



EASTER

Sunday

APRIL 5, 2026

SANCTUARY WORSHIP | 9:30 AND 11:00 A.M.

The Worship of God

*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 FOR EASTER ARE GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD
In honor and memory of our loved ones. *Please see the end of the bulletin for dedications.*

GATHERING

The Prelude

“Fanfare and Flourishes” | James Curnow

Raina Wood, Organist; Gilbert Villagrana and Will Tomaszewski, trumpet;

Peter Riggs, horn; Benjamin Novo, trombone; Hunter Kane, tuba; Jackson Riffle, timpani;

Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

The Easter Greeting

The Lord is risen!

He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

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

PRAISE & THANKSGIVING

**The Fanfare and Great Processional*

UMH 302 “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” | EASTER HYMN

with the Athens First Handbell Choirs

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia! Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia! Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!
Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia! Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia! Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!
Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia! Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia! Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

Interlude

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia! Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia! Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

**The Easter Acclamation*

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in me, even though they die, yet shall they live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.
I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I hold the keys of hell and death.

Because I live, you shall live also."

The Lord is risen!

He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

**The 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.

**The Gloria Patri | MEINEKE*

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.

**The Passing of the Peace*

The peace of the risen Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

The Psalm and Alleluia | from Psalm 118 | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

Unison



Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

The Bells

Choir: *Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

All singing: **Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!

Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:

"The right hand of the Lord does valiantly, the right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord does valiantly."

I shall not die, but I shall live, and declare the works of the Lord.

All singing: **Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

The Lord has chastened me, but he did not give me over to death. Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

All singing: **Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

The Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Offering and Offertory Anthem

"Joy to the Heart" | K. Lee Scott

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir

Look there! The Christ, our Brother, comes resplendent from the gallows tree and what he brings in his hurt hands is life on life for you and me. Joy! Joy! Joy to the heart all in this good day's dawning! Good Jesus Christ inside his pain looked down Golgatha's stony slope and let the blood flow from his flesh to fill the springs of living hope. Good Jesus Christ, our Brother, died in darkest hurt upon the tree to offer us the worlds of light that live inside the Trinity. Look there! The Christ, our Brother, comes resplendent from the gallows tree and what he brings in his hurt hands is life on life for you and me.

Text by John Bennett

**The Doxology* | LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

**The Gospel Lesson* | John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head.

The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

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

The Sermon | Rev. Jeremy Lawson

"Reading the Story Backwards"

RESPONSE

**The Hymn of Response*

UMH 715 "Rejoice, the Lord is King" | DARWALL'S 148th

Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore; mortals, give thanks and sing, and triumph evermore. Lift up your heart, lift up your voice; rejoice; again I say, rejoice.

Jesus the Savior reigns, the God of truth and love; when he had purged our stains, he took his seat above. Lift up your heart, lift up your voice; rejoice; again I say, rejoice.

His kingdom cannot fail; he rules o'er earth and heaven; the keys of earth and hell are to our Jesus given. Lift up your heart, lift up your voice; rejoice; again I say, rejoice.

Interlude

Rejoice in glorious hope! Jesus the Judge shall come, and take his servants up to their eternal home. We soon shall hear th'archangel's voice; the trump of God shall sound, rejoice!

**The Blessing*

The Lord is risen!

He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

**The Choral Benediction*

"Hallelujah" from *Messiah* | Handel

Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Hallelujah! Revelation 19:6, 11:15, 19:16

**The Postlude*

"Toccata" from *Symphony No. 5* | Charles-Marie Widor

In Honor of

Each year, flowers are placed throughout our church for Easter Sunday worship services in honor and memory of loved ones:

