

# Welcome

We are glad you are here! Thank you for joining us for worship this Sunday. Members of this congregation have been gathering here to worship since 1804. 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."

### Attendance

Please let us know of your attendance this morning by completing the pew pad.

### Newcomer Orientation

We invite you to learn about the life of our church, ways you can get involved, and how to become a member by attending Newcomer Orientation, which is held the second Sunday of the month at 9:45 and 11:00 a.m.

### Sunday School

We offer Sunday school for children age 2 through adult each Sunday from 9:45–10:45 a.m.

### Children

At Athens First United Methodist Church, we invite families to worship together. Children's Church is held for children in kindergarten through grade 2 most Sundays during the 11:00 a.m. service.

### Financial Report

An updated financial report will be available on Sunday, January 1.

### Attendance on December 18

An updated attendance report will be available on Sunday, January 1.

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#### Contact Us

Office hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Facebook: @Athens First United Methodist Church athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

# The Worship of God

# 11:00 a.m. Gathering

Flowers
The flowers on the altar are given to the glory of God and 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

"Good Christian Friends Rejoice" | Laubengayer

### THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Martha Aenchbacher

When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, the work of Christmas begins:

to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

# Praise & Thanksgiving

#### \*THE HYMNS

234 "O Come All Ye Faithful" | ADESTE FIDELES

O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,

O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.

Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,

O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given.

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,

O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

246 "Joy to the World" | ANTIOCH

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.

### THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

### Let Christ be born in us.

Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices; together they sing for joy, for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord.

### Let Christ be born in us.

Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted the people and has redeemed Jerusalem.

### Let Christ be born in us.

All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

#### Let Christ be born in us.

As we light the Christ candle, we welcome the tiny babe, born in a manger. Hope of the world, bringer of peace, joy of our hearts, and love incarnate, we welcome you. Let Christ be born in us today.

#### Amen.

### \*THE HYMN

240 "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" | MENDELSSOHN

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!"

### \*THE CHRISTMAS AFFIRMATION

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. 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 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 believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible. 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 PASSING OF THE PEACE

### \*THE HYMNS

251 "Go Tell It on the Mountain" | GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

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.

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born.

And God send us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

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

Please Note
During the singing of the
second verse of "Angels
We Have Heard on High,"
the children are invited to
come to the front for the
Children's Message.

238 "Angels We Have Heard on High" | GLORIA

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plain. And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strain.

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

See Him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise; Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

#### THE CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Robin Stewart

#### THE HYMNS

230 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" | ST. LOUIS

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!

### 219 "What Child is This" | GREENSLEEVES

What Child is this who laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom Angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and Angels sing; Haste, haste, to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christians fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and Angels sing; Haste, haste, to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

# THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER Betsy Butler

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 OFFERING AND THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"Gesu Bambino" | Yon

Callie Waller, soloist

### \*THE DOXOLOGY | THE FIRST NOEL

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, born is the King of Israel.

# Proclamation of the Word

### THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"The Reality of Christmas" | Betsy Butler

# Sending Forth

#### \*THE HYMN

217 "Away in a Manger" | 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.

### \*THE BLESSING AND CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

"Away in a Manger" | AWAY IN A MANGER

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray; bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

### \* THE POSTLUDE

"Hark the Herald Angels Sing" | Smith

# The Steeple

# renewal

# January 1 | Wesley Covenant Renewal Service

An opportunity to renew our covenant with God

The first Covenant Service in the Methodist movement likely dates to August 11, 1755. Wesley found the service rich and meaningful, as he stated, "It was an occasion for a variety of spiritual experiences. I do not know that ever we had a greater blessing." The heart of the service, focused in the Covenant Prayer, requires persons to commit themselves to God. We will follow Wesley's Covenant Renewal Service and conclude with Holy Communion.

# January 8 | Epiphany Sunday

Epiphany is the Christian feast day that celebrates the revelation of God in his Son as human in Jesus Christ and is most often known as the Twelfth Day of Christmas. The name Epiphany comes from the Greek word "Epiphania," and means "to show, make known, or reveal." For the Church, Epiphany represents a responsibility to reveal Jesus as the Divine Son and Savior sent by God the Father to atone for the sins of humanity. It is a time of healing and fellowship, where the Church comes together in the covenant of unity to love one another as Christ commanded.

### January 15 | Renewal of our Baptismal Covenant

### The day we remember our baptism

United Methodism teaches that baptism initiates people into the faith community and into a covenant relationship with God and God's people. Adam Hamilton, Sr. Pastor at Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City says "I appreciate the daily opportunity to remember that in my baptism God claimed me as his child, promised to forgive me, to fill me with his Spirit, blessed me with the church, and ordained me to a life of service in the world. My baptism is both a sign of God's gift of salvation and a sign of my desire and commitment to follow Christ." You will have the opportunity to come to the font at the front of the sanctuary, touch the water, and remember your baptism.

