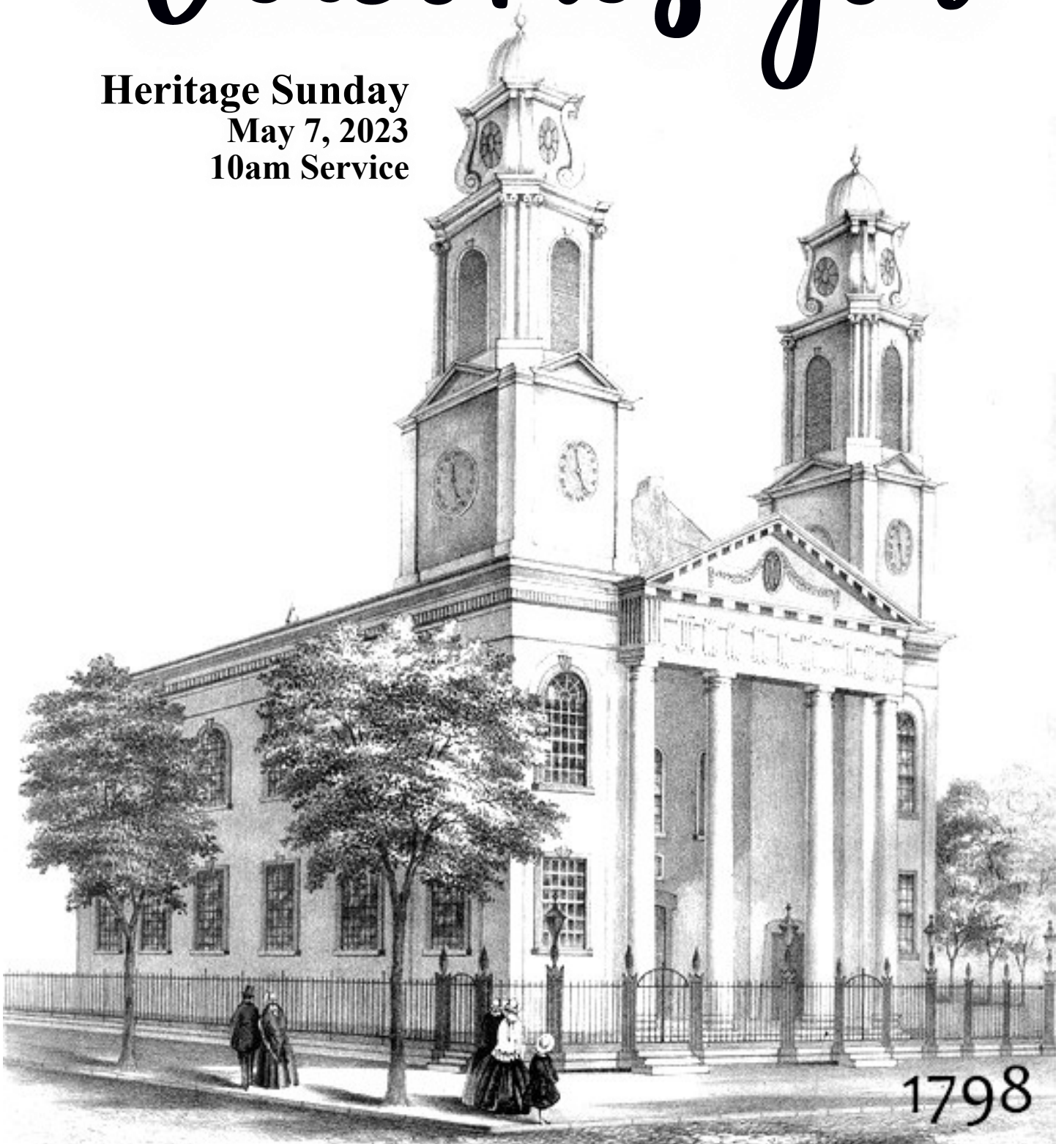


The First Church in Albany  
*Welcomes you*

**Heritage Sunday**  
**May 7, 2023**  
**10am Service**



**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.*

**Heritage Sunday, May 7, 2023**

**Prelude Reflection** Rev. Jaroslav Pelikan, Titus Street Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Yale University

“Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. Tradition lives in conversation with the past while remembering where we are and when we are and that it is we who have to decide. Traditionalism supposes that nothing should ever be done for the first time, so all that is needed to solve any problem is to arrive at the supposedly unanimous testimony of this homogenized tradition.”

