

ATHENS FIRST  
UNITED  
METHODIST  
CHURCH

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*Fifth Sunday in Lent*

March 22, 2026  
9:30 & 11:00 A.M.

# *The Worship of God*

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

Large print hymnals are available in the Narthex. Please ask a member of our Welcome Team for assistance.

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**THE FLOWERS IN THE CHURCH ARE GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD**

**In loving memory of** Ann and Arthur Jarrell by Fran and Richard Lane and Kitty and Frank Meyran.

## **GATHERING**

### *The Prelude*

“How Fair and How Pleasant Art Thou” from *Antiphons*, Opus 15 | Marcel Dupré  
Raina Wood, Organist

### *The Welcome and Opening Prayer* | Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby

### *The Call to Worship* | from Psalm 130

Minister Wait for the Lord, like those who hope in God’s mercy.

**All God’s steadfast love endures forever.**

Minister Watch for God, like those who eagerly await the morning.

**All We watch for God, whose power redeems us.**

Minister Hear God’s hopeful word, like those who long for pardon.

**All Let us sing praise to God and rejoice in God’s love.**

## PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

### *\*The Processional Hymn*

UMH 297 “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” | ST. CHRISTOPHER

### *\*The Prayer of Confession*

Out of the depths we cry to God, in the darkness of our suffering and in our pain. Out of the depths God cries to us, asking us to repent, to return with our whole hearts, to admit our sin, and to accept forgiveness. Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

**Almighty and merciful God, we know that when we offend another, we offend you. We are aware that we have often allowed the shadow of hate to cloud our souls, hiding the light from our unseeking eyes. We have said unpleasant and hurtful things to those around us when they failed to live up to our expectations. Grant that we might find that spark of love that ever burns within us, the love that you have shown to us even when we failed you. Fan the embers of that love until it roars again in flames of love, peace, and reconciliation. Forgive us our sins and help us to forgive those who have sinned against us. Lead us into new life through your Son Jesus Christ, who died for the sins of all.**

*All pray in silence.*

Hear the good news: “Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light.” In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven, restored, and called to walk in the light of God’s love.

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! Glory to God. Amen.**

### *\*The Kyrie* | Antonin Dvorak

Translation: *Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.*

**Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Christe, Christe eleison. Christe, Christe eleison.  
Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie eleison, eleison.**

### *\*The Passing of the Peace*

*The Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer* | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

**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 Hymn*

UMH 351 "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior" | PASS ME NOT

Verses 1 and 2

*At 11:00 a.m., children Kindergarten to grade 4 are dismissed through the front, lectern side doors to attend Children's Church. They can be picked up at the conclusion of worship in Room 320.*

*The Offering and Offertory Anthem*

"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" | Eric Nelson

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir; Natalie Smith, flute; Eunice Kang, cello;

Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

*The text of this anthem can be found on page 133 of The United Methodist Hymnal.*

*\*The Doxology* | OLD 100TH

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**PROCLAMATION**

*The Scripture Reading* | Psalm 130

The Word of God for the People of God. **Thanks be to God.**

*The Message* | Rev. Jeremy Lawson  
"Waiting for God"

## RESPONSE

*\*The Hymn of Response*

UMH 298 "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" | HAMBURG

*\*The Blessing*

*\*The Congregational Response*

"Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross" | NEAR THE CROSS

All singing: **Near the cross, O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me; help me walk from day to day with its shadow o'er me. In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever, till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.**

*\*The Postlude*

"Fugue in G minor," BWV 578 | Johann Sebastian Bach



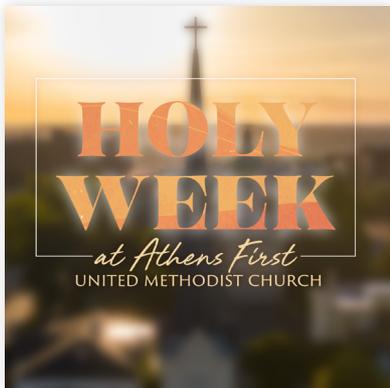
## Easter Extravaganza | March 25

Join us Wednesday, March 25 from 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m., at Oconee Veterans Park for an evening of Easter fun for the whole family! Bring a picnic blanket or chair and **register by March 22** using the QR code.

Planning to join the egg hunt? Please bring 1 dozen empty plastic eggs and a separate bag of individually wrapped candy or small trinkets (no chocolate or nuts) and drop them in the donation bins at the reception desk or outside the Galleria by March 22.

Traci Lowry, Director of Kids at Athens First | [traci@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:traci@athensfirstumc.org)

Emma Baughn, Assistant Director of Kids at Athens First  
[emma@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:emma@athensfirstumc.org)



## Holy Week Services | March 29-April 5

As Christians, Holy Week is a sacred journey we take each year as we retell the stories of Jesus' final days. You're invited to our Holy Week services as we walk with Jesus to the cross and hear the Good News of Easter anew: "He Is Risen!"

