

The background features a stylized design with three fish in grey outlines. Two fish are in the top-left corner, and one is in the bottom-right corner. A large red geometric shape, resembling a stylized 'L' or a corner of a square, frames the central text area. A small red circle is located in the top-left corner, and another is in the bottom-right corner.

ATHENS FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

First Sunday of Advent

DECEMBER 03, 2017
8:30, 9:45, & 11:00 a.m.

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.

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

Budget for 2017 | \$3,038,381
Amount Given YTD | \$2,878,719
Goal for November | \$241,742
Amount after 3 Sundays | \$180,412

Attendance on November 19

Total Worship | 1068
8:30 a.m. | 143
9:45 a.m. | 351
11:00 a.m. | 451
Online | 123
Sunday School | 344

Attendance on November 26

Total Worship | 934
8:30 a.m. | 161
9:45 a.m. | 358
11:00 a.m. | 298
Online | 117
Sunday School | 260

Table of Contents

- 1 8:30 a.m. Order of Worship
- 5 9:45 & 11:00 a.m. Order of Worship
- 9 The Steeple
- 12 Calendar

Ministers and Directors

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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

8:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

“Come Light Our Hearts” | Sandra McCracken

Flowers

The flowers on the altar
are given to the glory
of God and in loving
memory Mr. and Mrs.
Middleton Barnett
Wingfield and Mrs.
Blanche Quillian Wilkes
by Mr. and Mrs. W.
Terrell Wingfield.

Prelude Lyrics

For You, O Lord our
souls in stillness wait.
Truly our hope is in You.
O Lord of life, our only
hope, Your radiance
shines on all who look
to You in the dark.
Emmanuel, come, come
light our hearts. Oh Joy
above all other loves, in
You we find more than
enough. We come as we
are, oh heal and restore.
Come light our hearts.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Susan Taylor

Let us prepare our hearts as we await the coming of our Lord.

Let us watch for the one who heard our cries and shouldered the suffering of our world.

Let us anticipate the coming of Christ's eternal world with wholeness, reconciliation and plenty for all.

Let us wait in expectation for the day when God's glory is revealed in all its fullness.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

UMH 196 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” | HYFRYDOL

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH | The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;
the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*GLORIA PATRI

UMH 71 "Glory Be to the Father"

**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.**

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

The Steger family

The Gospel of John speaks of Christ as the true light coming into the world. In commemoration of that coming, we light candles for the four weeks leading to Christmas and reflect on the coming of Christ. It is significant that the church has always used that language—the coming of Christ—because it speaks to a deep truth. Christ is coming. Christ is always coming, always entering a troubled world, a wounded heart. And so we light the first candle, the candle of hope, and dare to express our longing for peace, for healing, and the well-being of all creation.

Let us pray:

Loving God, as we enter this Advent season, we open all the dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of Christ. Show us the creative power of hope. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ.

Congregation sings:

**A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
a candle of hope in December's dark night.
While angels sing blessing from heaven's starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.**

Anthem Lyrics

The advent of our God, our
prayers must now employ,
And we must meet Him
on His road with hymns of
holy joy. The everlasting
Son incarnate stoops to be;
Himself a servant's form
puts on to set His people
free. Daughter of Zion, rise
to meet thy lowly King. All
glory, all glory to the One
who comes to set us free.
As Judge, on clouds of light,
He soon will come again,
And all His scattered saints
unite with Him ever to
reign. Before the dawning
day let sin's dark deeds
be gone; the old man all
be put away, the new man
all put on. To the Son who
comes to set us free; to
the Spirit, all in harmony;
to the Father reigning in
eternity - all glory, all glory
to the One who comes to
set us free.

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.

OFFERING AND OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"The Advent of Our God" | Ben Grace and Michael Coia

*DOXOLOGY

"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" | VENI EMMANUEL

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. Rejoice, Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

SCRIPTURE READING

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 | p. 186 NEW TESTAMENT

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“He's The G.O.A.T.!” | Chuck Hodges

HYMN OF PREPARATION

UMH 219 “What Child Is This” | GREENSLEEVES

Verse 1

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord is here.

God's Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to offer thanks and praise.

It is right indeed, ever-living God, to give you thanks and praise through Christ your only Son. You are the source of all life and goodness; through your eternal Word you have created all things from the beginning.

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus had a meal with his friends. He took a loaf of bread, and after giving thanks to God, he broke it and gave it to his disciples. He said, “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.” After supper Jesus took the cup of wine, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them and said, “Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, remember me.” Let us pray:

Our souls magnify you, O Lord, and our spirits rejoice in you, for you are our Savior. In every generation, you have shown the lowly your favor and have blessed the poor in their need. With this bread and this cup we remember that your mercy endures from age to age on all who seek you. Fill us and all who hunger with good things and remember with your saving help all in need of your mercy. Amen.

Receiving of the Elements

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 elements are available at the center station in the front of the sanctuary.

Music During Holy Communion

“Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming” | Michael Burkhardt

“What Child Is This” | John Behnke

Prayer After Receiving

God our Father, in this meal you have filled us with the bread of life. Make us hunger now for his coming in the hearts and the homes of all. Fill us with his spirit of service and self-forgetting love, that through us, he may become near to people. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

UMH 230 “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!

***BLESSING**

***POSTLUDE**

“Advent Postlude on TRURO” | Frank Ashdown

The Worship of God

9:45 &
11:00 a.m.

Gathering

Flowers

The flowers on the altar
are given to the glory
of God and in loving
memory Mr. and Mrs.
Middleton Barnett
Wingfield and Mrs.
Blanche Quillian Wilkes
by Mr. and Mrs. W.
Terrell Wingfield.

THE PRELUDE

“Fantasia on ‘O Come, O Come, Emmanuel’” | Gene Clarke

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

“Prepare the Way of the Lord” | Joseph Herl

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir

Praise & Thanksgiving

*THE PROCESSIONAL HYMN

UMH 196 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” | HYFRYDOL

*THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

9:45 a.m. Josh Hawkins and Michele Wiesner

11:00 a.m. The Kiefer family

Let us pray.

Loving God, as we enter this Advent season, we open all the dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of Christ. Show us the creative power of hope. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

Congregation sings:

**A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
a candle of hope in December’s dark night.
While angels sing blessing from heaven’s starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.**

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH | The Apostles' Creed

Susan Taylor

We believe in God, the creator and giver of life, who brought all creation to birth, who mothers us and fathers us, protecting, nurturing, and cherishing us. We believe in Jesus Christ: God born among us as a fragile baby, embodying both love and the need for love, and calling us to rest in God as trustingly as a tiny child. We believe in the Holy Spirit, breathed into us at our birth, always drawing us on to be born

again, encouraging, exhorting, comforting, nourishing our growth and inspiring our living. We believe in the reconciliation of the world to God, through Christ. Searched for at birth and lifted up at death, Christ entered our fearful darkness so that we might enter his glorious light and share the life of his resurrection. And we believe that each new child is a glimpse of the face of God, a sign of the life to come, and a call to live in peace and celebrate living together. Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth. Amen.

***THE GLORIA PATRI**

UMH 71 "Glory Be to the Father"

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.

Anthem Lyrics

Long the days of waiting, longer still the nights; dark, the dead of winter, yearning for the light. Watching for the sunrise, reaching for the dawn, let us pray with eyes wide open this our Advent song: Come, O come, Lord Jesus, like the morning sun! Cast your light across our darkness; make our hearts your home. Lost the word of wisdom, missing what is true, seeking after knowledge without knowing you. List'ning for a prophet, hearing only noise, loud the thoughts so deep within us silencing your voice. Harsh the guilt we carry, evils we have done, pleading for your presence, wounded and alone. So we come believing, in the dark of night, that your saving presence with us will bring life and light.

