in the bread and cup today are Wallace Michalek and Declan Wilder.

With its opening "Come," Hymn 2 sounds the note of entreaty and invitation that characterizes the Advent season (from the Latin *adventus* = "coming"). Its blending of memory and hope helps us to give voice to our present faith as we stand between the past and the future.

***Congregational Response**

Hymn 3, Stanza 1

**Comfort, comfort you my people,
tell of peace, thus says our God;
comfort those who sit in darkness
bowed beneath oppression's load.
Speak you to Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell them that their sins I cover,
and their warfare now is over.**

Worshippers may greet each other by saying, "The peace of Christ be with you," and responding, "And also with you."

***Passing of the Peace**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you.

11:00 a.m. Sacrament of Baptism

Receiving the sacrament of baptism is Sawyer William Griffeth, son of Lindsey and Andrew Griffeth.

***Question to the Congregation**

Do we, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture Sawyer by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging him to know and follow Christ? If so, please stand.

***Affirmation of Faith** The Apostles' Creed Hymnal, p.14

Baptism Hymn 498 Child of Blessing, Child of Promise KINGDOM

After the baptism at the 11:00 a.m. service, children, ages Pre-K - grade 1, are invited to Children's Church held in the Children's Ministry Suite.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Congregational Prayer for Illumination Hymn 68, Stanza 3

**O Jesus, while the star of grace impels us on to seek your face,
let not our slothful hearts refuse the guidance of your light to use.**

First Lesson Psalm 100:1-5, page 541

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Second Lesson John 1:1-13, page 968

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon Christmas at the Movies: "A Christmas Carol"

Dr. Bruce Lancaster

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

***Hymn 5** Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence PICARDY

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

8:45 a.m. Offertory Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence Charles Callahan

11:00 a.m. Offertory E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come Paul Manz

Peace be to you and grace from him who freed us from our sins,
who loved us all and shed his blood that we might saved be.

Sing holy, holy to our Lord, the Lord, Almighty God,
who was and is and is to come; sing holy, holy Lord!

Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein, rejoice on earth ye saints below,
for Christ is coming, is coming soon, for Christ is coming soon!

E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, and night shall be no more;

they need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their All!

The flowering of English hymnody in the 19th century included the rediscovery, translation, and versification of ancient Christian hymns, such as Hymn 5, from one of the earliest existing Christian liturgies. It is set here to an adaptation of a 17th-century French melody.

***Doxology**

Hymn 592

**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.**

***Prayer of Dedication**

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

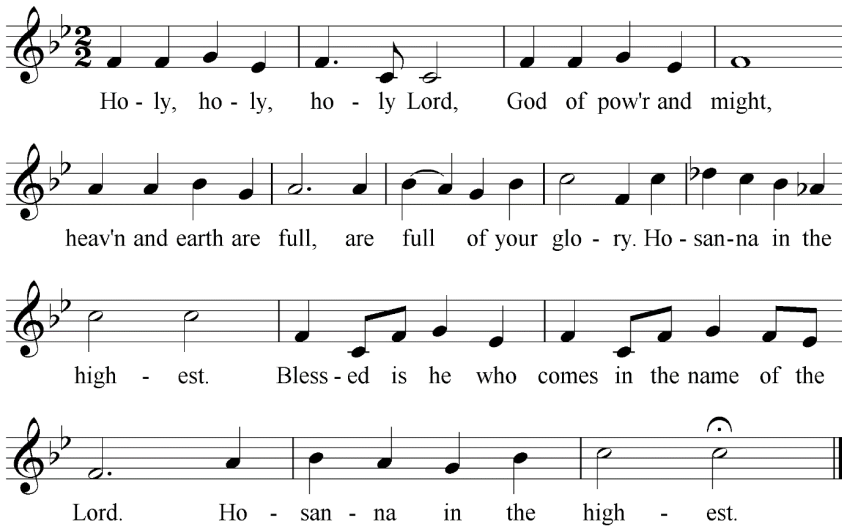
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise...

"...with all the company of heaven and earth we praise your holy name singing:"



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full, are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san-na in the
high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

"...Great is the mystery of faith:"



Christ has died, Christ is ris - en, Christ will come a - gain.

"...all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, forever and ever."



A - men, A - men, A - men.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymnal, p. 16

... and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. . .

Breaking of the Bread and Giving of the Cup

Communion of the People

Prayer after Communion

The musical setting of the communion liturgy was written by American composer Hal Hopson.

8:45 a.m. – Communion will be served by intinction. Please come forward to receive the bread and dip it into the cup.

11:00 a.m. – Please partake as you are served.

The cup in the center of each plate contains gluten-free bread.

SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

Following worship, all are invited for a time of fellowship and refreshments in the Atrium.

***Hymn 8** Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates TRURO

Called Congregational Meeting

***Benediction**

***Congregational Response** VENI EMMANUEL, refrain
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

***Postlude** Savior of the Nations, Come Johann Sebastian Bach

Texts and music for hymns and sung responses reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-714861

A special word of welcome to our guests: thank you for joining us for worship this morning. Please fill out the fellowship pad so that we may be in touch. We are delighted you are here and look forward to seeing you again.

Nurseries for infants and toddlers, available from 8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., are located next to the Children's Ministry Suite and are accessible down the stairs in the Atrium and through the glass door.

To pick up your child from Children's Church after the 11:00 a.m. service, please go through the Atrium to Fellowship Hall. A Children's Church teacher will meet you there.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

WORSHIP LEADERS

Liturgists:

8:45 a.m. Carol Strickland

11:00 a.m. Carol Strickland

Baptismal Elder: Lawton Stephens

Acolytes:

11:00 a.m. Cate DeMaria, Sam Seward

Lay Readers:

8:45 a.m. Bill Woolbright

11:00 a.m. Susan Stone

USHERS

8:45 a.m. John A. Simpson (head),
Charlie Logan, Henry Logan, David Magrino

11:00 a.m. Jimmy Klein (head),
Sandra Kays, Stan Kays, Brenda Klein,
Robert Simmons, Fred Wallace

GREETERS

8:45 a.m. Carla Buss, Carroll Gaillard,
Diane Hartzell

11:00 a.m. Jayne Bailey, Tom Landrum,
Melinda Miller

FELLOWSHIP HOST: Susan Ferguson

FLOWERS

Today's flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Walter Whitener Wilfong, Sr. and Ophelia Avery Wilfong by the Wilfong family.

We have a rosebud in honor of the birth of Louisa Jane Jackson on November 26, 2017. Louisa is the daughter of Lanier and Anne Jackson and the granddaughter of Tommy and Sydney Jackson.

TO AID IN WORSHIP

If you need to leave the sanctuary during the service, a live video feed is available in the Atrium.

Available in the narthex or from an usher:

- **Personal hearing receivers** usable anywhere in the sanctuary
- **Large-print** hymnals, Bibles, bulletins, and hymnsheets
- **Sermons** from the previous six weeks

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Prayer requests can be submitted to the church office, 706-543-4338, by the Prayer Request link on our church website (firstpresathens.org) or on the prayer cards in the fellowship pads.

ADVENT SERMON SERIES

During Advent, FPC is going to the movies. Our Sunday sermons will highlight popular holiday films, seeing how these Christmas stories intertwine with "THE" Christmas story.

2nd Sunday of Advent, December 10, "Elf"

3rd Sunday of Advent, December 17, 8:45 & 11:00 a.m., A Festival of Lessons & Carols

4th Sunday of Advent, December 24, 8:45 & 11:00 a.m., "It's a Wonderful Life"

Christmas Eve, December 24, 6:00 & 8:00 p.m., "Miracle on 34th Street"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOLIDAY BENEVOLENCE MARKET

Today, 9:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Shop between and after services today! There is a table set up in the Atrium for handling purchases. Cash, checks, and credit cards will be accepted. Shop for “symbolic gifts” from 29 local nonprofits to give to friends, relatives, and teachers this Christmas. Shopping lists will also be available in the Atrium through December 31.

