

# The First Church in Albany

# Hope

Sunday, December 1, 2024, 10am

## 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** *a haiku for today's worship by Jeannie Prinsen*

light the hope candle  
its flame pierces the darkness  
small but persistent

**Prelude** "DIVINUM MYSTERIUM" Wilbur Held

**Tolling of Bell**

**Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing Romans**  
15:13

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." **Amen.**

**Advent Anthem** "Of The Father's Love Begotten" v. 1-2  
(see p. 6)

**Call to Worship & Lighting of the Advent Candle**  
Call to worship (based on Luke 21:25-28)

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

Christ is coming!

**We see the signs!**

Christ is coming!

**We will be ready!**

Christ is coming!

Raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near!

**Praise be to God!**

**We will worship and prepare**

**\*Opening Hymn**

*“Prepare the Way, O Zion “*

*(see p.7)*

**Call to confession**

Preparing for Christ’s coming requires honest examination of our lives and our hearts. Let us turn to God in prayer to confess our sins.

**Prayer of Confession**

**Holy One in this season of wait we acknowledge how we often do not see the value in waiting. Our society believes in instant beverages, fast food, and high-speed communication. Every year your advent season calls us to wait and we struggle because waiting is often uncomfortable and inconvenient. Forgive us for resisting times of stillness and waiting.**

*Time of silence*

**Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law**

Beloved, in the grace of Christ, be assured: They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up on wings and eagles. They walk and do not grow weary. They shall run and not faint.

**\*Passing the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us rise and greet one another with the peace of Christ.

**Prayer for Illumination** *“O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”*

*(see p. 8)*

**Old Testament Text**

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon Text**

Luke 21:25-36

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to you, O’ Christ!**

**Sermon**

He Will Come  
Like A Trap to the Unprepared

**A Prayer of Blessing on the Word**

**\*Hymn of Response “On Jordon’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry ”** (see p.9)

**Profession of Faith** *The Apostles’ Creed (traditional version)*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;**

**And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried.  
He descended into hell.**

**The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the holy catholic Church\*,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**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** “The Earth Is White with Snow and Ice” Grindal/Husberg  
*The First Church Choir* (see p. 10)

**\*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.**

## **The Celebration of the Lord's Supper**

**Communion Hymn "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"**

(see p. 11)

### **Communion Prayer**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts!

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **Sanctus**

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

### **Mystery of the Faith**

**Christ has died!**

**Christ has risen!**

**Christ will come again!**

### **Celebration of Communion**

#### **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 "How Clear Is Our Vocation Lord"**

(see p. 12)

### **\*Charge & Blessing**

#### **Postlude**

Intonation on PICARDY

**Preacher:** Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston  
**Liturgist:** Rev. Trey Tirpak  
**Organist:** Iteke Prins  
**Vocalist and/or specialist:** Choir  
**Audio/Visual:** Joshua Bliss and Stephen Reohr

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**Note:** After coffee time, please join Rev. Trey in the chapel for a time of discussion of our Advent devotional, *Advent in Narnia*.

Today's liturgy was based on the theme "He Will Come" from *Reformed Worship* pg 4 - 17. We are grateful to *Presbyterian Outlook*, *Jeanie Prinsen*, for the *Advent haiku and call to worship*.

**Advent Candles:** Hope, Peace, Joy, Love

**Hope :** We light this candle of hope as a sign of our commitment to pay attention and prepare for the days that are surely coming and are already here - the days when God's kingdom of love, justice, and mercy will reign.

**Peace:** we light this candle of peace as a sign of our commitment to passionately pursue the work of making peace in our hearts, our families, our communities, and throughout the earth until God's kin-dom come on earth as it is in heaven. Let there be peace and wholeness on earth and let it begin with me.

**Joy:** We light this candle of joy as a sign of our commitment to be present to ourselves, our friends, our families, and our neighbors that in sharing our vulnerable lives we might share in the glorious joy of God's salvation together. The joy of the Lord is my strength.

**Love:** We light this candle of love as a sign of our commitment to live in the way of Christ, letting God's boundless love shape our hearts, our relationships, and our actions. May this love shine through us, transforming the world with the promise of Emmanuel, God with us.

# Of the Father's Love Begotten 108



1 Of the Fa-ther's love be - got - ten, ere the worlds be - gan  
 2 By his Word was all cre - at - ed; he com-mand-ed; it  
 3 O, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed when the Vir - gin, full  
 4 This is he whom seers in old time chant-ed of with one  
 5 O ye heights of heaven, a - dore him. An - gel hosts, his prais -  
 6 Christ, to thee with God the Fa - ther, and, O Ho - ly Ghost,



to be, he is Al - pha and O - me - ga; he the  
 was done: heaven and earth and depths of o - cean, u - ni -  
 of grace, by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing, bore the  
 ac - cord, whom the voic - es of the proph - ets prom - ised  
 es sing. Powers, do - min - ions, bow be - fore him, and ex -  
 to thee, hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing and un -



source, the end - ing he, of the things that are, that  
 verse of three in one, all that sees the moon's soft  
 Sav - ior of our race, and the babe, the world's Re -  
 in their faith - ful word. Now he shines, the long - ex -  
 tol our God and King. Let no tongue on earth be  
 wea - ried prais - es be. Hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



have been, and that fu - ture years shall see,  
 shin - ing, all that breathes be - neath the sun,  
 deem - er, first re - vealed his sa - cred face,  
 pect - ed. Let cre - a - tion praise its Lord,  
 si - lent; ev - ery voice in con - cert ring,  
 min - ion, and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry,

(after stanza 6)



ev - er - more and ev - er - more! A - men.

Seldom has the wonder of the Incarnation been expressed so beautifully as in this text, created in the era when the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds were being codified and mindful of similar theological affirmations. It is set here to a plainchant melody from the late Middle Ages.

# Prepare the Way, O Zion 106



1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!  
 2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.  
 3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace,

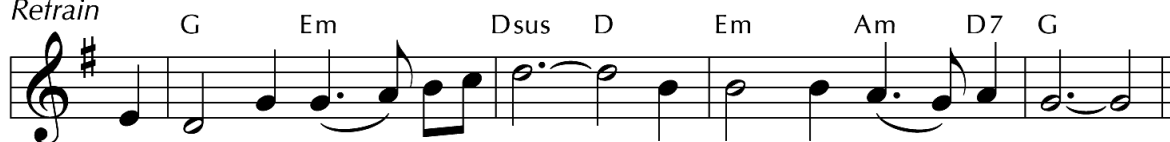


Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.  
 His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.  
 and ti - dings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.  
 Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.  
 All lands will bow re - joic - ing, their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.

*Refrain*



O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

*Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.*

This engaging Advent text based on Isaiah 40:3–5 and Psalm 24:7–10 has been in use in the Church of Sweden for almost two hundred years. It is set to a version of an even older Swedish tune, which in turn seems to be derived from a German folktune that spread to Scandinavia.

