



*love*

**The First Church in Albany**

**The Fourth Week of Advent  
December 19, 2021, 10am**



# **The First Church in Albany** **(Reformed Church in America)**

**Founded in 1642; Continuing in Ministry Today**

*In response to God's unconditional love for all people made known to us in Jesus Christ, we are called to be a welcoming and affirming community. The First Church in Albany includes young and old, families, couples and singles, rich and poor, persons of various races, ethnicities, backgrounds, sexual orientation and gender identities, differing physical and mental abilities, believers and seekers. We welcome into the full life of the church all those whom God sends us. Centered in Christ, we commit ourselves to breaking down dividing walls and building a community where we are loved.*

## **Fourth Sunday of Advent** **December 19, 2021**

### **We Gather in the Presence of God**

#### **Prelude**

*"Come Saviour of the Nations"*  
*Margaret Randall, organist*

J.S. Bach

### **Welcome, Announcements & Blessing**

"Behold the Lord stands at the door of all of our hearts and knocks. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

### **Advent Candle Lighting** *The Candle of Love is lit.*

Leader: First Church, during this Advent season, remember that "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." Please respond in the bold:

Leader: O Lord, throughout this Advent season, we have lit the candles of hope, peace, and joy. Today we light the candle of love.

**People: As we light this candle of love, kindle within our hearts your love.**

Leader: A love that leads us to know we belong to you no matter what.

**People: And a love that leads us to love in the way you show us to love.**

Leader: Remind us that "God is love, and those who abide in love, abide in God."

Leaders: \*light the Candle of Love\*

## Advent Anthem

## Wait for the Lord *(sing three times)*

Em C Am6 B

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Em D G Am7 B Em

Wait for the Lord; be strong, take heart!

*To use with Psalm 37: sing the above, read vv. 1-5, sing, read vv. 6-9, sing, read vv. 10-11, 39-40, sing.*

*For another setting of Ps. 37 see 850*

Words and Music (WAIT FOR THE LORD 8.8): Jacques Berthier, from *Songs and Prayers* from Taizé © 1991

Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, Taizé Community, admin. GIA Publications, Inc., exclusive North American agent

## Call to Worship *Psalm 80:1-7*

Leader: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!  
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth

**People: before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your  
might, and come to save us!**

Leader: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

**People: O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your  
people's prayers?**

Leader: You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to  
drink in full measure.

**People: You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh  
among themselves.**

Leader: Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be  
saved.


# \*Opening Hymn Comfort, Comfort You My People v. 1-3

PSALM 42 8.7.8.7.7.8.8



Johannes Olearius, 1671

Trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.



Genevan Psalter, 1551




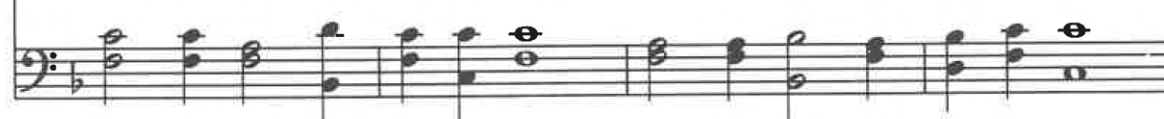
1. Com - fort, com - fort you my peo - ple, Tell of peace, thus says our God;  
2. For the her - ald's voice is call - ing In the des - ert far and near,  
3. Make you straight what long was crook - ed, Make the rough - er plac - es plain;




Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness Bowed be - neath op - pres - sion's load.  
Bid - ding us to make re - pent - ance Since the king - dom now is here.  
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, As be - fits God's ho - ly reign.



Speak you to Je - ru - sa - lem Of the peace that waits for them;  
O that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way;  
For the glo - ry of the Lord Now o'er earth is shed a - broad;



Tell them that their sins I cov - er, And their war - fare now is o - ver.  
Let the val - leys rise in meet - ing And the hills bow down in greet - ing.  
And all flesh shall see the to - ken That God's word is nev - er bro - ken.





