

The background of the entire poster is a deep blue night sky filled with numerous bright, twinkling stars of varying sizes. A particularly large, brilliant star with a prominent four-pointed starburst effect is located in the upper left quadrant. At the bottom of the image, there is a silhouette of a nativity scene set within a stable. The stable is depicted as a simple wooden structure with a gabled roof. Inside, the figures of Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus are visible, along with several animals. The overall composition is festive and evokes the spirit of Christmas.

Christmas Eve

at The First Church in Albany

December 24, 2021 at 7pm

The First Church in Albany
(Reformed Church in America)

Founded in 1642; Continuing in Ministry Today

Out of love and respect for one another, please remain masked even while singing. Maintain a safe social distance in the building.

*** Rise in body or in spirit**

Bold = Speak aloud.

Christmas Eve
December 24, 2021

We Gather in the Presence of God

Prelude

*“Once in Royal David’s City”
“Cradle Hymn”
Iteke Prins, organist*

Gordon Young

Welcome, Announcements & Blessing

People of goodwill, tonight we celebrate that “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” because we remember that Jesus Christ was born into this very world to save us from darkness.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:14

***Call to Worship** *Inspired from #81 of Lift Up Your Hearts Hymnal*

Leader: All who come near and far, in person or virtually,

People: Come and worship!

Leader: All who thirst for Love,

People: Come and worship!

Leader: All whose hearts overflow with gratitude and hope,

People: Come and worship!

Leader: All those who carry despair or grief,

People: Come and worship!

Leader: Whoever you are, and wherever you might be in life,

People: Come and worship Jesus Christ, the newborn King!

***Carol 1**

O Come All Ye Faithful

1. O come all ye faith-ful, joy-ful and tri-um-phant; O
2. Yea Lord, we greet thee, born this hap-py morn-ing
5 come ye, O come ye to Beth-le-hem! Come, and be-hold him,
11 Je-sus, to thee be all glo-ry given; Word of the Fa-ther,
born the king of an-gels! O come, let us a-dore Him; O come, let us a-
16 now in flesh ap-pear-ing!
dore Him; O come, let us a-dore Him, Christ the Lord.

Prophecy of the Birth of the Messiah: Isaiah 7:14-15

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel (which means "God with us"). He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Carol 2

"When God's Time Had Ripened"

A.V. Fedak

Rose Hunsberger, soprano and Susan Hermanse Fedak, contralto

When God's time had ripened,
Mary's womb bore fruit,
Scion of the God-head,
spring from Jesse's root:
So the True Vine branches
from the lily's stem,
The rose with-out blemish
blooms in Bethlehem.

More than mind can fathom,
limit or entwine,
This mysterious yoking,
human and divine,
But what reason fetters
faith at length unlocks,
And wise hears discover
truth in paradox.

As the bread of heaven,
that we might be fed
Choose a manger cradle in the House of
Bread.
So has Life Eternal mingled in the
womb
With our mortal nature to confound the
tomb.

For this swaddling infant in a humble
place
Holds our hope of glory our means of
grace;
In the love en-fleshed here dawns the
world's rebirth,
Promise of salvation, pledge of peace on
earth.

The Annunciation of the Birth of the Messiah: Luke 1:26-33

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

*Carol 3

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, — "Glo - ry to the
2. Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er -
3. Hail the heaven - born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of
4 new - born king. Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, — God and sin - ners
last - ing Lord, late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of the
8 rig - teous - ness! Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing
rec - on - ciled!" Joy - ful, all ye na - tions rise; —
vir - gin's womb. Veiled in flesh the God - head see; —
11 ni his wings. Mild he lays his glo - ry by, —
join the tri - umph of the skies; — with the an - gel - ic
hail them in - nate de - it - ty, — pleased with flesh in
14 born that we no more may die, — born to raise us
host pro - claim, "Christ is — born in Beth - le - hem!"
us to dwell, Je - sus, — our Em - man - u - el. —
from the earth, born to — give us sec - ond birth.
17
Hark! The he - rald an - gels sing. "Christ is born the new - born king!"

Prophecy of God's Promise to Make a Way for Salvation: Isaiah 40:1-5

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Offering

Tonight's special offering is going to two places: (1) The First Church in Albany Food Pantry, which serves thousands and thousands of pounds of food to our local Albany community; and (2) Kekeli, an organization in Ghana which provides advocacy, resources, and training for the inclusion and active involvement of children with disabilities in their communities.

