

# Welcome

We're glad you're here! Thank you for joining us today. Members of this congregation have been gathering here to worship since 1804, when our church was formed to minister to the Native American and European settlers in Athens. Over the past two centuries our congregation has changed, but our mission remains the same: to make disciples of Jesus Christ. We are inspired by the words of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, who encouraged believers to "do all the good you can, in all the ways you can." At Athens First United Methodist, there are many ways to get involved, grow in your faith, and do good in our community.

If you are unable to attend worship in person, each Sunday our 11:00 a.m. service is broadcast on WRFC 960 AM, and all of our services are live-streamed on our website at *athensfirstumc. org/webcast.* 

## Nursery

Our nursery is available for infants through four-year-olds on Sundays from 8:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. The nursery area is located on the first floor of the building, off the Washington Street entrance.

## Children

Worship activity bags (age appropriate for all preschool and elementary children) are available every Sunday in the narthex and by the south entrance of the sanctuary. Children's Church is held for children in kindergarten through second grade and follows the Children's Message during 11:00 a.m. worship all Sundays except for Communion Sundays.

## Sunday School

We offer Sunday School for all ages, children age 2 through adult, each Sunday from 9:45–10:45 a.m. For a list of adult Sunday School classes and locations, visit *athensfirstumc.org/ adultsundayschool*.

## Connect

We are blessed to have a large congregation. Because of this, we offer many programs and ministries. It can be overwhelming trying to decide where to get involved. If you would like someone to guide you along this process, please contact Martha Aenchbacher.

Another great way to learn about the life of our church is through attending a Newcomer Orientation held every second Sunday of the month at 9:45 and 11 a.m. We also encourage you to visit our website, *athensfirstumc.org*, for information about our ministries, to register for events, and to listen to sermons from our sermon archive. Visit *athensfirstumc.org/thesteeple* to sign up for our weekly newsletter, the eSteeple. You can also connect with us via social media. Find us @athensfirstumc on Facebook and @athens\_firstumc on Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest.

Our church office is open Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. If you need assistance, please call 706-543-1442.

# The Worship of God

\*Please stand as you are able. The congregation speaks or sings the text in **bold type.** 

Gathering

The poinsettias on the altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory and honor of our loved ones.

THE PRELUDE 9:45 & 11:00 а.м. "In Dulci Jubilo" | Bish

THE CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP 9:45 & 11:00 A.M. "Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending" | Rutter Sung by the Sanctuary Choir

THE WELCOME AND THE PASSING OF THE PEACE Beth Dickinson

\*THE PROCESSIONAL HYMN 234 | STANZAS 1 - 4 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" | ADESTE FIDELES

Praise & Thanksgiving

## **\*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR ADVENT**

We believe in God robed in splendor, veiled in mystery, ruler alike of darkness and light. We encounter God in Jesus Christ, whose touch brings a blaze of color to a dull, drab world, reviving the weary, healing the wounded, dazzling the satisfied; who was put to death, but whose radiance could not be quenched. We walk with God guided by the light of God's loving Spirit, who enters the shadowed places of our hearts and leads us into truth and life. We wait for God and for the fulfillment of God's promise, when the darkness will hold no fear, and the light will no longer blind, but creation will be made whole once more and God's peace will reign forever. Amen.

#### **\*THE GLORIA PATRI**

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

## THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

8:30 a.m. The Ward Family 9:45 a.m. The Keene Family 11:00 a.m. Valerie Aldridge Sung:

A candle is burning, a candle of love, a candle to point us to heaven above. A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth, for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

## THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Daughter of Stacy and Reid Golden

11:00 А.М. | Clara Jane Golden

Clara Jane, Clara Jane, 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. Clara Jane, Clara Jane, God claims you, God helps you, protects you, and loves you too.

## THE WELCOMING OF NEW MEMBERS | 11:00 A.M.

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER Martha Aenchbacher

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 CHILDREN'S MESSAGE | 8:30 & 11:00 A.M.

#### Linsey Jarrett, Director of Weekday Preschool

At the 11:00 a.m. service, children in kindergarten through grade 2 will go to Children's Church on the third floor where they may be picked up at the end of the service.

## THE OFFERING

## THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM

8:30 А.М. "O Little Town of Bethlehem" | Evanovich

#### Sung by the Worship Team

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie; above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight. For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above, while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love. O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth! How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given; so God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven. No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in. O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; o come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

9:45 & 11:00 А.М. "Cradle Hymn" | arr. Page

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir; Rachael Fischer, violin, Lucas Scalamogna, violin, Rebecca Floyd, viola, Ana Abrantes, cello

Hush! My dear, lie still and slumber, holy angels guard thy bed! Heavenly blessings without number gently falling on thy head. See the kindly shepherds round Him, telling wonders from the sky! Where they sought Him, there they found Him, with His Virgin mother by. See the lovely babe a-dressing; lovely infant, how He smiled! When He wept, the mother's blessing soothed and hush'd the Holy Child. May'st thou live to know and fear Him, trust and love Him all thy days; then go dwell forever near Him, see His face, and sing His praise!

## \*THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow! Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Proclamation of the Word

## THE SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 2:6 New living translation

'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.'

## **THE SERMON**

"Blessing in a Small Town" | Chuck Hodges

Response to the Word

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION | 8:30 A.M.

Please turn to page 9 in our hymnal. 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 at the stations in the front of the sanctuary.

This anthem has been placed in the choir library to the glory of God and in honor of the birth of Aveline Jane Reeves and her grandparents, Carol and David Reeves, by Thomas Douglas Jones.

Sending Forth

## \*THE HYMN 218

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" | CAROL

## \* THE BLESSING

Depart in peace, and take with you the certain knowledge that God is always coming into the world.

We will seek God, not in a long-ago stable or ancient manger, but in the people we meet and the depths of our own hearts.

May the blessing of Christmas make you a blessing to others; may the peace of the season pervade all that you do.

We will welcome the challenge of discipleship. We will offer ourselves as God's ministers. We will go forth in hope, peace, joy and love.

\* THE CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "O Little Town of Bethlehem" | ST. LOUIS

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

\* THE POSTLUDE "Angels We Have Heard on High" | McCluskey

## Sermon Notes

#### DECEMBER USHERS

8:30 a.m. Jim Belger, Ann and Paul Brown, Larry Deal, Hugh Larkey, Mack Lowrey, Jim Lyons, Candler Meadors, Olan Moore, Bob Noble, Grace Rabek, Ken Reece, Keith Wilson, Michael and Sharon Broun
9:45 a.m. Chris Bostdorff, Tom Cooper, David and Jane Disney, Mark Ellison, Mark Firth, Tom Hedges, Dan Lasseter, Jim Lyons, Sharon Milton, Tom Milton, Al Rogers, Bill Trigleth, Michelle and Reeves McNeill
11:00 a.m. Al Hawley, Henry Folsom, Tom Henson, Henry Garrard, Jim Lyons, Jake Riley, Frank Thornburg, Mike Scott, Tom Dean

#### OFFERING STEWARDS

Bob Booth, Jim Lyons, Nat Carmack, Henry Garrard, Nathan King, Al Hawley, Sean Rogers, Charlie Upchurch III

#### GREETERS

Beth and Gib Johnson, Paula and Scott Graffin, Trish and Joe Tillman, Tina and Bruce Powers, Becky Green, Mary Jenkins, Annie Miller, Lucy Frierson, Ben Griffith

#### FIRST LIGHT ACOLYTES

Acolyte Manager: Reagan Grace 8:30 a.m. Abbi Merhar, Isaac Ward, Lewis Scruggs 9:45 a.m. Jaden Drudge 11:00 a.m. Seele Jarrett

#### ATTENDANCE ON DECEMBER 13

Total Worship | 1373 Sunday School | 458 8:30 a.m. | 184 9:45 a.m. | 333 11:00 a.m. | 723 Online | 133

#### FINANCIAL REPORT

Budget for 2015 | \$2,641,842 Amount Given YTD | \$2,818,138 Goal for December | \$487,002 Amount after 1 Sunday | \$89,619

## OUR MINISTERS AND MINISTRY DIRECTORS

**Chuck Hodges** Senior Minister athensfirstumc.org chuck@athensfirstumc.org | 706-206-5529

**Martha Aenchbacher** Minister of Congregational Care athensfirstumc.org/congregationalcare martha@athensfirstumc.org | 678-230-9708

**Beth Dickinson** Minister of Discipleship athensfirstumc.org/smallgroupsbiblestudies beth@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

**Betsy Butler** Minister of Missions athensfirstumc.org/missions betsy@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

**Josh Miles** Director of Student Ministries athensfirstumc.org/youth josh@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

**Robin Stewart** Director of Children's Ministry athensfirstumc.org/elementary robinafumc@bellsouth.net | 706-543-1442

**Sarah Lawing** Director of Children's Music Ministry athensfirstumc.org/childrensmusicministry sarah@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

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Janis Maxwell Director of Youth Music & Organist athensfirstumc.org/wesleyanyouthchoir janis@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

**Lynn Bryant** Director of REACH International athensfirstumc.org/reachinternational lynn@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

**Rusty Wood** Director of Recreation Ministries athensfirstumc.org/recreation rusty@athensfirstumc.org | 706-206-8193

**Linsey Jarrett** Director of Weekday Preschool athensfirstumc.org/weekdaypreschool linsey@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

Julie Caldwell 8:30 a.m. Worship Leader *julie@athensfirstumc.org* | 706-540-0042

# The Steeple

## The Advent Wreath | Love

The advent wreath is a tradition that symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent. The wreath is a circle of various evergreens, signifying continuous life, the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life found in Christ. The four colored candles represent hope, peace, joy, and love, and the center candle represents the birth of Christ. Today we light the candles for hope, peace, and joy, and add the fourth candle for love.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9:6-7

## This Week:

Thursday, December 24 | 4:00 p.m. | Sanctuary | **Children's Christmas Eve Service** Thursday, December 24 | 7:00 p.m. | Sanctuary | **Candlelight Christmas Eve Service** Thursday, December 24 | 11:00 p.m. | Sanctuary | **Candlelight & Communion Christmas Eve Service** Sunday, December 27 | 11:00 a.m. only | Sanctuary | **Worship Service: Wesley Covenant Renewal** 

## New Arrivals

Congratulations to Kristy and Rolf Straubhaar on the birth of their twins, daughter Athena Roylance and son Malcolm Jacob, on December 13.

## New Members

On December 13, we welcomed Meghan and John Loftis to the Athens First United Methodist Church family.

## Sympathy

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Stacy Stephens and family in the loss of her father, Al Hall, on December 14.



## Poinsettias

Each year, poinsettias are placed on our altar during Advent in memory or honor of loved ones. A full listing of those being honored and remembered is in the narthex. Please note that ordered poinsettias may be picked up after the 11:00 a.m. service.

## Thank You to Lynn Bryant

We want to express our gratitude for Lynn Bryant for the many years she has committed to serving the UGA International students. As we say goodbye to Lynn as the Director of REACH, we want to thank her for loving God's people and making disciples of Jesus Christ through her ministry with International Students. REACH International is expanding to include other churches and UMC-connected ministries.

## Wednesday Night Meal

There is no Wednesday Night Meal this week. Wednesday Night Meals will resume January 6. Meals are \$6 each. Advance dinner orders are required. Order your meal online or by calling the church office each week by Tuesday at noon. You may also order for the month or the semester online. Volunteers are needed to help serve the meal, and volunteers eat free!

EA Whorton | edithann@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442 Learn more | athensfirstumc.org/wednesdaynightmeals



## Christmas Eve

We will offer three Christmas Eve services this year. Our 4:00 p.m. service will be led by the Children's Music Ministry. Our 7:00 p.m. service will be led by the Wesleyan Youth Choir. Our 11:00 p.m. service will include Communion and music from the Sanctuary Choir. All three services will include candlelight. We hope you and your family will make plans to worship with us on Christmas Eve and celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Traditionally, our Christmas Eve Services are very well attended and the sanctuary is often filled. We provide overflow seating in Hancock Hall for the 4:00 and 7:00 p.m. services. Additionally, our church parking lots will fill up quickly. When church lots are filled, please use the Washington Street pay parking deck.

## December 27 | Only One Service

On Sunday, December 27, we will offer one worship service at 11:00 a.m. We hope you'll make plans to join us for our annual Wesley Renewal Covenant Service.

# The Manger Project

What Can I Give?

## **Epiphany Party**

Wednesday, January 6 | Gym

4:30-6:00 p.m.

All children and their families are invited to join the party to celebrate Jesus, the Light of the World, at our Epiphany Party Wednesday, January 6, at 4:30 p.m. Dress up like nativity characters, meet the wise men, follow the light through a forest maze, and play games in the gym. We will also participate in a group mission project during the party. All children must attend with a parent or designated guardian. Childcare is available for infants and toddlers. This event concludes The Manger Project and kicks off the spring semester of Kids Music and Arts, our Wednesday night program for children.

Sarah Lawing | sarah@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442



## Communion Guild Training

Members of our church are invited to join us on Sunday, January 10, for the annual Communion Guild training session. Chuck Hodges will explain the significance of Holy Communion and what it means to provide this holy sacrament to our congregation. This is also an opportunity for the Communion Guild leaders to introduce themselves and show how to prepare and serve the elements at our church. At the conclusion of the training, we invite you to sign up to serve and/or prepare communion at any of the three worship services throughout the year. We will meet at the front of the sanctuary immediately following the 11:00 service on January 10 for 30 minutes. If you have any questions, please contact Katherine Hodges. Katherine Hodges | *katherine@athensfirstumc.org* 

706-543-1442

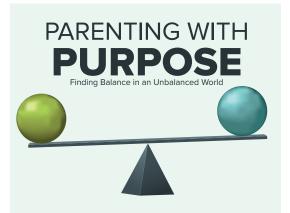


## Weekday Preschool Registration

It's almost time for Preschool Registration. Our preschool program serves families of children age 9 months through Pre-K from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Please keep the following deadlines in mind as we approach the new year:

- Currently enrolled deadline: January 15, 2016
- Church member deadline: January 20, 2016
- Community deadline: January 22, 2016

Register | athensfirstumc.org/weekdaypreschool Linsey Jarrett | linsey@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442



## Parenting with Purpose

This January, the Children's Ministry invites moms to a refreshing, humorous, and Godly series inspired by the words of Jen Hatmaker. Through this smallgroup discussion, busy moms will discover practical solutions for setting priorities for our families, helpful strategies for allocating our limited resources, and spiritual discernment for what matters most. We will offer various times and locations to meet all schedules. All groups will meet for three sessions beginning the week of January 10-16. A final session will take place Sunday, January 31, at 7:00 p.m. in Hancock Hall for all participants. Please see the webpage for more details and to register. This small group will read selections from Jen Hatmaker's book For the Love. Participants are encouraged to purchase the book before the class begins.

Register | athensfirstumc.org/parentingwithpurpose Robin Stewart | robin@athensfirstumc.org

Meeting at our church:

Sundays, January 10, 17, 24 | 4:45 p.m. Mondays, January 11, 18, 25 | 7:00 p.m. Wednesdays, January 13, 20, 27 | 5:15 p.m. Fridays, January 15, 22, 29 | 9:15 a.m.

#### Meeting in private homes:

Tuesdays, January 12, 19, 26 | 12:00 p.m. (Athens) Tuesdays, January 12, 19, 26 | 7:00 p.m. (Oconee Cty) Thursdays, January 14, 21, 28 | 10:00 a.m. (Athens) Fridays, January 15, 22, 29 | 9:30 a.m. (Oconee Cty)

## Serve a Meal in the New Year!

There are several opportunities for you to serve a meal to the hungry in our community in 2016: Souper Supper on Thursday evenings, Sack Lunch Ministry on Sunday mornings, and Our Daily Bread on various dates for lunch during the week throughout the year. Learn more and register on the church website, or contact Betsy or Mary Claire for more information.

Souper Suppers | athensfirstumc.org/soupersupper Sack Lunch Ministry | athensfirstumc.org/sacklunchministry Our Daily Bread | athensfirstumc.org/odb Betsy Butler | betsy@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442 Mary Claire Wills | maryclaire@athensfirstumc.org 706-543-1442

## Flag Retirement Ceremony

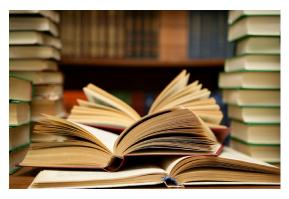
Cub Scouts Pack 1 will be conducting a flag retirement ceremony in early January. If you have worn or tattered flags in need of retirement, please bring them to the church's front desk. We will collect them and retire them during the ceremony.

Nat Carmack | nat@bosstaff.com



## Stop Hunger Now | January 23

Stop Hunger Now's meal packaging program is a hands-on international mission project that is fun for all ages! This is an annual churchwide mission project and a wonderful opportunity to impact people across the globe without leaving Athens. There are several ways to be involved: 1. Pray: for all those who will receive the meals and those who will serve at this event. 2. Contribute: 29 cents makes a meal. 3. Serve: Serve at one of the two shifts on January 23 (8:30 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.). Register online to sign up to serve, or contact Betsy or Mary Claire for more details. Register | *athensfirstumc.org/stophungernow* Betsy Butler | *betsy@athensfirstumc.org* | 706-543-1442 Mary Claire Wills | *maryclaire@athensfirstumc.org* 706-543-1442



## Church Library

Our church library was begun many years ago by professional librarians. It has been maintained and added to in the intervening years. The collection includes many useful items for study and research, a growing fiction collection, as well as many children's books. We are very fortunate to have such a resource in our church. The library is open for use and to check out books anytime the church is open. There is no set check-out period. We simply ask that you be reasonable in how long you keep materials as others may want to use them. Currently more than 120 books are missing from the library. These books have either been checked out for more than a year or were borrowed without being checked out. If you have ever borrowed books from the church library, will you please check at home and in your classrooms and return any you find as soon as possible so that they may be used and enjoyed by others.

# connect to community

## small groups: where community develops and growth occurs

New small-group opportunities are coming in the new year. There is a place for everyone to grow in their walk with the Lord and connect to community at Athens First United Methodist Church. We believe that connecting to our church family and finding community here is an integral part of our faith development. On the following pages, a brief description of the upcoming small groups is listed. For more information about any of the small groups listed, contact Beth. Register online to join any of these groups. Beth Dickinson | beth@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

sundays Making Sense of the Bible | January 24, 4:45-6:15 p.m.

mondays Disciplines Devotional Bible Study | January 4, 1:15-2:15 p.m. A Heart Set Free | January 25, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

wednesdays New Testament Letters | January 6, 9:30-10:45 a.m.
Esther: It's Tough Being a Woman | January 13, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
A Woman's Heart | January 13, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Prayer Shawl Ministry | January 6, 4:30-6:00 p.m.
Early Book Group | January 6, 4:45-5:45 p.m.
Later Book Group | January 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
The Way of Prayer | January 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Forgiveness: A Lenten Study | February 10, 6:45-8:00 p.m.
Before Amen | January 13, 6:30-8:00 p.m.
John by Adam Hamilton | February 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Unanswered: Men's Study | January 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

thursdays Connect Group (Young Adult) | January 7, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Connect Group (Single Adults) | TBD, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

athensfirstumc.org/connecttocommunity

#### **Disciplines Devotional Bible Study**

This is an ongoing Bible study group that is open to everyone. This group reads scripture passages from the Old Testament, New Testament, and Psalms, as well as from a devotional. This group will begin meeting on January 4 from 1:15 to 2:15 p.m. in room 200. Register and purchase class materials online.

## Women's Study

Join this new women's small group Bible study led by Jennifer Foster on Wednesdays from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. beginning January 13 in room 229. Additional details will be coming soon.

#### Prayer Shawl Ministry

All are welcome to join a group of expert, novice, and beginning knitters and crocheters as they create prayer shawls. Completed prayer shawls are prayed over by the group and given to those who are grieving or have special needs. This group meets weekly in room 200 on Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m. This group will resume on Wednesday, January 6.

#### Esther

We will be offering *Esther: It's Tough Being a Woman*, a study by Beth Moore, on Wednesday mornings from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in room 229 beginning January 13. This study is a very personal examination of the Old Testament story of Esther, peeling back the layers of history and showing how very contemporary and applicable the story is to our lives today. If you've ever felt inadequate, threatened, or pushed into situations that seemed overpowering, we hope you will join us. This study will be led by Susie Thrasher. The cost is \$16 for the participant workbook; please register online so we may order the correct number.

