



When Heaven Opens Up for You

Sunday, February 18, 2024 — The First Sunday of Lent

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 Maya Angelou

Try to be a rainbow
In someone else's cloud.

Prelude "Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether" Charles Callahan

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

Processional Hymn "We Are People on a Journey" (see insert)

For each Sunday leading up to Palm Sunday during this season of Lent, five congregants will process with common Christian symbols of worship, signifying our Lenten journey to the cross. These common Christian symbols of worship are a cross (or cloth to drape the cross with), a candle lighter, the church's bible, and the sacramental elements of water, wheat, and vines.

Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing

“Look up unto the hills from whence cometh help. Help comes from the Lord.”
- Psalm 121:1-4

Call to Worship Psalm 25:1-10

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

Leader: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

People: Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

Leader: All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

***Opening Hymn** *“Come to Me, O Weary Traveler”*

Prayer of Confession

God of mercy, you sent Jesus Christ to seek and to save the lost.
We confess that we have strayed from you
and turned aside from your way.
We have not tried to be the rainbows in someone else's
cloud that you have called us to be.
We see ourselves as pure and others stained,
We see ourselves as great and others as small.
We have failed in love, neglected injustice, and ignored your truth.
Have mercy on us, O God, and forgive our sin.
Return us to paths of righteousness
through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Time of silence

Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law

When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

***Passing the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us spend a few moments greeting one another.

Children's Message & Blessing

Prayer for Illumination *Please sing*

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me. Mold me. Fill me. Use me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me!

Sermon Text Genesis 9:8-17

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Text Mark 1:9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tested by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

When Heaven Opens Up for You

A Prayer of Blessing on the Word

***Hymn of Response "I've A Message From The Lord: Look And Live! "**

(see insert)

Profession of Faith *The Apostle's Creed, contemporary version*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
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

"I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"

Charles Callahan

***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.**

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**

"How Great Thou Art"

(see insert)

***Charge & Blessing**

Postlude

"Trumpet Tune"

Charles Callahan



Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

Liturgist:

Organist: Gloria Norton

Audio/Visual: Joshua Bliss and Stephen Reohr

CCLI License

#463379;

One License

#A-700689

Note: Join us for fellowship in Zimmerman Hall after worship. There will be no Second Hour Discussion this week. It will resume next week.

Lent 2024

Ash Wednesday
Feb. 14, 2024

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday
12pm Worship in Chapel

Feb. 18, 2024

First Sunday in Lent

Lectionary Texts

Feb. 25, 2024

Second Sunday in Lent

Lectionary Texts

Mar. 3, 2024

Third Sunday in Lent

Women in the Bible: Naomi

Mar. 10, 2024

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Women in the Bible: Deborah

Mar. 17, 2024

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Women in the Bible: Esther

Mar. 24, 2024

Palm Sunday

We process with Palms like those
in Jerusalem to begin Holy Week.

Mar. 28, 2024

Maundy Thursday

Service at 7pm in Sanctuary

Mar. 29, 2024

Good Friday

Capital Area Council of Churches
Noon Service, Location TBD

Mar. 30, 2024

Holy Saturday

Details TBD

Mar. 31, 2024

Easter Sunrise Service

FOCUS Easter Sunrise Service at
West Capital Park at 6:30am

Mar. 31, 2024

Easter Sunday

10am; We receive new members

Prayers, Concerns & Joys

- Rose Hunsberger and family as they mourn the death of her father
- Joanne Farrell and John Patterson, for recovery
- Ned Monthie, recovering from surgery
- Michelle Williams, for recovery
- Matt, cousin of Barb Andrews with health issues
- Rev. Dr. Mashona as she continues her health journey
- Mia Westman
- Becky Gardner
- Requests for the Tirpak Family
 - Trey's uncle, with cancer, family friend, with cancer, and a family friend who is caring for a terminally ill child
- Ginny Giguere
- Donna Schultz
- Jeff Curry
- Family of Gillian Persons and for her sister Sylvia
- Carol LaBatte
- Sam, son of Barb and Dave Andrews, recovering
- Charnelle Jones
- 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
- 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 Lent and Holy Week Events.
- 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.

