



**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

The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.

Prelude

"O Worship the King "

arr. Robert A. Hobby

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

Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing

Call to Worship

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

Amen

Psalm 95:1-7a

O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

***Opening Hymn** *“Give Thanks, O Christian People”* (see insert)

Prayer of Confession

Dear Lord, we confess that we often fail to give thanks. We often forget the many blessings you have poured out in our lives. You are God. You are the great shepherd. We are your sheep. May we live kindness. May we love our neighbors as ourselves.

Time of silence

Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

***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 *Please sing*

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me. Mold me. Fill me. Use me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me!

Sermon Text Matthew 25:31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'

And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?'

Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'

And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

King of the Least

A Prayer of Blessing on the Word

***Hymn of Response** *“Come Thou Fount Of Every Blessing”* (see insert)

Profession of Faith Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

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 *“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name ”* arr. Wayne L. Wold

***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

Leader: O Lord,

People: Hear our prayer.

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.**

Announcements

***Sending Hymn** *“Rejoice The Lord Is King”* (see insert)

***Charge & Blessing**

Postlude *“Crown Him Lord of All ”* *arr. Mary McDonald*

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

Minister: Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

Liturgist:

Consistory Chaplain of the Day: TBD

Organist: Gloria Norton

Audio/Visual: Joshua Bliss, Stephen Reohr

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Notes:

- Join us after worship to begin our Advent decorating. We will gather again on Saturday, December 2 to finish and enjoy a pancake breakfast.
- **There will be a meeting of the Joint Boards on Sunday, December 3, 10 minutes post-service.**
- Offering envelopes for 2024 will be available in the Lobby of the Sanctuary starting on Sunday, December 10. If you do not currently have envelopes, but would like them, please email **financesec@firstchurchinalbany.org** to let Joyce, our financial secretary, know. She will contact the office with your assigned giving # and we will get them labeled for you to pick up.

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

- For the family and friends of Barbara Parpale, who passed in October
- 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.



The Prayer Shawl Ministry



If you know of someone who needs a shawl, please tell
Gertrude Dorn, Kathy Monthie,
Mary Weijola or Jean Lamere.

Join Us for This Week's Events

SUN NOV. 26

- 10am: Thanksgiving Sunday Worship (also on Zoom and YouTube), See our website for links to worship info.
- First phase of Advent Decoration after worship

MON 27

- 9am: Food Pantry at Orange St. Door

TUE 28

- Noon: Adult Book Study on Zoom



Scan for full event calendar

WED 29

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

THU 30

- 11:30am: Soup & Sandwiches in the Park

Worship now streaming live on YouTube.



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

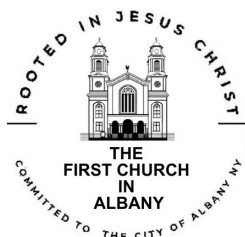
We would love to share your stories of your favorite Christmas memories at the First Church in Albany in our upcoming Family Newsletter.

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



2023 DECEMBER

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|--|---|---|--|-----|--|
| 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  | 1 | 2  Advent Decoration & Pancakes |
| 3  Communion Sunday G hope | 4  Prayer Shawl Meeting | 5  Consistory Mtg | 6  AA  Weather vanes | 7  Potluck & First Thursday Night of Worship | 8 | 9 |
| 10  M peace | 11  | 12  | 13  AA  G Blue Christmas 7pm | 14  | 15 | 16 |
| 17  T joy | 18  | 19  Castle Island Talent Show & Potluck Lunch 10am-1pm Zimmerman | 20  AA | 21  | 22 | 23 |
| 24 Morning 10am  Candlelight Service 7pm followed by Wassail M love | 25 Christmas Day Christmas Morning Worship 10am in the Chapel  Pantry & Office Closed | 26 | 27  AA | 28  | 29 | 30 |
| 31   | Key:  Indoor Worship 10am  Communion Sunday  Coffee Hour  Pantry 9am  Centering Prayer 12pm  Book Study  Soup & PB&J 11:30am  | | | | | |
| Preacher: M Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston T Rev. Trey Tirpak G Guest | | | | | | |



First Church in Albany

110 North Pearl St.
Albany NY 12207
518-463-4449

www.firstchurchinalbany.org

Give Thanks, O Christian People

1 Give thanks, O Chris-tian peo - ple, for work-ers of our day
 2 Give thanks, O Chris-tian peo - ple, for lead - ers of our years
 3 Give thanks, O Chris-tian peo - ple, for all who love the Lord,
 4 Give thanks, O Chris-tian peo - ple, for life in fel - low - ship

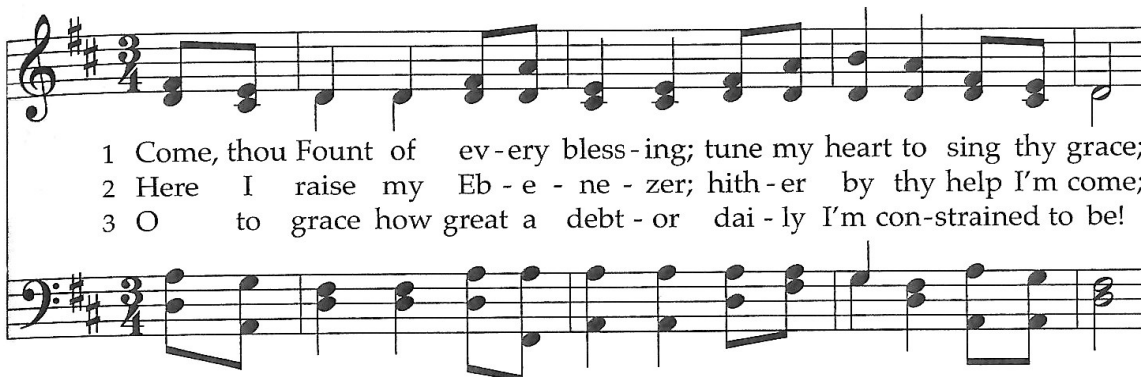
who heed the call to ser - vice and make it their life's way
 who live to share with oth - ers our joy when Christ ap - pears,
 who live each day be - liev - ing in God's e - ter - nal Word:
 with all who trust our Sav - ior their serv - ing to e - quip:

to go to feed the hun - gry, to tend to those in need,
 to teach the ones who seek light, to guide the fal - tering feet,
 to share Christ's love, in liv - ing, to wit - ness with each deed,
 to ease an - oth - er's bur - dens, to cope in joy and stress,

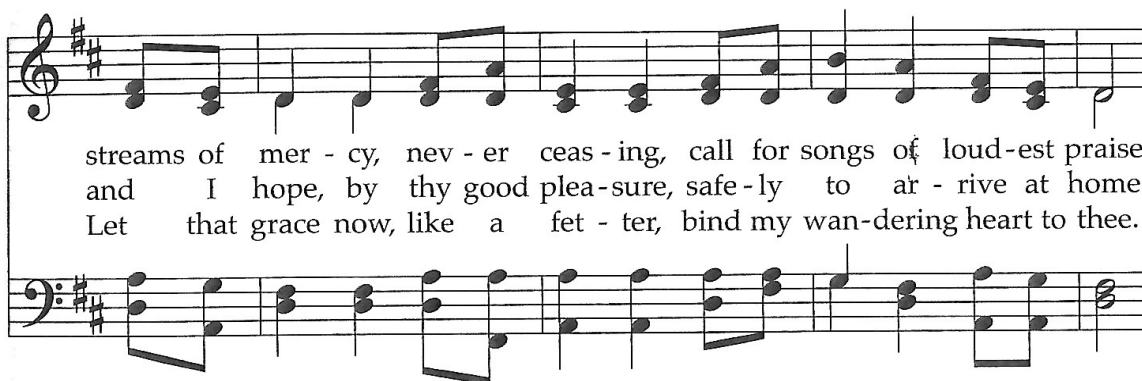
to work for e - qual jus - tice, till all God's folk are freed.
 to lead the fol - lowers for - ward our liv - ing Lord to meet.
 to use the tal - ents giv - en to plant the gos - pel seed.
 to mag - ni - fy God's mes - sage and Christ's great love con - fess.

This text was written by a Presbyterian director of Christian education in Washington, DC, to honor the ministry of a colleague who was leaving the area. It is an effective reminder that God's people serve in many vocations and ministries. The tune adapts a secular German song.

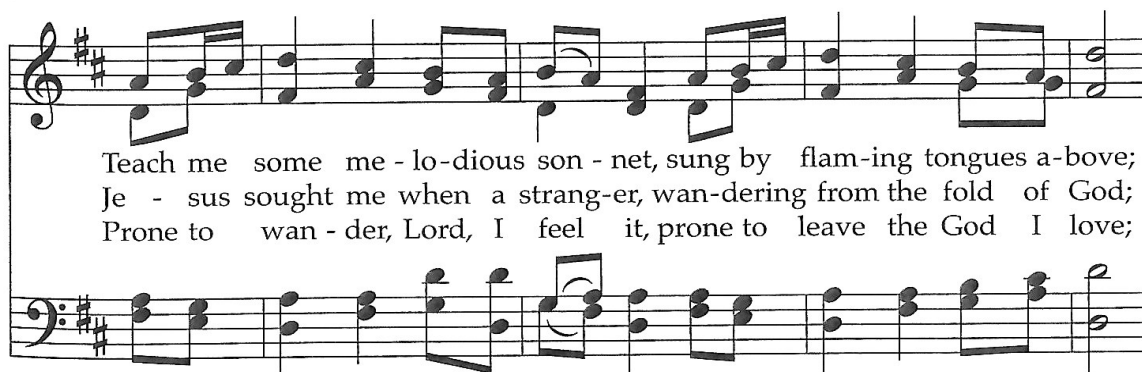
Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing



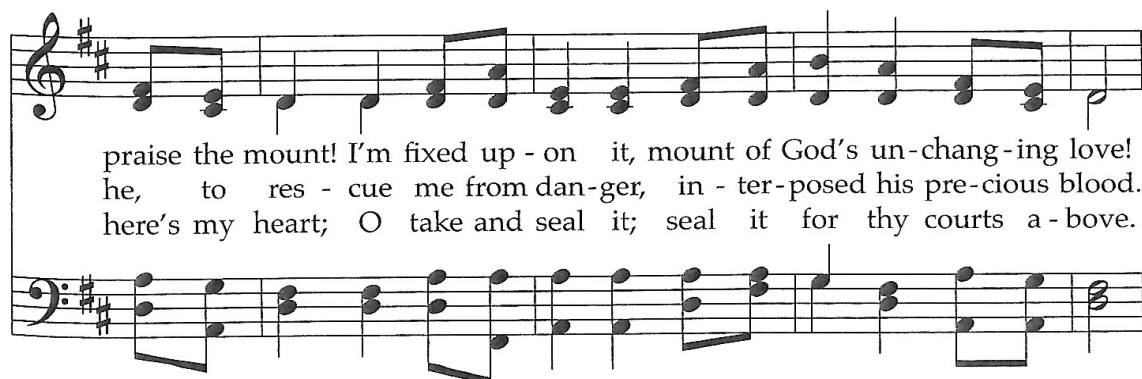
1 Come, thou Fount of ev-ery bless-ing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;
 2 Here I raise my Eb - e - ne - zer; hith-er by thy help I'm come;
 3 O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be!



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud-est praise.
 and I hope, by thy good plea-sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
 Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan-dering heart to thee.



Teach me some me - lo-dious son - net, sung by flam-ing tongues a-bove;
 Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-dering from the fold of God;
 Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;



praise the mount! I'm fixed up - on it, mount of God's un-chang-ing love!
 he, to res - cue me from dan-ger, in - ter-posed his pre-cious blood.
 here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Written for Pentecost by a British Baptist pastor, this text is full of biblical terms like "Ebenezer" (1 Samuel 7:12), Hebrew for "a stone of help" set up to give thanks for God's assistance. The tune name honors hymnal compiler Asahel Nettleton, who probably did not compose it.

Rejoice, the Lord Is King!

Descant

4 Re-joyce in glo-rious hope! For Christ, the Judge, shall come

- 1 Re-joyce, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King a-dore!
- 2 Our Sav-ior, Je-sus, reigns, the God of truth and love;
- 3 His king-dom can-not fail; he rules o'er earth and heaven;
- 4 Re-joyce in glo-rious hope! For Christ, the Judge, shall come

and gath-er all the saints to their e-ter-nal home.

Re-joyce, give thanks, and sing, and tri-umph ev-er-more.
 when he had purged our stains, he took his seat a-bove.
 the keys of death and hell are to our Je-sus given.
 and gath-er all the saints to their e-ter-nal home.

Lift up your heart; lift up your voice! Re-joyce, a-gain I say, re-joyce!

Lift up your heart; lift up your voice! Re-joyce, a-gain I say, re-joyce!

Each stanza of this enthronement text prepares for the final line of the refrain, based on Philippians 4:4. "Lord" is here a title of Christ rather than a reference to the undivided Trinity. The late 18th-century tune (first used with Psalm 148) captures the mood well.

THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY &
FOCUS CHURCHES OF ALBANY
INVITE YOU TO A

Blue Christmas

WORSHIP SERVICE

Wednesday, December 13th, 7:00pm

Keynote Speaker: To Be Announced
We have made a change to our original agenda



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FOCUS
CHURCHES OF ALBANY