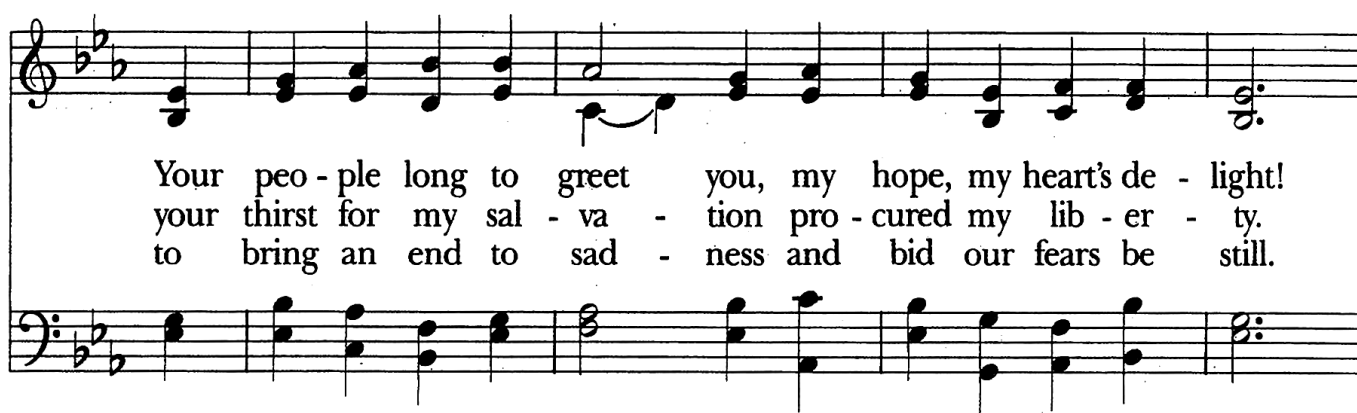
TEXT: Frans Mikael Franzen, 1812, rev. 1819; trans. Augustus Nelson, 1958;  
 adapt. Charles P. Price, 1980, alt.  
 MUSIC: *Then Swenska Psalmboken*, 1697; arr. *American Lutheran Hymnal*, 1930  
 Text © 1982 Hope Publishing Company

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN  
 7.6.7.6.7.7 with refrain

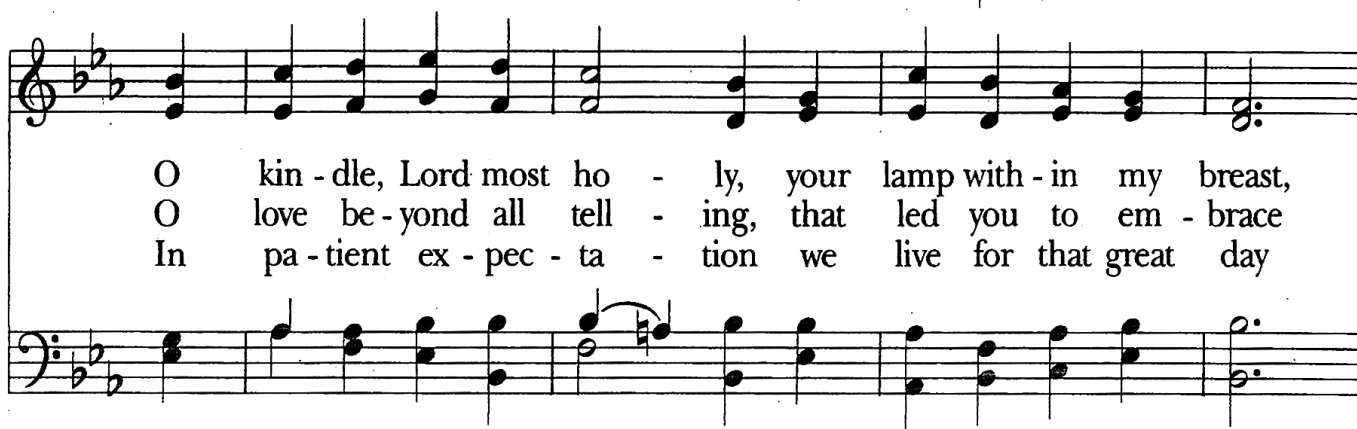
## 12.1.24 Verse 1 O Lord, How Shall I Meet You



