

# THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

(Reformed Church in America)

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

**Email:** firstchurch@verizon.net ~ **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 DAY

December 25, 2016

### MORNING WORSHIP 10:30 AM

#### THE APPROACH TO GOD

Prelude          Music for Cello

#### Announcements

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

**Amen.**

Psalm 124:8

A boy has been born for us;

**A child has been given to us.**

And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, the Prince of Peace.

Once we were no people;

**Now we are God's people.**

Once we walked in darkness.

**Now we have seen a great light.**

(from Isaiah 9:2,6 and 1 Peter 2:10)

Prayer of the Day

**Redeeming God, your angels announced that peace has been born among us, embodied in fragile flesh. Give us grace to let the truth of that mystery penetrate our hearts and direct our living. May Christ be present in us, so that we and all creation may sing songs of joy and walk in the way of peace. Amen.**

The Peace

The angel said to the shepherds: "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." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

**'Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!'**

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

\*Response (Hymn 602, verse 1)

Tune: MERLE'S TUNE

**Blessed be the God of Israel who comes to set us free,  
who visits and redeems us, and grants us liberty.  
The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release;  
God shall fulfill the promise to bring our people peace.**

*Based on the Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79)*

THE WORD OF GOD

Luke 2: 1-7 "Nativity"

Carol *Her Baby, Newly Breathing* (insert)

MERLE'S TUNE

Luke 2: 8-15 "Shepherds"

Carol 58 (vv. 1-4) *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*

WINCHESTER OLD

Matthew 2: 1-11 “Wise Men”

Carol 56 (vv. 1,2,3,6) *The First Nowell*

THE FIRST NOWELL

### THE RESPONSE TO GOD

Offering

Offertory: *Silent Night, Holy Night*

\*Carol at the Presentation of Gifts 53 *What Child Is This?*

GREENSLEEVES

The Joys and Concerns of the Church

Prayers of the People

The Lord’s Prayer

**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, forever. Amen.**

\*Carol 28 *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

IN DULCI JUBILO

\*The Benediction

\*Postlude *In Dir Ist Freude (In Thee is Joy)*

Johann Sebastian Bach

*(Please consider remaining in the sanctuary to listen to the postlude, or leave quietly to enable others to listen. Thank you)*

AΩ \*Those who are able please stand.

**Worship Leaders:** Preacher: the Rev. John Paarlberg; Organist and Choir Director: Mary Bon; Guest Instrumentalist: Jeff Bianchine, Cello.

**We welcome all who gather to worship God this morning, 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. If you have questions about our ministry, we encourage you to speak with one of the pastors or an usher. There is an elevator in our building, which makes every floor accessible.

Please join us following the service for refreshments and conversation in Zimmerman Hall.

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

The excerpts from Martin Luther's sermons are taken from *Martin Luther's Christmas Book* edited by Roland H. Bainton.

### **Children and Worship: A Joyful Way to Worship God**

Children are invited to stay in the sanctuary with their families. Children and Worship will return on January 8, 2017

**Christmas Eve Offering:** The Board of Deacons has designated the 2016 Christmas offering for two ministries:

- Toward the support of Maggie (Busman) and Jason White who are working with orphaned, abandoned and socially disadvantaged children in a resident care youth home in Romania.
- The Emergency Overflow Shelter, offering housing for men during the winter months.

**Thank you to all who have returned commitment cards for 2016.** To date 51 cards have been received pledging \$152,351.00 in support of the work and witness of First Church in the coming year. If you have not yet returned your commitment card please try to do so soon. Additional cards are available by contacting the church office. **Offering envelopes for 2017 are on the table in the lobby.**

**Reminders from the Financial Secretary:** All 2016 contributions must be received by Sunday, January 8th, 2017 and these contributions must be dated 2016. If you have any questions regarding this note or for any inquiries concerning your financial donations, please contact Wayne at [wsivaslian@nycap.rr.com](mailto:wsivaslian@nycap.rr.com) or 518-495-6353.

