



28th Anniversary Celebration
ECUMENICAL WITNESSES OF BAPTISM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2023 - 1:30 PM

Closing Prayer Service

Capital Area Council of Churches

Ecumenical Witnesses of Baptism

28th Anniversary Celebration
The First Church in Albany
January 8, 2023

Prelude

HOLY MANA
Iteke Prins, pianist

J. Carter

Call to Presence

Trusting in the word of life given in Baptism, we are gathered in the name of the One who created us, who redeems us, and who empowers us. Let us remember: when we come together in God's name, God is in our midst. God of Unity, make us one in mind and heart.

Opening Song

Baptized in Water



1. Bap-tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, cleansed by the
2. Bap-tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, dead in the
3. Bap-tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, marked with the



blood of Christ, our King; heirs of sal - va - tion, trust - ing his
tomb with Christ, our King; one with his ris - ing, freed and for -
sign of Christ, our King; born of one Fa - ther, we are his



prom - ise, faith - ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.
giv - en, thank - ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.
chil - dren, joy - ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.

WORDS: Michael Saward (Rom. 6:3-5)

MUSIC: Trad. Gaelic melody

BUNESSAN

55.54 D

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Unison Prayer

God of grace and glory, you call us with your voice of flame to be your people, faithful and courageous. As your beloved Son embraced his mission in the waters of baptism, inspire us with the fire of your Spirit to join in his transforming work. We ask this in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**



Psalter Antiphonal Reading of Psalm 29 (Message Translation)

One: Bravo, God, bravo! Gods and all angels shout, “Encore!”

All: In awe before the glory, in awe before God’s visible power. Stand at attention! Dress your best to honor him!

One: God thunders across the waters, Brilliant; his voice and his face, streaming brightness—God, across the flood waters.

All: God’s thunder tympanic, God’s thunder symphonic.

One: God’s thunder smashes cedars, God topples the northern cedars.

All: The mountain ranges skip like spring colts, The high ridges jump like wild kid goats.

One: God’s thunder spits fire. God thunders, the wilderness quakes; He makes the desert of Kadesh shake. God’s thunder sets the oak trees dancing. A wild dance, whirling; the pelting rain strips their branches.

All: We fall to our knees—we call out, “Glory!” Above the floodwaters is God’s throne from which his power flows, from which he rules the world.

One: God makes his people strong. God gives his people peace.

Song for Illumination **Come, O Holy Spirit, Come**



1. Come, O Ho - ly Spir - it, come! And from your ce -
 2. O most bless - ed Light di - vine, May that Light with -
 3. On the faith - ful who a - dore And con - fess you



les - tial home Shed a ray of light di - vine!
 in us shine, And our in - most be - ing fill! —
 ev - er more, In your sev'n - fold gift de - scend;



Come, O Ho - ly Spir - it, come! Come, O Fa - ther of the
 Come, O Ho - ly Spir - it, come! In your ab - sence, we have
 Come, O Ho - ly Spir - it, come! Give them vir - tue's sure re



poor! — Come O Source of all our store! Come, with
 naught, Noth - ing good in deed or thought, Noth - ing
 - ward; — Give them your sal - va - tion, Lord; Give them



- in our bos - oms shine! Come, O Ho - ly Spir - it, come!
 free from taint of ill. — Come, O Ho - ly Spir - it, come!
 joys that nev - er end. — Come, O Ho - ly Spir - it, come!

Gospel Reading Matthew 3:13-17

Before Jesus begins his ministry, he is baptized by John, touched by the Holy Spirit, and identified publicly as the child of God.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God’s Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from the heavens said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

One: The Gospel of the Lord.
All: Praise to you, O Christ!

Silent Reflection

Reaffirmation of Our Baptismal Covenant

One: Siblings in Christ, through the Sacrament of Baptism we have been joined into Christ's holy church.

All: We share in the story of God's mighty acts of salvation and we receive new birth through water and the Spirit.

One: These are the gifts of God, offered freely to all.

All: Let us renew the covenant declared at our baptism, acknowledging what God is doing in, through, and for us.

All are invited to rise in body or in spirit and are invited to circle the font if able

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Let us give thanks to God.

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Holy One, we thank you for the gift of water.

Over it, your Spirit hovered at the creation of the world

Through it, you led the children of Israel out of bondage and into the Promised Land.

In the fullness of time, you sent Jesus, who was nurtured in the water of Mary's womb.

And in it, Jesus was baptized and recognized as your beloved child.

With these words, the leader reaches into the water and allows it to pour back into the basin

We thank you for the water of Baptism. In it, we are buried, sharing in Christ's death. By it, we share also in Christ's resurrection. Through it, we are reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit as your children.

All gathered extend their hands into or over the water, repeating after the leader

**Now bless this water, we pray,
by the power of your Holy Spirit.
May it remind us
that we have been cleansed from sin
and are born again into new life.
May it enliven us
to remain faithful
until we are united with you
in the life to come.
Amen.**



The Affirmation of Unity

One: Let us affirm the unity that comes from our baptism into Christ.