**AFUMC Music Ministry,
Janis Maxwell, and Ryan
Ferguson**

Jane, Sarah, Sallie, and Matt
Allgood

AFUMC Staff
AFUMC Clergy

AFUMC Staff
Chris and Mike Selleck

Sallie Allgood
Alisha and Mitch Bain

Alisha and Mitch Bain
Jane, Sarah, Sallie, and Matt
Allgood

Jill Bateman
Julie and Oscar Webster

Twinkle Baxter
Alisha and Mitch Bain

**Anna Grace and Brock
Bowling**
Mom and Dad

Betty Chapeau
Circle 1

Betty Chapeau
Michelle, Betsy, Charlie, and
Jonah

Nancy Cobb
Franses, Brooke, and Pierce
Byrom

David Conley
Sherry Jackson

Cathy Felton
By her Family

Joy Ferrell
The Jordan Family

Deborah and Scott Fuller
Abby B. and Matthew Fuller

W. Bramblett Fuller
Abby B. and Matthew Fuller

Ginny Graham
Bradford, Watson, and
Denton Graham

Jamie and Harris Haley
Carlyn Haley

Palmer and Hatcher Haley
Carlyn Haley

Graham Harvey
Jane Harvey

Jon Harvey
Jane Harvey

Raegan Harvey
Jane Harvey

Landon Heath
Janeanna and Landon Heath

Robert Heath
Janeanna and Landon Heath

Page Hughes
Bradford, Watson, and
Denton Graham

**Molly, Anna, and Lucy
Linthicum**
Kristen and Will Linthicum

Janis Maxwell
Wesleyan Youth Choir

**Adaline, Alison and Bryan
McCullick**
Camilla Bracewell

Dianne Morrison
Sharon and David Conley

**Our Grandchildren—
Caroline, Peyton, Allie,
Thompson, William, Logan,
Tanner, and Groves**
Alice and Nathan King

**Our Grandchildren—
Charli, Leah, and C.J.**
Gail and David Walton

Kara and Steve Purvis
Michelle, Robert, and William
Beckum

Chris Selleck

Mike Selleck

Caroline Sumerel

Alisha and Mitch Bain

Nancy and Bob Taylor

Kristen and Will Linthicum

Muriel Turner

Lee and Mark Channell

Barnes and Borders Utley

Carlyn Haley

Ginn and Matt Utley

Carlyn Haley

Ann Vickers

Julie and Dave Suppes

Lilla McIntosh Walker

Dorothy and Phillip Walker

Charles Hamilton Walker

Dorothy and Phillip Walker

Dianne Wall

Circle 3

Callie Waller

Sharon and David Conley

Callie Waller

Sherry and Tom Jackson

Kierstin, Betty, Chris, and David Jr. Walton

Gail and David Walton

Jody and Richard Warner

The Sullivan Family

Leo West

Julie and Oscar Webster

Clark Williams Family

John Breen

Julian Williams Family

John Breen

Pat Wilson

Bradford, Watson, and Denton Graham

In Memory of

Rachael Quinn Adams

Debbie and Phil Kincaid

Jimmy Allen

Frances Allen

Derek Bain

Gail and David Walton

LaRue and Carl Barnes

Carlyn Haley

Mike Beckum

Michelle, Robert, and William Beckum

Lee Boyd

Dianne and Pat Morrison

Bill Bracewell

Camilla Bracewell

Judi and Tom Bradley

Kathy and Brian Thomas

Karen Sailors Bramblett

Abby B. and Matthew Fuller

Connie and Mary Jon Branch

Dorothy, Mary Lane, and Danny Todd

Lory Breen

John Breen

Louie A. Brown

Frances Brown

Armand "Toby" Chapeau

Michelle, Betsy, Charlie, and Jonah

Armand "Toby" Chapeau

Betty Chapeau

Bryce Chapeau

Betty Chapeau

Betty Ann Chapman

Karen and Susan Chapman and Courtney, Maddie, and John Durham

Bill Chapman

Karen and Susan Chapman
and Courtney, Maddie, and
John Durham

Delores Chorneyko

Gail and David Walton

Darris Crawford

Betty Chapeau

Walter D. Crawford

Betty Chapeau

**Mrs. and Mr. W.D.
Crawford**

Michelle, Betsy, Charlie,
and Jonah

Mollie Culpepper

Lee and Mark Channell

Mollie Culpepper

Peggy Gates

Mollie Culpepper

Thursday Morning
Bible Study

Sam H. Dabbs

Kathy Dabbs

Branan Elliott

Tish Elliott

Connor Elliott

Tish Elliott

Raleigh Elliott

Tish Elliott

Dr. Tom Ferrell

The Jordan Family

Tim Furlow, Jr.