### New Arrival

Congratulations to Brook & Flynn Miller on the birth of their son, Michael Doss, on December 13.

### Sympathy

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Greg Kirby and his family in the loss of his stepfather, Al Morgan, on December 13.

### New Year's Day Service Times

On Sunday, January 1, we will offer one service at 11:00 a.m. We hope you'll join us on New Year's Day as we celebrate the renewal of our covenant with God at our Wesley Covenant Renewal service. There will be no Sunday school that morning. The church will open at 10:00 a.m. and childcare for birth through age four will be available beginning at 10:30 a.m. prior to the 11:00 a.m. service.

# Wednesday Night Meals

There will be no Wednesday Night Meal this week. Please take time to enjoy family and friends during this time. Wednesday Night Meals will begin again on Wednesday, January 4.

Our vendors this year include Barberitos, Weaver D's, Dawg Gone Good BBQ, Taziki's Mediterranean Cafe, and Fox's Pizza Den. Dinner will be served from 5:00-6:30 p.m. in Hancock Hall. Each meal is \$6. All orders must be placed by Tuesday at noon. We have several options to purchase meals including the whole semester, by the month, or by the week. For more information, contact Beth.

Register | athensfirstumc.org/wednesdaynightmeals Beth Dickinson | beth@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

# Pray for Tijuana Mission Trip

We invite you to pray for our team members who will be ministering to those in need in Tijuana from December 27 to January 1. Our prayer is that God will use them to be a blessing to all those they meet.

# Epiphany Party | January 4

All children and their families are invited to join the party to celebrate Jesus, the Light of the World on Wednesday,

January 4! Dress up like nativity characters, meet the wise men, follow the light through a forest maze, and play games in the gym. We will present our Christmas offering to the baby Jesus to benefit Athens foster care. All children must attend with a parent or designated guardian. Childcare is available for infants and toddlers. This event kicks off the spring semester of Kids Music and Arts, our Wednesday night program for children.

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

## Small Group Opportunities | 2017

Registration is now open for all small group Bible studies. Find the perfect one today!

- Financial Peace
- · Disciple Fast-Track Old Testament
- Disciple IV: Under the Tree of Life
- Women's Study | Beth Moore's Entrusted: A Study of 2
   Timothy
- Women's Study | Israel's Mission by Ray Vander Laan
- Men's Study | Restoring an Attitude of Worship
- · What We Need is Here
- Revival: Faith as Wesley Lived it
- · Making Sense of the Bible

 $Register \ | \ a then s first umc. or g/registration$   $Beth \ Dickinson \ | \ beth @athen s first umc. or g \ | \ 706-543-1442$ 

### Souper Suppers

We invite you to come serve those who are hungry in our community this winter! We host Souper Suppers every Thursday evening beginning January 12 in Hancock Hall. At this weekly event, we invite our neighbors into our church home for a warm meal and fellowship. Individuals, Sunday school classes, families, or any small group are welcome to serve in several different ways:

- · Prepare a meal
- Work with children in the gym, set up the Souper Supper Store, or greet guests at 3:30 p.m.
- Greet, help in the Souper Supper Store, or serve as a dining room host at 4:30 p.m.
- Clean up from 5:30-6:15 p.m.

Please contact Mary Claire or Betsy to get involved! Learn More | athensfirstumc.org/soupersuppers Betsy Butler| betsy@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442 Mary Claire Wills | maryclaire@athensfirstumc.org 706-543-1442

# This Week

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25 | John 1:1-14

**Christmas Day** 

10:00 a.m. Sack Lunch Ministry HULL STREET ENTRANCE

11:00 a.m. Worship Service SANCTUARY Preschool Nursery FIRST FLOOR

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26 | PSALM 72:1-7, 10-14

Office closed—no programming

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27 | ISAIAH 60:1-6

Office closed—no programming

4:30 a.m. Tijuana Mission Trip DEPARTING FROM THE CHURCH PARKING LOT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28 | MATTHEW 2:1-8

Tijuana Mission Trip

7:30 p.m. Children's Basketball GYM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29 | MATTHEW 2:9-12

Tijuana Mission Trip

5:30 a.m. Fashion Fitness ROOM 120 9:00 a.m. Altar Guild SANCTUARY 5:00 p.m. Children's Basketball GYM 5:30 p.m. Fashion Fitness ROOM 120

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30 | Ephesians 3:1-7

Tijuana Mission Trip

Office closed—no programming

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31 | EPHESIANS 3:8-12

Tijuana Mission Trip

# Worship Bulletin (614-280)

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