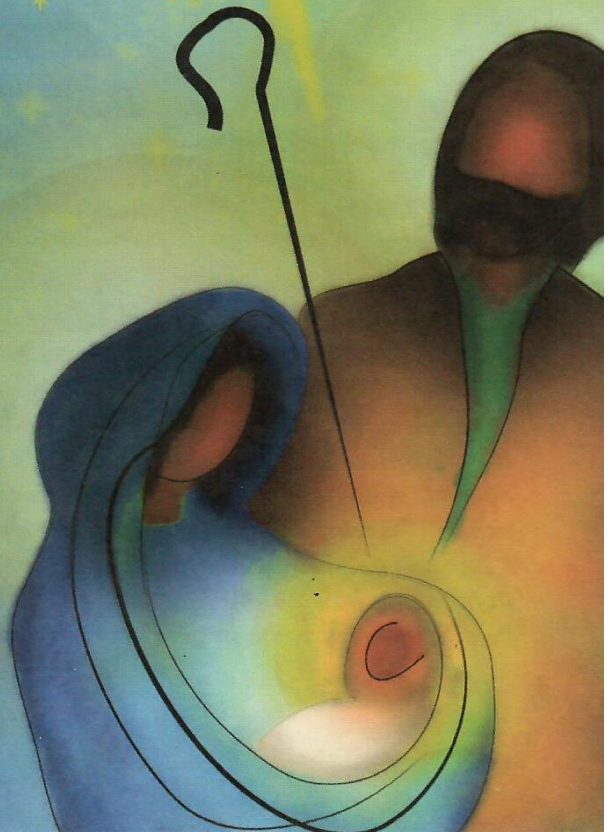


The
PRINCE
of
PEACE



THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

(Reformed Church in America)

110 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12207 ~ (518) 463-4449

Email: info@firstchurchinalbany.org ~ Website: www.firstchurchinalbany.org ~ Sunday Worship: 10:30 am

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 all are loved.

Christmas Eve
December 24, 2019
7:30pm

Prelude:

Music for Harp

Christmas Carols for bassoon and flute

THE LIGHT AWAITED

LIGHTING THE SANCTUARY CANDLES

CHOIR CAROL *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

Polish Carol
arranged David Willcocks

CALL TO WORSHIP

We wait in the darkness, expectantly, longingly, anxiously, thoughtfully. The darkness is our friend. In the darkness of the womb, the Christ-child was made ready for the journey into light.

You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

In the darkness we see the splendor of the universe.

In the darkness, shepherds and Magi found the star which guided them to where the Christ-child lay.

In the darkness, dreams rise up, and God speaks to us.

In the darkness, our fears and concerns, our hopes and visions rise to the surface. We come face to face with ourselves and the road that lies ahead of us. In that same darkness, we find companionship for the journey.

WE KNOW YOU ARE WITH US, O GOD, YET WE STILL AWAIT YOUR COMING. IN THE DARKNESS THAT CONTAINS BOTH OUR HOPELESSNESS AND OUR EXPECTANCY, WE WATCH FOR A SIGN OF YOUR HOPE.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

***CAROL 49** *Once in Royal David's City (vss. 1-2)*

IRBY

INVOCATION

**God, you call us now in this Christmas season to become new,
to make room for our own nativity,**

even where there is no room at the inn.

Where we are busy, may we find peace.

Where we are lost, salvation.

Where we are sad, joy.

Where we are bitter, love.

Let this be a time of hope for all these gifts.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

THE LIGHT REVEALED

PROPHECY OF BIRTH Isaiah 7:14-15

THE ANNUNCIATION Luke 1:26-33

CAROL *Gabriel's Message* Basque Carol arranged Edgar Pettiman

PROPHECY OF PROMISE Isaiah 40:1-5

SOLO CAROL *The Flower of Jesse* John Jacob Niles arranged Peter Subers

PROPHECY OF LOCATION Micah 5:2-4a

CAROL 44 *O Little Town of Bethlehem (vvs. 1,3)*

ST. LOUIS

THE LIGHT RECEIVED

THE SAVIOR'S BIRTH Luke 2:1-7

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

CAROL 38 *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear (Vss. 1-3)* **CAROL**

PROPHECY OF SALVATION Isaiah 9:2-3, 6-7

***CAROL 40** *Joy to the World* **ANTIOCH**

THE ANGELS APPEAR Luke 2:8-14

CHOIR CAROL *Tell Us, Shepherd Maids, from Whence You Come*
French Canadian Carol arranged Mary Caldwell

PROPHECY OF MESSENGERS Isaiah 52:7-9

***CAROL 23** *Angels We Have Heard on High (vss. 1,3)* **GLORIA**

THE SHEPHERDS VISIT Luke 2.15-20

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *Mary, Go Tell It* Christmas Spirituals arranged Mark Hayes
Mary, Had a Baby – Go, Tell it on the Mountain

***DOXOLOGY (Tune #56)** **THE FIRST NOEL**

**The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

**Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord.
That hath made heaven and earth of nought
And with his blood salvation bought.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