**Prelude**

*“Procession”*

Richard E. Frey

*Ministers & Elders enter the sanctuary and sit in their respective places.*

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

**Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing**

“May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” 2 Peter 1:2

## Call to Worship *Adapted from Psalm 31*

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

Leader: O LORD, Listen! Bend your ear to me. Rescue me speedily!

People: Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.

Leader: God, you are indeed my rock and my fortress.

People: You lead me and guide me.

Leader: Take me out of the net that is hidden for me!

People: You are my refuge, my place of safety.

Leader: Into your keeping I commit my spirit.

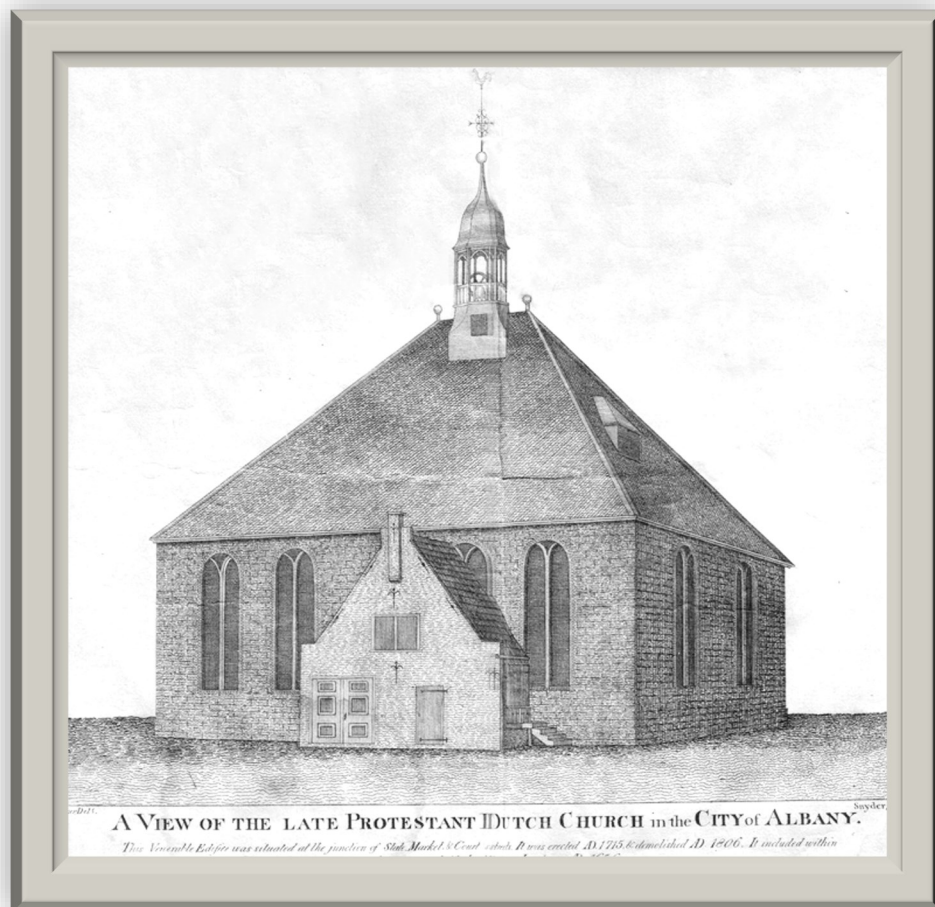
People: You have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

Leader: My past, present and future are in your hands.

People: Let your face continue to shine upon me.

Leader: I trust you will save me—*and all of us—*

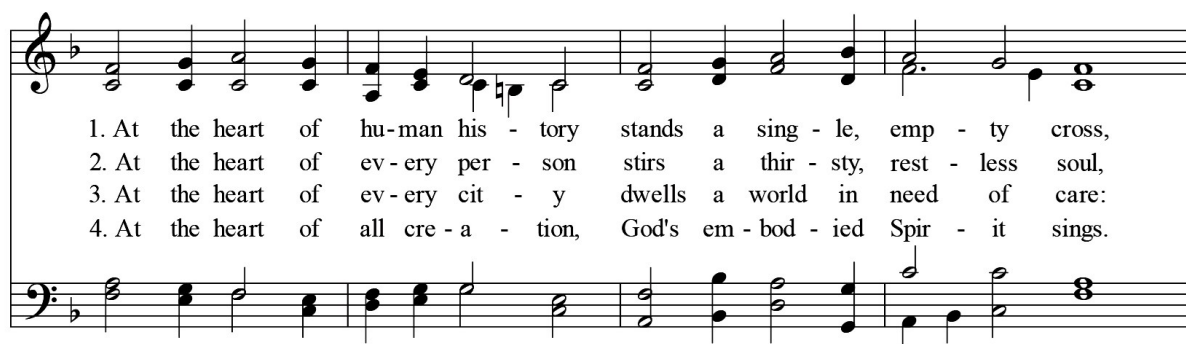
People: by your marvelous and steadfast love. **AMEN**