***THE PASSING OF THE PEACE**

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

"Long the Days of Waiting" | Mark Shepperd

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir; Amelia Merriman, oboe; Ana Abrantes, cello; Callie Waller, Christopher Mason, and Isaiah Feken, soloists

This anthem has been placed in the choir library to the Glory of God and in honor of Karen and Connie Broun.

***THE DOXOLOGY**

"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" | VENI EMMANUEL

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. Rejoice, Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Proclamation of the Word

THE SCRIPTURE READING

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 | p. 186 NEW TESTAMENT

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

“He’s The G.O.A.T.!” | Chuck Hodges

Response to the Word

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

When we gather to praise God and celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion, we remember that we are people who have preferred our wills to the will of God. Accepting God’s power to become new persons in Christ, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Merciful God, always with us, always coming: We confess that we do not know how to prepare for your Advent. We have forgotten how to hope in miracles; we have ignored the promise of your kingdom; we get distracted by all the busyness of this season. Forgive us, God. Grant us the simple wonder of the shepherds, the intelligent courage of the Magi, and the patient faith of Mary and Joseph, that we may journey with them to Bethlehem and find the good news of a child born for us. Now, in the quiet of our hearts, we ask you to make us ready for his coming. Amen.

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, Almighty God, our Comforter and Sustainer. You made us in your image and filled us with longing, that our hearts might remain restless until they find their rest in you. When our love failed, your love remained steadfast. In our longing for freedom through the ages, you

perceived our yearning to be your covenant people. In the lineage of Sarah and Abraham, Elizabeth and Zechariah, and Mary and Joseph, we come to this season of holy mystery, awaiting the promise of your redeeming love. And so, with your people on earth, and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

Congregation sings:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna, in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name, who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ, who came announced by angels, worshipped by shepherds, and sought by wise men from the east. As your precious gift to the world, Jesus walked among us, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and offering love and compassion to those in need. Through Christ and the Holy Spirit, you answered our longing for connection by giving birth to your Church, delivering us from slavery to sin and death, and making with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. In this holy season of Advent, you awaken us to your Presence, and call us to be your compassion in the world, as we speak the truth of your love.

Even when the song of the angels had stilled, and Jesus faced denial, betrayal, and death, he gave thanks and blessed the fruit of this, your good earth, offering not only bread and wine, but the bread that always satisfies and the life that never ends. And we remember that night when Jesus shared table with disciples, taking and breaking bread, blessing it, and giving it to his disciples, saying: “Take, eat; this is my body.”

We remember also that Jesus took the cup, blessing it, and giving it to his disciples, saying: “This is my cup of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many. Do this, as often as you do, in remembrance of me.”

This bread and this cup bring life and love to all—for they are God’s love living in us, they are the Spirit’s blessing flowing through us. And so, in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Christ Jesus, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as holy and living gifts to you and to your world. In union with Christ’s gift of love for us, we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, that this season of Advent may be a season of yearning for connection—a season of waiting with patience and hope. Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine, that they may bring your Advent miracle to a world that longs to believe in miracles

once more. As we experience your Presence in the eating of this bread and the drinking of this wine, help us lay claim to the hope and promise of the season. Through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forevermore.

The Receiving of the Bread and Wine

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 elements are available at the center station in the front of the sanctuary.

The Music During Communion

"Huron Carol" | arr. Susan LaBarr

Sung by the Chamber Ensemble

*THE HYMN

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" | ST. LOUIS

Verses 1, 3, 4

Sending Forth

*THE BLESSING AND CHORAL RESPONSE

"See Amid the Winter's Snow" | John Goss

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir; Kaitlyn Gilmore, soloist

* THE POSTLUDE

"Advent Postlude on TRURO" | Frank Ashdown



American Red Cross

The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.
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redcrossblood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS

Give the gift of blood this Christmas!

