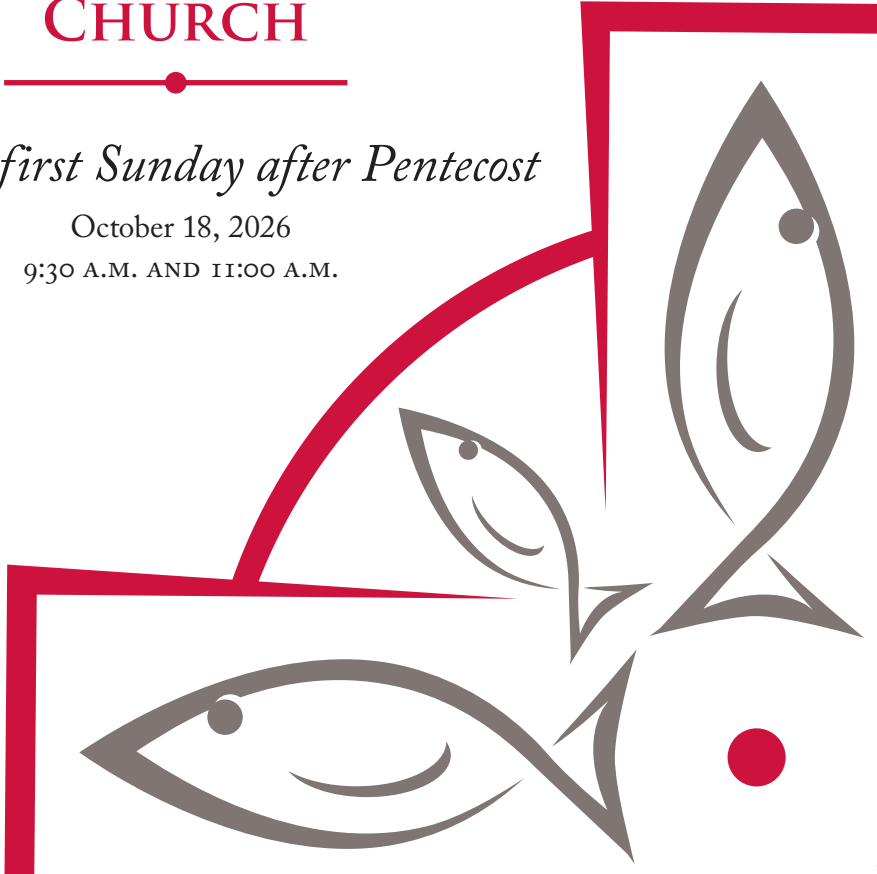


ATHENS FIRST
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

October 18, 2026

9:30 A.M. 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.



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

In loving memory of Beulah and Hilliard Thompson by their children and grandchildren.

GATHERING

The Prelude

"Here's One" | Traditional Spiritual, arr. Marilyn Rinehart

Raina Wood, Organist

The Welcome and Opening Prayer | Rev. Montana Hamby

The Call to Worship

Minister: We are lost sheep,

People: so God seeks and saves the lost.

Minister: We are a lost coin,

People: so God searches and rejoices when we are found.

Minister: We are the wayward son and daughter

People: so God welcomes us, and lets the past be the past.

Minister: We are the elder sibling, standing outside,

People: but God welcomes us in, challenging us to join in prodigal love and grace.

Minister: Let us receive and welcome and rejoice over one another in the name of Jesus Christ.

All: Let us celebrate and praise the God of Love.

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

**The Processional Hymn*

UMH 529 “How Firm a Foundation” | FOUNDATION

**The Affirmation of Faith* | “A Modern Affirmation”

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the one true church, apostolic and universal, whose holy faith let us now declare:

We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, power, and love, whose mercy is over all his works, and whose will is ever directed to his children’s good. We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, the gift of the Father’s unfailing grace, the ground of our hope, and the promise of our deliverance from sin and death. We believe in the Holy Spirit as the divine presence in our lives, whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance of the truth of Christ, and find strength and help in time of need. We believe that this faith should manifest itself in the service of love as set forth in the example of our blessed Lord, to the end that the kingdom of God may come upon the earth. 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. Amen.

**The Passing of the Peace*

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 Hymn

UMH 340 “Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy” | RESTORATION

Verses 1-3

During the singing of the hymn at 11:00 a.m., children from 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

“Elijah Rock” | Traditional Spiritual, arr. Moses Hogan

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir; Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

Oh, Elijah rock. Come on sister help me to pray, tell me my Lord done pass this way. Elijah rock, shout, shout, Elijah rock, comin’ up, Lordy. Satan ain’t nothin but a snake in the grass. He’s a conjur, he’s a liar, Hallelujah, Lord! If I could, I surely would stand on the rock where Moses stood. Elijah rock, coming up Lord. Hallelujah, Jesus! I’m coming up, Lord!

**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

The Scripture Reading | Luke 15:11-32

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

The Message | Rev. Jeremy Lawson

“Invited to a Party You Don’t Want to Attend”

RESPONSE

**The Hymn of Response*

“Softly and Tenderly” | THOMPSON

Verses 1, 2, and 4

**The Blessing and Choral Benediction* | Philip Stopford

May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be ever at your back. May the sun shine warm up on your face; the rains fall soft down up on your fields. And until we meet again, and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand.

**The Postlude*

“Dialogue sur les Mixtures” from *Suite Brève* | Jean Langlais



We're Glad You're Here | If you are visiting with us, we welcome you to Athens First! We invite you to visit our Hospitality Table in the Narthex following the service.

Membership at Athens First | If you are interested in becoming a member of our church community, please contact Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby (natalee@athensfirstumc.org) or Caroline Anne Chapura (carolineanne@athensfirstumc.org).

College Lunch | College and graduate students, join us in Hancock Hall for lunch and fellowship following the 11:00 a.m. service.



Aldersgate Special Offering | Today!

We are invited to join with churches across the North Georgia Conference to collect a special offering for Aldersgate Homes. Aldersgate Homes is an organization in North Georgia dedicated to serving the disability community through advocacy, learning opportunities, retreats, and recreation. Through their many ministries, they work with churches and individuals to help support those with disabilities and to create a community where people of all abilities are welcome. Situated on Lake Oconee, Collinswood offers a beautiful and fully accessible retreat center for individuals or groups. You may give during either worship service this morning. You may also give online or mail a check to the church office with "Aldersgate" in the memo.



Jazz Vesper Service | Tonight!

Invite a friend and join us tonight at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary for an evening service with Theodicy Jazz Collective and the Sanctuary Choir. Theodicy Jazz has held worship residencies around the world, including the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, Washington National Cathedral, and Canterbury Cathedral. This service, entitled "Love Is the Way," will explore the hope, justice, compassion, and love of the Spirituals and freedom songs. You won't want to miss this special jazz service!

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



Wednesday Night Dinner Costume Party!

Get ready for a spooktacular Wednesday Night Dinner on October 28. We'll have a costume contest and parade, so start planning your best, funniest, silliest, or most creative costume! All ages are encouraged to participate: kids, youth, adults, and the young at heart! Fried Chicken will be served for dinner beginning at 5:00 p.m., and the costume contest will begin at 5:45 p.m. We can't wait to see you Wednesday night for dinner and a little extra Halloween fun!

Alisha Bain, Administrative Assistant | alisha@athensfirstumc.org

Quick Links | This QR code will allow you to quickly access information for events, giving, prayer, and more.



Navigating Grief in the Holidays

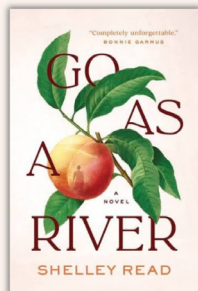
Luncheon | November 1



Navigating Grief in the Holidays

We invite you to our "Navigating Grief in the Holidays" luncheon in Hull Conference Room following the 11:00 a.m. service on November 1. Together, we will spend time reflecting on the ways grief can be especially present during the holiday season and share some practical tools for navigating this time with care. To RSVP for lunch, please register using the QR code above or call the church office at (706) 543-1442. This will also kick off our Grief Support Group that will meet during the Advent Season and throughout the Spring of 2027.

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



October Book Club

Book Club | October 25

Love to read? Join our Monthly Book Club, led by Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby, Callie Waller, and Nate Roberson. Each month, we'll gather for a thoughtful intergenerational conversation about a selected book and explore how its themes intersect with our daily lives and faith. Our next gathering is October 25 at 4:00 p.m., when we'll discuss Shelley Read's *Go as a River*. Purchase your own copy and read at your own pace before we meet. Register to let us know you're coming!

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



Extra-Thankful Bags

Extra-Thankful Bags

In collaboration with Student Ministry's Thanksgiving Ingathering meal, our Missions Ministry will be offering our guests "Extra-Thankful Bags" filled with Thanksgiving inspired pantry staples. We are asking YOU, our congregation, to join in helping fill these food bags. Empty bags and shopping lists can be found at the church's front desk. Grab one (or a couple), fill the bag with the listed items, and return the filled bag to the church by November 18. Together, we will ensure this is an EXTRA special Thanksgiving for our guests.

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

MEMBER NEWS

In Memoriam

Dr. Van Herrin
October 7, 2026

Sympathy

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to Stephen Lawrence and his family in the loss of his father, Dr. Harry Lawrence, on October 1.

Heartfelt Christian sympathy is extended to family and friends in the loss of Dr. Van Herrin on October 7.

Baptisms

We celebrate that Amelia Elizabeth Mamuhewa, daughter of Dev and Hashina Mamuhewa, received the sacrament of baptism on October 11.

New Members

On October 11, we welcomed Dev and Hashina Mamuhewa to the Athens First United Methodist Church family.

WEEKLY MENUS

college
lunch

TODAY'S MENU: Taco Bar

*All college and graduate students are invited to join us for a **free lunch** in Hancock Hall following the 11:00 a.m. worship service.*

Wednesday
NIGHT
DINNER

OCTOBER 21: Meatloaf served with mashed potatoes, cabbage, and cornbread.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT As of October 13, 2026 (finance@athensfirstumc.org):

2026 Budget: \$3,055,000 | **YTD Total Revenue:** \$2,619,685 | **YTD Total Expenses:** \$2,550,672

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

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

Rev. Lisa Lawrenz | Associate Minister
lisa@athensfirstumc.org | 706-338-6952

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

ATHENS FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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