His Family

Bobbie and Martin Gates

Peggy Gates

Jack Godwin

Pat Dunleavy

Sara Godwin

Pat Dunleavy

Dianne Graham

Marty Mitchell

Bill Haley

Carlyn Haley

Cassandra and Jeff Haley

Carlyn Haley

Haley Ruth and Billy Haley

Carlyn Haley

Alton Kenneth Hall

Carey, Stacy, Bo, and Hank
Stephens

Sara Hamby

Montana and Natalee Dukes
Hamby

Laurie and John Hansen

Patti Hurst

Ann Hudson

The Hudson Family

Wallace Jan Hunnicutt

Theresa Hunnicutt

Avolyn and Robert Huycke

Rev. Richard Huycke and
Jennifer Huycke

Jay Huycke

Rev. Richard Huycke and
Jennifer Huycke

Our Grandparents Huycke

Rev. Richard Huycke and
Jennifer Huycke

Lowellen Jackson

Cynthia Harbold

Mary and Charlie Jordan

The Jordan Family

Dell and Robert Kerr

Rev. Richard Huycke and
Jennifer Huycke

George Kuhlman

Cindy Kuhlman

Bob Langstaff

Susan Reinhardt and Family

Shirley Lee

The Hudson Family

Effie McCullough

Ellen McCullough and Keith
Newberry

Tom McCullough

Ellen McCullough and Keith
Newberry

Connie McMillan

Gary McMillan

H.C. McMillan, Jr.

Gary McMillan

Johnny McMillan

Gary McMillan

Thelma McMillan

Gary McMillan

Mitch Mitchell

Marty Mitchell

Wanda Huycke Moore

Rev. Richard Huycke and
Jennifer Huycke

Joanne Newberry

Ellen McCullough and
Keith Newberry

John Parker

Jane Parker

Jennifer Pickwell

Cindy Kuhlman

Kevin Reinecke

Allison and Jason Hodge,
Elizabeth and Weston

Bob Reinhardt

Susan Reinhardt and Family

Mary John Reinhardt

Susan Reinhardt and Family

Rob Reinhardt

Susan Reinhardt and Family

Jeffrey Todd Rodrick

Lynn Bailey and Gary Rodrick

Donnie Rogers

Ellen and Bob Hope

Janelle Rogers

Ellen and Bob Hope

Janelle and Donnie Rogers

The Partners Sunday School
Class for Ellen and Bob Hope

Bill Ruff

Dianne and Pat Morrison

Boyd Ruff

Dianne and Pat Morrison

Grace Ruff

Dianne and Pat Morrison

Geoff Smith

Campbell and Andrew Smith

**Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Wade
Stephens**

Carey, Stacy, Bo, and Hank
Stephens

The Guthrie Family

Billy Stone

The Stone Family

Billy Stone

Jackie Thomas

Kathy and Brian Thomas

Carolyn Trigleth

Reese and William Trigleth

Col. Jack A. Turner

Muriel, Jackie, Mary,
Chandelle, and Sandi

Ruth and Lamar Wansley

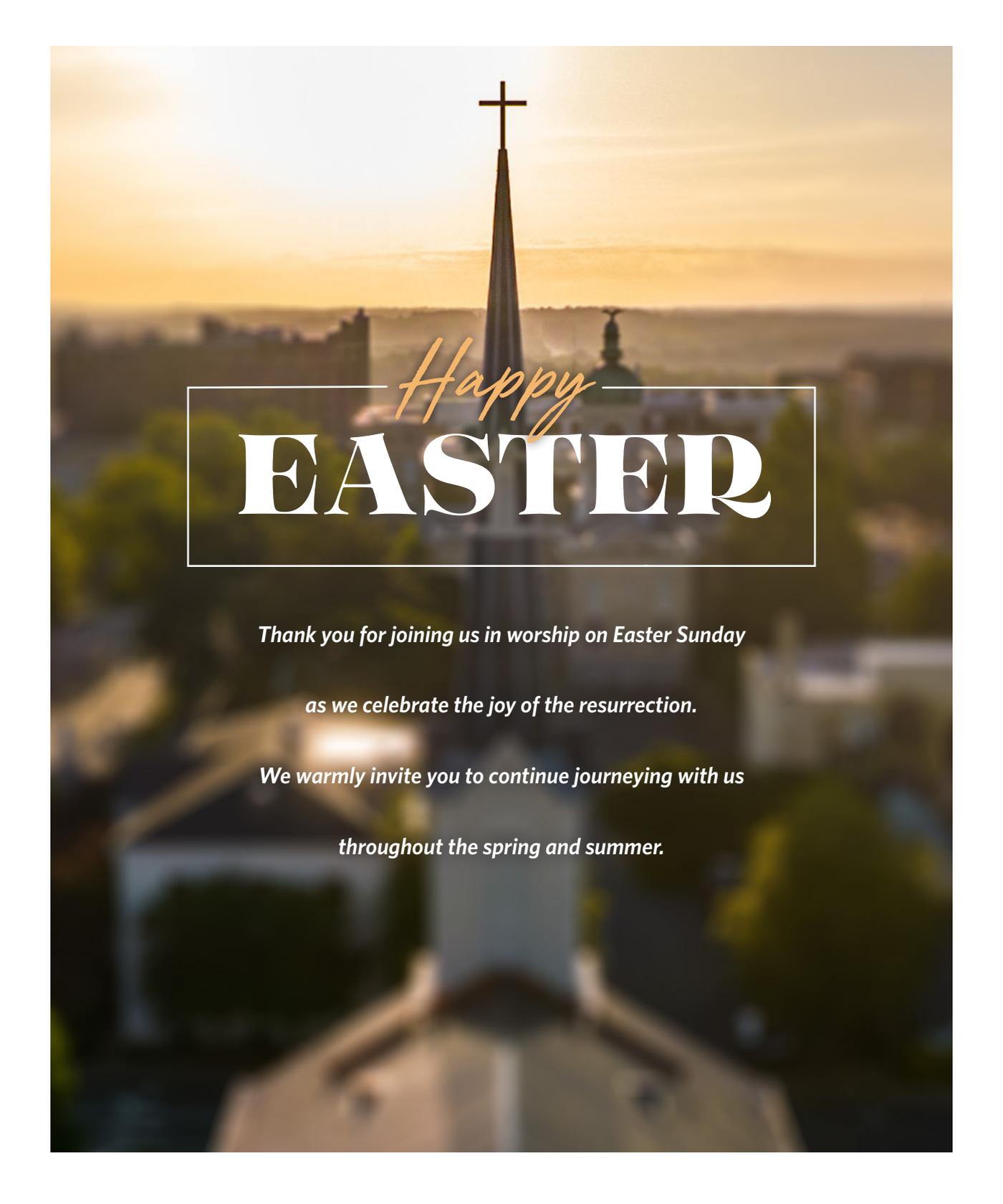
Margaret and Gene Howard

**Gene and Ina Claire
Weekley**

Alice and Nathan King

Deborah Willingham

The Willingham and Lord
Families



Happy
EASTER

Thank you for joining us in worship on Easter Sunday

as we celebrate the joy of the resurrection.

We warmly invite you to continue journeying with us

throughout the spring and summer.

UPCOMING DATES

- UMW Spring Luncheon** | April 9
- Athens First hosts Twilight Kids Zone** | April 18
- New Member Sunday** | April 19
- Missions Celebration Brunch** | April 19
- The Sweet Life: A 50+ Ministry** | April 23
- College Graduation Sunday** | April 26
- Children's Music Ministry Spring Program** | April 26
- 5th Grade Sneak Peek** | April 26
- Student Ministry Color Wars** | April 26
- Wesleyan Youth Choir "Drop Party"** | May 3
- New Member Sunday** | May 17
- Sanctuary Concert Series: Creation** | May 17
- Wesleyan Youth Choir Tour to Niagra Falls** | May 25-31
- The Sweet Life: A 50+ Ministry** | May 28
- Vacation Bible School** | June 1-4
- James Banks Basketball Camps** | June 8-12, June 22-26
- Summer Music and Arts Camp** | July 6-9
- Middle School Mission Trip** | July 13-15
- Adult Summer Sunday School** | July 12
- Back to School Blessing** | August 2

Visit athensfirstumc.org to learn more.



We're Glad You're Here!

Whether this is your first time with us or you've been coming for a little while, we're glad you're here this Easter! We hope you feel a genuine sense of welcome, joy, and connection as we worship together.

If you'd like to get more connected, we invite you to fill out a Connect Card in the back of the pew. It's a simple way for us to follow up and help you find your home here at Athens First. You may place that card in the offering plate later in service or, after the service, stop by the Welcome Table in the narthex—just look for the red sign. We'd love to meet you and share a small welcome gift with you!



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.

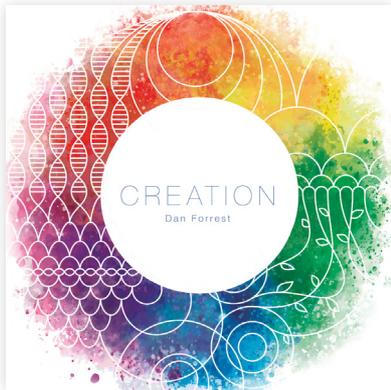
Sarah Beth Barger, Director of Missions | sarahbeth@athensfirstumc.org



College Graduation Sunday | April 26

Join us for Graduation Sunday as we celebrate our college graduates during worship at **11:00am on April 26!** Whether you're graduating from undergraduate or graduate programs, we want to recognize all you have done! We'll have a special moment of celebration in worship for you, and we will have your names and graduation information included in our bulletin. Your parents and family are also invited to attend this special service and are welcome to stay for our final Sunday Lunch of the semester where the celebration will continue. To help us plan accordingly, please RSVP with the number of family members attending the lunch.

Even if you're not in town, we still want to celebrate you. Scan the QR code and send us your graduation info. We look forward to celebrating this milestone with you!



Forrest's Creation | May 17

Join the AFUMC Sanctuary Choir, soloists, and orchestra for Creation, a new major work by acclaimed composer Dan Forrest. Written to commemorate the 225th anniversary of Joseph Haydn's own masterpiece, Creation (1799), Forrest's work explores the awe-inspiring beauty of life on this planet and the sacred wonder of its origins. With powerful texts, ancient melodies, and expansive orchestrations, Creation invites listeners into a profound reflection on the overwhelming wonder of God.

Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship | ryan@athensfirstumc.org



Color Wars | April 26

Join us for our final Sunday Night Encounter of the school year at Color Wars hosted by Athens First Student Ministry. Middle and High School students are invited to come dressed in white to leave in color! Color Wars is one of the most highly anticipated events of the year that you won't want to miss. Register online to help us prepare for all the fun!

Rev. Montana Hamby, Associate Minister | montana@athensfirstumc.org



Vacation Bible School | June 1-4

Join us this summer at Rainforest Falls VBS where we will explore the life-giving truth that God loves us deeply. VBS is June 1-4, for rising K-6th graders. Invite your friends to join in the fun! Want to help make VBS the BEST week ever? Come volunteer with us or donate supplies or monetary gifts. Scan the QR code above to register, volunteer, or view our donation wish list.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED | APRIL 6

The church office will be closed on Monday, April 6, to allow our staff a Sabbath day of rest.

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 | 404-304-3574

Rev. Montana Hamby | Associate Minister
montana@athensfirstumc.org | 770-633-3140

Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby | Associate Minister
natalee@athensfirstumc.org | 404-414-1701

Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson | Associate Minister
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.

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ATHENS FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
327 N LUMPKIN ST. ATHENS, GA 30601 • 706-543-1442 | athensfirstumc.org