

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, thick red line forms a partial frame around the central text, with a small red dot at its top-left end and another at its bottom-right end.

# ATHENS FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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*First Sunday of Advent*

DECEMBER 02, 2018  
8:30, 9:45, & 11:00 a.m.

# Welcome

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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 2018 | \$3,231,864

Amount Given YTD | \$2,789,707

Goal for November | \$265,325

Amount after 3 Sundays | \$169,835

## *Attendance on November 18*

Total Worship | 1120

8:30 a.m. | 127

9:45 a.m. | 361

11:00 a.m. | 466

Online | 166

Sunday School | 353

## *Attendance on November 25*

Total Worship | 898

8:30 a.m. | 125

9:45 a.m. | 277

11:00 a.m. | 346

Online | 150

Sunday School | 247

## *Table of Contents*

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## *Ministers*

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## *Directors*

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# The Worship of God

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8:30 a.m.

## GATHERING SONG

“Come Light Our Hearts” | Sandra McCracken

For you, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait.

**For you, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait.**

Truly our hope is in you.

**Truly our hope is in you.**

### *Flowers*

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

## OPENING PRAYER

Josh Miles

## \*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.**

**Amen.**

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Dan and Jan Foust

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. 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.**

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

Susan Taylor

**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.**

### *Anthem Lyrics*

We will find our hope  
in you. We will find our  
peace in you.

## OFFERING AND OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"Hope" | David Gungor and Jon Arndt

### \*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

ECCLESIASTES 10:10 | NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

Using a dull ax requires great strength, so sharpen the blade. That's the value of wisdom; it helps you succeed.

## SERMON

"The Value of Preparation" | Chuck Hodges

## HYMN OF PREPARATION

UMH 216 "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" | ES IST EIN ROS

Verses 1 & 2

## SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

In this season of expectant waiting, we are invited to Christ's table here and now to experience God's grace. The table is open to all who seek to be in community with God and with one another. Let us pray.

**God of salvation, we fall short of your perfect love. Be born once again in us today. Remove the barriers we build in our hearts and minds so that we are free to love you completely. Show us how to love our neighbor as ourselves through your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

Out of the wilderness a voice calls out: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Prepare ye the way of love. Prepare ye the way of forgiveness." The Christ child was born in the midst of darkness to be the light. Christ is the light that shines in and through us. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

**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.**

God of many blessings, you promised the coming of an anointed one, who would lead his people to peace and goodness. We give you thanks for your Son Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh. He is the one the prophets foretold, the one to whom John pointed in the wilderness, who was born in a lowly manger. Through his living and dying, he has shown us the way to your love. On the night...

And so, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer our lives, in praise and thanksgiving for your many blessings, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

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

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, and on this meal we share. Make us a Christmas people, secure in what has come, and hopeful for what is yet to be. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry until Christ shall dwell in the hearts and minds of all the world.

**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.

### *Song Lyrics*

The world waits for a miracle. The heart longs for a little bit of hope. Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel. A child prays for peace on Earth, and she's calling out from a sea of hurt. Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel. And can you hear the angels singing? Glory to the light of the world. Glory, the light of the world is here. The drought breaks with the tears of a mother. A baby's cry is the sound of love come down. Come down, Emmanuel. He is the song for the suffering. He is Messiah, the Prince of Peace has come. He has come, Emmanuel. For all who wait, for all who hunger, for all who've prayed, for all who wonder, behold your King. Behold Messiah, Emmanuel.

## Music During Holy Communion

“Light of the World” | Lauren Daigle

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

### \*BLESSING

### \*CLOSING HYMN

UMH 211 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” | VENI EMMANUEL

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

### \*POSTLUDE

“Postlude on TRURO” | Hopson

# The Worship of God

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9:45 &  
11:00 a.m.

## Gathering

### *Flowers*

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

### THE PRELUDE

“Once in Royal David’s City” | arr. Lash

### THE CALL TO WORSHIP

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” | 15th cent. French

*Sung by the Sanctuary Choir; Isaiah Feken, soloist*

## Praise & Thanksgiving

### \*THE PROCESSIONAL HYMN

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

### \*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

9:45 a.m. | Josh Miles

11:00 a.m. | Martha Aenchbacher

### \*THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

9:45 a.m. The Lee family

11:00 a.m. Martha and Rick Parker

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. 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.**

*Anthem Lyrics*

Awake, my spirit, awake  
lute and harp; I will awake  
at the dawn of day. I will  
confess You, O Lord  
among the nations. I will  
raise a psalm to You, for  
Your love is wide as the  
heavens, and Your truth  
reaches to the skies! Wake,  
awake, for night is flying,  
the watchmen on the  
heights are crying; awake,  
Jerusalem at last. Midnight  
hears the welcome voices,  
and at the thrilling cry  
rejoices: "Come forth you  
maidens! Night is past.  
The bridegroom comes,  
awake; Your lamps with  
gladness take!" Alleluia!  
Prepare yourselves to  
meet the Lord, whose light  
has stirred the waiting  
guard...Now let all the  
heavens adore you, and  
saints and angels sing  
before You. The harps and  
cymbals all unite. Of one  
pearl each shining portal,  
where, dwelling with the  
choir immortal we gather  
around Your dazzling light.  
No eye has seen nor ear  
has yet been trained to  
hear. What joy is ours!  
Crescendos rise; Your halls  
resound; Hosannas blend  
in cosmic sound. Arise, O  
Jerusalem! Arise clothed in  
light! Your light has come,  
and the glory of God upon  
your hearts will shine.  
Alleluia!

**\*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**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 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**

**"Arise, Your Light Has Come" | David Danner**

*Sung by the Sanctuary Choir; with the Alleluia Ringers and Brass Ensemble*



**\*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 PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and Word proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.**

**THE SCRIPTURE READING**

ECCLESIASTES 10:10 | NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

Using a dull ax requires great strength, so sharpen the blade. That's the value of wisdom; it helps you succeed.

**THE SERMON**

“The Value of Preparation” | 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 from this cup, 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 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.

### The Music During Communion

“Savior of the Nations, Come with O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

arr. Brenda Austin

*Rung by the Alleluia Ringers*

## *Sending Forth*

### \*THE BLESSING AND CHORAL RESPONSE

“Be a Christmas Presence” | Pepper Choplin

Now we go into to the world to be the Christmas presence. Sharing gifts of hope and love the Lord has placed within us, the Lord has placed within us. We’re bringing hope to the world, hope to the world, hope to the world, the Lord is come.

**We’re bringing hope to the world, hope to the world, hope to the world, the Lord is come.**

### \* THE POSTLUDE

“Praise Ye the Lord of Hosts” | Camille Saint-Saens

## *The Season of Advent* 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.

*A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD...*

Isaiah 11:1-2

*Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord."*

Zechariah 6:12



## Sympathy

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Beth Rector and her family in the loss of her husband, Mike Rector, on November 24.

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Jeffrey Martin and his family in the loss of his father, Bill Martin, on November 25.

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Tom Beisswenger and his family in the loss of his father, Don Beisswenger, on November 26.

## New Members

On November 18, we welcomed Jimmy and Brenda Klein to the Athens First United Methodist Church family.



## Messiah | A Bible Study

Want to hear G.F. Handel's *Messiah* from a new and fresh perspective? Want to know more about the work and study the text? Join Stephen Mitchell, Martha Aenchbacher, and Susan Taylor for a three-week study of Handel, *Messiah*, and the text. The study will meet on Wednesday evenings from 5:30-6:30 p.m., beginning November 28 through December 12 in room 148. Then everyone is invited to hear the Sanctuary Choir perform Part I on Sunday, December 16, at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. For more information, contact Susan or Cindy. Please register online.

Register | [athensfirstumc.org/registration](https://athensfirstumc.org/registration)

Susan Taylor | [susan@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:susan@athensfirstumc.org) | 706-543-1442

Cindy McKoy | [cindy@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:cindy@athensfirstumc.org) | 706-543-1442



## Carols and Readings for Christmas

Join us tonight at 7:00 p.m. to hear the Chamber Ensemble host Carols and Readings for 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. Enjoy the wonderful acoustics of the chapel as the Chamber Ensemble presents music of Arnesen, Koppin, Rachmaninoff, and Chilcott.

Stephen Mitchell | [stephen@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:stephen@athensfirstumc.org)

706-543-1442

## Christmas Giving

As a reminder, gifts for the Salvation Army Angel Tree, Project Safe families, and community children are due this week! We will continue collecting gift cards for the families of the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Athens. If you have any questions, please contact Betsy Butler or Sarah Beth Barger.

Betsy Butler | [betsy@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:betsy@athensfirstumc.org) | 706-543-1442

Sarah Beth Barger | [sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org)

## Wednesday Night Meals

The meal on Wednesday, December 5, is provided by Fresh Air BBQ. Join us for barbecue pork sandwich, macaroni and cheese, Brunswick stew and chips. Order your meal online or by calling the church office by Tuesday at noon. For more information, contact Cindy.