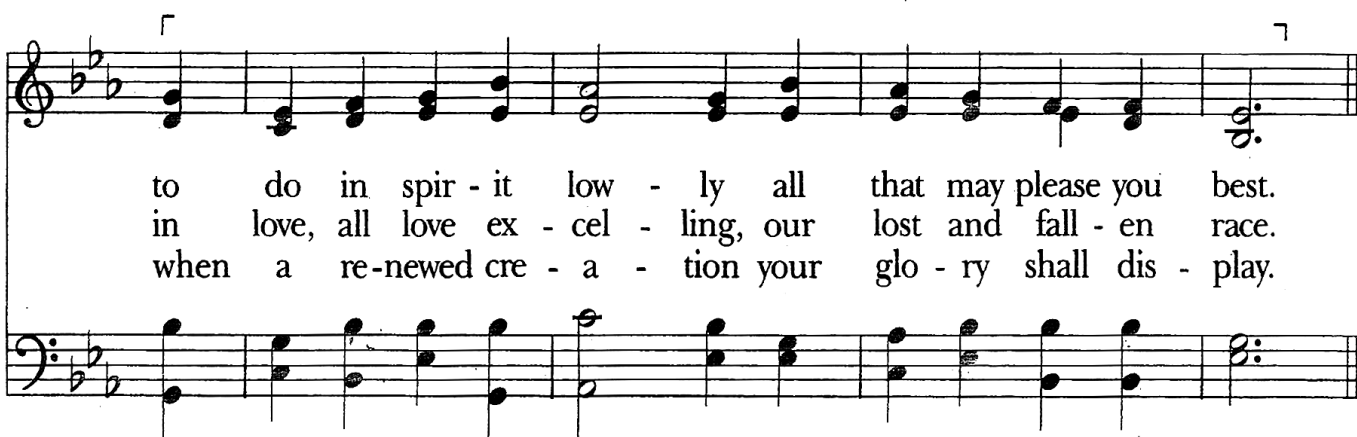
1 O Lord, how shall I meet you, how wel - come you a - right?  
 2 Love caused your in - car - na - tion; love brought you down to me;  
 3 You come, O Lord, with glad - ness, in mer - cy and good - will,



Your peo - ple long to greet you, my hope, my heart's de - light!  
 your thirst for my sal - va - tion pro - cured my lib - er - ty.  
 to bring an end to sad - ness and bid our fears be still.



O kin - dle, Lord most ho - ly, your lamp with - in my breast,  
 O love be - yond all tell - ing, that led you to em - brace  
 In pa - tient ex - pec - ta - tion we live for that great day



to do in spir - it low - ly all that may please you best.  
 in love, all love ex - cel - ling, our lost and fall - en race.  
 when a re - newed cre - a - tion your glo - ry shall dis - play.

# 96 On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an -  
 2 Then cleansed be ev - ery life from sin; make  
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our  
 4 Stretch forth your hand; our health re - store, and

nounc - es that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,  
 straight the way for God with - in, and let us all our  
 ref - uge and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we  
 make us rise to fall no more. O let your face up -

for he brings glad ti - dings of the King of kings!  
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.  
 waste a - way like flowers that with - er and de - cay.  
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.

This hymn shows how once-unconnected parts can work together. The text about John the Baptist was written in Latin in the 18th century and translated into English in the 19th century. Similarly, the 17th-century melody was adapted to its present form in the 19th century.

TEXT: Charles Coffin, 1736; trans. John Chandler, 1837, alt.

MUSIC: *Musikalisches Handbuch*, 1690; harm. William Henry Monk, 1847, alt.

WINCHESTER NEW

LM

(alternate tune: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR)

# The Earth Is White with Snow and Ice

Text-G. Grindal; Music A. Hus-  
berg

The earth is white with snow and ice,  
and far away the Baptist cries to all he meets  
“Prepare the way!” But all we hear is carols play.

Outside the carols fill the street,  
the Baptist cries, “Prepare to meet the one who comes,  
the Christ your Lord, whom in your haste you have ignored

While we ignore the news he comes,  
the Baptist cries, “behold the Lamb The Lamb of God!  
He to reign within your lawless heart’s domain.

Lord, you have died to make us yours.  
Come, open up our cluttered hearts, and enter in,  
yes, enter in and take away our guilt and sin.




## Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence 347

Capo 3: (Bm) Dm (G) B $\flat$  (D) F (Bm) Dm (C) E $\flat$




1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and  
 2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on  
 3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van-guard  
 4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim, with

(G) B $\flat$  (F $\sharp$ ) A (G) B $\flat$  (D) F (Em) Gm



trem - bling stand; pon - der noth - ing earth - ly  
 earth he stood, Lord of lords, in hu - man  
 on the way, as the Light of light de -  
 sleep - less eye, veil their fac - es to the

(Bm) Dm (C) E $\flat$  (G) B $\flat$  (D) F



mind - ed, for with bless - ing in his hand  
 ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,  
 scend - eth from the realms of end - less day,  
 pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry,

(B) D (Em) Gm (Bm) Dm (A) C



Christ our God to earth de - scend - eth,  
 he will give to all the faith - ful  
 that the powers of hell may van - ish  
 "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

(Bm) Dm (Em) Gm (F $\sharp$ m) Am (Bm) Dm



our full hom - age to de - mand.  
 his own self for heaven - ly food.  
 as the shad - ows clear a - way.  
 al - le - lu - ia, Lord most high!"

The flowering of English hymnody in the 19th century included the rediscovery, translation, and versification of ancient Christian hymns, such as this text from one of the earliest existing Christian liturgies. It is set here to an adaptation of a 17th-century French melody.

# How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord 432

Capo 1: (D) (A) (Bm) (G) (D) (A)(D)  
 E<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> Cm A<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup>

1 How clear is our vo - ca - tion, Lord, when once we heed your call  
 2 But if, for - get - ful, we should find your yoke is hard to bear;  
 3 We mar - vel how your saints be - came in hin - dranc - es more sure:  
 4 In what you give us, Lord, to do, to - geth - er or a - lone,

(G) (Em) (A) (F#m) (Bm) (G) (Em)  
 A<sup>b</sup> Fm B<sup>b</sup> Gm Cm A<sup>b</sup> Fm

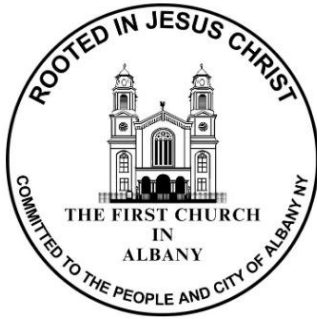
to live ac - cord - ing to your word and dai - ly learn, re - freshed, re -  
 if world - ly pres - sures fray the mind and love it - self can - not un -  
 whose joy - ful vir - tues put to shame the ca - sual way we wear your  
 in old rou - tines or ven - tures new, may we not cease to look to

(A7) (D) (A7)(B) (Em) (G)(A7) (D)  
 B<sup>b</sup>7 E<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>7 C Fm A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>7 E<sup>b</sup>

stored, that you are Lord of all and will not let us fall.  
 wind its tan - gled skein of care: our in - ward life re - pair.  
 name, and by our faults ob - scure your power to cleanse and cure.  
 you: the cross you hung up - on, all you en - deav - ored, done.

*Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.*

This reflection on Christian vocation was written to provide a new text for a pre-existing tune, and the poet has crafted his words so well that the two parts mesh smoothly. The tune is named for a noted British boarding school, whose music director was a friend of the composer.



In partnership with 518 Albany SNUG and Toys for Tots, First Church will help provide toys and other gifts to area children this holiday season.

518 SNUG Albany is an anti-violence program aimed at reducing gun violence by using outreach workers to interrupt potentially violent situations; part of the Trinity Alliance of the Capital Region family of programs and services.



Please bring **NEW, UNWRAPPED** toys and gifts and place them beneath the tree in the Lobby outside of our Sanctuary. All gifts must be under the tree by **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8**