CHRISTMAS GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

The Ark is launching a drive benefiting foster families who will have a new family member arrive in the near future! There will be a donation box in the Atrium until December 5 with a list of items needed on the box.

The **Salvation Army Angel Tree** is in Fellowship Hall. All gifts are due December 7.

Casa Baskets provide food for a special Christmas meal. You may donate \$40.00 marked, “Casa Baskets” by December 2 or fill a basket or other reusable container with the items found on our website by December 9.

Please see firstpresathens.org for details on all these ways to help others this Christmas season.

PROJECT SAFE VOLUNTEER WORK DAY

December 4, 10:00 a.m.

Please join our team from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. sorting clothes and other items for sale to benefit victims of domestic violence. To volunteer or for questions please contact Kitty Donnan (kittydavedonnan@gmail.com).

PARADE OF LIGHTS HOSPITALITY

December 7, 5:00 p.m.

We will provide hospitality at the front of the church for the Downtown Athens Parade of Lights. We will offer refreshments to participants and attendees, and our restrooms will be open to the public. To help, please contact Christian Cordon at christiancordonrome@gmail.com.

MESSIAH SING-ALONG

December 11, 7:00 p.m.

Everyone is invited to join local congregations and sing along or just enjoy this Christmas music favorite. Singers, please arrive at 6:30 p.m. Oconee Presbyterian Church, 2601 Hog Mountain Rd., Watkinsville.

SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY CHRISTMAS TEA

December 14, 2:00 p.m.

All senior adults are cordially invited to a festive tea party and time of fellowship. Please RSVP to the church office by December 7 at 706-543-4338 or frontdesk@firstpresathens.org.

A FESTIVAL OF LESSONS & CAROLS

December 17, 8:45 & 11:00 a.m.

This special service will include Advent and Christmas carols and hymns sung by the Chancel Choir, the Celebration Singers, and the congregation. This promises to be a meaningful part of our preparation to celebrate again the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

December 17

Each year we celebrate the gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. By giving to this offering, you honor this gift by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.

COMMITMENT SUNDAY UPDATE

The early response to Commitment Sunday has been good. Thank you to everyone who has already pledged.

There are still a number of members from whom we hope to hear. It will help our church leaders plan the 2018 budget if we can receive pledge cards prior to year-end. You may turn in your pledge in the offering plate, in the church office, or you may pledge online. Thank you for prayerfully considering your pledge.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT AND DINNER

December 10, 5:00 p.m.

Our children will lead us in this special tradition for the whole church family, followed by dinner in Fellowship Hall. Parents, please bring your children to the Children’s Ministry Suite by 4:30 p.m. There will also be a rehearsal at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 9 in the Sanctuary.

Please make your reservation for the dinner on the Fellowship Pad, online, or with the church office **by Monday, December 4 at 12:00 p.m.** \$8 for adults, \$5 children and students, \$20 max per family.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School Classes are available for all ages and meet 9:45-10:40 a.m.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

Children's Ministry Suite • Infants - 5th Grade

Director of Children's Ministries: Natalie Bishop

Nursery Volunteer & Staff Coordinator: Jennifer Abbott

Infants • Nursery Baby Room

Room Lead: Rita Raines

Toddlers - Preschoolers • Nursery Playroom

Room Lead: Mary Smith

Our toddler and preschooler curriculum is Group Publishing's Play-n-Worship. It is filled with music, activities, and storyboards that encourage little ones to interact with Bible stories.

Children's Sunday Morning Music: Garland Ryder

Pre-Kindergarten - 5th Grade

Our elementary aged children will experience Godly Play during Sunday School. Godly Play helps children to explore their faith through story, to gain religious language, and to grow their spiritual experience through wonder and play.

Pre-Kindergarten - Kindergarten • Room 127

Godly Play Guides: Susan Ferguson, Karen Phillips, Heather Roberts, Dan Trier

1st Grade - 2nd Grade • Room 126

Godly Play Guides: Jennifer Abbott, Mary Elizabeth McConnell, Carmen Meadows

3rd Grade • Room 125

Godly Play Guides: Greta Covington, Madie Fischetti, Cathi Lancaster, Chuck Roberts

4th Grade - 5th Grade • Room 124

Godly Play Guides: Jody Corry, Denise Horton, Matt Jones

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

Christian Issues • Room 310

Study of the book, Judges Returning to God by Donald Baker.

Coordinator: Sandy Boyles

Inquirers • Moses Waddel Room

Thoughtful introspection and lively group discussion covering contemporary issues and daily Christian living.

- December 3 - DVD, The Old Testament, by Amy-Jill Levine.
- December 10 - Terry Nestor reading children's Christmas books.

Facilitators: Carl Bergmann, Carla Buss

Living on a Prayer • Room 303

Study of the book, Sabbath in the Suburbs by MaryAnn McKibben-Dana. Socials outside of class.

Facilitators: Bryans, Holloways, McConnells

New Voices • Room 308

Study of the book, Short Stories by Jesus by Amy-Jill Levine.

Led by: Lewis Hudgins, Christine Register

W. D. Hooper • Room 309

Study of the Acts of the Apostles with other books of the New Testament to follow.

Led by: Richard Stone

Wayne F. Middendorf Men's Bible Class

Bride's Room, Tinsley Stern

Study of the Gospel of Matthew.

Teacher: John Kipp

Women's Bible Class • Room 301

Study of Micah, one of the minor prophets, followed by a study of Hebrews.

Teacher: Wanda Wilcox

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR YOUTH - The PIT

Director of Youth Ministries: Kim Ness

MIDDLE SCHOOL – re:form

Lounging on bean bags, our MS class will use the re:form curriculum - creative, funny animated videos and group activities - to engage in tough faith questions. Teachers: Jordan Osborne, Erik Ness

9th GRADE CONFIRMATION – CnC (Confirm not Conform)

This year we are using a confirmation program that celebrates questions and choices. Together, we will create a space where youth can explore the breadth of the Christian tradition, ask questions, express doubts, and discover what they truly believe. This is a year-long class with Confirmation on May 20. Teacher: Kim Ness, Robbie Bryan

HIGH SCHOOL – d365

The demands of high school can feel overwhelming, but finding just a few minutes each day to connect to God can help lighten the load. This year we'll take time to pause-listen-think-pray-go on a different verse from scripture using the app d365.org as our guide. On the fourth Sunday of the month, the high school class will also meet with Natalie Bishop to help plan and lead Children's Church.

Teacher: Megan Bawcum

THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 3 - 1st Sunday of Advent, Communion Sunday, Food Sunday

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Bruce Lancaster preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 12:05 p.m. Fellowship, Atrium
- 12:45 p.m. CPR Training, Moses Waddel Room
- 12:15 p.m. Ski Trip Meeting, The PIT
- 4:00 p.m. Cherub Choir, Room 203
- 4:00 p.m. St. Andrews Choir, Room 202
- 5:00 p.m. Celebration Singers, Room 202
- 6:00 p.m. David LaMotte concert and dinner, Presbyterian Student Center

Monday, December 4

- 9:05 a.m. Weekday School Chapel, Sanctuary
- 10:00 a.m. Circle 2, Home of Beth Collins, 130 Cherokee Forest Dr.
- 10:00 a.m. Project Safe Volunteer Work Day, Bell's Shopping Center, 995 Hawthorne Ave.
- 4:00 p.m. Worship & Music Commission Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, Room 205

Tuesday, December 5

- 2:00 p.m. Circle 3/4, Home of Kitty Donnan, 1050 Simonton Way
- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 1:30 p.m. Knitting Purls, Room 304
- 2:00 p.m. The Mellows, Arbor Terrace, 170 Marilyn Farmer Way
- 6:00 p.m. Stephen Ministry Training, Moses Waddel Room
- 7:00 p.m. Circle 6, Home of Ann Dunn, 425 Southview Dr.

