

THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

Consecration Sunday 2023

THE GIFTS OF GOD FOR THE
PEOPLE OF GOD



**The First Church in Albany
(Reformed Church in America)**
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 we are loved.

Prelude Reflection

Gratitude's embrace,
Joy overflowing with grace,
Heart's bliss in its place

Prelude

"St. George Windsor"

arr. C. Callahan

Tolling of Bell: *Bell tolled by children of First Church*

Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing 2 Corinthians 13:14

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." **Amen.**

Call to Worship *Based on a text from that week's Lectionary, usually the Psalm*

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

Amen.

Leader: Let us gather in gratitude and praise!

People: God's love endures throughout all time!

Leader: From the greatest wonders to the smallest of details,

People: Give thanks to the Source of All for God's love is eternal!

Leader: In creation, deliverance, and provision,

People: Give thanks to the Holy One who is the creator, redeemer, and sustainer of all life!

Leader: In our lowest moments and in our greatest victories,

People: Give thanks to God whose love remains steadfast!

Leader: O gathered people, let us honor and praise this God of goodness!

People: With hearts full of gratitude, we worship you, Triune God!

"Songs of praise we will ever give to thee!"

***Opening Hymn** *"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"* (see insert)

Prayer of Confession

In his Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation, Reformed theologian Karl Barth says, "Radically and basically, all sin is simply ingratitude," for gratitude is the only proper response to the God who is the "overflowing source of all goodness." Let us pray:

God of all goodness and grace, we confess our ingratitude. We continually fail to realize all your gracious gifts to us. Send your Holy Spirit to enable us to exude gratitude in radical ways, understanding that true gratitude flows from seriously grasping the grace you have shown us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Time of silence

Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law

Friends, Karl Barth also says, "Gratitude follows grace like thunder follows lightning," and in our sermon text today, Paul prays for the the Christians of Ephesus:

"I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

May we, too, come to comprehend God's grace to us in Jesus Christ so we might live a thunderously grateful life.

***Passing the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with a hand-sign of peace.



Touch your thumb to the tip of your ring finger, and wave to one another. This hand-sign makes Christ's gesture of blessing in a lot of iconography in the Orthodox Tradition.

Children's Message & Blessing

Prayer for Illumination

Holy Spirit, come. We pray as Paul does in Ephesians: strengthen our inner being, our collective life together, to comprehend "the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge," so that we might live a life overflowing with joy, the most blissful form of gratitude. Amen.

Sermon Text Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.



**The Vision of John:
Opening of the Fifth Seal**
by El Greco, around 1608-1614

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Leader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon

Can Gratitude Be Radical?

A Prayer of Blessing on the Word

***Hymn of Response** *“Now Thank We All Our God”* (see insert)

Profession of Faith *Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 86*

Q. Since we have been delivered from our misery by grace through Christ without any merit of our own, why then should we do good works?

A. Because Christ, having redeemed us by his blood, is also restoring us by his Spirit into his image, so that with our whole lives we may show that we are thankful to God for his benefits so that he may be praised through us, so that we may be assured of our faith by its fruits, and so that by our godly living our neighbors may be won over to Christ.

Tithes & Offerings: *If you would like to connect more with the life and mission of First Church, please fill out a Welcome Card found in your pew and place it in the offering as it goes by.*

Offertory *“Nun danket alle Gott”* Gott G. F. Kaufman

Consecration Sunday Litany

One: In the letter of James, we are reminded that,

All: “Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.”

One: And so today, we remember the generous gifts you have bestowed on us.

All: We respond to your gracious goodness, O God, with gratitude and generosity.

One: On this Consecration Sunday, we pledge to give back to you some of what you have so generously given to us:

All: Our time, talents, and tithes.

Congregants are invited to walk up and place their pledges on the communion table while music is being played. A prayer will then be given over the pledges and the next fiscal year.

Consecration Hymn *“God, You Are Providing Good Fruit”* (see insert)

***Doxology** #592 in pew hymnal

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

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.**

***Sending Hymn** “*City of God*” (see insert)

*Charge & Blessing

Postlude *“Marche Triomphale”* S. Karg-Elert

We wish each of you a blessed week, until we meet again.

This week's flowers: Given by Kim Reohr, in memory of Jay who passed away on November 17, 2022.

Note: Please join us downstairs in Zimmerman Hall for a Consecration Sunday lunch!



Minister: Rev. Trey Tirpak

Liturgist: Deacon Imani Brewer

Consistory Chaplain of the Day: TBD

Hymn leaders: Norma Jean Ballou and Jean Lamere

Organist: Iteke Prins

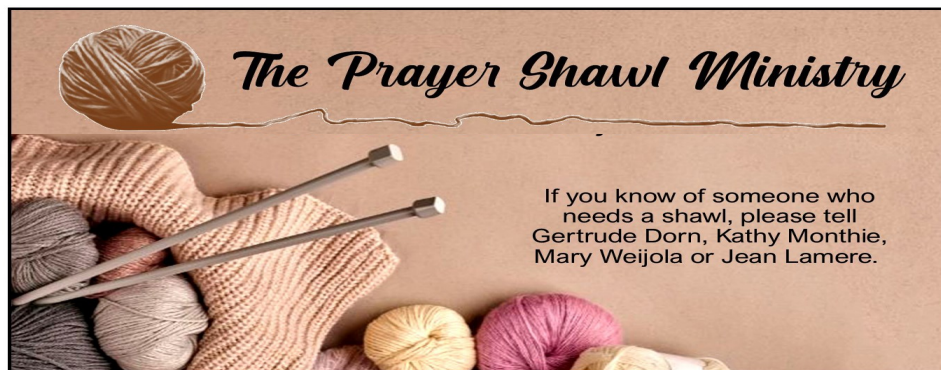
Audio/Visual: Joshua Bliss, Stephen Reohr

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Prayers, Concerns & Joys

If you have a concern or joy you would like to share with our church family,
email office@firstchurchinalbany.org or call the office at 518-463-4449

- Marian Lais, our office manager's mother
- Ginny Giguere
- Kathleen Claydon
- Donna Schultz
- Jeff Curry
- Yono Purnomo, chef at neighbor Yono's Restaurant, on Sheridan and Chapel, awaiting a kidney for transplant
- Avery Bradley, granddaughter of Marilyn and David, an athlete continuing her recovery from a leg injury
- Norma McClement
- From our pantry family, Maureen Jackson and her brother Maurice, both dealing with health issues
- Family of Gillian Persons and for her sister Sylvia
- For Shirley Mockel, good friend of Marilyn Bradley, with health concerns.
- Doug Plummer, friend of the Bradley family, as he begins treatment for health concerns
- Becky Gardner, continuing her recovery from surgery
- Virginia Giguere and family as they mourn the passing of an uncle and a cousin
- Sam, son of Barb and Dave Andrews, recovering
- Carol LaBatte
- Sharnelle Jones
- Joeanna Brown
- Sam, cousin of Barb Andrews
- For Barb and Dave Andrews as they take on the role of caretakers
- Family of Norma Jean Ballou
- Ken Lucas, friend of Philip Labatte
- Kokese Ballou
- For Jennifer Recene Gallagher
- Ruth and Josue Torres
- For Jim, Rose Hunsberger's father
- Alexis Parry, niece of Cheryl Gowie
- Gail Santimaw, friend of Judith Utley-Suess
- John Utley, brother of Judith Utley-Suess
- Judith Utley-Suess, for strength
- Harold Bushnel
- Alex Bliss
- Mary Weijola
- Cheryl Gowie
- Ralph McNeil, brother of Norma Jean Ballou
- Anthony, of the Brown Family
- Olivia Gaydushek
- Clergy, staff and leaders of the First Church in Albany as they plan Advent
- Prayers for Ukraine, Israel and Palestine and all areas of conflict across the globe. May we all remember to lead with love.
- For an end to gun violence here in Albany, in the U.S., and around the world.