**A pot-luck lunch and congregational meeting are scheduled for Sunday, January 22, following the worship service.**

**New Year's Day Worship:** Come ring in the New Year by singing carols and ringing bells. Do you have a family heirloom bell? An old cow bell? Bring your bells to worship on Sunday, January 1 at 10:30 a.m. If you have a bell to share, bring it! We'll have some extra bells if you can't bring a bell of your own.

**Our Next Overflow Shelter dinner is January 13.** Sign up at the table in the lobby to bring a dish or deliver a meal.

**The choir is taking a well-deserved break** after all their Christmas music making. They will be back on Sunday, January 8.

**Sunday, January 1<sup>st</sup> after the service and through the week is designated for poinsettia delivery.** (Please note that the office is closed on Monday, January 2). It is our hope many of you will deliver one or more plants to some of our members who are home bound 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 maps on the table for your convenience. Sign-up sheet is on the Hospitality table.

**“Personal Care” items** are needed for the First Church Food Pantry guests. These products cannot be purchased with food stamps. Items to consider: toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, razors, feminine hygiene products. Thank you!

### **375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Calendar**

2017 will mark the 375<sup>th</sup> year that First Church has been doing the work of God in this community and we will be planning special worship, artistic and historical events to celebrate. Whether you are near or far you have the opportunity to commemorate this festive year. We are creating a beautiful 2017 First Church wall calendar that highlights important dates in the history of First Church. Calendars will be on sale mid-January. Please contact Valerie Williams at the church office 463.4449 or [vwilliams@firstchurchinalbany.org](mailto:vwilliams@firstchurchinalbany.org) to place your order.

## **THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH**

Sunday	12/25	<b>Christmas Sunday</b> 10:30 AM Sanctuary Worship 11:30 AM Coffee and Conversation
Monday	12/26	9:00 AM - 11:30 AM - Food Pantry Closed Office Closed
Tuesday	12/27	No Bible Study
Wednesday	12/28	9:00 AM - 11:30 AM - Food Pantry Open NOON AA Meeting
Thursday	12/29	No Choir Rehearsal
Sunday	1/1	<b>First Sunday after Christmas</b> <b>New Year's Day</b> 10:30 AM Sanctuary Worship (Communion) 11:30 AM Coffee and Conversation

# 19. Her Baby, Newly Breathing

Brian Wren

Hal H. Hopson

(♩ = 56; ♪ = 112)

*Merle's Tune, 7676.D*

Unison

1. Her ba - by, new - ly breath - ing, with wail - ing need - ful

cry, by Ma - ry kissed and cra - dled, is

lulled in lul - la - by. Long months of hope and

wait - ing, the thrill and fear of birth, are

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crowned with ex - ul - ta - tion, and God is on the earth.

1. Her baby, newly breathing,  
with wailing needful cry,  
by Mary kissed and cradled,  
is lulled in lullaby.  
Long months of hope and waiting,  
the thrill and fear of birth,  
are crowned with exultation,  
and God is on the earth.
2. The eyes that gaze at Mary  
have yet to name or trace  
the world of shape and color,  
or recognize a face;  
yet Holiness Eternal  
is perfectly expressed  
in hands that clutch unthinking,  
and lips that tug the breast.
3. The milk of life is flowing  
as Mary guides and feeds  
her wordless Word, embodied  
in infant joys and needs.  
Enormous, formless strivings,  
and yearnings deep and wide,  
becradled in communion,  
are fed and satisfied.
4. How mother-like the Wisdom  
that carried and gave birth  
to all things, seen and unseen,  
and nurtured infant earth:  
unstinting, unprotected,  
prepared for nail and thorn,  
constricted into maleness,  
and of a woman born.

**Brian Wren,  
for Christopher William Allen  
and Arthur William Wren.**

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