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

February 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1  Potluck & First Thursday Night of Worship 		Albany Classis Meeting 9am Bethany Ref.
4 <i>G</i>  Communion Sunday  Focus Worship Delmar	5  Prayer Shawl Meeting	6  Elders' Meeting	7  AA	8  Choir Rehearsal	9	10
11 <i>T</i>  Communion Sunday	12 	13 	14  AA 	15  Castle Island (Bilingual Montessori) Play 6pm	16 	17
18 <i>M</i>  Communion Sunday	19  Presidents Day Pantry & Office Closed	20 	21  AA 	22 	23	24
25 <i>T</i>  Communion Sunday	26 	27  Focus Board Mtg.	28  AA WMA Mtg.	29  Choir Rehearsal		

Key:



Indoor Worship 10am



Communion Sunday



Coffee Hour



Pantry 9am



Centering Prayer 12pm



Book Study



Soup & PB&J 11:30am



Choir Rehearsal



Weather vanes

Preacher: *M* Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston *T* Rev. Trey Tirpak *G* Guest



First Church in Albany

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 Albany NY 12207
 518-463-4449

www.firstchurchinalbany.org

We Are People on a Journey

A E A E E/D#

1 We are peo - ple on a jour - ney, fol - lowing

C#m7 A2 E A

where the Mas - ter walks. We are peo - ple on a

E F#m7 E A E

jour - ney in the sha - dow 7 of the cross.

A2 E

What com - pels? The face of Je - sus!

A2 D A

Who pro - tects? Our faith - ful guide:

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system has a treble staff with lyrics 'he who treads the road of ser - vice,' and a bass staff. The second system has a treble staff with lyrics 'Christ the Lord, the cru - ci - fied.' and a bass staff. The third system is a piano accompaniment with a grand staff (treble and bass) and includes a repeat sign and a 'Final ending' section. Chord symbols are placed above the staves: E, A, E, C#m7, A, E, C#m7, Bm7, E, A2, and E.

he who treads the road of ser - vice,

Christ the Lord, the cru - ci - fied.

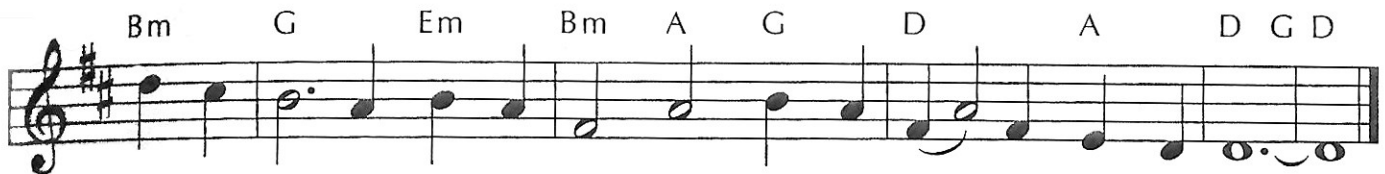
C#m7 Bm7 E A2 To stanzas E Final ending

Words and Music (DEEPER JOURNEY 8.7.8.7 D): Gregg DeMey © 2008, 2010 Re:Create Music, admin. Faith Alive Christian Resources

Come to Me, O Weary Traveler



- 1 "Come to me, O wea - ry trav - eler; come to me with your dis - tress;
- 2 "Do not fear, my yoke is eas - y; do not fear, my bur - den's light;
- 3 "Take my yoke and leave your trou - bles; take my yoke and come with me.
- 4 "Rest in me, O wea - ry trav - eler; rest in me and do not fear.



come to me, you heav - y bur - dened; come to me and find your rest."
do not fear the path be - fore you; do not run from me in fright."
Take my yoke, I am be - side you; take and learn hu - mil - i - ty."
Rest in me, my heart is gen - tle; rest and cast a - way your care."

This paraphrase and expansion of Matthew 11:28–30 by a Canadian minister is structured so that the first three syllables of each stanza provide the hymn's skeleton and summary. The immediacy of the text is enhanced by the folksong-like setting later composed for it.

TEXT: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1991

MUSIC: William P. Rowan, 1992

Text © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music © 1993 Selah Publishing Co., Inc.

