



**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.*

---

**Prelude Reflection** *a haiku for today's worship*

Hope's flame softly glows,  
Advent whispers "promise near,  
Our darkness will end."

**Prelude** *"Let Our Gladness Know No End"*  
15th Century Bohemian Carol

**Tolling of Bell:** *Bell tolled by children of First Church*

**Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing** *Romans 15:13*

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." **Amen.**

**Advent Anthem**    *“We Welcome Now the World’s True Light”*                      (see insert)

The liturgist will share some words regarding hope and our advent anthem.

Titus 2:11-14

**Call to Worship** *Based on a United Methodist Advent Liturgy*

Votum: Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

**Amen.**

Leader: We come, today, from a world of darkness

**People: Into Christ’s world of light.**

Leader: We come, today, from a world of weariness

**People: Into God’s strength and hope.**

Leader: We come, today, from a slumbering world

**People: Awakened by the Spirit to keep watch for the coming of Christ.**

Leader: This advent, let us keep watch and long for Jesus to show up in our world anew so hope, peace, joy, and love may abound!

**\*Opening Hymn**            *“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”*                      (see insert)

**Prayer of Confession** *Based on a United Methodist Advent Liturgy*

**Gracious God, we confess that we have not always turned to you for guidance. At times, we have allowed the world’s time to dominate your time. Forgive us for our sins of hurriedness and impatience. Forgive us when we have slumbered instead of remaining alert, waiting and watching for you. Forgive us for allowing the world’s fears to become our fears. Send your Holy Spirit this Advent season to shine upon us so that we may be restored. Guide us into your time, and awaken us to what you’re doing in our lives, so we won’t be afraid but free in Christ. Amen.**

*Time of silence*

**Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law**

Beloved, in the grace of Christ, be assured: God forgives our hurriedness and impatience, our slumbering instead of staying alert. In this Advent season, the Holy Spirit shines upon us, restoring and guiding us into God’s time. Receive the freedom Christ offers. Amen.

**\*Passing the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us greet one another with a hand-sign of peace.

Touch your thumb to the tip of your ring finger, and wave to one another. This hand-sign makes Christ’s gesture of blessing in a lot of iconography in the Orthodox Tradition.



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

### **Prayer for Illumination**

**Guide us, O God, by your Word and Holy Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover peace; through Christ our Lord, Amen.**

### **OldSermon Text** Genesis 1:26-31

Then God said, "Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

So God created humans in his image,  
in the image of God created them;  
male and female God created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

### **Sermon Text** 1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of humans and of angels but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions and if I hand over my body so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part, but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see only a reflection, as in a mirror, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

Since the Sixth Day

**A Prayer of Blessing on the Word**

**\*Hymn of Response**

*"The Words are Old"*

*(see insert)*

**Profession of Faith** *The Apostles' Creed (traditional version)*

**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 Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on 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 Ghost,  
the holy catholic Church\*,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Tithes & Offerings:** *If you would like to connect more with the life and mission of First Church, please fill out a Welcome Card found in your pew and place it in the offering as it goes by.*

## Offertory

*"Hope Is a Seed"*

M.L. Bringle/J. Best

Hope is a seed in the silent ground  
Embedded deep, darkness all around.  
But then it sprouts, reaching toward the sky  
In the light of God, In the Light of God

Hope is a bird at its fledging time,  
Afraid to leave home and nest behind.  
It spreads its wings and begins to fly  
On the breath of God. on the breath of God.

Hope is a dream of a world at peace,  
Of hungers fed and of captives freed,  
A song of joy bursting from a sigh:  
It's the dream of God. It's the dream of God.

**\*Doxology** #592 in pew hymnal

**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.**

**Communion Hymn** *"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"*

*(see insert)*

## Communion Prayer

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts!

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## Sanctus

**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 of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

## Mystery of Faith

**Christ has died!**

**Christ has risen!**

**Christ will come again!**

## Celebration of Communion

### Intercession

We, indeed, praise and thank you, O Lord, that you have fed us at your Table. Grateful for this gift and mindful of the communion of your saints, here and in all places, we offer to you our prayers for all people:

*Prayers offered*

### 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                                      *"In Christ Alone"*                                      (see insert)

\*Charge & Blessing

Postlude                                      *"Personent Hodie"*                                      Piae Contienes 1582

**We wish each of you a blessed week, until we meet again.**

**Minister:** Rev. Jon Norton

**Liturgist:** Rev. Trey Tirpak

**Consistory Chaplain of the Day:** TBD

**Organist:** Iteke Prins

**Audio/Visual:** Joshua Bliss, Stephen Reohr



**Note:** After coffee time, please join Rev. Trey for a time of discussion of our Advent devotional, *A Surprising God*



# Prayers, Concerns & Joys

If you have a concern or joy you would like to share with our church family, email [office@firstchurchinalbany.org](mailto:office@firstchurchinalbany.org) or call the office at 518-463-4449

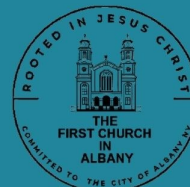
- **Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston**
- **Requests for the Tirpak Family**
  - Trey's uncle, with cancer
  - a family friend, with cancer
  - a family friend who is caring for a terminally ill child
- **Marian Lais, our office manager's mother in hospice care**
- **For the family and friends of Barbara Parpale, who passed in October**
- **Ginny Giguere**
- **Kathleen Claydon**
- **Donna Schultz**
- **Jeff Curry**
- **Yono Purnomo, chef at neighbor Yono's Restaurant, on Sheridan and Chapel, awaiting a kidney for transplant**
- **Avery Bradley, granddaughter of Marilyn and David, an athlete continuing her recovery from a leg injury**
- **Norma McClement**
- **From our pantry family, Maureen Jackson and her brother Maurice, both dealing with health issues**
- **Family of Gillian Persons and for her sister Sylvia**
- **For Shirley Mockel, good friend of Marilyn Bradley, with health concerns.**
- **Doug Plummer, friend of the Bradley family, as he begins treatment for health concerns**
- **Becky Gardner, continuing her recovery from surgery**
- **Virginia Giguere and family as they mourn the passing of an uncle and a cousin**
- **Sam, son of Barb and Dave Andrews, recovering**
- **Carol LaBatte**
- **Sharnelle Jones**
- **Joeanna Brown**
- **Sam, cousin of Barb Andrews**
- **For Barb and Dave Andrews as they take on the role of caretakers**
- **Family of Norma Jean Ballou**
- **Ken Lucas, friend of Philip Labatte**
- **Kokese Ballou**
- **For Jennifer Recene Gallagher**
- **Ruth and Josue Torres**
- **For Jim, Rose Hunsberger's father**
- **Alexis Parry, niece of Cheryl Gowie**
- **Gail Santimaw, friend of Judith Utley-Suess**
- **John Utley, brother of Judith Utley-Suess**
- **Judith Utley-Suess, for strength**
- **Harold Bushnel**
- **Alex Bliss**
- **Mary Weijola**
- **Cheryl Gowie**
- **Ralph McNeil, brother of Norma Jean Ballou**
- **Anthony, of the Brown Family**
- **Olivia Gaydushek**
- **Clergy, staff and leaders of the First Church in Albany as they plan Advent**
- **Prayers for Ukraine, Israel and Palestine and all areas of conflict across the globe. May we all remember to lead with love.**
- **For an end to gun violence here in Albany, in the U.S., and around the world.**



## a Night of WORSHIP

THURSDAY 7PM  
DECEMBER 7, 2023

POTLUCK AT 6PM





# Join Us for This Week's Events

SUN	DEC. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10am: Advent 1, Communion Sunday Worship (also on YouTube). See our website for links to worship info.</li> </ul>
MON	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9am: Food Pantry at Orange St. Door</li> <li>11:30am: Prayer Shawl Meeting</li> </ul>
TUE	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noon: Adult Book Study on Zoom</li> <li>6pm: Consistory Meeting</li> </ul>
WED	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9am: Food Pantry at Orange St. Door</li> <li>Noon: Centering Prayer (Powell), AA Mtg (Parlor)</li> <li>12:30pm: Weathervanes' Christmas Lunch</li> </ul>
THU	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11:30am: Soup &amp; Sandwiches in the Park</li> <li>7pm: First Thursday Night of Worship</li> <li>6pm Potluck in Parlor</li> </ul>



Scan for full event calendar

Worship now streaming live on YouTube.



**THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY & FOCUS CHURCHES OF ALBANY INVITE YOU TO A**

# Blue Christmas

**WORSHIP SERVICE**

**Wednesday, December 13th, 7:00pm**

**Keynote Speaker: To Be Announced**  
We have made a change to our original agenda



The First Church in Albany  
110 North Pearl St.  
Albany NY 12207  
[www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org)



**FOCUS**  
CHURCHES OF ALBANY

## Other Upcoming Events:

- **RCA Restructuring Team Roundtable Meeting** - Sunday, December 3, from 3-6pm at Delmar Reformed Church (386 Delaware Ave., Delmar NY 12054-3204). Register at the following website <https://www.rca.org/restructuring-team-roundtable-meetings-this-fall-look-to-engage-and-gather-more-feedback/>
- **The FCIA Food Pantry: Boutique at First** will be live after December 7. This Christmas shop allows our pantry families the opportunity to shop wonderful gift items when they come in for the pantry. See pantry director Lynne Furrier for more information.



## First Church in Albany

110 North Pearl St.  
Albany NY 12207  
518-463-4449

[www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org)



# We Welcome Now the World's True Light

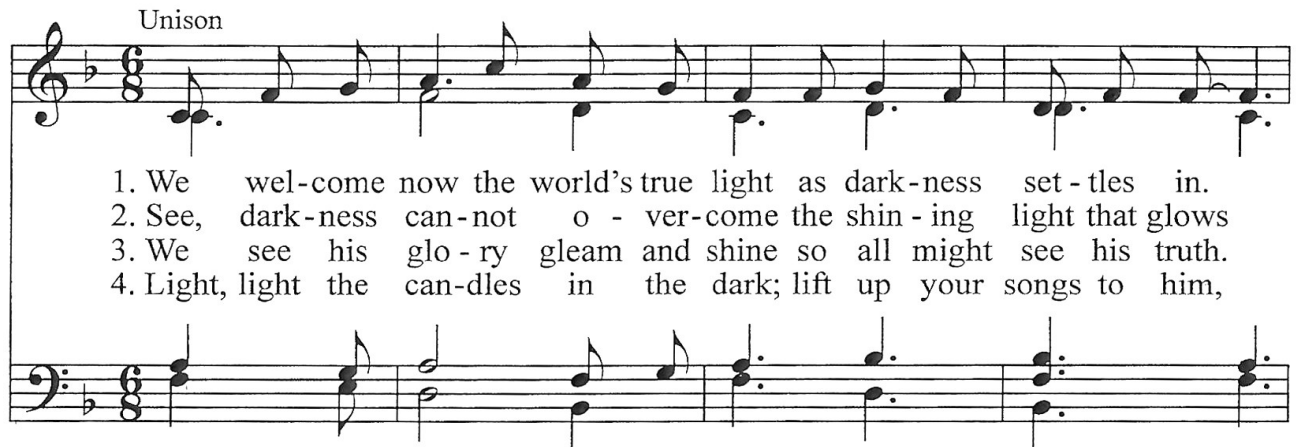
## SIMPLE CRÈCHE

86 86 88

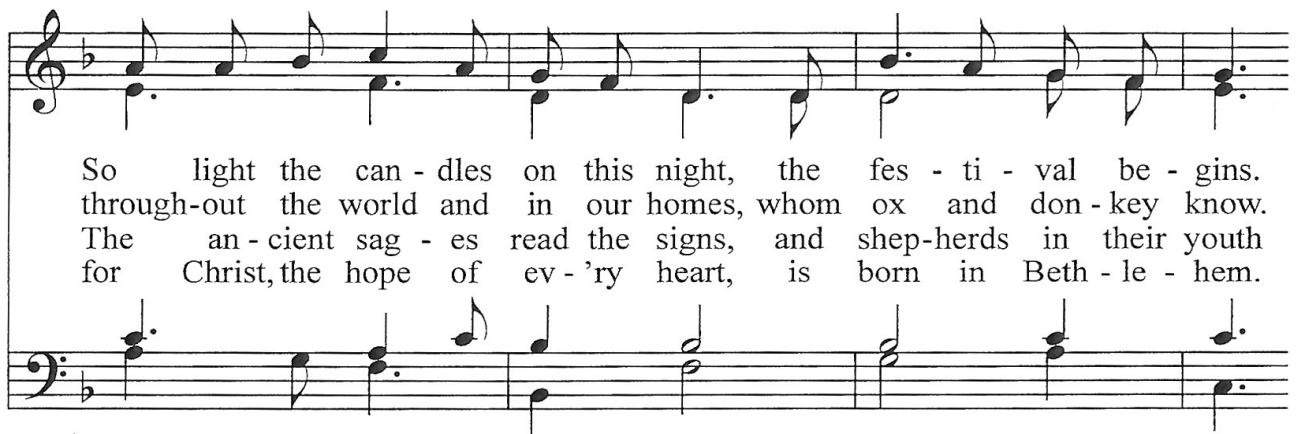
Gracia Grindal (b. 1943)

Iteke Prins

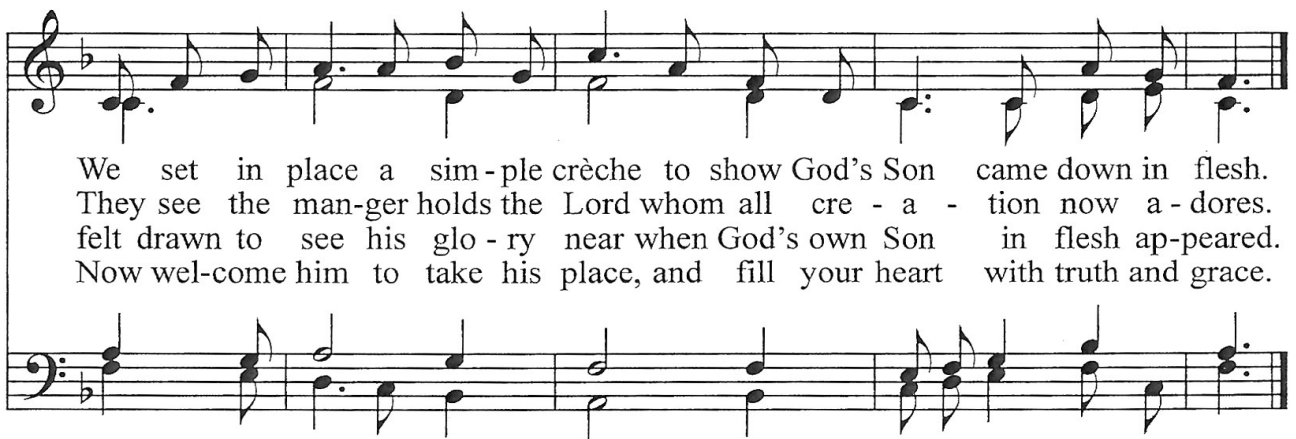
Unison



1. We wel-come now the world's true light as dark-ness set-tles in.  
 2. See, dark-ness can-not o-ver-come the shin-ing light that glows  
 3. We see his glo-ry gleam and shine so all might see his truth.  
 4. Light, light the can-dles in the dark; lift up your songs to him,



So light the can-dles on this night, the fes-ti-val be-gins.  
 through-out the world and in our homes, whom ox and don-key know.  
 The an-cient sag-es read the signs, and shep-herds in their youth  
 for Christ, the hope of ev-'ry heart, is born in Beth-le-hem.



We set in place a sim-ple crèche to show God's Son came down in flesh.  
 They see the man-ger holds the Lord whom all cre-a-tion now a-dores.  
 felt drawn to see his glo-ry near when God's own Son in flesh ap-peared.  
 Now wel-come him to take his place, and fill your heart with truth and grace.

# Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Charles Wesley, 1744

HYPERDOI 3/8 / D

Rowland Hugh Prichard, 1831

1. Come, Thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, Born to set Thy  
 2. Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, Born a child and

peo - ple free; From our fears and sins re - lease us;  
 yet a King, Born to reign in us for - ev - er,

Let us find our rest in Thee. Is - rael's strength and con - so -  
 Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring. By Thine own e - ter - nal

la - tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art; Dear de - sire of  
 Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone; By Thine all - suf -

ev - ery na - tion, Joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.  
 fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

Alternate tune: STUTTGART, 1

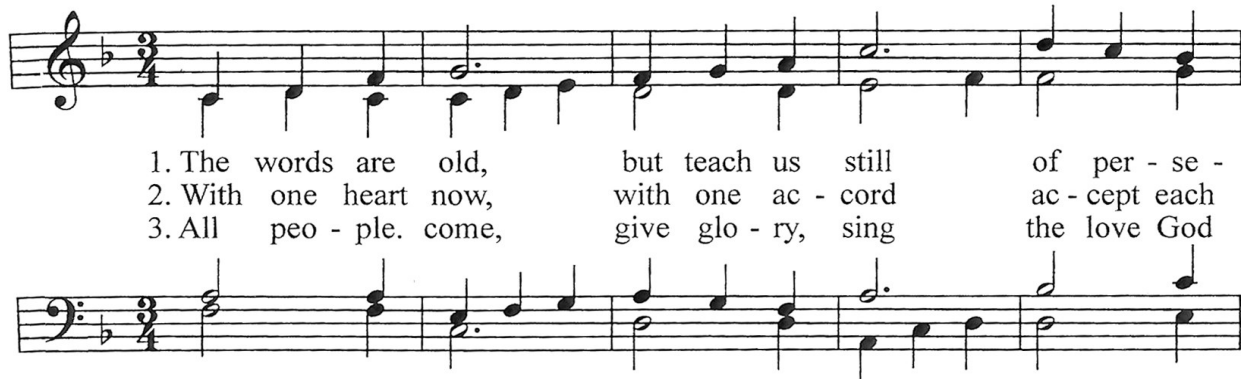
# The Words Are Old

## OUTSTRETCHED HAND

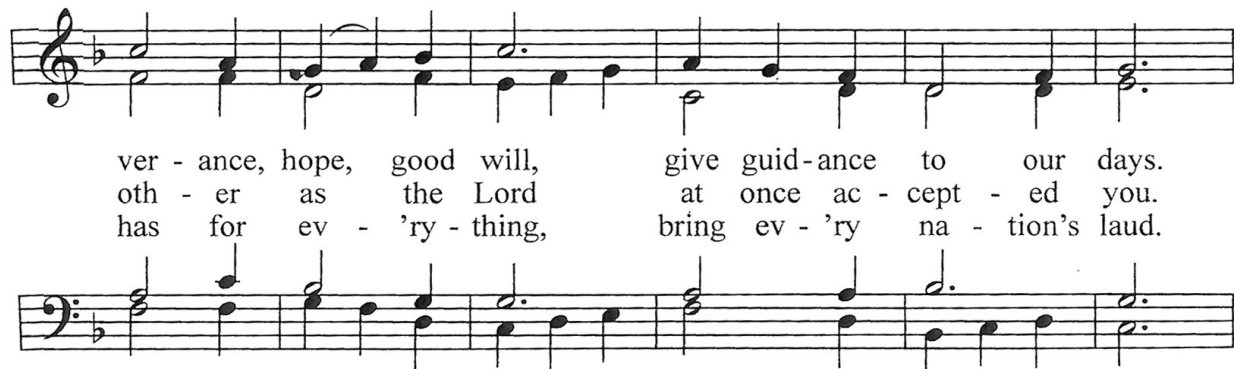
886 886

John Core (1951–2017)

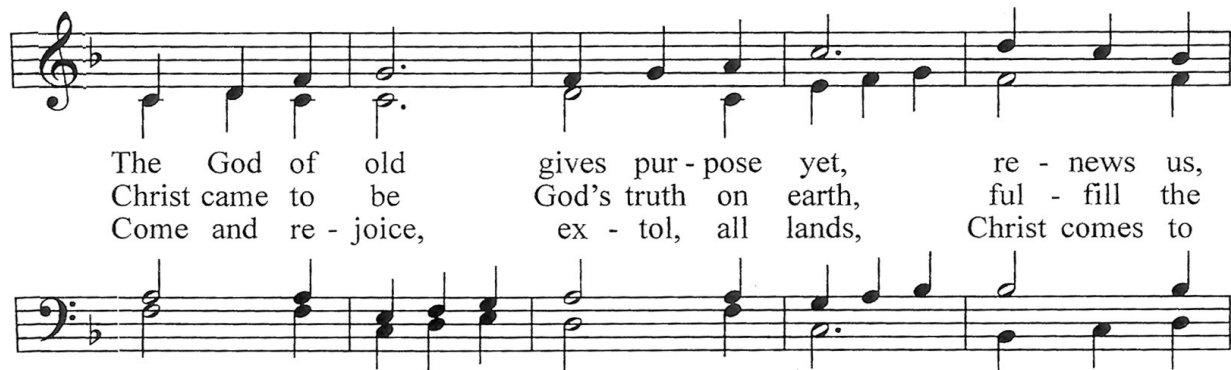
Iteke Prins



1. The words are old, but teach us still of per - se -  
 2. With one heart now, with one ac - cord ac - cept each  
 3. All peo - ple. come, give glo - ry, sing the love God



ver - ance, hope, good will, give guid - ance to our days.  
 oth - er as the Lord at once ac - cept - ed you.  
 has for ev - 'ry - thing, bring ev - 'ry na - tion's laud.



The God of old gives pur - pose yet, re - news us,  
 Christ came to be God's truth on earth, ful - fill the  
 Come and re - joice, ex - tol, all lands, Christ comes to



gets our spir - its set on Christ - ly things and praise.  
 cov - e - nant, add worth to what past ag - es knew.  
 hold in out - stretched hands the last, best hope of God.

Text © 2016 by Wayne Leupold Editions, Inc.

Music © 2021 by The Leupold Foundation



# Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Capo 3: (Bm)  
Dm

(G) (D) (Bm) (C)  
B<sup>b</sup> F Dm E<sup>b</sup>

1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and  
2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on  
3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van-guard  
4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim, with

(G) (F#) (G) (D) (Em)  
B<sup>b</sup> A B<sup>b</sup> F Gm

trem - bling stand; pon - der noth - ing earth - ly  
earth he stood, Lord of lords, in hu - man  
on the way, as the Light of light de -  
sleep - less eye, veil their fac - es to the

(Bm) (C) (G) (D)  
Dm E<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> F

mind - ed, for with bless - ing in his hand  
ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,  
scend - eth from the realms of end - less day,  
pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry,

(B) (Em) (Bm) (A)  
D Gm Dm C

Christ our God to earth de - scend - eth,  
he will give to all the faith - ful  
that the powers of hell may van - ish  
"Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

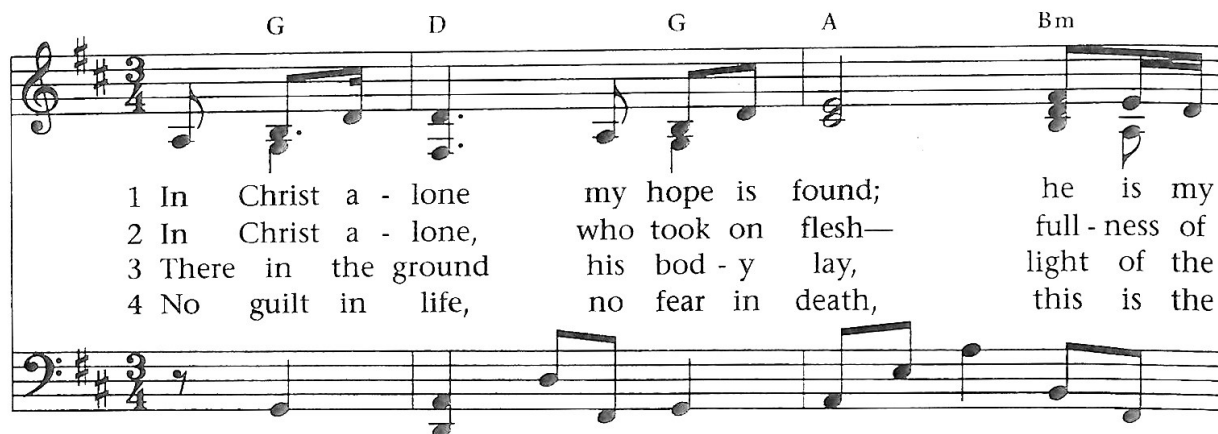
(Bm) (Em) (F#m) (Bm)  
Dm Gm Am Dm

our full hom - age to de - mand.  
his own self for heaven - ly food.  
as the shad - ows clear a - way.  
al - le - lu - ia, Lord most high!"

The flowering of English hymnody in the 19th century included the rediscovery, translation, and versification of ancient Christian hymns, such as this text from one of the earliest existing Christian liturgies. It is set here to an adaptation of a 17th-century French melody.

# In Christ Alone

G D G A Bm



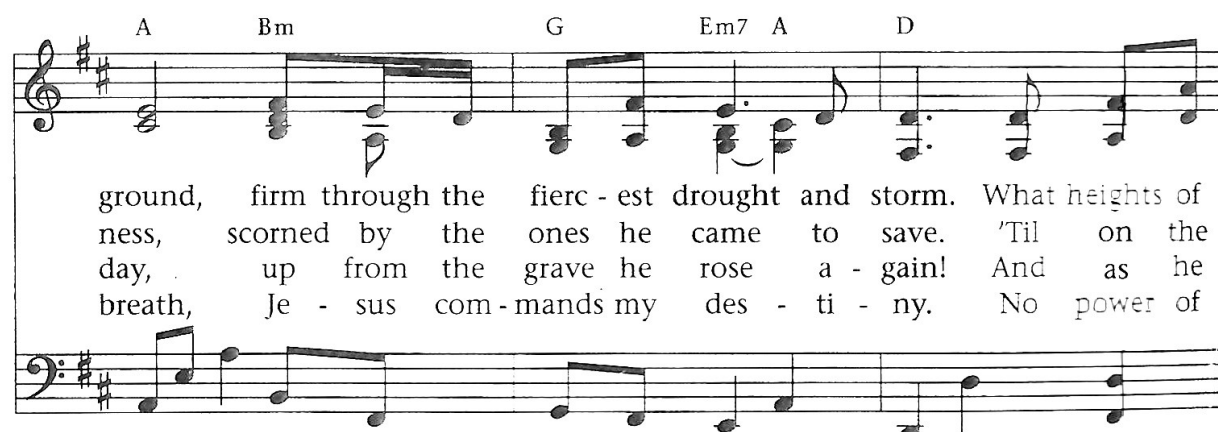
1 In Christ a - lone my hope is found; he is my  
 2 In Christ a - lone, who took on flesh— full - ness of  
 3 There in the ground his bod - y lay, light of the  
 4 No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the

G Em7 A D G D G



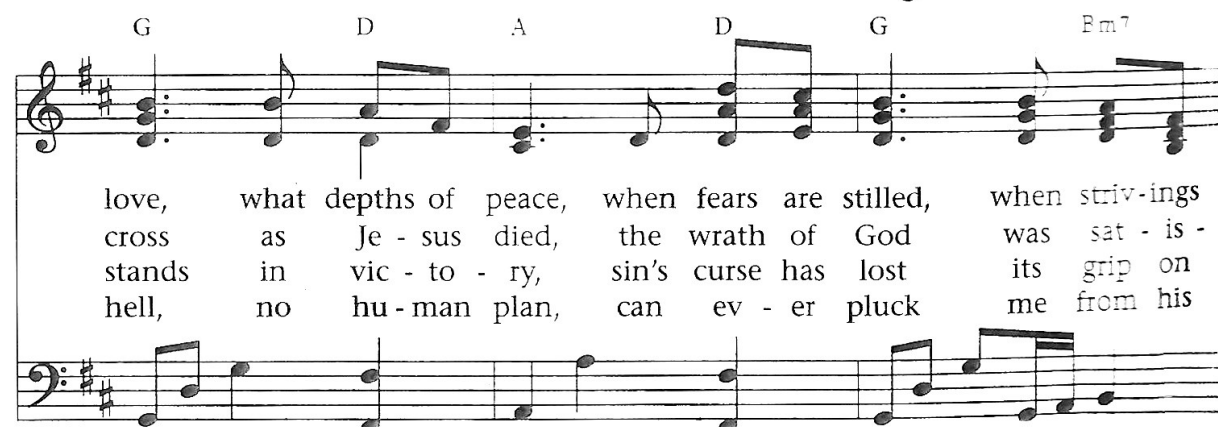
light, my strength, my song— this cor - ner - stone, this sol - id  
 God in help - less babe!— this gift of love and right - eous -  
 world by dark - ness slain; then, burst - ing forth in glo - rious  
 power of Christ in me; from life's first cry to fin - al

A Bm G Em7 A D



ground, firm through the fierc - est drought and storm. What heights of  
 ness, scorned by the ones he came to save. 'Til on the  
 day, up from the grave he rose a - gain! And as he  
 breath, Je - sus com - mands my des - ti - ny. No power of

G D A D G Bm7



love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when striv - ings  
 cross as Je - sus died, the wrath of God was sat - is -  
 stands in vic - to - ry, sin's curse has lost its grip on  
 hell, no hu - man plan, can ev - er pluck me from his

cease. My com - fort - er, my all in all,  
 fied. For ev - ery sin on him was laid;  
 me; for I am his and he is mine,  
 hand; 'til he re - turns or calls me home,

here in the love of Christ I stand.  
 here in the death of Christ I live.  
 bought with the pre - cious blood of Christ.  
 here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY &  
 FOCUS CHURCHES OF ALBANY  
 INVITE YOU TO A

# Blue Christmas

WORSHIP SERVICE

Wednesday, December 13th, 7:00pm

Keynote Speaker: To Be Announced  
 We have made a change to our original agenda



The First Church in Albany  
 110 North Pearl St.  
 Albany NY 12207  
[www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org)



**FOCUS**  
 CHURCHES OF ALBANY