Register | [athensfirstumc.org/wednesdaynightmeals](https://athensfirstumc.org/wednesdaynightmeals)

Cindy McKoy | [cindy@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:cindy@athensfirstumc.org) | 706-543-1442





# Home for the holidays

Senior Fun is excited to host our annual Home for the Holidays event where we invite home-bound church members to a delicious meal and special music from the Bulldog Brass Society of the Hugh Hodgson School of Music. Home for the Holidays will be Thursday, December 13, at 12:00 p.m. in Hancock Hall. There is no cost for our special home-bound 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 11. Contact Martha with any questions.

Church office | 706-543-1442

Martha Aenchbacher | [martha@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:martha@athensfirstumc.org)

## Preparing for Advent: Candlelight Yin Yoga and Prayer Meditation

Join Susan Taylor in "Preparing for Advent: Candlelight Yin Yoga and Prayer Meditation" on Monday, December 3, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., in room 301. Yin Yoga offers a much deeper access to the body when practicing the asanas (yoga postures). Postures are held for three to five minutes so that there is time for meditation. Yin yoga is for every "body," novice, beginner, intermediate, and advanced yoga practitioners. Advent prayer meditations using scripture and poetry along with prayer bead practice are included. Prayer beads will be provided and given to each participant to use and keep as a reminder of this time of Advent preparation. The cost is \$10. Please register online. For more information, contact Susan or Cindy.

Register | [athensfirstumc.org/registration](https://athensfirstumc.org/registration)

Susan Taylor | [susan@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:susan@athensfirstumc.org) | 706-543-1442

Cindy McKoy | [cindy@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:cindy@athensfirstumc.org) | 706-543-1442



## Gratitude Multiplied

If your gratitude is compelling you to give back, there is a place for you to change hearts and shape hearts of people of all ages. We are forming discipleship teams whose first responsibility is to teach children. However, the bonus is that we are building new relationships among all ages. Bring your heart and your special gifts. You determine the size of your commitment. Stop by the desk at the Washington Street Galleria entrance, or contact Robin Stewart or Tiffany Anderson for more information.

Learn more | [athensfirstumc.org/timothyadvantage](https://athensfirstumc.org/timothyadvantage)

Robin Stewart | [robin@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:robin@athensfirstumc.org) | 706-543-1442



## Lessons and Carols

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 9, for Lessons and Carols at all three service times. This year's Lessons and Carols services will center around the themes of hope, joy, love, and peace. The 8:30 a.m. service will feature music and carols from The Oh Hellos' "Family Christmas Album" with full band and vocalists leading the congregation in singing, readings, and stories. The 9:45 and 11:00 a.m. services will feature the children, youth, and adult choirs as they sing of the hope, peace, joy, and love of Christ's birth as told through scripture and song.

## Newcomer Orientation | December 9

Everyone is invited to attend Newcomer Orientation the second Sunday of each month. Join us on December 9 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](mailto:martha@athensfirstumc.org)  
706-543-1442

## Church Conference | Next Sunday

There will be a church conference next Sunday, December 9, at 12:00 p.m. in Sanctuary. We hope you can attend!

## UMW Christmas Luncheon

Come and join our United Methodist Women's Christmas Luncheon on Monday, December 10, at 11:30 a.m. in Hancock Hall. If you are interested in the United Methodist Women, this is a great opportunity to learn more. All women are invited to attend. Please contact Cindy to make reservations. If you are a member of one of our circles, please make your reservation for lunch with your circle leader. Please bring a salad or dessert for the luncheon. Kim Griffith | [kimgriffith@bellsouth.net](mailto:kimgriffith@bellsouth.net)  
Cindy McKoy | [cindy@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:cindy@athensfirstumc.org) | 706-543-1442

## 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 16 at 11:00 a.m. worship as we welcome these sweet babies into our church family. Families are invited to come to Hancock Hall at 10:30 a.m. for a reception prior to the worship service. Jennifer Golden | [jennifer@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:jennifer@athensfirstumc.org) | 706-543-1442



## Red Cross Blood Drive

Join us Tuesday, December 18, 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 12:00 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](mailto:sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org)

## Souper Suppers | Save the Date

Save our Date! Souper Suppers is just around corner. Beginning January 10, we will invite our community guests to dinner at the church each Thursday. At this time, we are collecting donations of toilet paper 4-packs, bottles of dish soap, peanut butter crackers, and new or used books (from children's books to young adult). 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](mailto:betsy@athensfirstumc.org) | 706-543-1442

Sarah Beth Barger | [sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org)

706-543-1442

## Weekday Preschool Registration

Preschool registration opens for the 2018-2019 school year online on January 7. 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 25
- Church member deadline: January 28
- Community deadline: January 30

