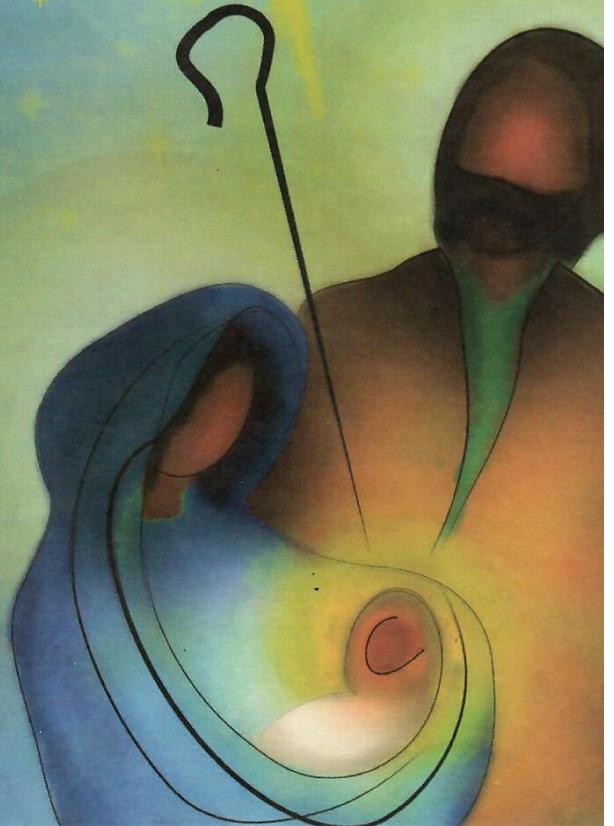


The
PRINCE
of
PEACE



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, 2018

7:00pm

Prelude:

Music for Harp

Largo from The Seasons

Antonio Vivaldi

THE LIGHT AWAITED

LIGHTING THE SANCTUARY CANDLES

CHOIR CAROL

Of the Father's Love Begotten

12th Century Tune
DIVINUM MYSTERIUM

Of the Father's love begotten, Ere the worlds began to be, He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending He, Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see, Evermore and evermore! / O that birth forever blessèd, When the virgin, full of grace, Overshadowed by the Spirit, Bare the Savior of our race; And the Babe, the world's Redeemer, First revealed His sacred face, Evermore and evermore! / This is He Whom seers and sages Sang of with one accord; Whom the voices of the Prophets promised in their faithful word; Now He shines, the long-expected: Let creation praise its Lord: Evermore and evermore! / Let the heights of heaven, adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing; powers, dominions, bow before him, and extol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert ring, evermore and evermore.

Text: Aurelius Clemens Prudentius 4th Century Hymn Translated
by John Neale and Henry Baker

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 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.**

**Douce nuit, sainte nuit !
Dans les cieux ! L'astre luit.
Le mystère annoncé s'accomplit
Cet enfant sur la paille endormi
C'est l'amour infini !
C'est l'amour infini !**

**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

In Dulci Jubilo

Johann Sebastian Bach

AΩ

*Those who are able, please stand

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS: Readers: Deb Anderson, Kokese Ballou, Rob Bauer, Kaitlyn Bliss, Imani Brewer, Cheryl Gowie, Ian Leet, Peter Pagerey, Meredith Parmalee; Preacher: The Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden; Minister of Music: Mary Bon.

Instrumentalists: Elizabeth Huntley, harp; Liz Silver, violin; Eric Latini, Doug Persons, trumpets; David Bon-Keen, timpani, bassoon.

The Choir of First Church,

Sopranos: Ella Campbell, Rose Hunsberger, Cheryl Gowie, Audrey Ming, Denise Wright
Altos: Norma Jean Ballou, Becky Hudak, Nancy McKenna, Jean Lamere Tenors: David Bon-Keen, David Bradley Baritones: Cliff Lamere, Ian Leet, Zachary Morton, Wayne Sivaslian, Peter Subers.

We welcome all who gather to worship God this evening, especially visitors and friends from near and far. Please sign our guest book or complete a visitor's card (found in the pew rack) and place it in the offering plate. There is an elevator in our building, which makes every floor accessible. Please join us for refreshments and conversation after worship.

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**.

Everyone is invited to **Wassail Hour** downstairs in Zimmerman Hall following the service. Thank you to the coordinators: Rebecca Mondore, James Folts and Tom Allison.

The Deacons have selected the following programs to receive equal portions of our 2018 Christmas Offering:

Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless (IPH) is a program on Sheridan Ave that works to empower individuals and families who are homeless or facing homelessness, giving them the tools to be self-sufficient and find stability. Their Emergency Shelter Program addresses the needs of their guests by providing a continuum of services which include: meals, showers, laundry facilities, case management and life skills groups. There is also psychiatric support and help with job searching. Last year 200 families/individuals were discharged to a positive living environment.

Mekane Yesus Seminary Program in Christian/Muslim Relations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, started by Peter Ford in 2002, will now be led by the Rev. Dr. John Hubers, who preached at First Church in November. The program works with Ethiopian seminary teachers to train their pastors in the development of positive relations with their Muslim neighbors, a critical calling in a country which is 60% Christian and 40% Muslim.

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 30th after the service and throughout the week is designated for poinsettia delivery. **(Please note the office is closed on Tuesday, 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 30! 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.

Our next Overflow Shelter dinner is Friday, January 11th. The theme is "Meatloaf and Hamburger Dishes." Sign up at the Hospitality table. Contact Mary Bon at (518) 463-4449 ext. 310.

TO DATE: We have received 52 pledges for 2019 totaling \$129,431.00, or 92% of anticipated pledges. Thank you to all who have given. If you have not yet pledged and plan to do so, please return your pledge card in the offering plate or mail it into the office, Attn: Wayne Sivaslian. Thank you.

Rev. Cameron Monthly Brunch

Rev. Bill Cameron began gathering a group for lunch on the first Thursday of the month. The group continues to meet each month at the Gateway Diner, 899 Central Ave. in Albany. Anyone can join us on January 3rd starting at 12:15 and stay until you wish to leave. We all pay for our own. Contact Donna E. Schultz at deschultz07@aol.com or 518.429.1255.

FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY:

We will be collecting “**shampoo**” for the First Church Food Pantry. Please bring your offering for our Food Pantry guest to church on Sunday, January 6, and lay it near the communion table. Shampoo, and the other items listed for the coming months cannot be purchased with food stamps, and yet they are necessary for any household on a daily basis for good health and hygiene. We’ll dedicate this offering during our time of prayer. Thank you for reaching out to help your neighbors in need.

REMINDER



NEWSLETTER

We are moving to an online newsletter beginning January 2019. If we do not have your email address, please send it to Valerie Williams at vwilliams@firstchurchinalbany.org . If you do not have an email address, we will mail you a paper copy of the monthly newsletter.