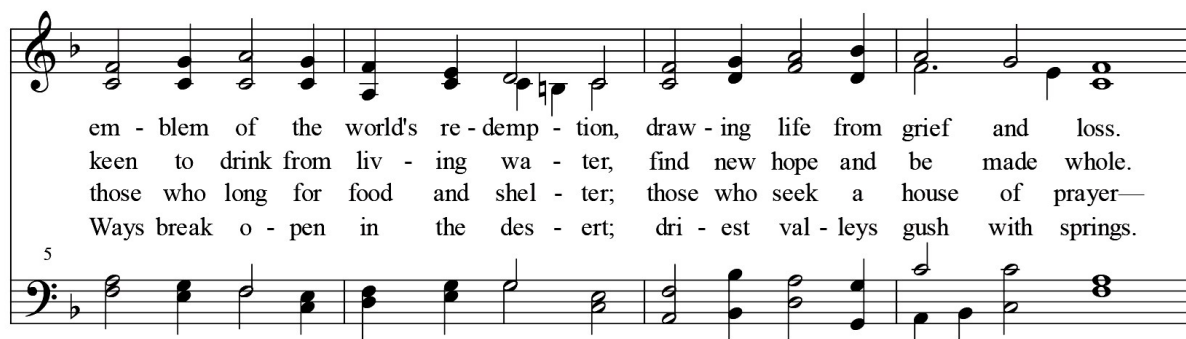


*\*Opening Hymn At the Heart of Human History, a hymn composed for the 375th Anniversary Celebration of the First Church in Albany*

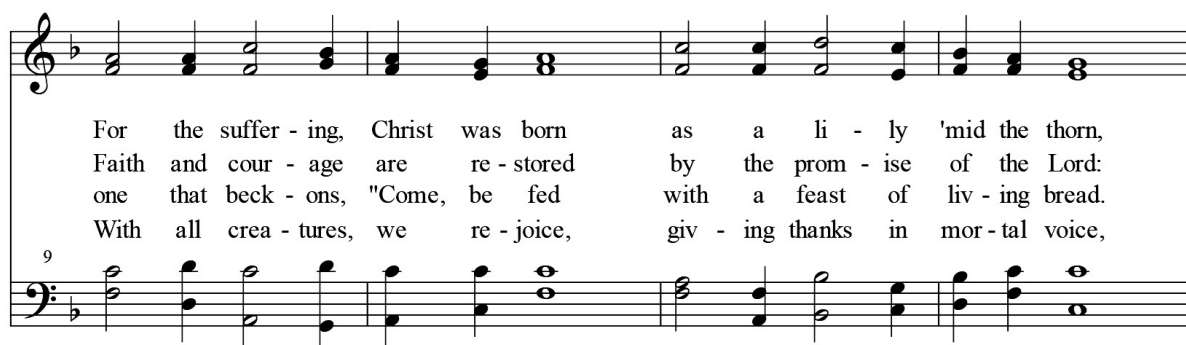
## At the Heart of Human History



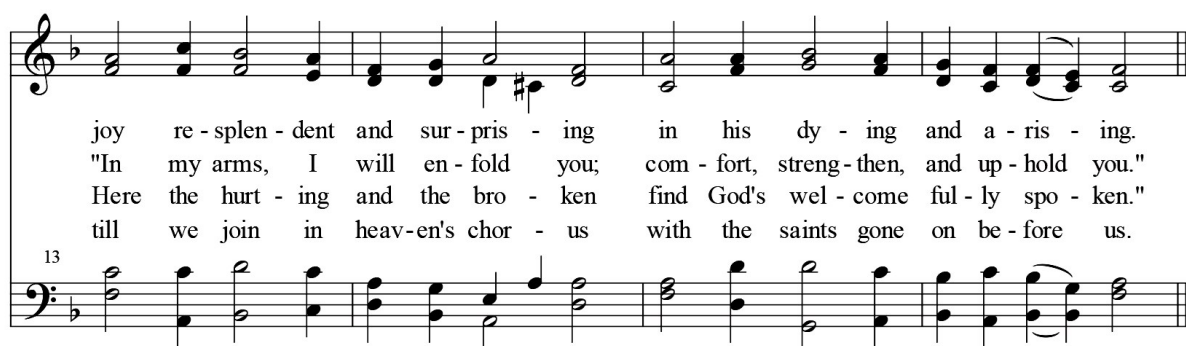
1. At the heart of hu-man his - tory stands a sing - le, emp - ty cross,  
2. At the heart of ev - ery per - son stirs a thir - sty, rest - less soul,  
3. At the heart of ev - ery cit - y dwells a world in need of care:  
4. At the heart of all cre - a - tion, God's em - bod - ied Spir - it sings.



em - blem of the world's re - demp - tion, draw - ing life from grief and loss.  
keen to drink from liv - ing wa - ter, find new hope and be made whole.  
those who long for food and shel - ter; those who seek a house of prayer—  
Ways break o - pen in the des - ert; dri - est val - leys gush with springs.



For the suffer - ing, Christ was born as a li - ly 'mid the thorn,  
Faith and cour - age are re - stored by the prom - ise of the Lord:  
one that beck - ons, "Come, be fed with a feast of liv - ing bread.  
With all crea - tures, we re - joice, giv - ing thanks in mor - tal voice,



joy re - splen - dent and sur - pris - ing in his dy - ing and a - ris - ing.  
"In my arms, I will en - fold you; com - fort, streng - then, and up - hold you."  
Here the hurt - ing and the bro - ken find God's wel - come ful - ly spo - ken."  
till we join in heav - en's chor - us with the saints gone on be - fore us.



## **Prayer of Confession *Based on 1 Peter 2:2-10***

Good God, as infants long for pure milk, we long to grow into all you have called us to be: “a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices” of justice, kindness, and humility. Today, we confess to all the times we have chosen false selves, making ourselves out to be priests for injustice, malice, and vanity. In many ways, we have caused this spiritual house to be about ourselves. Send your Holy Spirit, now, to transform us to be like living stones who proclaim the excellence of Jesus, who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

*Time of silent confession*

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

Friends of Jesus, we can become the spiritual house God calls us to be when we continually center Christ, the living stone and cornerstone, in all that we do, and when we do that, we will come to truly know that God has already forgiven us and we will live in peace.

## **\*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**

God, you are our rock and our fortress, our stronghold in times of trouble. May we trust in you, the rock of our salvation, and follow where you lead. Amen.

## **Sermon Text**

**1 Peter 2: 2-10**

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

“See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

This honor, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner,” and “A stone that makes them stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

**Leader: The Word of the Lord.**

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## **Sermon**

**“Living Stones”**

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

## \*Hymn of Response

### The Church's One Foundation

1 The chur - ch's one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ her Lord.  
4 Mid toil and trib - u - la - tion, and tu - mult of her war,  
5 Yet she on earth has un - ion with God, the Three in One,

She is his new cre - a - tion by wa - ter and the word.  
she waits the con - sum - ma - tion of peace for - ev - er - more:  
and mys - tic sweet com - mu - nion with those whose rest is won:

From heaven he came and sought her to be his ho - ly bride.  
till with the vi - sion glo - rious her long - ing eyes are blest,  
O hap - py ones and ho - ly! Lord, give us grace that we,

With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.  
and the great church vic - to - rious shall be the church at rest.  
like them, the meek and low - ly, may live e - ter - nal - ly.

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It consists of six systems of music, each with a vocal line and a basso continuo line. The lyrics are printed below the vocal lines. The hymn concludes with a final cadence in the bass line.

This hymn was one of twelve written by an English curate to affirm the articles of the Apostles' Creed with biblical allusions such as 1 Corinthians 3:11 here. Though not created for this text, the tune was joined to it in 1868, and the two have been inseparable ever since.



## 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

*"Pastoral"*

Richard E. Frey

\*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.*



## **\*Confession of Faith Older, RCA-Adopted Apostles' Creed**

**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.**

## **Passing the Peace Before Communion**

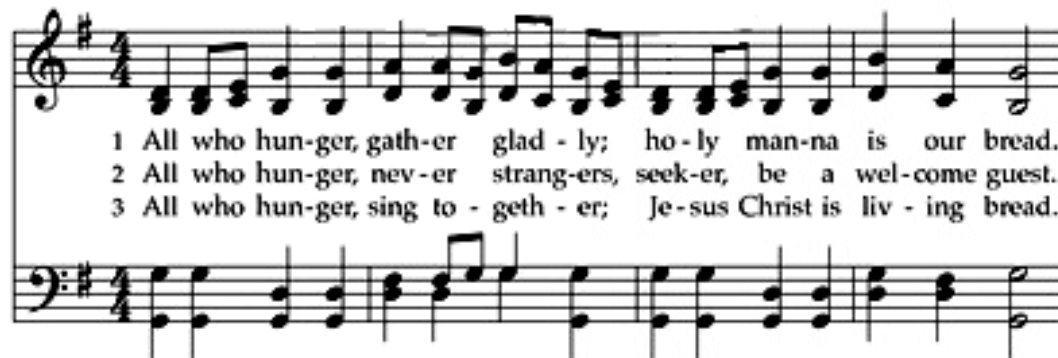
**“Let the peace of Christ rule in  
your hearts, to which indeed you  
were called in the one body”  
Colossians 3:15**

**Leader: The peace of Christ be  
with you.  
People: And also with you.**

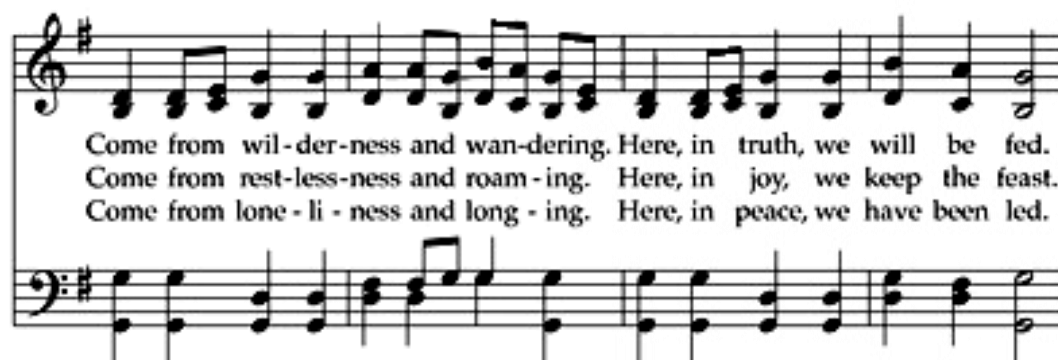


## \*Communion Hymn

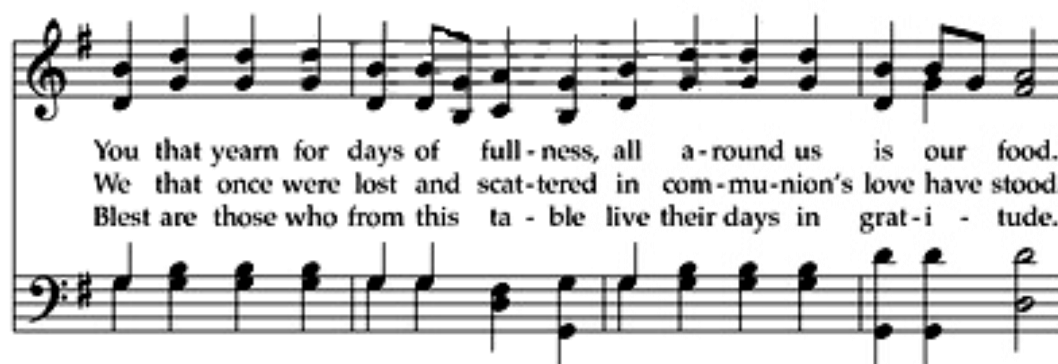
### All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly



1 All who hun-ger, gath-er glad - ly; ho - ly man-na is our bread.  
 2 All who hun-ger, nev-er strang-ers, seek-er, be a wel-come guest.  
 3 All who hun-ger, sing to - geth - er; Je - sus Christ is liv - ing bread.



Come from wil-der-ness and wan-dering. Here, in truth, we will be fed.  
 Come from rest-less-ness and roam-ing. Here, in joy, we keep the feast.  
 Come from lone - li - ness and long - ing. Here, in peace, we have been led.



You that yearn for days of full - ness, all a-round us is our food.  
 We that once were lost and scat-tered in com-mu-nion's love have stood.  
 Blest are those who from this ta - ble live their days in grat-i - tude.



