



**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.*

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**Prelude Reflection** *a haiku for today's worship by Jeannie Prinsen*

come, Immanuel  
let your love and justice break  
the curse's power

**Prelude** *"Chorale & Variation on Adeste Fideles"*  
*Joshua Bliss, Baritone Saxophone*

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

**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** *"We Welcome Now the World's True Light" v.1-2* (see insert)

Joy Smith will share a reflection about peace and light our Advent candles.

Titus 2:11-14

**Call to Worship** *Based on a liturgy from Reformed Worship*

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

Leader: We come this Advent Sunday longing for peace.

**People: We dream God's dream, a world at peace.**

Leader: Where enemies are reconciled and children play in safety.

**People: Where the poor and powerless find justice.**

Leader: This season, we're reminded of the good news of Christmas day,

**People: "For unto us a child is born."**

Leader: And his name shall be,

**People: "Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."**

Leader: Prince of Peace, we long that you break into our world anew for the sake of peace, and so we cry out with the prophets,

**People: "Prepare the way of the Lord," and dwell with us as Emmanuel.**

**\*Opening Hymn**                      *"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"*                      (see insert)

**Prayer of Confession** *Based on a prayer by Rev. Beth Merrill Neel*

**Prince of Peace, long ago your prophets told of your promises – a promise of salvation, restoration, and peace. We confess that we have walked in our own ways rather than your ways of salvation; we have preferred brokenness over restoration; we have worked solely for our betterment instead of being peacemakers. Forgive our stiff-necked ways, renew our strength to walk in your ways, and accompany us as we work with you to bring about the peace of your kingdom. Amen.**

*Time of silence*

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

On this Advent day, our honest words of confession echo ancient words once spoken, and like in ancient days, God responds to us, "Comfort, comfort, O my people." Take comfort that the Prince of Peace forgives us. Be set free by this and walk in his peace. Amen.

## **\*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 *Peace & Blue Christmas***

### **Prayer for Illumination**

**Speak to us, Lord, in our waiting, our watching, our hoping, and our longing. Teach us peace. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

### **Old Testament Lesson** Isaiah 40:1-5

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her

that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

### **Sermon Text** Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight,' "

so John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to you, O Christ!**

**Sermon**                      He Has Come To Bring Peace?

**A Prayer of Blessing on the Word**

**\*Hymn of Response** *"Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice"*                      (see insert)

**Profession of Faith** *Third section, first point of the Belhar Confession*

**We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ; that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world; that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker; that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells.**

**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**                      *"Comfort, Comfort O My People"*  
Glenn Claydon, solo

**\*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	"O Day of Peace"	(see insert)
*Charge & Blessing		
Postlude	"REGENT SQUARE"	I. Prins

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

**Note:** You are invited to join Rev. Trey in the chapel after coffee time to discuss the first week of our Advent devotional book *A Surprising God*.



**Minister:** Rev. Trey Tirpak

**Liturgist:** Deb Anderson, Deacon

**Consistory Chaplain of the Day:** TBD

**Organist:** Iteke Prins

**Musician(s)/Specialist(s):** Choir and Joshua Bliss, baritone saxophone

**Audio/Visual:** Joshua Bliss, Stephen Reohr

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# 2023 DECEMBER



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
26 	27 	28 	29 	30 	1 	2 
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  T peace	11 	12 	13  AA Blue Christmas 7pm G	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 T love	25 Christmas Day Christmas Morning Worship 10am in the Chapel  Pantry & Office Closed	26 	27  AA	28 	29 	30 
31  Happy New Year 2024	<b>Key:</b> Indoor Worship 10am          Communion Sunday          Coffee Hour          Pantry 9am          Centering Prayer 12pm          Book Study          Soup & PB&J 11:30am          Choir Rehearsal					

**Preacher:** M Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston T Rev. Trey Tirpak G Guest





# Prayers, Concerns & Joys

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

- Norma McClement
- Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston
- Requests for the Tirpak Family
  - Trey's uncle, with cancer
  - a family friend, with cancer
  - a family friend who is caring for a terminally ill child
- Marian Lais, our office manager's mother in hospice care
- For the family and friends of Barbara Parpale, who passed in October
- Ginny Giguere
- Kathleen Claydon
- Donna Schultz
- Jeff Curry
- Avery Bradley, granddaughter of Marilyn and David, an athlete continuing her recovery from a leg injury
- 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
- Sam, son of Barb and Dave Andrews, recovering
- Carol LaBatte
- