

The background features a stylized illustration of three fish in grey outlines, swimming in various directions. These fish are framed by thick red lines that form a partial border on the left and bottom. A solid red circle is positioned in the upper left, and another is in the lower right. A horizontal red line with a small red dot in the center is located below the church name.

ATHENS FIRST
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

July 5, 2026

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 IN THE CHURCH ARE GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD

In loving memory of Robert Wall by Dianne Wall and family.

GATHERING

The Prelude

“America the Beautiful” | arr. Calvin Hampton

Raina Wood, Organist

The Welcome and Opening Prayer | Rev. Montana Hamby

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

**The Processional Hymn*

UMH 698 "God of the Ages" | NATIONAL HYMN

**The Prayer of Confession*

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us confess our sins before God and one another.

Merciful God, we have sinned against you, our neighbors, and your creation. Although Christ is among us as our peace, we are a people divided against ourselves, clinging to the values of a broken world. The fears that we harbor set neighbor against neighbor and nation against nation. We abuse your good gifts of imagination and freedom, of intellect and reason, and have turned them into bonds of oppression. Lord, have mercy upon us; rescue us, forgive us, and restore us for lives of compassion and courage, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All pray in silence.

Hear the good news: The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. If we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! Glory to God. 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 Litany for Independence Day* | Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby

Gracious God, you have made us for community, for relationships woven through common experiences, inspired by shared struggles, and dedicated to common goals. We give thanks for this nation of ours, for its commitment to liberty, for the vision of its founders, for the bravery of its people, for its defense of the weak, and for its love of justice.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for our fellow Americans, for the splendor of diversity, for their goodness and generosity, for the dreams that brought us all to this land, for the genius and industry of every generation, for the rich tapestry of our cultural heritage, and for commitments that have made many, one.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

O Author of Liberty, on this week of national celebration, as we mark the 250th anniversary of this great experiment, we pray: strengthen us in our resolve to act justly, to care for the tempest-tossed and all who yearn to breathe free, to defend the persecuted, and to foster freedom and peace. When we fail, give us the courage to confess our faults and the strength to amend our ways.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We remember before you those who have died in every generation and those who have died ensuring the freedoms of this country: people in the armed services, advocates, and activists. Gather us together with those who have gone before us, and with saints of every tribe and nation, into the holy city you have prepared.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Guide us, O God. Help us to walk in freedom's holy light and protect us, so that we may live out of gratitude and grace, and serve without abandon, confident that our lives and the life of our nation is in your hands.

God of grace, **hear our prayer. Amen.**

Into your mercy, O God, we entrust our hearts and all our cares, through Jesus Christ our Savior, who loves us, who seeks liberty and justice for all, and who taught us how to pray:

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

“Homeland” | Gustav Holst, arr. Z. Randall Stroope

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir; Ava Bogarde, soprano;

Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

This anthem has been placed in the music library to the Glory of God and in loving memory of CDR Armand “Toby” Chapeau, U.S. Coast Guard, by Betty Chapeau.

I vow to you, my country, all earthly things above, entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love: the love that asks no question, the love that stands the test, that lays upon the altar the dearest and the best: the love that never falters, the love that pays the price. The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice. Though the road has bends and turns, and my spirit suffers, humans fail, systems fail, shadows fall. But the ruts run deep, cut by the blood of faces above, and voices now silent, but the message loud is heard: Homeland, homeland renew your youth, restore your soul! Homeland, the country that I love, hold out your arms to me. I strive for you, and give to you the best I hope to be. May your wisdom be your armour, your compassion be your sword; may your strength be forged with mercy, your courage lives restore. Homeland, the country that I love, forever reign supreme; and when time stands still, my homeland, may heaven hold your dream. Text by Sir Cecil Spring-Rice and Z. Randall Stroope

**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 | Micah 6:6-8

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

The Message | Rev. Jeremy Lawson

“One Nation Under God”

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

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. Within the vast reaches, you formed our world: purple mountains, fruited plains, crystal waters, towering forests, and gleaming mines. Here, you created humans in your image, in our infinite variety and hue, yet each one created equal. And so, with your creation on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sung: **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. Born under the rule of a merciless king, Jesus revealed the merciful realm of God. Moving across borders to people broken and oppressed, Jesus brought healing, restoration, and freedom. On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

Holy God, shed your grace on us. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine.* Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. May the fire of your Holy Spirit ignite in us the flame of freedom—freedom from prejudice and freedom from fear: that we may shed your grace for welcome, for acceptance, for peace, and for the love that you have shown us. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever.

Sung: **Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.**

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, given for you.

Sung: **Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.**

*During the singing, those serving communion are invited to the Chancel. *In the United Methodist Church, grape juice is used for the Sacrament of Holy Communion.*

The Receiving of the Bread and Cup

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 communion elements are available in the Narthex.

The Hymns for Communion

“Eternal Father, Strong to Save” | MELITA

Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm does bind the restless wave, who bid the mighty ocean deep its own appointed limits keep: O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea.

O Savior, whose almighty word the wind and waves submissive heard, who walked upon the foaming deep, and calm amid the rage did sleep: O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea.

O Holy Spirit, who did brood upon the chaos wild and rude, and bid its angry tumult cease, and give for fierce confusion, peace: O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea.

O Trinity of love and power, all travelers guard in danger's hour; from rock and tempest, fire, and foe, protect them where-so-e'er they go; Thus, evermore shall rise to thee glad praise from air and land and sea.

“This Is My Song” | FINLANDIA

This is my song, O God of all the nations, a song of peace for lands afar and mine. This is my home, the country where my heart is; Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine; But other hearts in other lands are beating with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean, and sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine; But other lands have sunlight too, and clover, and skies are everywhere as blue as mine. O hear my song, thou God of all the nations, a song of peace for their land and for mine.

This is my prayer, O Lord of all earth's kingdoms: Thy kingdom come; on earth thy will be done. Let Christ be lifted up till all shall serve him, and hearts united learn to live as one. O hear my prayer, thou God of all the nations; Myself I give thee; let thy will be done.

RESPONSE

**The Hymn of Response*

UMH 696 “America the Beautiful” | MATERNA

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain; for purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain! America! America! God shed his grace on thee, and crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife, who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life! America! America! May God thy gold refine, till all success be nobleness, and every gain divine.

O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years thine alabaster cities gleam,
undimmed by human tears! America! America! God mend thine every flaw, confirm thy soul
in self-control, thy liberty in law.

**The Blessing and Congregational Response*

“The Battle Hymn of the Republic” | BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat; he is sifting out the hearts
of men before his judgement seat; O be swift, my soul, to answer him; be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on. Glory, glory, Hallelujah! Glory, glory, Hallelujah! Glory, glory,
Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.

**The Postlude*

“Trumpet Tunes” | Calvin Hampton



Congregational Care Update

At Athens First, caring for one another is a vital part of who we are as a congregation. If you or someone you know would benefit from a visit, prayer, or pastoral support, we encourage you to let us know. This includes those who are hospitalized, recovering at home, navigating a difficult season, or living in an assisted living, memory care, or skilled nursing community. As circumstances change, we rely on our church family to help us stay connected with one another and ensure we don't miss anyone. Help us by letting us know about care needs so we can walk alongside one another through every season.

Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby, Associate Minister
natalee@athensfirstumc.org



Summer Sunday School | July 12, 19, & 26

Throughout July, all adult Sunday School classes will meet together in **Hancock Hall from 9:30-10:30 a.m.** for our Summer Adult Sunday School series, Good News, Great Joy, All People. Each week, staff and lay leaders will share how faith formation, worship, and outreach shape our church and community while offering opportunities to learn and connects. On **July 12**, we'll explore how worship ministries share the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, guilds, hospitality, and ways to deepen our faith in worship. On **July 19**, we'll hear how ministries for children, students, and adults nurture faith and cultivate joy and discipleship (with a few surprises!). And on **July 26**, we'll discover how AFUMC serves others through missions and outreach as we work toward reaching over 10,000 people this year, ending with a hands-on project we can do together.



Summer Music and Arts Musical | July 9

Summer Music and Arts for rising 1st-6th graders will take place July 6-9, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. It's going to be an incredibly fun and creative week! This year we're thrilled to put on a musical. Along with music, movement, instruments, and art, students will work together to produce Mark Burrows' musical "Storms." You are invited to an **end-of-week performance on Thursday, July 9, at 3:00 p.m.** in Hancock Hall.

Janis Maxwell, Director of Children and Youth Music
janis@athensfirstumc.org



Back to School Blessing | August 2

Save the Date for our Back to School Blessing Sunday! Join us for a special time of prayer and encouragement as we bless our students, teachers, school staff, and families at the start of a new school year. This meaningful tradition invites our whole church family to come together in support and love. We will conclude the celebration in Hancock Hall with ministry areas from across our church, who will be there with fun giveaways, helpful information, and ways for you to get involved. As we step into a new season of discipleship this fall, come celebrate, reconnect, and discover how you can grow in faith and community this year.



Student Ministry Fall Retreats

Registration is now open for our 2026 Fall Retreats! The Momentum High School Retreat will travel to Camp Glisson the weekend of **August 15-16** for a one night retreat of worship, fellowship, and zip lining! The Spark Retreat will take place the weekend of **August 21-23** at Camp Glisson. Spark is open to all Middle School age students and includes retreat break outs designed for both Confirmation and Middle School ages. Register early by July 15 to receive our special discounted rate and retreat t-shirt!

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



Fall Children's and Student Music Kickoff

Our children's and youth choirs will begin again in August, and we invite all children and students to be part of this exciting ministry. Choir is a great opportunity to make friends, learn to sing, lead in worship, and participate in fun trips and activities throughout the year. Children's choir opportunities include Cherub Choir (age 3 by September 1, 2026), Sunshine Choir (age 4), Joy Choir (Kindergarten), Lyric Choir (1st and 2nd grades), and Celebrate Choir (3rd-5th grades). Youth music opportunities include Wesleyan Youth Choir for students in grades 6-12 (no audition required) and the Youth Praise Team for high school students (audition required). Come join the fun this fall!

Janis Maxwell, Director of Children and Youth Music
janis@athensfirstumc.org

MEMBER NEWS

New Members

On June 28, we welcomed Wendy and Kris Johnson and Leslie, Dan, and Susanna Trier to the Athens First United Methodist Church family.

FINANCIAL REPORT *As of June 29, 2026* (finance@athensfirstumc.org):

2026 Budget: \$3,055,000 | **YTD Actual Giving:** \$1,427,194 | **YTD Actual Expenses:** \$1,628,549

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
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Rev. Lisa Lawrenz | Associate Minister
lisa@athensfirstumc.org

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.

CCS #12591 • CCLI #1097880

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