Tuesday, December 19
1:00-6:00 p.m.
Hancock Hall



Join us Tuesday, December 19, to give the gift of blood! The holidays are a time when blood is most needed, and we are happy to host a blood drive to help those in need! Many in our church family have been beneficiaries of blood transfusions and platelets and we are excited to continue to serve our community in this way. The Red Cross blood drive will be in Hancock Hall from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. Contact Sarah Beth Barger to schedule an appointment to give blood; however, walk-ins are always welcome!

Sarah Beth Barger

sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442



The Advent Wreath | Hope

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 first candle for hope.

For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Isaiah 60:2-3

Sympathy

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Ken Mauldin and his family in the loss of his mother, Charlotte Floyd Mauldin, on November 23.

New Members

On November 19, we welcomed Jen Callaway; Charlie Stevens; Jerry Jones; Joe Maxey and Katherine Poss; and Josh Hawkins and Michele Wiesner to the Athens First United Methodist Church family.



Carols for Advent and Christmas

Join us tonight at 7:00 p.m. to hear the Chamber Ensemble host Carols for Advent and Christmas in the chapel. Come celebrate the first Sunday of Advent as we prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus and take time to pause from the busyness of the season to reflect and hear the story again through word and song.

Stephen Mitchell | stephen@athensfirstumc.org

706-543-1442

The Ark | Foster Family Support

The Ark is launching a donations drive benefiting foster care families who will have a new family member arrive in the near future! Often these families receive little to no advance warning before welcoming a child into their home. The Ark's goal is to pack 200 Family Placement Packs, and we are serving as a drop-off location. We will be collecting the following items: children's books, games, diapers, baby wipes, onesies, teething toys, plush toys, bibs, and bottles. The collection box is located on a display table in the youth

hallway. All donations must be made by Monday, December 4. For more information please contact Betsy Butler or Sarah Beth Barger.
Betsy Butler | betsy@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442
Sarah Beth Barger | sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org
706-543-1442

Christmas Giving | Gifts are Due!

We are partnering with local non-profit agencies to provide gifts for children through Salvation Army Angel Tree and families through Project Safe. We will also be collecting gift cards for Interfaith Hospitality Network of Athens families. Please be sure that all gifts are unwrapped. However, as an additional gift to these families, please include wrapping materials so that parents can be included in the gift giving experience. All gifts for Christmas Giving are due December 4 to room 110. Thank you for the many ways you share God's love in our community!

Sarah Beth Barger | sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org
706-543-1442

Jennifer Golden | jkgolden19@gmail.com | 706-543-1442

Wednesday Night Meals

The meal on Wednesday, December 6, is provided by Barberitos. Join us for soft shell turkey tacos and chips. Order your meal online or by calling the church office by Tuesday at noon. All are invited to attend and encouraged to spend time together during our Wednesday Night Meal. For more information, contact Cindy. If you have trouble ordering online, church staff can help you order your meal. Volunteers eat free. Register to volunteer online. Register for the meal.

Register | athensfirstumc.org/registration

Cindy McKoy | cindy@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

GriefShare

Join us Wednesday, December 6, from 10:00-11:30 a.m. in room 100 as we answer questions about heaven and the afterlife. This faith-based curriculum led by Martha Aenchbacher is for those grieving the death of a friend or family member features nationally recognized experts on grief and recovery topics. New participants are welcome to join at any time. Please register online; there is a \$20 cost to

cover the workbook.

Learn more | athensfirstumc.org/griefshare

Martha Aenchbacher | martha@athensfirstumc.org
706-543-1442



Home for the Holidays | December 7

Senior Fun is excited to host our annual Home for the Holidays event where we invite homebound church members to a delicious meal and wonderful Christmas music program performed by the brass department of the Hugh Hodgson School of Music. Home for the Holidays will be Thursday, December 7, at 12:30 p.m. in Hancock Hall. There is no cost for our special homebound guests, and the cost is \$6 for all others. If you are caring for an aging parent at home or have caregivers you employ, please know that all are invited and welcome to attend this special luncheon! If you need transportation, please let us know. Call the church office to make your reservation by Tuesday, December 5. Contact Martha with any questions.