## **Prayer of Confession**

**Lord, we confess that too often we do not reach out to you for guidance. We know and are told how much you love us. We are told to seek you first. Yet, too often we whittle away countless hours and days with worry. Forgive us for all the times we do not seek You our Great Restorer!**

## **Assurance of Pardon** *adapted from Luke 1:46-55*

God, our Great Restorer brings justice, mercy, and new life! Do not let your heart be troubled. God is with us. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name. God's mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. God has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly!

## **\*Passing the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: This Advent season we are having a longer time to pass the peace to one another. You will know when to head back to your seats when the organ starts to play. So, please rise and greet one another by name; introduce yourself and reintroduce yourself; learn the names of our kids; catch up on a few things; share Christ's peace.

## **Children's Message & Blessing**

### **Prayer of Illumination for Advent**

**Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me so that I may hear you, know you, and follow you. Amen.**

### **Sermon Text**

Luke 1:39-55

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies

the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to you, O Christ!**

**Sermon**

*The Great Equalizer*

Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

### **A Prayer of Blessing on the Word**

#### **Sermon Notes**

Trouble in the text:



Trouble in our world:

God in the text:

God in our world:

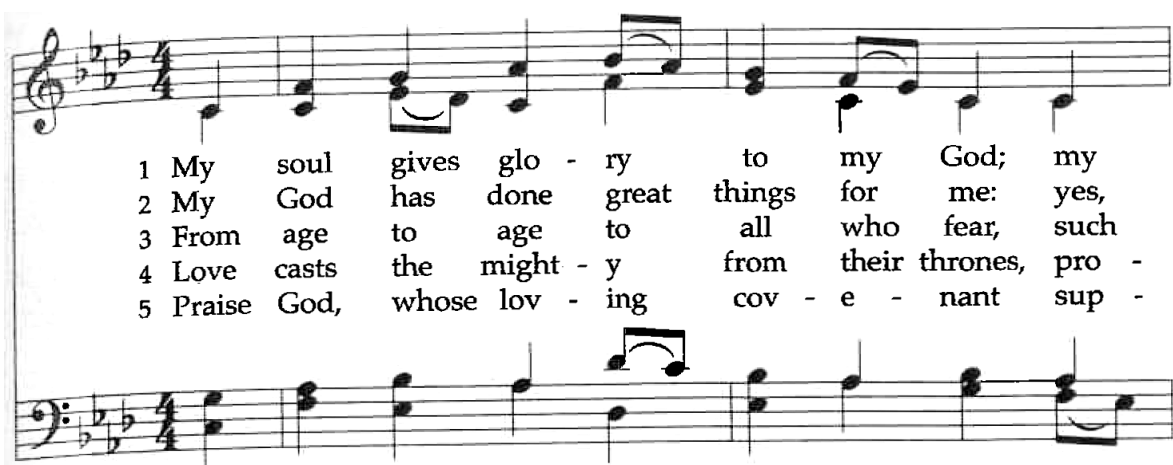
Ways that God is moving in me:

\*Hymn of  
Response

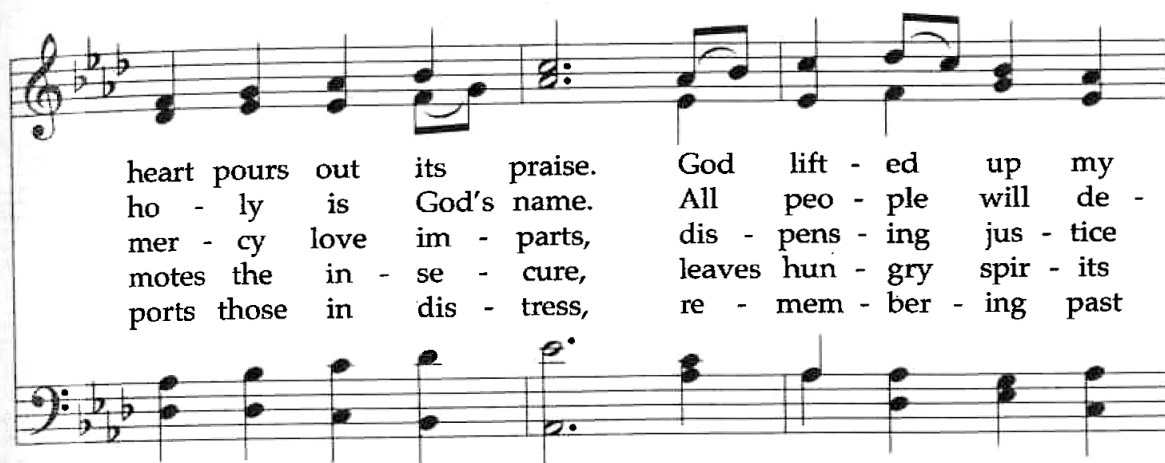
# My Soul Gives Glory to My God

## Song of Mary

v. 1, 4 & 5



1 My soul gives glo - ry to my God; my  
2 My God has done great things for me: yes,  
3 From age to age to all who fear, such  
4 Love casts the might - y from their thrones, pro -  
5 Praise God, whose lov - ing cov - e - nant sup -



heart pours out its praise. God lift - ed up my  
ho - ly is God's name. All peo - ple will de -  
mer - cy love im - parts, dis - pens - ing jus - tice  
motes the in - se - cure, leaves hun - gry spir - its  
ports those in dis - tress, re - mem - ber - ing past



low - li - ness in man - y mar - vel - ous ways.  
clare me blessed, and bless - ings they shall claim.  
far and near, dis - miss - ing self - ish hearts.  
sat - is - fied; the rich seem sud - den - ly poor.  
prom - is - es with pres - ent faith - ful - ness.

This 20th-century paraphrase is based on the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55), commonly known by its opening Latin word, *Magnificat*. This song of praise offers clear reminders that God's purposes often lead to the reversal of human values, exalting the poor and dethroning the mighty.

TEXT: Miriam Therese Winter, 1979; rev. 1987

MUSIC: Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music*, 1813; harm. C. Winfred Douglas, 1940

Text © 1978, 1987 Medical Mission Sisters

Music Harm. © 1943, 1961, 1985 Church Pension Fund

MORNING SONG  
CM

**Offering & Offertory “*From Heaven Above to Earth I Come* ”**  
*Margaret Randall, Organist*

J.G. Walther

**\*Doxology #592**

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

**Prayers of the People**

# 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever. Amen.**



\*Sending Hymn

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

v. 1, 2, & 4

Em Am Em G C

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, who or - dered all things  
 3 O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to thy tribes on  
 4 O come, thou branch of Jes - se's stem, un - to thine own and

Am Em/B Bm Em Am Em D

Is - ra - el that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 might - i - ly; to us the path of knowl - edge show  
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times did give the law  
 res - cue them! From depths of hell your peo - ple save,

Em D G Am G/B D G Refrain D Em Bm G

un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 and teach us in its ways to go. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -  
 in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.  
 and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.

Am D Em D G C Am Em/B Bm Em

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

(continues)

Words: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. Composite, P.D.

Music (VENI EMMANUEL 8.8.8.8 refrain 8.8): French processional, 15th c., adapt. Thomas Helmore, 1854, P.D.

## \*Charge & Blessing

### Postlude

*“Go Tell It on the Mountain”*  
*Margaret Randall, organist*

E.W. Hancock

### Worship Leadership:

**Preacher:** Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

**Liturgist:** Rev. Trey Tirpak

**Guest Organist:** Margaret Randall

**Technical Team:** Joshua Bliss, and Stephen Reohr

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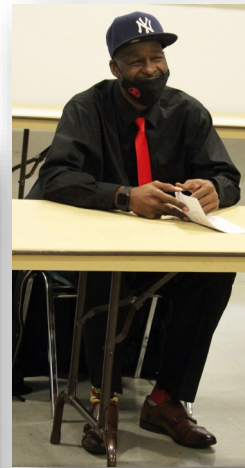
- Cheryl Gowie
- Carol LaBatte
- Amy, Cindy Gillespie's daughter
- Jane, sister of Donna Schultz
- Elaine and Jim Jenks, Rose Hunsberger's parents
- Carol, Keith Curry's mother
- Marian, Colleen Lais' mother
- Peter, Karen Van Epps' brother
- Charnelle Jones
- Jeff Curry
- Barb Andrews
- Samuel, Barb Andrew's son
- Neil Keen
- Ian Leet and family, for the passing of his brother
- Fran Carr Morton
- Haleigh Bliss
- Mary Weijola
- Harriet Stockhoff
- Kathy Stallmer (Monthie family)
- Steve Hoffman
- Ada Harris
- Ginger
- Charles Welge
- Olivia Gaydushek
- Staff and Leaders of The First Church in Albany

*Prayer Concerns? If you would like your church family to join you in prayer, please share your concerns and joys with us.*

*Call the office at 518-463-4449 or email [office@firstchurchinalbany.org](mailto:office@firstchurchinalbany.org)*

## The Pantry Christmas Luncheon 12.15.21

Photos: Colleen Lais



## The Blue Christmas Service 12.16.21

Photos: Doug Person







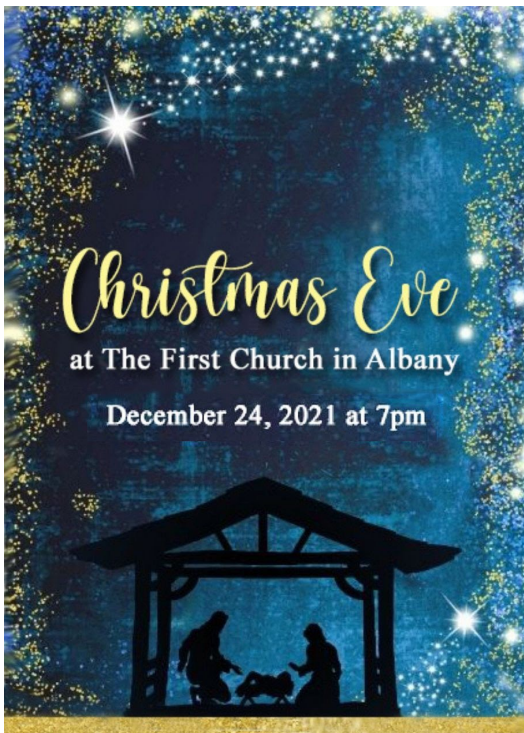
## This Week at the First Church in Albany



- |             |       |         |  |
|-------------|-------|---------|--|
| • Sunday    | 12.19 | 10am    | Sanctuary Worship & Children and Worship |
| • Monday    | 12.20 | 9am     | Food Pantry                              |
| • Tuesday   | 12.21 | 12pm    | Adult Book Study                         |
| • Wednesday | 12.22 | 9am     | Food Pantry                              |
|             |       | 12pm    | AA Meeting                               |
|             |       | 12pm    | Centering Prayer                         |
| • Thursday  | 12.23 | 11:30am | Soup Lunch in Clee Park                  |
| • Friday    | 12.24 | 7pm     | <b>Christmas Eve Service</b>             |

### Upcoming Events

- |            |      |         |                                      |
|------------|------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| • Thursday | 1.6  | 7:00pm  | Epiphany Service in the James Chapel |
| • Sunday   | 1.23 | 11:15am | Annual Congregational Meeting        |

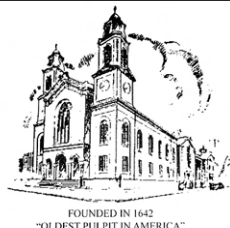


Join us  
on  
Christmas Eve  
for  
our candlelight  
celebration  
of  
the birth of the  
Baby Jesus

All are welcome!

“Without a doubt, a personal invitation to church from a friend or loved one is the most effective way to actually get a new face through the church doors. In fact, more than half of unchurched Americans say a personal invitation to church from a friend of family member would be enough to get them there.”  
(from [www.blog.outreach.com](http://www.blog.outreach.com))

**Who will you invite to Christmas Eve this year?**



### First Church in Albany

110 North Pearl St., Albany NY 12207

518-463-4449 [www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org)