Carol 4

"Wexford Carol"

Irish traditional

Rose Hunsberger, soprano

*Good people all, this Christmas time,
consider well and bear in mind
What good God for us has done, in
sending his beloved Son.
With Mary holy we should pray to God
with love this Christmas day;
In Bethlehem upon that morn, there was
a blessed Messiah born.*

*The night before that happy tide, the
noble Virgin and her guide
Were long time seeking up and down to
find a lodging in the town
But mark how all things came to pass:
from ev'ry door repelled, alas!
As long foretold, their refuge all, was
but a humble ox's stall*

*Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep
their flocks of lambs and feeding
sheep
To whom God's angels did appear,
which put the shepherds in great fear
"Prepare and go", the angels said, "to
Bethlehem, be not afraid:
For there you'll find, this happy morn, a
princely babe, sweet Jesus born."*

*Good people all, this Christmas time,
consider well and bear in mind
What good God for us has done, in
sending his beloved Son.
With Mary holy we should pray to God
with love this Christmas day;
In Bethlehem upon that morn, there was
a blessed Messiah born.*

Prophecy of the Location of the Messiah's Birth: Micah 5:2-4a

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth, shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Carol 5

O Little Town of Bethlehem

1.O lit-tle town of Beth-le-hem, how still we see thee lie! A -
2.O ho-ly child of Beth-le-hem, de - scend to us we pray; cast
5bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by. Yet
9out our sin and en - ter in; be born in us to - day. We
in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light; the
hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad ti - dings tell; O
13hope and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
come to us; a - bide with us, our Lord Em-man - u - el!



The Savior's Birth: Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

*Carol 6

Joy to the World



1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2. Joy to the earth, the Sa - vior reigns! Let all their
3. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - ery heart___ pre - pare him___
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods,___ rocks, hills, and___
na - tions prove the glo - ries of___ his righ - teous



room,___ and heaven and na - ture - sing, and heaven and na - ture
plains___ re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
ness___ and won - ders of his___ love, and won - ders of his___



sing, and heaven, and heaven___ and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat___ re - peat___ the sound - ing joy.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

A Christmas Prayer

Rev. Trey Tirpak

Prophecy of Salvation, The Light of the World: Isaiah 9:2-3, 6-7a

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest.

*Carol 7

Arise Your Light Is Come



1. A-rise your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey; show
2. A-rise your light is come! All you__ in sor - row born, bind
3. A-rise your light is come! The moun-tains burst in song! Rise



forth the glo - ry of your God, which shines on you to - day.
up the bro-ken-heart - ed ones and com__ fort those who mourn.
up like ea-gles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

*The Angles Appear and Announce the Good News: Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward all!”

*Carol 8

Angels We Have Heard on High

1. An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing
3. Come to Beth - le hem and see him whose birth the
4 o're the plain, and the moun - tains in re - ply
7 an - gels sing; come, a - dore on ben - ded knee
ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains. Glo
Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.
11 ri-a in ex-cel-sis De - o! Glo -
16 - - - - ri-a in ex-cel-sis De - o.



Prophecy Regarding the Messengers of Salvation: Isaiah 52:7-9

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.

***Carol 9**

*“Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head”
Susan Fedak, contralto*

arr. R. Row

Christ Candle Reflection & Lighting the Advent Candles: Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

An attendant will come and light the candle of whomever is on the outside of the aisle. Please then light the candles of those next to you.

***The Shepherds Visit Christ the Messiah:** Luke 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

***Carol 10**

“Silent Night”

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
‘Round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, loves pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord at thy birth.

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly host sing alleluia:
Christ the Savior is born;
Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night
Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King:
Christ the Savior is born;
Christ the Savior is born.

Benediction: Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

There will be receptacles at the exits for you to place your extinguished candle in as you leave.

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain

Go tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev-ery-where;

5

Go tell it on the moun - tain, that Je - sus Chris - tian born. 1 While

7

8

2 Down

9

shep-herds kept their watch-ing o're si - lent flocks by night, be -

12

in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born, and

13

hold through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light. -

16

God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Postlude

“Carillon on “Come All Ye Shepherds”

G. Young

Worship Leadership:

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

Liturgist: Rev. Trey Tirpak

Organist: Itke Prins

Soprano: Rose Hunsberger

Contralto: Susan Fedak

Trumpets: Eric Latini and Doug Persons

Technical Team: Joshua Bliss, and Stephen Reohr

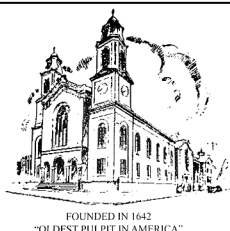


This Week at the First Church in Albany

- **Friday 12.24 7pm Christmas Eve Service**
- **Saturday 12.25 Merry Christmas Day!**
- Sunday 12.26 10am Sanctuary Worship (Children remain in worship)
- Monday 12.27
9am Office Closed due to holiday
No Food Pantry due to holiday
- Tuesday 12.28 12pm Adult Book Study
- Wednesday 12.29 9am Food Pantry
12pm AA Meeting
12pm Centering Prayer
- Thursday 12.30 11:30am Soup Lunch in Clee Park

Upcoming Events

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



First Church in Albany

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