

# THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

(Reformed Church in America)

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

Email: [info@firstchurchinalbany.org](mailto:info@firstchurchinalbany.org) ~ Website: [www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://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.*

## Second Sunday in Advent December 9, 2018

Prelude                      *Variations of Advent and Christmas Carols for Organ and Trumpet*

Announcements

\*Hymn #1                      *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*                      STUTTGART

Lighting the Advent Candles                      Food Pantry and Overflow Shelter Volunteers

Candle Song (Tune: #25 MUELLER)

**The candle of peace that shines bright with God's plan;  
The wolf will lie down and will dwell with the lamb.  
Our guns and our weapons, our hatred and war,  
Will give way to gardens that heal and restore.**

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## Prayer of Confession

Oh God, you call us to turn our lives around,  
and work with patience and diligence to prepare the way for your reign,  
but we get discouraged and give up too soon.

**Lord, Have mercy.**

Oh God, you call us to collaborate in community  
to prepare the way for your reign,  
but we neither trust nor honor the gifts of others.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Oh God, you call us to be full of joyful confidence  
to prepare the way for your reign,  
but we burden ourselves with anxiety and fear.

**Lord, have mercy.**

*The prayer may continue in silence.*

## Assurance of Pardon

### \*The Peace

Let us celebrate this great grace by offering to one another  
a sign of Christ's peace.

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 (Tune: WAITING)

**While we are waiting, come!**

**While we are waiting, come!**

**Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,**

**While we are waiting, come!**

## A Word with Children

## THE WORD OF GOD

The Prayer for 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.**

The Old Testament Lesson                      Malachi 3:1-4

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Anthem            *The Reapers All with Their Sharp Sickles*            Early American Hymn by  
Elisha West, arr. Seth Huston

*The fields are all white, the harvest is near, the reapers all with their sharp sickles appear, To reap down their wheat, and gather in barns, While wild plants of nature are left for to burn. Come, then, O my soul, meditate on that day, when all things in nature shall cease and decay. When the trumpet shall sound, the angels appear, To reap down the earth, both the wheat and the tare.*

*'Twill all be in vain, the mountains must flee, The rocks fly like hailstones, and shall no more be: The earth it shall shake, the seas shall retire, and this solid world, then, will be all be on fire. So farewell, I leave you, pond'ring your way, The Lord seal instruction to what I now say. Your souls to God's throne be pour'd out in pray'r, That you be prepared to meet Christ in the air. Text Anonymous*

The Gospel Lesson                                      Luke 1:68-79

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

The Sermon                                      Readiness Plans

The Prayer for Blessing on the Word



**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. There is an elevator in our building, which makes every floor accessible. Please join us for refreshments and conversation after worship.

**This morning's liturgy:** Our candle lighting liturgy is adapted from the work of Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church. The Confession is adapted from a prayer authored by the Rev. Susan A. Blain of the United Church of Christ.

**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**.

**After A Word with Children,** children age 4 and under are welcome in the Nursery. Children 4-12 are invited to be a part of Children and Worship.

**The First Church Readers will meet in the Parlor after Worship** to discuss *The Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II* by Liza Mundy. Everyone is welcome to join the discussion even if you have not read the book.

**We still need of some dishes for the Overflow Homeless Shelter Dinner** this Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. We need one more main dish, and some additional desserts. Can you help? The general theme is “chili” but feel contribute a different main dish if that is more convenient. Sign up at the hospitality table. **Bring your dishes to First Church by noon on Friday the 14<sup>th</sup>.** Contact Mary Bon at 463-4449 or [maryebon@verizon.net](mailto:maryebon@verizon.net) for more info or if you've got questions.

**Join us at 10:15 am each Advent Sunday** beginning December 2<sup>nd</sup> for a special pre-service program, “**A Little Advent Music.**” We are grateful to Doug Persons for providing our music today. Next week's music will include excerpts from Handel's Messiah with soloists Teresa Mannix, alto, and Rose Hunsberger, soprano.

**Each Sunday in Advent** we will be using tangible objects to help open the scripture lessons to us. We invite you to participate in providing some!

- December 16 - bring a stone of any size! And bring mittens for the Mitten Tree.
- December 23 - share a toy sheep, if you have one. (We'll give it back!)

**Christmas Eve:** Lynn is looking for readers. If you would like to participate, please speak with her.

**Christmas Decoration Memorials** - This year the Worship, Music and Arts Commission invites you to remember loved ones and honor friends by contributing toward the costs of decorating the entire church: poinsettias, wreaths, garlands, bows and all! In the past, costs have totaled as much as \$1800, and any contribution you make will be helpful.

### **2018 Christmas Offering**

The Christmas letters will be sent out soon with the Board of Deacons 2018 designation for the Christmas offering for 2018. It will also be announced in worship. So, stay tuned!

### **Monthly Newsletter Update**

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](mailto:vwilliams@firstchurchinalbany.org) . If you do not have an email address, we will mail you a paper copy of the monthly newsletter.

### **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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:deschultz07@aol.com) or 518.429.1255.

### **Music Note**

**The anthem, *The Reapers*,... is based** on the early American folk hymn, *Meditation*, by Elisha West (c. 1756-?) West was a carpenter and house builder by trade, but became a leading musical figure in Woodstock, Vermont in the late 1700s and early 1800s. He was a fine singer and teacher and was hired by the town to “regulate harmony in the religious societies of the town and encourage youth and others to gain knowledge in the fine art of psalm singing.”

The text is anonymous and uses images of harvest and late autumn as metaphors for death and the fire of the second coming. Farming images were especially apt for composers like West who each year experienced the severe Vermont winters. By 1806 West had been replaced by another singing master and details of his later life and death date are unknown. His fall from grace may have had something to do with “even the certain bad habits of his were not allowed to interfere with the order and discipline.” Adapted from *A history of music education in the United States* and notes by arranger, Seth Huston.

**TO DATE:** We have received 49 pledges for 2019 totalling \$116,391.00, or 83% 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.

## THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

Sunday	12/9	<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> 10:15 am Pre-Service Music 10:30 am Worship Service - Sanctuary The Rev. Lynn Caman Bodden, preaching Children & Worship (during worship) Post Service: Coffee & Conversation 11:45 am First Church Readers
Monday	12/10	9:00 am – 11:30 am – Food Pantry Open 1:30 pm Staff Meeting - Parlor
Tuesday	12/11	12:00 pm Adult Bible Study
Wednesday	12/12	9:00 am – 11:30 am – Food Pantry Open 12:00 pm AA Meeting 12:00 pm Prayer at Noon
Thursday	12/13	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
Friday	12/14	Overflow Homeless Shelter Dinner
Sunday	12/16	<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> 10:15 am Pre-Service Music 10:30 am Worship Service - Sanctuary The Rev. Lynn Caman Bodden, preaching Dedication of Prayer Shawls (during worship) Children & Worship (during worship) Post Service: Coffee & Conversation 11:45 am Last Journey Through the Psalms 11:45 am Confirmation meeting with youth and parents