Join Us for This Week's Events

SUN NOV. 19

- 10am: Consecration Sunday Worship (also on Zoom and YouTube), See our website for links to worship info.
- PACKING THANKSGIVING BAGS AFTER WORSHIP

MON 20

- 9am: Food Pantry at Orange St. Door

TUE 21

- Noon: Adult Book Study on Zoom



Scan for full event calendar

WED 22

- 9am: Food Pantry at Orange St. Door
- Noon: Centering Prayer (Powell), AA Mtg (Parlor)

THU 23

- Happy Thanksgiving! The office will be closed Thursday and Friday for the holiday.

Worship now streaming live on YouTube.



There will be no soup on Thanksgiving Thursday. Our Soup & Sandwich Ministry will return on Thursday, November 30.

Soup & Sandwiches in
Clee Park
Thursdays at 11:30am-1pm



Everyone is welcome and there is no charge for the soup!

#firstchurchinmotion

110 North Pearl St., Albany NY 12207

Hanging of the Greens

- On Sunday, November 26th, whomever would like to start decorating parts of the church with Advent/Christmas decorations, they are encouraged to do so! This will serve as a headstart for the 2nd.
- We are planning for a Saturday, December 2nd Advent decorating event. We're hoping to have a pancake breakfast!



Christmas Memories at First

We would love to share your stories of your favorite Christmas memories at the First Church in Albany in our upcoming Family Newsletter.

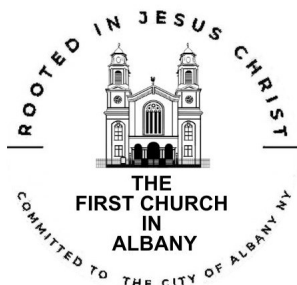
Reminisce with those you have shared the holiday with over the years. Introduce our newer attendees to our well-loved traditions. And to those new to First Church, we would love to know about your traditions as well. Please send your stories to office@firstchurchinalbany.org by December 6.

Fall & Advent 2023

SECOND HOUR GATHERINGS

(Events held in the Parlor or downstairs Zimmerman Hall after Coffee Time for 30-45 min.)

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
11.5 All Saints' Sunday	Communion of Saints Talk	Come to a discussion about the communion of saints in the Parlor
11.12	Pantry Thanksgiving Packing	Come pack our Thanksgiving bags for the pantry in Zimmerman Hall
11.19	Consecration Sunday	Consecration Sunday Brunch in Zimmerman Hall
11.26 Christ the King Sunday	Thanksgiving Weekend	Start Advent Decorations to be finished on Saturday, 12.2.23
12.03	First Sunday of Advent: Hope	<i>A Surprising God</i> discussion in the Parlor
12.10	Second Sunday of Advent: Peace	<i>A Surprising God</i> discussion in the Parlor
12.17	Third Sunday of Advent: Joy	<i>A Surprising God</i> discussion in the Parlor
12.24 Morning 10am	Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love	<i>A Surprising God</i> discussion in the Parlor
Christmas Eve Evening	Wassail Hour	Come down to Zimmerman Hall after the evening service for wassail!
Monday 12.25	Christmas Day	TBD
12.31	New Year's Eve	TBD
1.7.24	First Sunday After Epiphany: Baptism of the Lord	Come discuss and learn about baptism in the Parlor



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Albany NY 12207

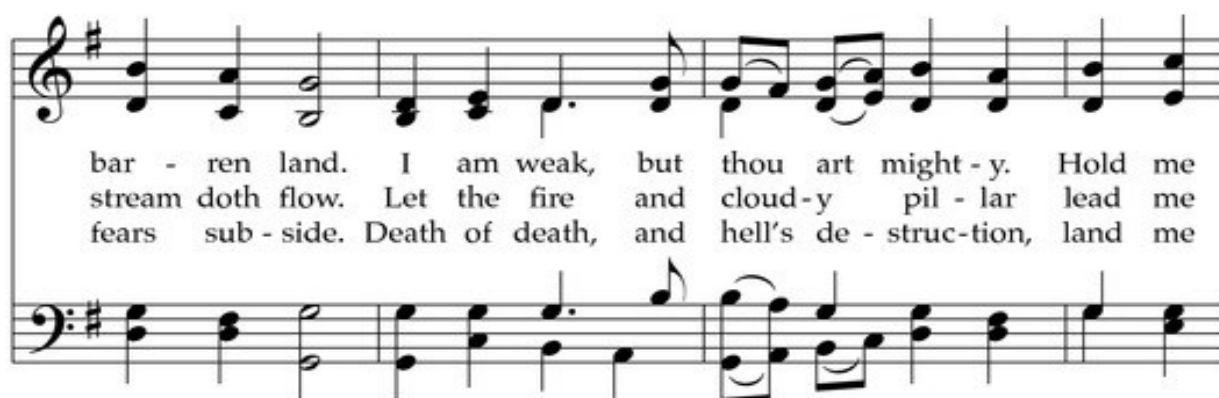
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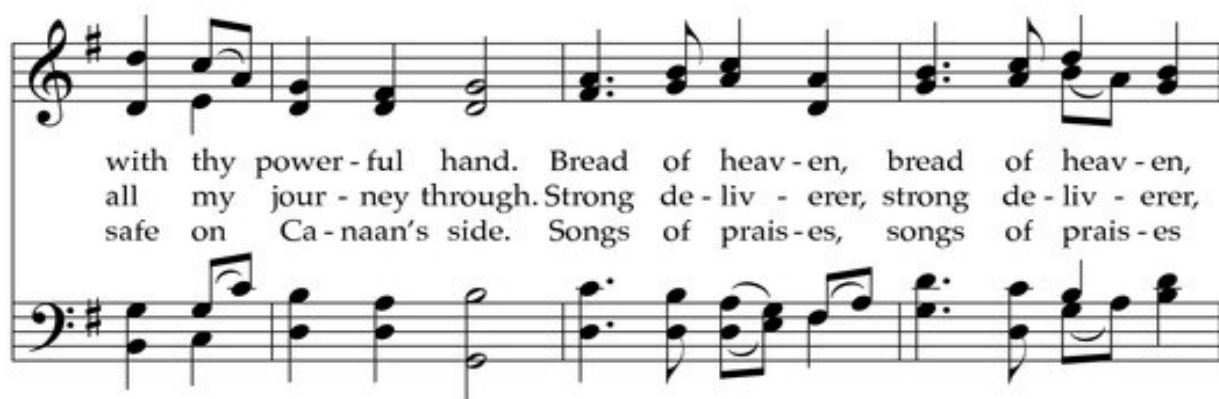
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah



1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, whence the heal - ing
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious



bar - ren land. I am weak, but thou art might - y. Hold me
 stream doth flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
 fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, land me



with thy power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
 all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
 safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es



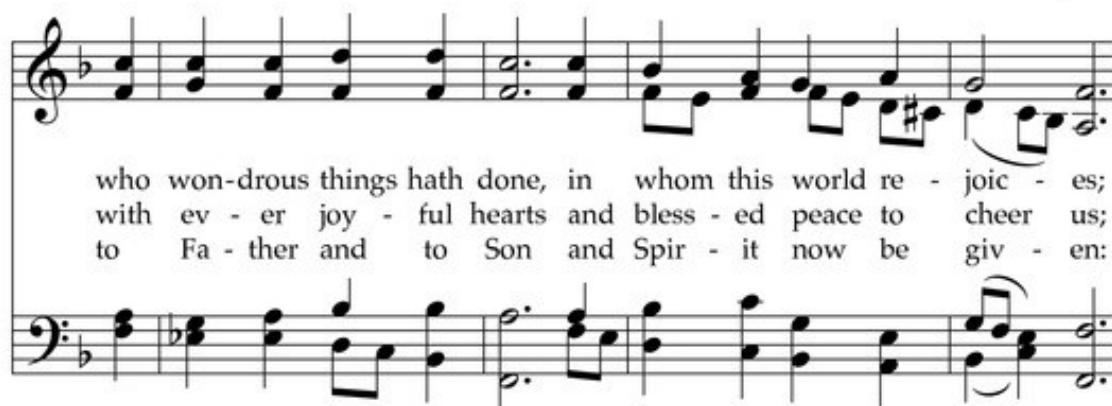
feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.
 be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.
 I will ev - er give to thee; I will ev - er give to thee.