**Palm Sunday** | Sunday, March 29 | 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

**Maundy Thursday** | Thursday, April 2 | 6:30 p.m.

**Good Friday** | Friday, April 3 | 12:00 p.m.

**Easter | Sunday, April 5**

**Sunrise at the Steeple** | 7:00 a.m.

**Easter Sanctuary Worship** | 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.



## Palm Sunday Children's Processional

We have been preparing for the Palm Sunday Children's Processional! Children are invited to process while waving palm branches on Sunday, March 29, at the 9:30 and the 11:00 a.m. services. Our children have been learning a special Palm Sunday song for the last several weeks, either in Children's Choir or Kids Sunday School. We encourage our 3s, 4s and Kindergarten classes to participate at 9:30 and our Elementary kids to participate at 11:00. Please meet in the Chapel 30 minutes before your service.

Janis Maxwell, Director of Children and Youth Music Ministry  
[janis@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:janis@athensfirstumc.org)



## New Member Class | March 29

We invite you to take the next step in your faith journey by becoming a member of Athens First United Methodist Church. Membership is a holy opportunity to formally commit to our congregation and to grow together through your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Our New Member Class is designed to help you connect, ask questions, and discern your place in the life of the church. Our next New Member Class will be held on **March 29 at 9:30 a.m.**, in preparation for Membership Sunday on April 12. Please register online, or for more information about membership, contact Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby.

Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby, Associate Minister  
[natalee@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:natalee@athensfirstumc.org)



## Mission Celebration Brunch | April 19

We invite you to join us on **Sunday, April 19**, to celebrate what God has done through our Missions Ministry in the past year! The Missions Celebration Brunch is a morning full of fun and fellowship around a delicious meal, accompanied by a silent basket auction. All are welcome! Ways to get involved:

- **Attend the Brunch!** Sign up for a seating time on the Missions webpage
- **Donate a basket!** Gather your group, class, family, or friends and donate a basket to be bid on!
- **Help us prepare!** Help us decorate and get ready for the Brunch on Saturday, April 18. Please email Sarah Beth Barger to help.

Sarah Beth Barger, Director of Missions | [sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org)



## VBS Volunteers Needed | June 1-5

Student and adult volunteers are needed to help bring VBS to life for the children in our church and community. Our incredible Student Ministry volunteers are essential to a successful VBS! Rising 7-12 graders will team up with adult leaders to guide our young explorers and help make sure they have a fun and safe adventure. Adult volunteers will serve as Rainforest Rangers, leading groups of kids through the lush paths of Rainforest Falls. Bring your sense of adventure and love for the outdoors—Athens First will soon be alive with the sounds and excitement of young explorers as we explore the nature of God together! Register using the QR code.

Traci Lowry, Director of Kids at Athens First | [traci@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:traci@athensfirstumc.org)

Emma Baughn, Assistant Director of Kids at Athens First  
[emma@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:emma@athensfirstumc.org)

## MEMBER NEWS

### Baptisms

We celebrate that Charles Edward “Charlie” Chambers, son of Hannah Michna and Cole Chambers, and Fisher Samuel Albright, son of Lauren and Sam Albright, received the sacrament of baptism on March 15.

### New Members

On March 15, we welcomed Hannah Michna, Cole Chambers and their son Charlie, Amber Juncker and Daniel Schoon, Anne and Pat Saunders, Elle Downey, DJ Cadden, and Sophia Willis to the Athens First United Methodist Church family.



### NO DINNER MARCH 25 | EASTER EXTRAVAGANZA AT OVP!

Register by noon on Tuesday | Scan the Steeple QR Code to register online or Call the Church Office.

## FINANCIAL REPORT As of March 16, 2026 ([finance@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:finance@athensfirstumc.org)):

2026 Budget: \$3,055,000 | YTD Actual Giving: \$680,535 | YTD Actual Expenses: \$710,409

### WAYS TO GIVE



#### OFFERING PLATE:

Fill out the envelope located in your pew.



#### ONLINE:

Scan to be taken to Realm, our online giving platform.



#### TEXT-TO-GIVE:

Text “AFUMCTTG” to 73256.

## FOLLOW UP WITH A MINISTER

**Rev. Jeremy Lawson** | Senior Minister  
[jeremy@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:jeremy@athensfirstumc.org) | 404-304-3574

**Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby** | Associate Minister  
[natalee@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:natalee@athensfirstumc.org) | 404-414-1701

**Rev. Montana Hamby** | Associate Minister  
[montana@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:montana@athensfirstumc.org) | 770-633-3140

**Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson** | Associate Minister  
[nancy@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:nancy@athensfirstumc.org) | 762-233-4761

**REQUEST PRAYER** | Have a prayer request? Scan the QR code located in your bulletin and select “**Needing Prayer**” to fill out a form to submit your prayer request. If you desire for the request to be shared with our Prayer Ministry team, please indicate that in your submission. Prayer requests can also be made directly via email [prayer@athensfirstumc.org](mailto:prayer@athensfirstumc.org).

CCS #12591 • CCLI #1097880

**ATHENS FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
327 N LUMPKIN ST. ATHENS, GA 30601 • 706-543-1442 | [athensfirstumc.org](http://athensfirstumc.org)