Wednesday, December 6

- 10:45 a.m. Weekday School Pre-K Christmas Program & Cookie Swap
- 11:30 a.m. Bookless Book Group, Mama's Boy, 8851 Macon Hwy., Unit 403
- 12:00 p.m. Weekday School Ballet, Atrium
- 12:00 p.m. Our Daily Bread, Oconee Street United Methodist Church, 595 Oconee St.
- 12:30 p.m. Prayers for Healing, Sanctuary
- 3:00 p.m. Bridge, Room 302
- 4:30 p.m. Gentle Yoga, Room 310
- 4:30 p.m. Fellowship & Evangelism Commission Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

Thursday, December 7

- 10:00 a.m. Josephine Paine Bible Study, Staff Conference Room
- 12:05 p.m. Weekday School Committee Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 2:00 p.m. Congregational Care Commission Meeting, Pastor's Conference Room
- 5:00 p.m. Downtown Athens Parade of Lights Hospitality, Atrium

Saturday, December 9

- 9:00 a.m. Christmas Pageant Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 10:00 a.m. Stated Session Meeting, Moses Waddel Room

Sunday, December 10 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Bruce Lancaster preaching

LOOKING AHEAD

December 10 - Christmas Pageant & Dinner, 5:00 p.m.

December 11 - Messiah Sing-Along, Oconee Presbyterian Church, 7:00 p.m.

December 14 - Senior Adult Ministry Christmas Tea, 2:00 p.m.

December 17 - A Festival of Lessons & Carols, 8:45 and 11:00 a.m.
Christmas Joy Offering
Adult Sunday School Social, 9:45 a.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Bruce Lancaster, Moderator Jerris Hayes, Clerk of Session
Carol Strickland, Associate Pastor

CLASS OF 2017

Allen Crowell
Don DeMaria
Susan Ferguson
Madie Fischetti
Jerris Hayes
Joy Holloway
Diane Hudgins
Mike Morris
Jerry Rogers
Ella Stewart

CLASS OF 2018

Joe Attaway
David Cole
Jason Doornbos
Sue Gray
Mark Harrison
Denise Horton
Christine Register
Arlene Shirley
Harry Shuford
Richard Stone

CLASS OF 2019

Robbie Bryan
Greta Terrell Covington
DeeAnn Cox
Mary Havick
Joe Hermanowicz
Richard Lane
Mary Peace
Lawton Stephens
Dan Trier

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Bruce Lancaster, Interim Senior Pastor
Dr. Carol Strickland, Associate Pastor
Dr. John Kipp, Parish Associate
The Reverend Bob Googe, Parish Associate
Dr. John Coble, Director of Music and Organist
Mrs. Kim Ness, Director of Youth Ministries
Mrs. Natalie Bishop, Director of Children's Ministries
Mrs. Elaine Johnson, Director of Weekday School
Mr. Roger Burbage, Church Administrator
Ms. Lucy Bell, Administrative Assistant
Ms. Nan Powell, Communications Specialist
Mrs. Jennifer Sunderlin, Receptionist/Administrative Assistant
Mrs. Laura McHugh, Accountant
Mrs. Tiffany Greene, Weekday School Administrative Assistant
Ms. Jennifer Abbott, Nursery Volunteer & Staff Coordinator
Mrs. Charlotte Chromiak, Children's Music Assistant
Mr. Chuck Hunt, Sunday Morning Manager
Mr. Willie "Buc" Collins, Sexton
Mrs. Madeline Van Dyck, Parish Nurse

STUDENT INTERNS

Ms. Jordan Osborne, Youth Ministry Intern
Ms. Yamini Pulusu, Website Technician

WADDEL FELLOWS

Mr. Wesley Bowden, Congregational Care
Mr. Christian Cordon, Mission & Outreach
Ms. Nettie Jester, Youth Ministry

PLEASE SEE FIRSTPRESATHENS.ORG

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.