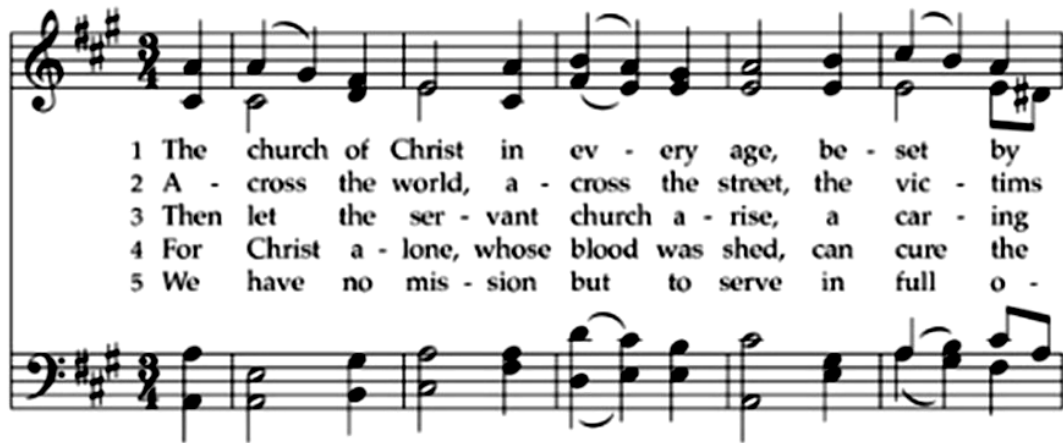
Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal. Taste and see that God is good.

The United Church of Canada minister who wrote this text was introduced to shape note tunes at the 1990 Hymn Society conference in Charleston, South Carolina. Afterwards she vacationed with friends nearby and worked out this text while humming this tune as she walked up and down the beach.



## The Celebration of the Lord's Supper: *Please see insert*

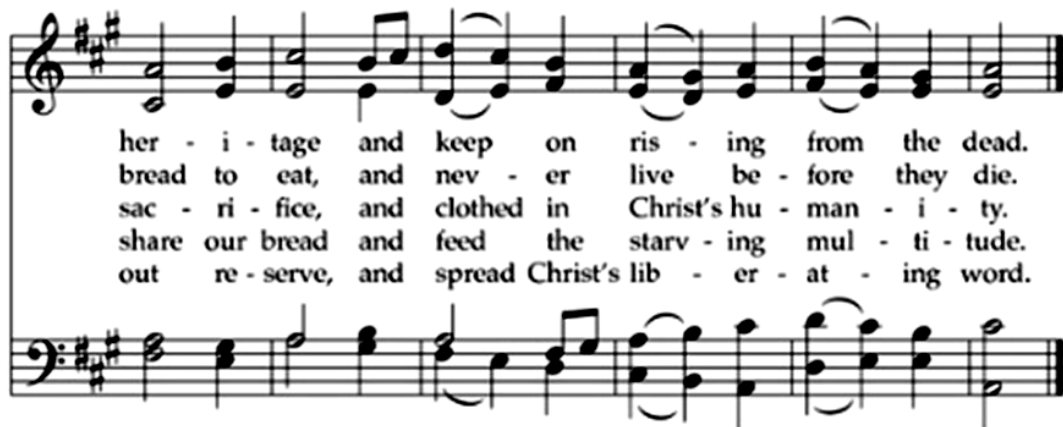
### \*Sending Hymn The Church of Christ in Every Age



1 The church of Christ in ev - ery age, be - set by  
2 A - cross the world, a - cross the street, the vic - tims  
3 Then let the ser - vant church a - rise, a car - ing  
4 For Christ a - lone, whose blood was shed, can cure the  
5 We have no mis - sion but to serve in full o -



change but Spir - it - led, must claim and test its  
of in - jus - tice cry for shel - ter and for  
church that longs to be a part - ner in Christ's  
fe - ver in our blood, and teach us how to  
be - dience to our Lord: to care for all, with -



her - i - tage and keep on ris - ing from the dead.  
bread to eat, and nev - er live be - fore they die.  
sac - ri - fice, and clothed in Christ's hu - man - i - ty.  
share our bread and feed the starv - ing mul - ti - tude.  
out re - serve, and spread Christ's lib - er - at - ing word.

In this challenging text by a British Methodist minister, the odd-numbered stanzas develop the image of "the servant church," while the second surveys the many needs and the fourth describes the true source of strength for the task.

TEXT: Fred Pratt Green, 1969  
MUSIC: William Knapp, 1738  
Text © 1971 Hope Publishing Company

WAREHAM  
LM

*Sr. & Asst. Elders cover elements.*

*Sr. & Asst. Elders and Minister recess to the narthex.*

**\*Charge & Blessing**

**Postlude**

*“Trumpet Jubilation”*

Richard E. Frey

*CCLI License #463379; One License #A-700689*

**Today's Worship Team:**

**Preacher:** Rev. Abby Norton-Levering

**Liturgist:** Rev. Trey Tirpak

**Organist:** Gloria Norton

**Tech Team:** Joshua Bliss and Stephen Reohr



**Post-service Note:** Please join us in Zimmerman Hall (downstairs) for coffee and some traditional Dutch cookies, made special for today. Don't forget to take a Heritage Sunday pamphlet and take a look around at the many things of historical note here at First Church.