THE CHRISTMAS PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

***CAROL 41** *O Come All Ye Faithful* **ADESTE FIDELES**

THE LIGHT REFLECTED

THE CANDLELIGHTING

CAROL 60 *Silent Night* (vvs. 1-3)

STILLE NACHT

**Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!
Alles schlaeft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe mit lockigem Haar,
Schlaf im himlicher Ruh,
Schlaf im himlicher Ruh.**

**Stille nacht, heilige nacht!
Davids Zoon, lang verwacht
Die miljiienen eens zaligen zal,
wordt geboren in Bethlehems stal,
Hij, der schepselen Heer,
Hij, der schepselen Heer.**

**Nuit de Paix, Sainte Nuit.
Dans l'étable aucun bruit.
Dans le ciel tout repose en paix.
Mais soudain dans l'air pur et frais.
Le brillant coeur des anges
Aux bergers apparaît.**

**Noche de paz, Noche de paz
Todo duerme en doerredor.
Entre los astros qu esparcen su luz,
bella, anunciado el ninito Jesus
brilla la estrella de paz.,
brilla la estrella de paz.**

**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! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!"**

**Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light,
radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth! Jesus Lord, at thy birth!**

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 1:1-4, 14, 16

POSTLUDE Toccata on "*O Come, All Ye Faithful*"

John Wade
arranged Sandra Tucker

ΑΩ

*Those who are able, please stand

Welcome to the Celebration of Christmas at the First Church in Albany. The whole staff hopes the celebration of the birth of Christ will bring you time for reflection and renewal. May God grant you a joyous Christmas and a blessed New Year!

For those seated in the balcony, extra hymnals are available from the ushers.

Everyone is invited to Wassail Hour downstairs in Zimmerman Hall following the service. The coordinators of this year's Wassail Hour are: Rebecca Mondore , James Folts and Tom Allison.

Candle lighters: Joshua, Haleigh, Kaitlyn, Chance and Mela.

Readers: Cheryl Gowie, Mary Weijola, Joanne Farrell, Tom Allison, Jay Reohr, Joeanna Brown, Kaitlyn Bliss, Peter Pagery, Ian Leet.

Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston; **Minister of Music:** Mary Bon.

The Choir of First Church: Sopranos: Ella Campbell, Cheryl Gowie, Rose Hunsberger, Audrey Ming, Denise Wright. **Altos:** Norma Jean Ballou, Becky Hudak, Jean Lamere, Terressa Mannix. **Tenors:** David Bon-Keen, David Bradley. **Baritones:** Ian Leet, Peter Subers. **Soloists:** Peter Subers, David Bon-Keen, Rose Hunsberger, Terressa Mannix.

Guest Instrumentalists: Elizabeth Huntley, harp; David Bon-Keen, timpani and bassoon; Melanie Chirignan, flute; Dave Andrews, electric guitar; Eric Latini, Doug Persons, trumpets; Joshua Bliss, cymbals.

Hearing assist devices are available for your use. Please ask an usher.

First Church is an accessible building. We have an elevator so you can reach every floor.



An Automated External Defibrillator “**AED**” is located in the lobby attached to the wall outside of the **workroom**.

2019 Christmas Offering

The Board of Deacons has designated the 2019 Christmas offering for two ministries: Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless and Kids Alive International, a Christian faith mission (based in Indiana & founded in 1916) dedicated to rescuing vulnerable children who have been orphaned, abandoned, abused. The Christmas letter sharing more about these programs will arrive soon in your mailbox.

Pocket Prayer Shawls are available at today's Worship. Please ask one of our greeters and they can provide a basket of pocket prayer shawls to choose from. Pocket Prayer Shawls are made and filled with prayers and can be given to someone in need of comfort, healing, or a reminder of the closeness of God.

This Sunday, December 29th after the service and throughout the week is designated for poinsettia delivery. **(Please note the office is closed on Wednesday, January 1st).** It is our hope many of you will deliver one or more plants to some of our members who are homebound or in the hospital or nursing home. If you can join the Poinsettia Delivery Service, please sign up on the sign-up sheet located in the lounge on the Hospitality table. It will greatly facilitate the process that morning if we know who will assist. We will have addresses with directions on the table for your convenience.

Ring them Bells! Bells and Carols, Sunday December 29th! Bring your bells to worship next Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Got a family heirloom bell? An old cow bell? Come and celebrate the joy of Christmas by singing carols and ringing bells. If you have a bell to share, bring it! We'll have extra bells if you can't bring a bell of your own.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

- Tuesday 12/24 **Christmas Eve Worship**
7:00 pm Pre-Service Music
7:30 pm Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols
with Choir
8:45 pm Wassail Hour
- Wednesday 12/25 **CHRISTMAS DAY – CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED**
Have a blessed Christmas
- Thursday 12/26 **NO CHOIR REHEARSAL**
- Sunday 12/29 **First Sunday after Christmas Day**
10:15 am Pre-Service Music with Bells
10:30 am Worship Service - Sanctuary
The Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston, preaching
Post Service: Coffee & Conversation

