



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 10, 2017
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.
Second 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.

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

Greeting

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

Please sign and pass the Fellowship Pad.

Prelude

In the Bleak Midwinter arr. Mark Schweizer

Words of Welcome and Concerns of the Church

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

8:45 a.m. Grier, 6th Grader, and Katie Sue Martin-Williams, 9th Grader,
Ann Dunn and Jo Carol Nessel-Sale, Handbell Choir

11:00 a.m. Cate DeMaria, 5th Grader,
Sarah Bryan and Jay Holloway, Living on a Prayer

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

Congregational Response

VENI EMMANUEL

**O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

*Those who are able may stand.

Though many Advent hymns address Christ with entreaty and invitation, the more contemplative text of Hymn 11 considers how an individual prepares for and responds to Christ's coming. It also brings together a recollection of the First Coming with an anticipation of the Second Coming.

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

After the Passing of the Peace at the 11:00 a.m. service, children, ages Pre-K-grade 2, are invited to Children's Church held in the Children's Ministry Suite.

The anthem is a paraphrase of the Magnificat by Alice Carpenter, set to music of Michael Praetorius with interludes by American composer Roland Martin.

*Hymn 11

○ Lord, How Shall I Meet You?

VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

Though we would like to be more Christ-centered in our daily lives, especially in this time of the year, we confess we are complicit in the frenzy of consumerism, the unreality of social expectations, the tension of gift-giving, and the pressure to decorate our lives with expensive ornaments. Restore us, O God. Let our souls magnify your name, drowning out the din of Christmas chaos so the world can hear your song of love in the Christ child.

*Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. Amen.

*Assurance of Pardon

*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.**

*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.

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 146:1-10, page 570

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

11:00 a.m. Anthem My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord Michael Praetorius

My soul doth magnify the Lord, in God, my Savior shall rejoice;
he raises me from low estate, and gives a hundred blessings voice.
All generations call me blest, yes, God has done great things for me;
and holy is his righteous name, to those who know his majesty.
His arm is strong to all who fear, the proud he scatters in their greed;
he casts the mighty from their thrones, and lifts the lowly from their need.
He fills the hungry with good things, the rich he sends away in shame;
the humble he has lifted high, to magnify his holy name.
Remembering his mercy sure, his servants, Israel embrace;
as prophesied in days of old, to Abraham and all his race.
All glory to the Father God, and to the Son, which we adore;
the Holy Spirit, three in one, forever and forever more.

Second Lesson Luke 1:46-55, page 934
This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon Christmas at the Movies: “Elf”
Dr. Bruce Lancaster

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

***Hymn 600** Song of Mary MORNING SONG

***Affirmation of Faith** from The Theological Declaration of Barmen
Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and death.

As Jesus Christ is God’s assurance of the forgiveness of all our sins, so in the same way and with the same seriousness is he also God’s mighty claim upon our whole life. Through him befalls us a joyful deliverance from the godless fetters of this world for a free, grateful service to his creatures.

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Pastor Nominating Committee Update Fran Lane

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming John Ferguson

***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**

SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

***Hymn 40** Joy to the World! ANTIOCH

***Benediction**

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

***Postlude** Toccata on VENI EMMANUEL
Adolphus Hailstork

Hymn 600 is a 20th-century paraphrase based on the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55) commonly known by its opening Latin word, Magnificat. This song of praise offers clear reminders that God’s purposes often lead to the reversal of human values, exalting the poor and dethroning the mighty.

While Isaac Watts did not write Joy to the World strictly for Christmas use, he did purposely cast his paraphrase of Psalm 98:4-9 in Christian terms, titling it “The Messiah’s coming and kingdom.” So “the Lord” here is Jesus Christ, rather than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

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

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

Liturgist:

8:45 a.m. Carol Strickland

11:00 a.m. Carol Strickland

Acolytes:

11:00 a.m. Kate Ness, Lizzie Simmons

Lay Readers:

8:45 a.m. Katie Sue Martin-Williams

11:00 a.m. John Ferguson

USHERS

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

11:00 a.m. Richard Lane (head),
Carmen Meadows, David Mendenhall,
Courtney Pittman, Bo Thurston, Fred Wallace

GREETERS

8:45 a.m. Jim Dove, Carroll Gaillard,
Diane Hartzell, Terry Nestor

11:00 a.m. Jayne Bailey, Jim Boyles,
Sandy Boyles, Jo Carol Nessel-Sale

FELLOWSHIP HOST: The Bangle family

FLOWERS

Today's flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Hewitt McGown and Mr. and Mrs. Joe Foster by Jane McGown.