*There will be a Board of Trustees meeting after worship today.*

*Next Sunday, May 14, 2023, there will be a congregational meeting after worship in Zimmerman Hall to elect new officers.*

**Elder Nominees:**

- Norma Jean Ballou
- Tom Allison

**Deacon Nominees:**

- Deb Anderson
- Becky Hudak
- Erica Zetterholm-Bliss

## Today's Guest Minister, Abby Norton-Levering

Abby Norton-Levering is the Albany Synod Ministries Coordinator. She lives in Schenectady with her husband Bill Levering, daughter Valerie, their dog Tia, and their cat Ted. She is a graduate of Vassar College and New Brunswick Theological Seminary. She served as a chaplain in the Philadelphia area and as the pastor of the Glenmont Community Church in the classis of Albany. She is passionate about congregational renewal, heartfelt worship, conflict mediation, productive meetings and the creation of authentic community. Abby enjoys building relationships with congregations and classes, and learning about the joys and challenges of following Jesus in our region. When she's not working, Abby enjoys spending time with her family, storytelling, cooking, making music, drawing and teaching Zentangle and decorating Ukrainian eggs.

### *Prayers, Joys & Concerns*

- Ian Leet
- Sam, son of Barb and Dave Andrews
- Sam, cousin of Barb Andrews
- Joe Vasta and Albie, friends of the Persons
- Eula, friend of Joeanna Brown
- Marilyn Bonam, Sara's mother
- Sharnelle Jones
- Ken Lucas, friend of Philip Labatte
- Kokese Ballou
- Janie Unright, friend of the Andrews family
- Carol LaBatte
- Norma McClement
- For Jennifer Recene Gallagher
- David Bradley
- For Jason Shahid
- 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
- John Utley, brother of Judith Utley-Suess
- Judith Utley-Suess, for strength
- For Barbara W., dear friend of Barb & Dave Andrews and Donna Jones
- Harold Bushnel
- Alex Bliss
- Mary Weijola
- Cheryl Gowie
- Ralph McNeil, brother of Norma Jean Ballou
- Anthony, of the Brown Family
- Donna Schultz
- Olivia Gaydushek
- Clergy, staff and leaders of the First Church in Albany
- Prayers for 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.
- Travel mercies for some of our First Church family traveling abroad, including Rev. Mashona, her son Chance, Norma Jean Ballou, and Itke Prins.

*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).*



## Upcoming events...

Sheridan Ave. Lot next to FCIA

FCIA PRESENTS

Through Labor Day

**DRIVE-IN Worship**


**SUNDAY WORSHIP GOES OUTSIDE**

**SUNDAY, MAY 21 AT 10AM**

**FOLLOWED BY THE LEMONADE LULL IN CLEE PARK**

110 NORTH PEARL ST. ALBANY NY 518-463-4449

WWW.FIRSTCHURCHINALBANY.ORG



**NETWORK of Women in**  
FAITH, HUMAN SERVICE & SMALL BUSINESS

**Tuesday, May 23, 2023**  
10:30am to noon

THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY  
110 NORTH PEARL ST., ALBANY NY 12207  
518-463-4449  
srpastor@firstchurchinalbany.org

Facilitator, Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston, Sr. Minister at The First Church in Albany

## Tulips for Albany



**May 3, 2023–September 10, 2023**


Tulips for Albany highlights the seventy-five-year history of Albany's beloved Tulip Festival.

**Several items from The First Church in Albany's historical collection are on display for this exhibition.**

In 1947, Albany adopted the Dutch city of Nijmegen as a sister city and sent supplies to help rebuild the war-ravaged city. In gratitude, the Netherlands sent thousands of tulip bulbs to Albany, which in 1948 Mayor Erastus Corning 2nd proclaimed Albany's official flower and thus the Tulip Festival was born. Crowns and regalia worn by the Tulip Queens over the years will be displayed alongside designs for the tulip beds in Washington Park and photographs documenting the celebration.