# PRAYERS, CONCERNS & JOYS

- For Melanie, sister of Monica Marsh as she recovers from a fall. For Monica who has traveled to be with her sister.
- For Baby Stella who is home with her family, as she continues to grow stronger. For Kaitlyn Bliss and Victor, Stella's parents as they settle in with their new baby.
- For Rebecca Keller, Zaquan West, family and friends of Andy Mondore as they mourn his passing.
- For the congregation of Elijah Missionary Church of Albany after a devastating fire.
- For the family and friends of The Rev. Dr. Robert A. White. Rev. White was a very active minister and educator with the RCA, who also served locally.
- The Rev. Leroy Koopman, minister, author, lifelong learner via HASP, active in music and theater in Holland MI.
- The Rev. Carlton Bruce Wierks, active in the RCA in many varied roles.
- For the Johnson family, mother of three who passed. Prayers for children and grandchildren.
- For Mark, the cousin of a pantry guest, and his family
- For the Lloyd family for the passing of Donald
- Stephen Giguere, Virginia's husband, diagnosed with cancer
- Shawn Giguere, Virginia's son, with a health diagnosis
- David Allen, recovering from emergency surgery
- Teresa Wheeler's grandmother Cindy, with health concerns
- Donna Jones
- Michelle Williams
- Mia Westman
- Becky Gardner
- Carol LaBatte
- For Jennifer Recene Gallagher
- Ken Lucas, friend of Philip Labatte
- Harold Bushnel
- Alex Bliss
- Mary Weijola
- Cheryl Gowie
- Anthony, of the Brown Family
- Olivia Gaydushek
- Ministers, staff, and leaders of First Church as they move forward into our everchanging world.
- Those dealing with natural disasters exasperated by climate change.
- 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.
- For government officials at all levels as we move forward into the new year.

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



# December



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>1</p> <p>Worship 10am</p> <p>Communion Sunday</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p> <p>2nd HOUR</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p> <p>New Day Prayer Shawl Mtg. 11:30am</p> <p>BIBLE Zoom Study 1:00pm</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Soup &amp; Sandwiches 11:30am</p> <p>Centering Prayer 12pm</p> <p>12pm</p> <p>Weather vanes 12:30pm</p> <p>BIBLE Zoom Study 7:30pm</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Downtown Hot Chocolate Stroll 11am-3pm</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Worship 10am</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p> <p>Deadline for Toys for Tots Joint Boards Mtg</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p> <p>BIBLE Zoom Study 1:00pm</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Boutique at 1st 9am</p> <p>Soup &amp; Sandwiches 11:30am</p> <p>Centering Prayer 12pm</p> <p>12pm</p> <p>Blue Christmas 7pm</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Worship 10am</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p> <p>2nd HOUR</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Boutique at 1st 9am</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p> <p>BIBLE Zoom Study 1:00pm</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Soup &amp; Sandwiches 11:30am</p> <p>Centering Prayer 12pm</p> <p>12pm</p> <p>BIBLE Zoom Study 7:30pm</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Worship 10am</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p> <p>2nd HOUR</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Pantry Closed</p> <p>Brass Quartet 6:30 pm</p> <p>Christmas Eve 7pm</p>	<p>25</p> <p>MERRY CHRISTMAS</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Worship 10am</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p> <p>New Year's Eve</p>	<p>January 1</p> <p>HAPPY NEW YEAR!</p> <p>Office Closed</p>			

Key:



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

## DECEMBER 2024



**TUE** **PANTRY** **9AM**

**3** **PRAYER SHAWL GROUP** **11:30PM**

**ZOOM BIBLE STUDY** **1PM**

**CONSISTORY MTG.** **6:30PM**

**WED**  **SOUP & SANDWICHES** **11:30AM**

**4** **CENTERING PRAYER** **12PM**

**AA MEETING** **12PM**

**WEATHERVANES**  **12:30PM**

**CHRISTMAS LUNCH**

**THU** **PANTRY** **9AM**

**5**

**SUN** <sup>NEW</sup> **BEGINNINGS WORSHIP** **9AM**

IN THE STEPHEN JAMES CHAPEL

**8** **WORSHIP - ADVENT 2** **10 AM**

**FIRSTKIDS (FORMERLY 9UP)**

**2ND HOUR AFTER WORSHIP**

FOR MORE INFO VISIT US AT  
[WWW.FIRSTCHURCHINALBANY.ORG](http://WWW.FIRSTCHURCHINALBANY.ORG)



**First Church in Albany**

110 North Pearl St., Albany NY 12207

518-463-4449

[www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org)