#### Early Book Group

The Early Book Group resumes January 6 with Harvey Cox's *The Future of Faith* from 4:45-5:45 p.m. on Wednesdays in Room 247. *The Future of Faith* is being released to coincide with Cox's retirement: it charts the three major periods in the history of Christianity and the shift that is taking place today away from religious beliefs and dogma to an emphasis on spirituality and social justice. Please purchase the book prior to the first meeting. Contact Cindy Kuhlman for more information.

Cindy Kuhlman | gckuhlman@charter.net

## Unanswered | Men's Study

We live in a radically skeptical age. Tough questions are being asked about Christianity and most believers are ill-equipped to provide the answers our culture and communities desperately need. Many in today's church do not know the Bible as well as they should and they struggle with their own "big questions" about the faith. Join other men as we study *Unanswered: Lasting Truth for Trending Questions* by Jeremiah Johnston. This eight-week study will be led by Keith Wilson and will meet Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. beginning January 13.

#### A Woman's Heart

We have a new study beginning in January. A Woman's Heart: God's Dwelling Place, a study by Beth Moore, will meet on Wednesday afternoons from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in room 229 beginning January 13. Explore the fascinating account of the building of the Old Testament tabernacle, its pivotal role in God's eternal plan, the grand fulfillment of its purpose by Jesus Christ, and its variety of meanings for your walk with God today. This study will be led by Therese Wilson. The cost is \$16 for the participant workbook; please register online so we may order the correct number.

#### The Way of Prayer

The Way of Prayer expands on our knowledge of prayer through an eleven-week exploration of different forms of prayer practices. Led by Frank Sweezey and Alan Cannon, members will embark on a journey of discovery—the discovery of different dimensions of God's grace and love. Prayer is explored through music, dance, gazing, silence, or acts of service. The Way of Prayer teaches us how to respond to God's invitation into the divine Presence, and it brings a deeper sense of spiritual vitality and encouragement to seek out new ways to pray. This study will begin Wednesday, January 13, from 6:30-8:30 in room 224.

#### Before Amen

In *Before Amen*, Max Lucado explores the very heart of Biblical prayer by offering distilled, hope-filled prayers that will help you turn your heart towards the One who longs to speak with you. Thankfully, we aren't the first followers of Jesus to struggle with prayer. The disciples did too. In response to their questions, Jesus gives them, and us, a simple, beautiful example to follow. This group will meet on Wednesdays beginning January 13 at 6:30 in room 222.

# This Week

#### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 | PSALM 80:1-7 8:30 a.m. Worship Service SANCTUARY Preschool Nursery & Sunday School FIRST FLOOR 9:00 a.m. Fun Gym GYM 9:45 a.m. Worship Service SANCTUARY Adult Sunday School SECOND FLOOR AND SAYE BUILDING Elementary Sunday School THIRD FLOOR Grade 5 & 6 Sunday School: Fuel FIRST FLOOR Youth Sunday School: First Word FIRST FLOOR Young Professionals Sunday School Class HULL CONFERENCE ROOM 10:00 a.m. Sack Lunch Ministry HULL STREET ENTRANCE 11:00 a.m. Worship Service SANCTUARY 12:00 p.m. Wesleyan Youth Choir Rehearsal SANCTUARY

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 21 | 1 SAMUEL 218-20, 26

5:00 p.m. Children's Basketball GYM

#### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22 | COLOSSIANS 3:12-14

- 5:30 a.m. Fashion Fitness GYM
- 5:00 p.m. Children's Basketball GYM
- 5:30 p.m. Fashion Fitness ROOM 119

#### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23 | COLOSSIANS 3:15-17 No Programming

#### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24 | LUKE 2:1-20

	Christmas Eve, office is closed
4:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service SANCTUARY
7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service SANCTUARY
11:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion Service SANCTUARY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25 | HEBREWS I:I-I2 Christmas Day, office is closed

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26 | PSALM 148

## Worship Bulletin (614-280)

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## Athens First United Methodist Church

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