

# 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 flowers on the altar are given to the glory of God in loving memory of James (Jim) T. Blasingame for his December 18 birthday by his family: Alma L. Blasingame, Rhonda B. McClure, Ellen and Andrew McClure, James T. Blasingame II and Becky Blasingame. THE PRELUDE

THE WELCOME Martha Aenchbacher

\*THE CALL TO WORSHIP
He came as a baby in a manger.
O come, let us adore him.
He came in a lowly stable.
O come, let us adore him.
Shepherds brought their worship.
O come, let us adore him.
Angels sang his praise.
O come, let us adore him.
Magi brought their gifts.
O come, let us adore him.
What shall we do?
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

**\*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE** 

## **\*THE HYMNS**

Hymn 251 | "Go Tell It on the Mountain" Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere. Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching Over silent flocks by night, behold throughout the heavens, there shone a holy light. (Refrain)

Down in a lowly manger our humble Christ was born and God sent us salvation, that blessed Christmas morn. (Refrain)

## Hymn 246 | "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, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love.

## Hymn 240 | "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 th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings. Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die, born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"

# Praise & Thanksgiving

## **\*THE CHRISTMAS CREED**

We believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem. We believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small. We believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and we confess that sometimes our hearts still want to exclude Christ from our lives today. We believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts. We believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible. We believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God. We confess our everlasting need of God: The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold. We believe in God who gives us the best of himself. We believe in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem that night, for us and for the world. 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 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 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

#### Robin Stewart, Director of Children's Ministry

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** "Breath of Heaven" | Amy Grant

Janis Maxwell, piano; Julie Caldwell, solo

I have travelled many moonless nights, cold and weary, with a babe inside. And I wonder what I've done. Holy Father, you have come and chosen me now to carry your son. I am waiting in a silent prayer. I am frightened by the load I bear. In a world as cold as stone, must I walk this path alone? Be with me now. Be with me now. Breath of heaven, hold me together. Be forever near me, Breath of heaven. Breath of heaven, light up my darkness. Pour over me your holiness, for you are holy, Breath of heaven. Do you wonder as you watch my face if a wiser one should have had my place? But I offer all I am for the mercy of your plan. Help me be strong. Help me be. Help me. Breath of heaven, hold me together. Be forever near me, Breath of heaven. Breath of heaven, light up my darkness. Pour over me your holiness, for you are holy. Breath of heaven, hold me together. Be forever near me, Breath of heaven. Breath of heaven, light up my darkness. Pour over me your holiness, for you are holy. Breath of heaven. Breath of heaven, light up my darkness. Pour over me your holiness, for you are holy. Breath of heaven. Breath of heaven.

#### **\*THE DOXOLOGY**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below. Praise God above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Noel, Noel, Noel Noel, born is the King of Israel.

Proclamation of the Word

### THE SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 2:25-32, 36-38

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

#### THE SERMON

"Promises Kept" | Beth Dickinson

Response to the Word

## THE CONFESSION

We are those who seek to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ, but sometimes we fall short. Let us now examine ourselves before God, humbly confessing our sins and submitting our hearts so that we do not deceive ourselves and cut ourselves away from God.

#### Let us pray:

Father God, You have set forth the way of life through Your Son Jesus Christ, whom You love dearly. We shamefully confess that we have been slow to learn of Him and have been reluctant to follow Him. You have spoken and called to us but we have not listened. You have revealed Your beauty to us, but we have been blind. You have stretched out Your hands to us through our friends, but we have passed by them. Forgive us for when we waste time and when we misuse the gifts you have given us. Forgive us for when we have made excuses for the wrong things we have done and when we have purposefully avoided responsibility.

Forgive us that we have been unwilling to overcome evil with good and that we have not been ready to carry our cross. Forgive us that we have not allowed Your love to work through us to help others and that we have not made their suffering our own. Forgive us for those times when, instead of working for unity, we made it hard for others to live with us because of our lack of forgiveness, inconsiderate judgment, and quick criticism.

## Forgive us for when we have not tried to reconcile with others and when we have been slow to seek redemption.

Forgive us also for these sins that we silently confess to you now.