**ALBANY INSTITUTE  
OF HISTORY & ART**

125 Washington Ave, Albany, NY 12210 - 518.463.4478  
www.albanyinstitute.org/exhibition/tulips-for-albany



**THE 75<sup>TH</sup>**

**TULIP FESTIVAL**

WASHINGTON PARK

11A.M. - 6P.M.  
**MAY 13 & 14 2023**

ALBANY NEW YORK

AlbanyNYevents  
@AlbanyNYevents  
AlbanyNYevents

518-424-2800  
WWW.ALBANYEVENTS.ORG





# THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

## SUMMER EVENTS CALENDAR

### MAY

- 7 - HERITAGE SUNDAY, CROP WALK, START OF TULIP TIME
- 14 - CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, MOTHER'S DAY, END OF TULIP TIME
- 17 - (WEDNESDAY) LAST WEATHERVANES UNTIL THE FALL
- 21 - ASCENSION SUNDAY, **FIRST DRIVE-IN (BRING CHAIRS!)**,
- 23 - (TUESDAY) NETWORK OF WOMEN IN FAITH, HUMAN SERVICES, AND BUSINESS
- 28 - PENTECOST, INSTALLATION OF ELDERS & DEACONS
- 29 - (MONDAY) OFFICE CLOSED FOR MEMORIAL DAY

### JULY

- 2 - FOCUS SUNDAY, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN IN ALBANY, **NO WORSHIP AT FIRST CHURCH**
- 4 - (TUESDAY) OFFICE CLOSED FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY
- 16 - BRING YOUR BIKE AND RIDE THE ALBANY SKYWAY AFTER WORSHIP! (WALKERS WELCOME!)
- 30 - SPECIAL COMMUNION IN CLEE PARK AFTER WORSHIP



### AUGUST

- 6 - FOCUS SUNDAY, TRINITY UNITED METHODIST, **NO WORSHIP AT FIRST CHURCH**
- 13 - FIRST CHURCH BIRTHDAY BASH #381! ENJOY SOME SPECIAL REFRESHMENTS AFTER WORSHIP
- 20 - ALOHA ATTIRE COMPETITION. COME DRESSED IN YOUR ALOHA BEST!
- 27 - SPECIAL COMMUNION IN CLEE PARK AFTER WORSHIP

### JUNE

- 1 - (THURSDAY) START OF HOT DOGS IN CLEE PARK EVERY THURSDAY
- 4 - RECOGNITION OF GRADUATES SUNDAY
- 11 - PRIDE SUNDAY, GO TO CAPITAL PRIDE AFTER WORSHIP
- 18 - JUNETEENTH SUNDAY, FATHER'S DAY
- 19 - (MONDAY) OFFICE CLOSED FOR JUNETEENTH
- 25 - SPECIAL COMMUNION IN CLEE PARK AFTER WORSHIP



### SEPTEMBER

- 3 - FOCUS SUNDAY, EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, **NO WORSHIP AT FIRST CHURCH**
- 4 - (MONDAY) OFFICE CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY
- 17 - LAST DRIVE-IN SERVICE
- 24 - BACK TO **IN-DOOR SERVICE**, BLESSINGS OF THE PRAYER SHAWLS



REMINDER: THIS IS JUST THE CALENDAR OF SPECIAL SUNDAYS, HOLIDAYS, AND EVENTS. KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ANY MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS.

SUMMER 2023





## WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WEEK AT THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

- |             |      |            |   |
|-------------|------|------------|---|
| • Sunday    | 5.7  | 10am<br>AW | <b>Heritage Sunday and Crop Walk</b><br>Indoor Worship at FCIA, also on Zoom<br>Fellowship and Coffee in Zimmerman,<br>Trustees Meeting |
| • Monday    | 5.8  | 9am        | Food Pantry   |
| • Tuesday   | 5.9  | noon       | Zoom Book Study   |
| • Wednesday | 5.10 | 9am        | Food Pantry   |
|             |      | noon       | AA Meeting  |
|             |      | noon       | Centering Prayer in the Chapel  |
| • Friday    | 5.12 | 1:30pm     | Burial of Mary Ann Selmer at Saratoga<br>National Cemetery  |

*AW = After Worship*

### Upcoming Events

- Sunday, May 14—Mother's Day, Congregational Meeting (Election Office Bearers) AW
- Wednesday, May 17—Last Weathervanes Gathering until Fall
- Sunday, May 21—First Drive In of 2023
- Tuesday, May 23—Networking Event for Albany Area Women in Faith, Human Services and Business
- Sunday, May 28—Pentecost, Installation of Officers
- Monday, May 29—Memorial Day, Office and Pantry Closed

\*Meeting Schedules are subject to change. Watch your email for updates if you are a part of these gatherings.



### First Church in Albany

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

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