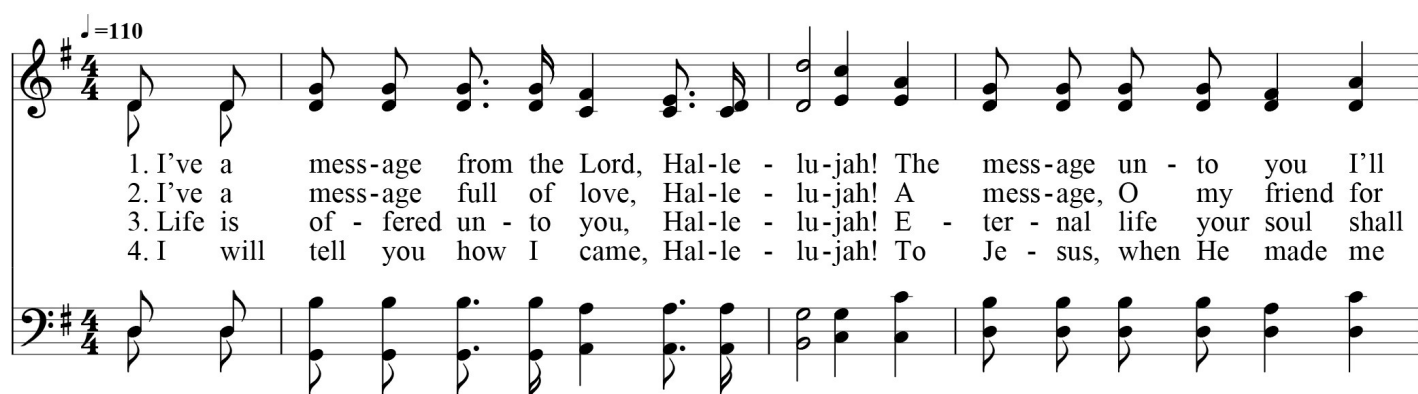
AUSTIN

8.7.8.7

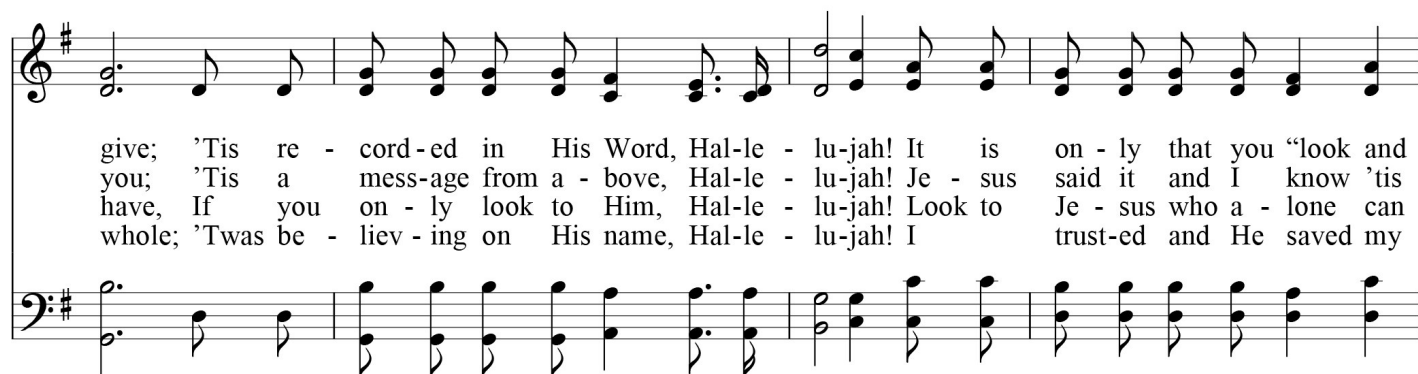
I've a Message from the Lord

William Augustine Ogden, 1887

$\text{♩} = 110$

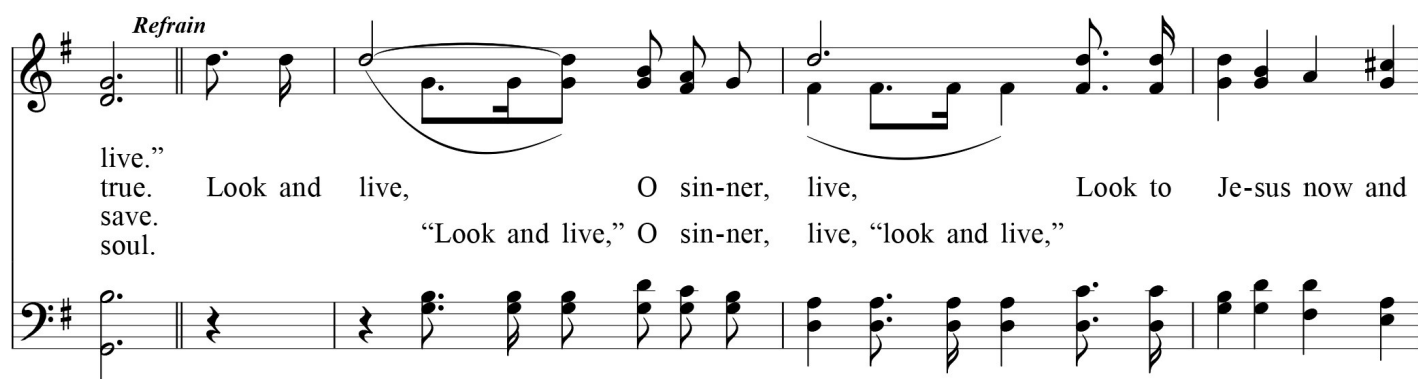


1. I've a mess-age from the Lord, Hal-le - lu-jah! The mess-age un - to you I'll
2. I've a mess-age full of love, Hal-le - lu-jah! A mess-age, O my friend for
3. Life is of - fered un - to you, Hal-le - lu-jah! E - ter - nal life your soul shall
4. I will tell you how I came, Hal-le - lu-jah! To Je - sus, when He made me

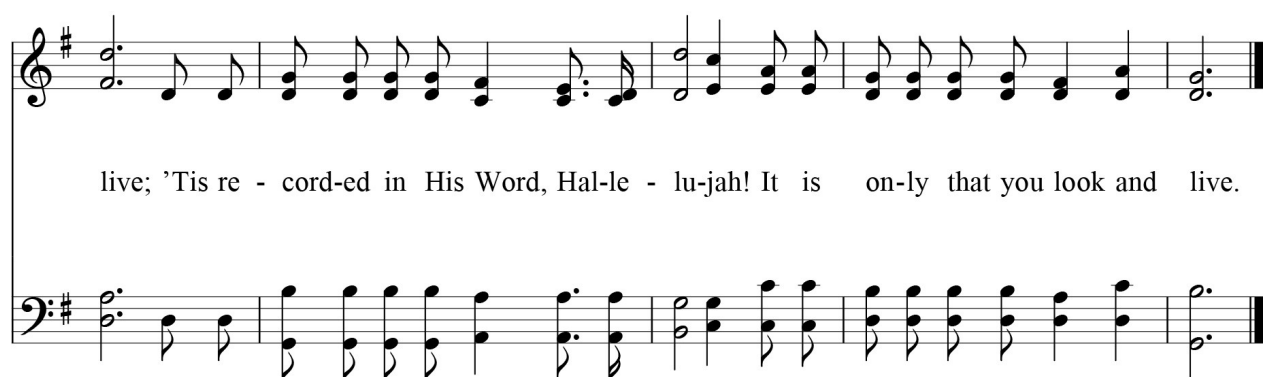


give; 'Tis re - cord-ed in His Word, Hal-le - lu-jah! It is on - ly that you "look and
you; 'Tis a mess-age from a - bove, Hal-le - lu-jah! Je - sus said it and I know 'tis
have, If you on - ly look to Him, Hal-le - lu-jah! Look to Je - sus who a - lone can
whole; 'Twas be - liev - ing on His name, Hal-le - lu-jah! I trust-ed and He saved my

Refrain



live."
true. Look and live, O sin-ner, live, Look to Je-sus now and
save.
soul. "Look and live," O sin-ner, live, "look and live,"



live; 'Tis re - cord-ed in His Word, Hal-le - lu-jah! It is on-ly that you look and live.

How Great Thou Art

B^b E^b

1 O Lord, my God, when I in awe - some won - der
 2 When through the woods and for - est glades I wan - der,
 3 But when I think that God, his Son not spar - ing,
 4 When Christ shall come, with shout of ac - cla - ma - tion,

B^b/F F7 B^b

con - sid - er all the works thy hand hath made,
 I hear the birds sing sweet - ly in the trees;
 sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
 and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!

E^b

I see the stars, I hear the roll - ing thun - der,
 when I look down from loft - y moun - tain gran - deur
 that on the cross, my bur - den glad - ly bear - ing,
 Then I shall bow in hum - ble ad - o - ra - tion

B^b/F F7 B^b

thy power through - out the u - ni - verse dis - played;
 and hear the brook and feel the gen - tle breeze;
 he bled and died to take a - way my sin;
 and there pro - claim, "My God, how great thou art!"

Refrain

Then sings my soul, my Sav - ior God, to thee: how great thou art,

how great thou art! Then sings my soul, my Sav - ior God, to thee:

how great thou art, how great thou art!

Words and Music (HOW GREAT THOU ART 11.10.11.10 refrain 10.8.10.8): Stuart K. Hine, 1949, © 1949, 1953, The Stuart Hine Trust, USA print rights admin. Hope Publishing Company. All other USA rights admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing