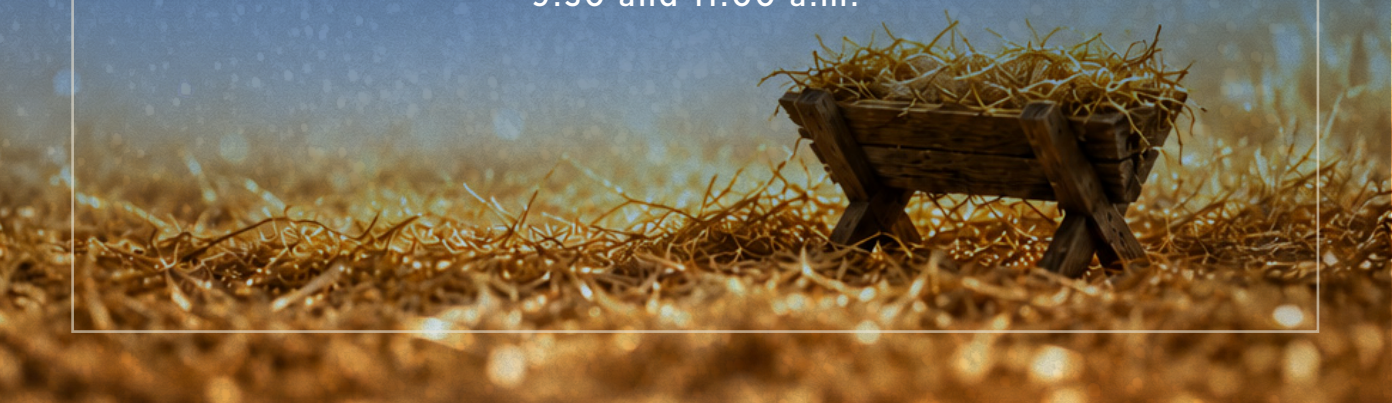
# GOOD NEWS OF *Great Joy*

## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**Sunday, November 29, 2026**
**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 IN THE CHURCH ARE GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD**

**In loving memory of** Bill Bracewell by Camilla Bracewell and family.

**In loving memory of** Mitch Mitchell by Marty Mitchell.

## GATHERING

*The Prelude*
"Savior of the Nations, Come" | arr. Brenda Austin
Rung by the Athens First Ringers

*The Welcome and Opening Prayer* | Rev. Dr. Gary Whetstone

## PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

**The Processional Hymn*
UMH 196 "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" | HYFRYDOL
*At 11:00, children from the Family Advent Breakfast will join the processional.*

## *The Lighting of the Advent Candles*

9:30 a.m. | The Family of Rebecca and Jon Cochran

11:00 a.m. | The Family of Jena and Jason Hills

**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. Give us the grace and strength to make room. Show us the creative power of hope. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ, maintaining hope, watching and waiting, always. Amen.**

*All singing:* **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.**

## *The Children's Moment* | 11:00 a.m.

Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

and Zane Taylor

## *The Lighting of the Chrismon Trees*

*Following the Lighting of the Chrismon Trees at 11:00 a.m., children Kindergarten up 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 the Gym.*

*All singing:* **O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree, How lovely are your branches! O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree, How lovely are your branches! Not only green in summer's heat, But also winter's snow and sleet. O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, How lovely are your branches!**

## **The Passing of the Peace*

The Peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

## *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*

"Manger Lullaby" | Hart Morris
Rung by the Athens First Ringers; Natalie Smith, flute

## **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* | Isaiah 64:1-9

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

## *The Message* | Rev. Jeremy Lawson

"Longing for Joy"

## RESPONSE

### **The Hymn of Response*

UMH 213 "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates" | TRURO

### **The Blessing and Congregational Response*

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" | ST. LOUIS

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.**

### **The Postlude*

"Once He Came in Blessing" from *The Orgelbüchlein* | Bach



**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*).




## Red Cross Blood Drive | December 1

Give the gift of life this Christmas season! Join us on Tuesday, December 1, for the Red Cross Blood Drive in the gym at Athens First UMC. Each pint of blood we collect can help save up to three lives and will touch the lives of so many more. We have timeslots available from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Scan the QR code to sign up and claim your shift.