All: We come out of many traditions. We have confessed many understandings of Baptism: sacrament, symbol, and sign. Some of us were baptized before we remember. Others only later when we said, “I believe.”

One: Whether we were immersed, poured upon, or sprinkled, it is your action, Gracious God, that defines our baptism.

All: Having put off the old nature, we have been clothed with Christ.

One: There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female. For we are all one in Christ Jesus—your children through faith, heirs to the promise. Old things have passed away.

All: Behold, you make all things new.

Remembering Our Baptism

Song

(Refrain)

Neither Death Nor Life

Refrain – All

Nei-ther death, nor life, nor an-gels, nor rul-ers, nor
trials in the pres-ent, nor an - y trial to come, nei - ther height, nor
depth, nor all of cre - a - tion can ev - er sep - a - rate us
from the love of God poured out in Christ Je - sus, our Lord.

The musical notation is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: 'Nei-ther death, nor life, nor an-gels, nor rul-ers, nor'. The second staff continues: 'trials in the pres-ent, nor an - y trial to come, nei - ther height, nor'. The third staff continues: 'depth, nor all of cre - a - tion can ev - er sep - a - rate us'. The fourth staff concludes: 'from the love of God poured out in Christ Je - sus, our Lord.' The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and half notes) and rests, with lyrics aligned under the corresponding notes.

Verse 1: Dwell in the One who raised Christ from the dead; though your body shall die in Christ you shall rise through the Spirit who brings you to life!

(Refrain)

Verse 2: All who are led by the Spirit shall live as children of God, and heirs with Christ Jesus, God's adopted and chosen beloved!

(Refrain)

Verse 4: All of creation awaits the new birth, the fullness of redemption, through labor pains of love, and so we wait in patience and hope.

(Refrain)

Prayer of Commitment

Lord God of creation, mindful of our baptism into Christ, we renew our commitment to our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Guide us to serve as living witnesses for the unity of the body of Christ through participation in the Capital Area Council of Churches Ecumenical Witnesses of Baptism program.

Lead us by your Holy Spirit to work for communion in faith, life, and witness, so that, as one body, by the one Spirit, we may be witnesses to the perfect unity of God's love.

Inspire us to continue to engage in faithful mission for Christ, to take up the cross, to proclaim the gospel, and to love and serve others.

We pray for more individuals and faith communities to embrace the vision for this ministry of witness. We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

May God, who created the waters of the earth, Jesus Christ the spring of living water, and the Spirit who moves on the face of the waters inspire and empower us to be witnesses and servants as we go forth from this place.
Amen.



Closing Song

We Are One in the Spirit They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love



1 We are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord;
2 We will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand;
3 We will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side;
4 All praise to the Fa - ther, from whom all things come,



we are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord,
we will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand,
we will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side,
and all praise to Christ Je - sus, God's on - ly Son,



and we pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored:
and to - geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our land:
and we'll guard hu - man dig - ni - ty and save hu - man pride:
and all praise to the Spir - it, who makes us one:



And they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love, by our



love; yes, they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love.

Postlude

"Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song"
Iteke Prins, pianist

P. Cutts



The New York State Office of General Services has invited us to join them for a special screening of NYS Celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Paths to Change on **Friday, January 13, 2023, at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany, NY from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

During the red carpet premiere event, you will have a chance to preview a one-hour broadcast tribute to Dr. King through art, music, and inspiring stories, hosted by our own Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston. This year's program will feature segments on the Apollo Theater in Harlem, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, performances by the NYS MLK Ensemble (filmed here at First Church), and more!

The event is FREE and open to the public. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the program screening will begin promptly at 7 p.m. Music will be provided by DJ Intell Hayesfield. Light refreshments will be served (while supplies last).

Invite others. Let's make this a time to celebrate our commitment to the community and to the ideal of equality!

Contact Colleen at the office to RSVP. with your parties' number. I have to give the rep. from OGS a number by January 9th, so make sure to get your intention to attend to her ASAP.

Call 518-463-4449 or email office@firstchurchinalbany.org

Notes:



Begun in 1995, the Ecumenical Witnesses of Baptism Program of the Capital Area Council of Churches is one of the most visible ways of celebrating Christian unity. The program is overseen by the Coordinator, Miranda Rand, a member of Lisha's Kill Reformed Church, and Kitt Jackson, a member of Altamont Reformed Church and the former Administrative Director of the Council of Churches. Our thanks to the First Church in Albany for hosting us today. For more information about the program, becoming a witness, or inviting witnesses to your church, call the CACC office at 518-462-5450 or contact Miranda Rand directly at 518-393-5047 (H) or 518-229-5105 (cell). You may also e-mail her at mirandarand411@gmail.com.

Note: The Reaffirmation of our Baptismal Covenant and Affirmation of Unity come from

“Affirmation of Baptism: An Order of Service” written by Bryce Rich.
(www.brycerich.net)



First Church in Albany

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