Church office | 706-543-1442

Martha Aenchbacher | martha@athensfirstumc.org
706-543-1442

Lessons and Carols | December 10

In 1880, E.W. Benson, then Anglican Bishop of Touro, England, composed a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, based on ancient sources, for Christmas Eve. It is our custom to celebrate this tradition on the second Sunday of Advent. Join us Sunday, December 10, for Lessons and Carols at all three service times. This year's Lessons and Carols services will center around the theme "And This Shall Be a Sign." The 8:30 a.m. service will feature congregational singing and music offered by our worship

team. The 9:45 and 11:00 a.m. services will feature the children, youth, and adult choirs as they join together to reveal the signs of Christ's birth as told through scripture and song.

Newcomer Orientation | December 10

Everyone is invited to attend Newcomer Orientation the second Sunday of each month. Join us on December 10 in the Hospitality Room at 9:45 a.m. You can learn more about Athens First United Methodist, including ways to get involved and how to become a member.

Martha Aenchbacher | martha@athensfirstumc.org
706-543-1442



Youth Christmas Lock-In | Register!

ONE Student Ministries is hosting a Christmas Lock-in for students in grades 7-12 on December 15-16. The activities at the lock-in will include dinner, caroling, missional activity, games, worship, and movies. We hope that this lock-in will be a great time for our youth to strengthen their relationships with one another through Christian fellowship and fun! Please visit our webpage for more information and to register. Registration ends Sunday, December 10.

Register | athensfirstumc.org/christmaslockin

Josh Miles | josh@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

UMW Christmas Luncheon

The United Methodist Women circles are hosting their annual Christmas luncheon. If you are interested in the United Methodist Women, this is a great opportunity to learn more. The luncheon will be held in Hancock Hall on Monday, December 11, at 11:30 a.m. Please contact the

church office for reservations. If you are already a member of a UMW circle, please make your reservation for lunch with your circle leader. Please bring a salad or dessert for the luncheon.

Church office | 706-543-1442

Kim Griffith | kimgriffith@bellsouth.net

Baby Recognition Sunday

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we also celebrate the birth of babies born into our church family during the last year. Please join us on December 17 at 11:00 a.m. worship as we welcome these sweet babies into our church family. Families are invited to a reception in Hancock Hall prior to the worship service, at 10:15 a.m.

Katie Elder | katie@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

The Snow Lay on the Ground

You are invited to hear the Sanctuary Choir's performance of "The Snow Lay on the Ground: Nine Festive Carols for Christmas" including "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," "Angels We Have Heard on High," "The First Nowell," "Joy to the World" and others. Join us on Sunday, December 17, at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. The choir will be accompanied by a brass choir, organ and harp.

Community Christmas Party

We have the opportunity to partner with Action Ministries, First Baptist Church, Chapelwood United Methodist Church, Oconee Street United Methodist church, and Janssen Pharmaceuticals to host our Community Christmas Party! Join us for this service-centered event on Wednesday, December 20, in Hancock Hall. Together, we will serve a free meal and provide winter necessities to community guests in need. Set-up for the event will begin at 9:30 a.m. and we will begin serving the meal at 12:00 p.m. Although this new event will take the place of our annual Christmas Community Meal, we look forward to continuing the tradition of coming together and serving our neighbors for the Christmas season. If you are interested in volunteering to help set up, greet guests, serve food, wash dishes, or hand out winter items, please contact Betsy Butler or Sarah Beth Barger.

Betsy Butler | betsy@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

Sarah Beth Barger | sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org

Weekday Preschool Registration

Preschool registration opens for the 2017-2018 school year online on January 8. Our preschool program serves families of children age nine months through Pre-K from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Please note the following registration deadlines:

- Currently enrolled deadline: January 22
- Church member deadline: January 24
- Community deadline: January 26

Register | athensfirstumc.org/weekdaypreschool

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



Souper Supper

Save the date! Souper Supper is just around corner.

Beginning January 11 we will invite our community guests to dinner at the church each Thursday. If you are interested in getting involved or serving, mark your calendars and contact Betsy Butler or Sarah Beth Barger.

Betsy Butler | betsy@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442

Sarah Beth Barger | sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org

Rise Against Hunger

Mark your calendars for Saturday, January 27, for Rise Against Hunger (formally known as Stop Hunger Now)!

This is a meal packaging event and a churchwide mission opportunity that impacts our neighbors across the globe without leaving Athens. We will package 50,000 meals in a single shift beginning at 10:00 a.m. Register online to let us know you will be coming; shifts are available Friday for set-up and Saturday for meal packaging and clean-up. Contact Betsy Butler or Sarah Beth Barger with any questions.

Betsy Butler | betsy@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442


Sarah Beth Barger | sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org

Parenting with Purpose | January 28

Kari Kampakis is a blogger, author, speaker, and newspaper columnist whose popular books for teens and tweens have been used widely across the country to empower them through faith. Kari offers practical advice, loving support, and insightful discussion for families in the digital age. As part of our ongoing Parenting with Purpose series, we look forward to hosting Kari for two events on Sunday, January 28. At 4:30 p.m. there will be a session for mothers and daughters (fifth grade and older) called "Dear Girls, You are Stronger Than You Think." At 6:30 p.m. there will be a session for the parents of pre-teens and teenagers called "How to Love Your Teenager: Navigating Your Relationship into the Teen Years." Please visit our webpage for more information and registration for each of these events.

Learn more | athensfirstumc.org/pwp

Robin Stewart | robin@athensfirstumc.org | 706-543-1442



Joy to the World

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE TIMES:

4:00 p.m.

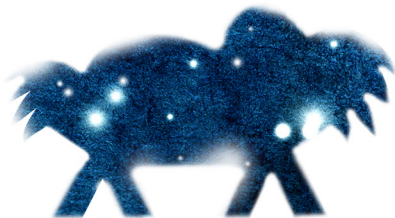
Candlelight service led by the
Children's Music Ministry

7:00 p.m.

Candlelight service with music
from the Wesleyan Youth Choir

11:00 p.m.

Candlelight service with Holy
Communion and music from
the Sanctuary Choir



This Week

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3 | MARK 13:32-37

Interfaith Hospitality Network Host Week

- 8:30 a.m. **Worship Service** SANCTUARY
Preschool Nursery FIRST FLOOR
Advent Family Breakfast and Worship Service HANCOCK HALL
- 9:00 a.m. **Fun Gym** GYM
- 9:45 a.m. **Worship Service** SANCTUARY
Adult Sunday School SECOND FLOOR AND SAYE BUILDING
Preschool Nursery & Sunday School FIRST FLOOR
Youth Sunday School: First Word ROOM 119
Route 56: Fuel ROOM 120
Elementary Sunday School: Holy Ground CHAPEL
Kindergarten Sunday School: City on a Hill ROOM 311 & 313
- 10:00 a.m. **Sack Lunch Ministry** HULL STREET ENTRANCE
- 11:00 a.m. **Worship Service** SANCTUARY
Preschool Nursery FIRST FLOOR
- 12:00 p.m. **S.A.L.T Meeting** ROOM 124
- 1:00 p.m. **Children's Basketball** GYM
Venture Crew Meeting ROOM 100
- 3:00 p.m. **Cub Scout Pack 1 Meeting** HANCOCK HALL
- 3:45 p.m. **Agape Choir Rehearsal** ROOM 148
- 4:30 p.m. **Wesleyan Youth Choir** ROOM 148
Route 56: Open Road + Octane ROOM 120
Connect and Grow Group JOHN WESLEY PARLOR
- 4:45 p.m. **Connect and Grow Group** ROOM 200
- 5:45 p.m. **Youth: Encounter** ROOM 119
- 7:00 p.m. **Carols and Readings for Advent and Christmas** CHAPEL