Walk-ins are welcome!

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




## Wednesday Night Dinner Ugly Christmas Sweater Party | December 9

'Tis the season to be tacky! Pull out your most outrageous, over-the-top, wonderfully ugly Christmas sweater and join us for a festive Wednesday Night Dinner on December 9. We'll enjoy our last dinner of the year together with Breakfast for Dinner, Christmas cheer, and fellowship as we celebrate the most wonderful time of the year. Whether it's glittery, goofy, or gloriously gaudy, wear your wildest sweater and come ready to celebrate the season with laughter, good eats, and great company. Make sure to register by Tuesday, December 8 at noon. Scan the QR code to sign up.

Alisha Bain, Administrative Assistant | *alisha@athensfirstumc.org*

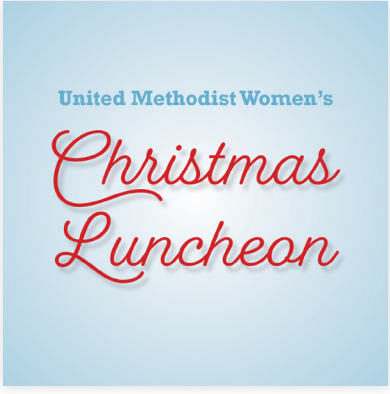



## Sweet Life Christmas Luncheon | December 10

Join us for the Sweet Life Christmas Luncheon on Thursday, December 10, at 12:00 p.m. Celebrate the season with friends as we gather for a festive meal, enjoy special music from Mark Maxwell, and sing some of our favorite Christmas carols together. We hope you'll come share in the joy, fellowship, and holiday spirit of this special Sweet Life gathering. Lunch is $8 per person, and you can register on Realm or by calling the church office.

Rebecca Cochran, Small Groups and Older Adult Ministry Coordinator
*rebecca@athensfirstumc.org*

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




## UMW Christmas Luncheon | December 17

We invite you to join us for our United Methodist Women's Christmas Luncheon on Thursday, December 17, at 11:30 a.m. in Hancock Hall. It will be a potluck, so bring your favorite dish, salad, or dessert to share! It will be an excellent opportunity to fellowship with other women of the church and to learn more about our circles. All women are invited. Our Associate Minister, Rev. Montana Hamby, will be sharing about Athens First's high school mission trip to Guatemala in April 2027. Come hear how we can pray for and support our youth as they seek to share the good news of Jesus to the world. Please let us know you plan to attend by scanning the QR code and registering on Realm. We can't wait to see you there!



## Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Join us on Thursday, December 24, as we celebrate Christmas Eve together!

**3:00 p.m.** Children's Candlelight Service*

**5:00 p.m.** Candlelight Service | Wesleyan Youth Choir and Brass*

**7:00 p.m.** Candlelight Service | Sanctuary Choir and Brass*

**11:00 p.m.** Candlelight Holy Communion | Sanctuary Choir and Strings

**Nursery care is available at the 3:00, 5:00, and 7:00 p.m. services*



## WYC Alumni Invited to Sing Christmas Eve

Wesleyan Youth Choir Alumni are invited to join us for the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service, where we will continue our tradition of singing "O Holy Night" with current members of the youth choir. Please spread the word and let all alumni know that we welcome them for this special service. Alumni of all ages are invited to participate. Please join us in the Choir Room at 4:30 p.m. to warm up and rehearse.

Janis Maxwell, Director of Children's and Youth Music Ministry
*janis@athensfirstumc.org*

## SERMON NOTES:

college
AT ATHENS FIRST UMC

### COLLEGE LUNCH RETURNS DECEMBER 6TH!

***College students**, join us December 6 for our final College Lunch of the semester and Christmas party! Later that evening, we'll head to Winter WonderLights at the State Botanical Garden. Tickets are on us, so be sure to register online!*

Wednesday NIGHT DINNER

**DECEMBER 2: Chili** *served with a side salad and cornbread.*

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

## FINANCIAL REPORT *As of November 17, 2026 (finance@athensfirstumc.org):*

**2026 Budget:** $3,055,000 **| YTD Total Revenue:** $3,078,457 **| YTD Total Expenses:** $2,897,454

**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*