

# Advent

At First Church in Albany



Sunday, December 13, 2020  
10am ZOOM Online Service

Join us for this season of expectation!

First Church in Albany

Senior Minister Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

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

FOR THE MIGHTY ONE HAS  
DONE GREAT THINGS FOR  
ME, AND HOLY IS HIS  
NAME.

L u k e 1 : 4 9

## The Third Sunday of Advent

December 13, 2020

### Prelude

Recitative

**“Messiah: Thus Saith the Lord”**

G.F. Handel

*Peter Subers, baritone; Mary Bon, organ*

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts: Yet once a little while  
and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land.  
And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come  
The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple,  
even the messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in;  
behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. (*Haggai 2:6-7; Malachi 3:2*)

Chorus

**“Messiah: And the Glory”**

G.F. Handel

*The First Church Choir; Mary Bon, Organist and Choir Director*

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it Together:  
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (*Isaiah 40:5*)

### Welcome & Announcements

### Call to Worship\*

Our souls magnify the Lord,  
And our spirits rejoice in God our Savior.  
**God has looked with favor  
On the lowliness of God’s servant.**  
God’s mercy is for those who fear him  
From generation to generation.  
**God has shown strength with God’s arm.  
God has scattered the proud  
In the thoughts of their hearts.**  
God has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
And lifted up the lowly;  
**God has filled the hungry with good things,  
And sent the rich away empty.**  
Come, for God is doing a new thing!  
Come, let us worship God!

\*re-worshipblogspot.com/stephenfearing.com

Recitative:

**“Messiah: Comfort Ye”**

G.F. Handel

*Chris Vettel, tenor; Mary Bon, organ*

Comfort Ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God.  
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,  
and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished,  
That her iniquity is pardoned.  
The Voice of him that crieth in the wilderness.  
Prepare ye the way of the Lord.  
Make straight in the desert a highway for Our God. (*Isaiah 40:1-3*)



Lighting of the Advent Candles

- **Reader One:** We want everything to look nice: the decorations of the season, our homes with their lights and tinsel, wreaths and ribbons. We want to lighten the darkness around us, bring beauty to the ugliness that wears us down. We decorate, because it is tradition. Because it lifts our hearts. Because it makes us feel like children again. We deck our halls because company is coming. (*Light the 1<sup>st</sup> candle.*)
- **Reader Two:** The prophet Isaiah smiled when he said, “God will give a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.” No matter how far we feel from the spirit of the season, God promises to decorate us with love and joy. (*Light the 2<sup>nd</sup> candle.*)
- **Reader One:** We light these candles as a sign of our joy in the beautiful things of this season—not just the things that glitter and flash, but the deeper things, the beauty of the heart and the soul, the beauty of love shared in service and hospitality. We light this candle of joy because company is coming. (*Light the 3<sup>rd</sup> candle.*)

Response

**“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”**

*Veni Emmanuel*

O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

## Prayer of Confession

Lord of Christmas peace,  
We have done wrong.  
We have tarnished the gift you gave freely.  
We have buried you so deeply in our hearts,  
The world doesn't see you.  
We have not followed Christ,  
We have ignored your teachings,  
We have lived lives of apathy against your love,  
We have built fences and fortresses to push people away,  
And we have silenced the screams of those in need.  
Forgive us, we pray.  
Free us from our sin,  
Free us from our captivity,  
Free us to a life lived in joy  
Through Jesus Christ Our Lord.  
Amen

*The Rev. Nathan Decker*

## Assurance of Pardon

God, our kind and loving Savior God, has stepped in and saved us.

*(Adapted from Titus 3:4-7, The Message)*

Aria

**“Messiah: Every Valley Shall Be Exalted”**

*G.F. Handel*

*Chris Vettel, tenor; Mary Bon, organ*

Every valley shall be exalted,  
And every mountain and hill made low,  
The crooked straight and the rough places plain. *(Isaiah 40:4)*

## Prayer of Illumination

**Eternal God, in the reading of the Scripture, may your word be heard; in the meditation of our hearts, may your word be known; and in the faithfulness of our lives, may your word be shown. Amen.**

## Gospel Reading

## Luke 1:46b-55

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,  
<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
<sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
<sup>50</sup> His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their  
hearts.  
<sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
<sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

### The Gospel Lesson

The Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, O Christ**

### Sermon

### *God News*

### The Prayer for Blessing on the Word

## THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

### The Meaning of the Sacrament and the Invitation

### The Communion Prayer and the Prayers of the People

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts!

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

You are worthy of our thanks and praise.

### Lord God of truth...

we echo the song of the angels in heaven, evermore praising you and singing:

## Sanctus

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God: God of power, God of might.  
Heav'n and earth, filled with your glory, their hosannas gladly cry.  
Blessed is the One that in the Lord's name comes.  
Glory be to you, most high.**

Embracing our humanity.... that we might rise and  
reign with him in glory.

**Dying he destroyed our death, rising he restored our life, We await his  
coming in glory.**

## Lord's Prayer

Josh Bliss

**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, for ever. Amen.**

## The Words of Institution and Communion

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

## Hymn

### ***"Comfort, Comfort Ye my People"***

*Psalm 42*

Comfort, comfort ye My people,  
Speak ye peace, thus saith our  
God;  
Comfort those who sit in darkness,  
Mourning 'neath their sorrow's  
load;  
Speak ye to Jerusalem  
Of the peace that waits for them;  
Tell her that her sins I cover,  
And her warfare now is over.

For the herald's voice is crying  
In the desert far and near,  
Bidding us to make repentance,  
Since the kingdom now is here.  
O that warning cry obey!

Now prepare for God a way!  
Let the valleys rise to meet Him,  
And the hills bow down to greet  
Him.

Make ye straight what long was  
crooked,  
Make the rougher places plain:  
Let your hearts be true and  
humble,  
As befits His holy reign,  
For the glory of the Lord  
Now o'er the earth is shed abroad,  
And all flesh shall see the token  
That His Word is never broken.

## Charge & Blessing