Few Welsh hymns are as well known or loved as this 18th-century text that did not gain its popular tune until the early 20th century. In both its original text and in English translation, it is a stirring hymn of pilgrimage filled with vivid imagery from Hebrew Scripture.

Now Thank We All Our God



1 Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,
 2 O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
 3 All praise and thanks to God, who reigns in highest heaven,



who wondrous things hath done, in whom this world rejoices;
 with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
 to Father and to Son and Spirit now be given:



who, from our mothers' arms, hath blessed us on our way
 and keep us in God's grace, and guide us when perplexed,
 the one eternal God, whom heaven and earth adore,



with countless gifts of love, and still is ours to-day.
 and free us from all ills in this world and the next.
 the God who was, and is, and shall be evermore.

Although this hymn is often used on large and festive occasions, its first two stanzas had much humbler beginnings: they originated as a family table prayer during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). These words have been associated with this tune since the mid-17th century.

God You Are Providing Good Fruit

John Dalles

66 11 66 11D

ASH GROVE



1. God, you are pro - vi - ding good fruit for our guid - ing; we
2. God, you are be - stow - ing good fruit for the grow - ing, all
3. God, you are pre - sen - ting good fruit re - pre - sen - ting your

5
blos - som as__ bran - ches of your Ho - ly Vine. The love you ap -
full - ness you form, all fru - i - tion as - sign. With pa - tience, con -
will with per - fec - tion, your pur - pose di - vine. We ech - o your

10
por - tion be - comes our good for - tune in love we re__ spond as our
di - tion each gift's dis - po - si - tion and guide what we're giv - ing to
splen - dor by faith - ful - ness ten - der; our ways you ar - range, and our

15
hearts you en - twine. We give without en - ding what comes from our
match your de - sign. May kind - ness to o - thers, our sis - ters, our
work you a - lign. In__ e - v'ry en - dea - vor, may gen - tle ness

20
send - ing our ta - lents our treas - ures, our wit - ness our time till
bro - thers de - ter - mine our giv - ing our mis - sion de - fine. By
e - ver be seen as__ our hall - mark, our em - blem, our sign, till

25
peace in per fec - tion be - comes the con - nec - tion u - ni - ting all__
do - ing by say - ing, your good - ness con - vey - ing, we serve the whole
by your as - sur - ance we work with en - du - rance for - e - ver to__

30
peo - ple with - in your de - sign.
world in com - mu - ni - ty fine.
flour - ish, for - e - ver to shine.

City of God

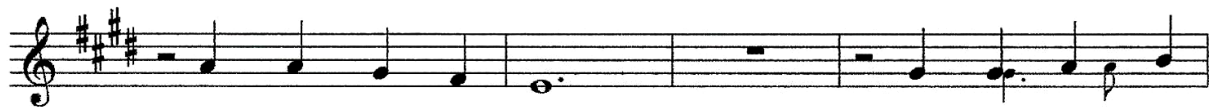
Verses 1, 2



1. A-wake from your slum-ber! A - rise from your
2. We are sons of the morn-ing; we are daugh-ters of



sleep!
day. A new day is dawn - ing
The One who has loved us



for all those who weep. The peo - ple in
has bright-ened our way. The Lord of all



dark - ness have seen a great light. The Lord of our
kind - ness has called us to be a light for his



long-ing has con-quired the night.
peo - ple to set their hearts free.

Refrain %



Let us build the cit-y of God. May our tears be



turned in - to danc - ing! For the Lord, our light and our



love, has turned the night in - to day!