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.

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

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Today, 5:00 p.m.

Our children will lead us in this special tradition for the whole church family. Parents, please bring your children to the Children's Ministry Suite by 4:30 p.m.

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 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.

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.

HOLIDAY BENEVOLENCE MARKET

Through December 31

Shop for "symbolic gifts" from 29 local nonprofits to give to friends, relatives, and teachers this Christmas. Shopping lists are available in the Atrium, or you can shop online at holidaybenevolencemarket.org.

ANNUAL ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

December 17, 9:45 a.m., Moses Waddel Room

It takes dedicated leaders and participants to present engaging, provocative Sunday School classes for us to enjoy each year. If you are involved in Sunday School, come let us celebrate you. If you haven't been involved in Sunday School, stop by for refreshments and speak with people who are. It's a vibrant scene on Sunday mornings, perhaps waiting just for you.

Since the Chancel Choir rehearses during the Sunday School hour, it is difficult for members to fully engage in Sunday School, so this Social is also in recognition of them, the sacrifices they make on our behalf, and the exceptional music we hear and sing during worship.

A very special invitation to join us for our Christmas Eve services:

Christmas Eve, December 24

Morning Services: 8:45 & 11:00 a.m.

Sermon from Dr. Carol Strickland

Candlelight Christmas Eve Services

4:00, 6:00 & 8:00 p.m.

Family service, 4:00 p.m., planned with small children in mind

Communion services, 6:00 & 8:00 p.m.

Special music and a sermon from Dr. Bruce Lancaster

Nursery at 6:00 p.m. Nursery will not be provided at 8:00 p.m.

Please plan to join us on this most holy of nights as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.

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 10 - Terry Nestor reading children's Christmas books.
- December 17 - Annual Sunday School Christmas Social

Facilitators: Carl Bergmann, Carla Buss

Living on a Prayer • Room 303

Study of the book, Vanishing Grace by Philip Yancey. 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 10 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

- 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
- 5:00 p.m. Christmas Pageant, Sanctuary
- 5:30 p.m. Christmas Dinner, Fellowship Hall
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Christmas Party, The PIT

Monday, December 11

- 7:00 p.m. Messiah Sing-Along, Oconee Presbyterian Church, 2601 Hog Mountain Rd., Watkinsville

Tuesday, December 12

- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 1:30 p.m. Knitting Purls, Room 304
- 2:00 p.m. The Mellows, Athens Heritage Home, 960 Hawthorne Ave.
- 6:00 p.m. Stephen Ministry Training, Moses Waddel Room
- 6:00 p.m. Men's Fellowship, Akademia Brewing Company, 150 Crane Dr.

Wednesday, December 13

- 9:00 a.m. Weekday School Christmas Break
- 9:30 a.m. Circle 7, Home of Lois Neighbors, 1030 Forrest Hills Dr.
- 12:30 p.m. Prayers for Healing, Sanctuary
- 3:00 p.m. Bridge, Room 302
- 4:30 p.m. Gentle Yoga, Room 310
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

Thursday, December 14

- 10:00 a.m. Josephine Paine Bible Study, Staff Conference Room
- 2:00 p.m. Senior Adult Ministry Christmas Tea, Fellowship Hall

Sunday, December 17 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, A Festival of Lessons & Carols

LOOKING AHEAD

December 17 - Christmas Joy Offering

Annual Adult Sunday School Christmas Social, 9:45 a.m.

December 24 - Morning Services: 8:45 & 11:00 a.m., No Sunday School

Candlelight Christmas Eve Services:

Family Service, 4:00 p.m.

Communion Services, 6:00 & 8:00 p.m., No Sunday School

December 31 - One Service, 10:00 a.m.

Poinsettia Dedication

If you wish to give a contribution in honor or memory of a loved one, please place your order by **Monday, December 11**. Each dedication is \$12. You may place your completed form and check in a pew pad envelope and drop it in the offering plate, mail it to the church office, or contact the church at 706-543-4338 or frontdesk@firstpresathens.org with your dedications. Each dedication will be listed in the December 17 worship service bulletin.

In Memory of

In Honor of

Given by

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.