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4 | ISAIAH 40:1-5

- 10:00 a.m. **Connect & Grow Women's Group** ROOM 200
- 4:00 p.m. **Children's Basketball** GYM
- 7:00 p.m. **Community Bible Study | Evening** HANCOCK HALL
Connect & Grow Group

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5 | ISAIAH 40:6-11

- 8:30 a.m. **Community Bible Study Leaders Council** YOUTH AREA
- 9:15 a.m. **Wesley Leadership Meeting** HULL CONFERENCE ROOM
- 10:30 a.m. **Prayer Shawl Ministry** PANERA BREAD
- 1:30 p.m. **Pickleball** GYM
- 4:00 p.m. **Children's Basketball** GYM
- 5:30 p.m. **Fashion Fitness** ROOM 120
Connect & Grow Group ROOM 229
Men's Prayer Group ROOM 226
- 6:30 p.m. **Disciple Fast Track | New Testament** ROOM 224
- 7:00 p.m. **Boy Scouts Troop 1** SCOUT HUT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6 | PSALM 85:1-2, 8-9

- 9:30 a.m. **Wednesday Morning Bible Study** ROOM 222
10:00 a.m. **GriefShare | Wednesday Group** ROOM 100
12:45 p.m. **Music Explorers** ROOM 314
4:30 p.m. **Prayer Shawl Ministry** ROOM 200
Celebrate Worship Arts | Grades 3 & 4 ROOM 301
Lyric Choir | Grades 1 & 2 ROOM 151
Music Explorers ROOM 314
Dance | Ages 4-5 ROOM 145
4:45 p.m. **Early Book Group** ROOM 224
5:00 p.m. **Wednesday Night Meal** HANCOCK HALL
Route 56: GPS ROOM 120
5:10 p.m. **Celebrate Choir | Grades 3 & 4** ROOM 151
5:15 p.m. **Joy Choir | Kindergarten** ROOM 320
Sonshine Choir | Age 4 ROOM 325
5:20 p.m. **Lyric Worship Arts | Grades 1 & 2** ROOM 301
Music Explorers ROOM 314
Dance | Age 3 ROOM 145
5:30 p.m. **66 Love Letters** JOHN WESLEY PARLOR
Connect Group | Young Married ROOM 114
5:45 p.m. **Lessons & Carols Rehearsal (Adult and Children Choirs)** SANCTUARY
6:00 p.m. **Youth Bible Study: Engage** ROOM 119
6:15 p.m. **Dance Recital** HANCOCK HALL
6:30 p.m. **Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal** ROOM 148
Disciple IV ROOM 226
Connect & Grow Group ROOM 224
Pauses for Advent ROOM 200
6:45 p.m. **Children's Basketball** GYM
7:00 p.m. **Chamber Ensemble Rehearsal** ROOM 148
8:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7 | PSALM 85:8-13

- 9:30 a.m. **Community Bible Study** SANCTUARY
10:00 a.m. **Our Daily Bread** FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH DOWNTOWN
12:30 p.m. **Home for the Holidays** HANCOCK HALL
1:30 p.m. **Pickleball** GYM
4:00 p.m. **Children's Basketball** GYM
5:30 p.m. **Fashion Fitness** ROOM 120

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8 | 2 PETER 3:8-15a

- 11:30 a.m. **Tuck Sunday School Class Christmas Party** HANCOCK HALL
4:00 p.m. **Children's Basketball** GYM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9 | MARK 1:1-6

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

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