

**Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born."**

**Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

**Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.**

As we sing this carol, the ushers will lead the congregation from the sanctuary, beginning with the front pews. As you exit the building, please extinguish your candle. You may take the candle with you or place it in one of the baskets on the sanctuary porch.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

A special word of welcome to our guests: thank you for joining us for worship this evening. We are delighted you are here and look forward to seeing you again.

Tonight's offering will be divided, with seventy-five percent given locally to Meals on Wheels, which fosters independent living among disabled and older adults. Twenty-five percent will go to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, which is currently responding to fires on the United States western coast; an earthquake in Mexico; Hurricanes Maria, Irma, and Harvey; the Rohingya refugee crisis; and other calamities. Thank you for your generosity.

Nurseries for infants and toddlers will only be provided at the 6:00 service and are located next to the Children's Ministry Suite. They are accessible down the stairs in the Atrium and through the glass doors.

The flowers and poinsettias are given to the glory of God and in memory and honor of our loved ones. We thank the Flower Committee for decorating our church and sanctuary during Advent and Christmas.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

2018-19 Weekday School Registration Begins January 11, 2018

Please call our director, Elaine Johnson, at 706-206-8180 to schedule a tour. Our Weekday School is celebrating 51 years of serving Athens children, ages infant through 5 years.

Battling a Blue Christmas? "Getting through the Holidays When You've Lost a Loved One" booklets are available in the Atrium. Pastors are also always available to talk.

WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Bruce Lancaster, Interim Senior Pastor
Dr. Carol Strickland, Associate Pastor
Dr. John Coble, Director of Music and Organist
Dr. Bob Burton, guitar

Those who wish to make a contribution to the church before the end of the year please note the following: for tax purposes the contribution must be claimed in the year in which it is delivered. One exception is a check; which is deductible in the year it is mailed (and postmarked) even though it is received by the church early in the new year.

USHERS

6:00 p.m.
Randy Dudley (head),
Carl Bergmann, Scott Collins,
Carroll Gaillard, Jimbo LaBoon III,
Keith Oelke, John A. Simpson,
Bo Thurston

8:00 p.m.
Judy Howell (head), Leslye Queen,
Elizabeth Katherine Simmons,
Georgia Blue Simmons,
Robert P. Simmons,
Robert W. Simmons

LOOKING AHEAD

December 25

Church Office Closed for Christmas Holiday

December 31

One Service, 10:00 a.m., Sunday School will not meet

January 1

Church Office Closed for New Year's Holiday

January 7 - Communion Sunday/Food Sunday*

8:45 and 11:00 a.m. Worship Services, Dr. Bruce Lancaster preaching
9:45 a.m. Sunday School resumes for all ages

January 10

11:30 a.m. Bookless Book Group

January 12-15

Youth Ski Trip

January 14

4:00 p.m. Voices of Truth Concert

5:00 p.m. Ecumenical Martin Luther King, Jr. Service, First Baptist Church

January 15

9:30 a.m. MLK, Jr. Day of Service

10:00 a.m. Project Safe Volunteer Work Day

* January 7 we will be collecting pork & beans, breakfast cereal, and spaghetti sauce for the Athens Area Emergency Food Bank.

**Please see firstpresathens.org
for more information about the life of the church.**



Christmas Eve

Candlelight Communion Service

December 24, 2017

6:00 and 8:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church of Athens

185 East Hancock Avenue, Athens, GA 30601

firstpresathens.org 706-543-4338

Candlelight Communion Service

Prelude In dulci jubilo Johann Sebastian Bach

In dulci jubilo James Vivian

In the Bleak Midwinter Allen Orton Gibbs

Shepherds Sang Their Praises O'er Him Helmut Walcha

Christmas Prelude on DIVINUM MYSTERIUM
John R. Watkinson

Choral Prelude on "Silent Night" Samuel Barber

Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light Johann Schop
Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light, and usher in the morning.
You shepherds, shudder not with fright, but hear the angel's warning.
This child, now weak in infancy, our confidence and joy shall be;
the power of Satan breaking, our peace eternal making.

Lighting of the Christ Candle Dr. Bruce Lancaster

Call to Worship

Let us sing with gladness, for the love of God has come to dwell on earth.

Let us shout with joy, for the grace of God is at work in our lives.

Let us praise God, the giver of all blessings,
for the very heart of God is given to us.

Let us call out to God, for redemption is God's gift to us.

***Hymn 41** O Come, All Ye Faithful ADESTE FIDELES

Prayer for Christmas Eve (Attributed to Robert Louis Stevenson)

Loving God,
help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas make us happy to be your children,
forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. **Amen.**

First Lesson Isaiah 7:10-17, page 623

Anthem O Holy Night Adolphe Adam
O holy night! the stars are brightly shining,
it is the night of the dear Savior's birth;
long lay the world in sin and error pining,
till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary soul rejoices,
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;
fall on your knees, oh, hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!
Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
with glowing hearts by his cradle we stand;
so led by light of a star sweetly gleaming
here came the wise men from Orient land.
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger,
in all our trials born to be our friend;
he knows our need, our weakness is no stranger.
Behold your King, before him lowly bend!
Behold your King, before him lowly bend!
Truly he taught us to love one another,
his law is love, and his gospel is peace;
chains shall he break for the slave is our brother,
and in his name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
let all within us praise his holy name;
Christ is the Lord, oh, praise his name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim!
His power and glory evermore proclaim!

Second Lesson Luke 2:8-20, page 935

***Hymn 23** Angels We Have Heard on High GLORIA

Sermon Christmas at the Movies: Miracle on 34th Street
Dr. Bruce Lancaster

***Hymn 44** O Little Town of Bethlehem ST. LOUIS

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

Seventy-five percent of tonight's offering will be given locally to Meals on Wheels and twenty-five percent will go to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, which responds to national and international crises. Thank you for your generosity.

Offertory In the Bleak Midwinter Harold Darke
In the bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.
Our God, heaven cannot hold him nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter a stable-place sufficed
the Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ.
Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day,
a breastful of milk and a manger full of hay;
enough for him, whom angels fall down before,
the ox and ass and camel which adore.
What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb,
if I were a wise man I would do my part, yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

Prayer of Dedication

***Hymn 53** What Child Is This GREENSLEEVES

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer Hymnal, p. 16

Sharing of Bread and Cup

Please partake of the elements as you are served. The cup in the center of each plate contains gluten free bread.

Prayer after Communion

Lighting of the Candles

When lighting your candle, please tilt the unlighted candle toward the flame of the lighted candle.

Candlelight Carol Sing

Congregation remains seated.

Joy to the World

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing.**

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

**It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth,
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's all gracious King":
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.**

The First Nowell

**The first Nowell the angels did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay a-keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.**

Away in a Manger

**Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King."
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

*Those who are able may stand.