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND PARDON

God, the Father of all mercies, is faithful to cleanse us from our sins and restore us to Christ's image. Praise and glory be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! **Amen.** 

#### 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, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. We sing for joy for you have redeemed your people. You came to us in the person of Jesus, who saves us from our sins and brings us into your presence. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. A heavenly host of angels announced his birth to lowly shepherds as they tended their flock by night. 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. When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit. On the night in which he gave himself up for us, our Lord Jesus 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." Likewise, 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. **Amen.** 

### THE RECEIVING OF THE ELEMENTS OF COMMUNION

At Athens First United Methodist, 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 center station with the acolytes.

## THE HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

Hymn 217 | "Away in a Manger"

Away in a manger, no crib for a 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.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes; I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

## Hymn 218 | "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 men, from heaven's all-gracious King." The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled, and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world; above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing, and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

## Hymn 238 | "Angels We Have Heard on High"

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing, come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King. (Refrain) See him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise, Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise. (Refrain)

Sending Forth

## \* THE WESLEY RENEWAL PRAYER

I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

#### \* THE BLESSING

#### \* 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 to-day. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

\* THE POSTLUDE "Good King Wenceslas" | Otis

#### 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

Dave and Devereaux Burch, Susan and Don Crew, Dan Harper, Duke Lindsay, Jennifer Stewart, Mary Beisswenger, Gale White

#### FINANCIAL REPORT

Budget for 2015 | \$2,641,842 Amount Given YTD | \$2,872,754 Goal for December | \$487,002 Amount after 1 Sunday | \$144,235

#### 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

**Stephen Mitchell** Director of Music athensfirstumc.org/adultmusic stephen@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

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

## New Arrivals

Congratulations to Ginny and John Graham on the birth of their twin sons, Robert Denton and Stewart Watson, on December 14.

# Senior Fun

Everyone is invited to stay after the service today and help Senior Fun undecorate the Christmas tree in Hancock Hall.

# 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



# Epiphany Party | January 6

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

# Opportunities to Serve in 2016:

January 3, 10:00 a.m. | Sack Lunch Ministry Learn more | *athensfirstumc.org/sacklunchministry* 

January 21 | Souper Suppers Learn more | *athensfirstumc.org/soupersupper* 

January 23, 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. shifts | Stop Hunger Now Learn more | *athensfirstumc.org/stophungernow* 

January 23, 8:00 a.m. | Mobile Food Pantry Learn more | *athensfirstumc.org/mfp* 

If you have questions about any of the above opportunities, please feel free to contact Betsy or Mary Claire. Betsy Butler | *betsy@athensfirstumc.org* | 706-543-1442 Mary Claire Wills | *maryclaire@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 small-group 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.

#### 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)

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

# 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



# Connect to Community Next Year

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 below, contact Beth. Register online to join any of these groups. Register | *athensfirstumc.org/connecttocommunity* Beth Dickinson | *beth@athensfirstumc.org* | 706-543-1442

#### **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.

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### 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 27   LUKE 2:41-52
9:45 a.m.	Preschool Nursery & Sunday School FIRST FLOOR
	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.	Senior Fun: Christmas Tree Undecorating HANCOCK HALL
	MONDAY, DECEMBER 28   JEREMIAH 31:7-9
5:00 p.m.	Children's Basketball GYM
	TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29   JEREMIAH 31:10-14
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 30   Ephesians 1:3-14
	No Programming
	THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31   PSALM 147:12-20
	New Year's Eve, office is closed
	FRIDAY, JANUARY 1   Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
	New Year's Day, office is closed
	SATURDAY, JANUARY 2   ISAIAH 61:10-62:3

9:00 a.m. Children's Basketball GYM

# Worship Bulletin (614-280)

Published weekly

# Athens First United Methodist Church

327 N. Lumpkin Street Athens, GA 30601-2743 Telephone | 706-543-1442 Fax | 706-546-4797 Website | *athensfirstumc.org* 

# Postmaster

Send address changes to: AFUMC P.O. Box 1109 Athens, GA 30603-1109 Periodicals Postage Paid at Athens, GA

## Vol. LVI No. 75