Register | [athensfirstumc.org/weekdaypreschool](http://athensfirstumc.org/weekdaypreschool)

Linsey Jarrett | [linsey@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:linsey@athensfirstumc.org) | 706-543-1442





# *Join us for 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  
Communion and music  
from the Sanctuary Choir*



# This Week

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## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2 | I THESSALONIANS 3:9-13

- 8:30 a.m. **Worship Service** SANCTUARY  
**Advent Family Gathering** HANCOCK HALL  
**Preschool Nursery** FIRST FLOOR
- 9:00 a.m. **Fun Gym** GYM
- 9:45 a.m. **Worship Service** SANCTUARY  
**Adult Sunday School** SECOND FLOOR AND SAYE BUILDING  
**Youth Sunday School** YOUTH AREA  
**Route 56: Grade 5 & 6 Sunday School** ROOM 120  
**Elementary Sunday School: Holy Ground** CHAPEL  
**Kindergarten Sunday School: City on a Hill** ROOM 311 & 313  
**Preschool Nursery & Sunday School** FIRST FLOOR
- 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 119
- 1:00 p.m. **Children's Basketball** GYM  
**Venture Crew Meeting** ROOM 125
- 3:00 p.m. **Cub Scout Pack 1 Meeting** HANCOCK HALL
- 3:45 p.m. **Agape Choir Rehearsal** ROOM 145
- 4:30 p.m. **Carillons Ringers** ROOM 150  
**Wesleyan Youth Choir Rehearsal** ROOM 148  
**Route 56 Sunday Nights** ROOM 120  
**Connect & Grow Group** JOHN WESLEY PARLOR
- 5:30 p.m. **Alleluia Ringers** ROOM 150  
**Encounter** ROOM 119
- 6:30 p.m. **Route 56 Extended Care** ROOM 120
- 7:00 p.m. **Carols and Readings for Christmas** CHAPEL

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 3 | MALACHI 3:1-4

- 10:00 a.m. **Connect & Grow | Women's Group** ROOM 200
- 4:00 p.m. **Children's Basketball** GYM
- 5:30 p.m. **Preparing for Advent: Candlelight Yin Yoga & Prayer Meditation** ROOM 301
- 6:30 p.m. **Evening Community Bible Study**  
**Junior Girl Scouts Meeting** SAYE BUILDING
- 7:00 p.m. **Connect & Grow Group**

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4 | LUKE 1:68-75

- 8:30 a.m. **Community Bible Study Leaders' Council** YOUTH AREA
- 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. **Connect & Grow Group** JOHN WESLEY PARLOR  
**Fashion Fitness** ROOM 120
- 7:00 p.m. **Boy Scouts Troop 1** SCOUT HUT

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## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5 | LUKE 1:76-79

- 9:30 a.m. **Wednesday Morning Bible Study** ROOM 222
- 4:30 p.m. **Prayer Shawl Ministry** ROOM 200
- Lyric Choir | Grades 1-2** ROOM 151
- Celebrate Worship Arts | Grades 3-4** ROOM 301
- Dance | Age 4-Kindergarten** ROOM 145
- 4:45 p.m. **Early Book Group** ROOM 224
- 5:00 p.m. **Route 56 Wednesday Nights** ROOM 120
- Wednesday Night Meal** HANCOCK HALL
- 5:10 p.m. **Celebrate Choir | Grades 3-4** ROOM 151
- 5:15 p.m. **Sonshine Choir | Age 4** ROOM 325
- Joy Choir | Kindergarten** ROOM 325
- 5:20 p.m. **Music & Movement | Age 3** ROOM 314
- Lyric Worship Arts | Grades 1-2** ROOM 301
- 5:30 p.m. **Messiah Bible Study** ROOM 148
- 66 Love Letters**
- Connect Group | Young Married** ROOM 114
- 6:00 p.m. **Youth Bible Study** ROOM 119
- 6:30 p.m. **Connect & Grow Group** ROOM 224
- Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal** ROOM 148
- 7:00 p.m. **Children's Basketball** GYM
- 8:00 p.m. **Chamber Ensemble Rehearsal** ROOM 148

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6 | PHILIPPIANS 1:3-8

- 9:30 a.m. **Community Bible Study** SANCTUARY
- 1:30 p.m. **Pickleball** GYM
- 5:30 p.m. **Fashion Fitness** ROOM 120

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7 | PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11

- 12:00 p.m. **Tuck Christmas Party** HANCOCK HALL
- 4:00 p.m. **Children's Basketball** GYM
- 7:00 p.m. **Scout Winter Lock-In** ROOM 119

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8 | LUKE 3:1-6

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

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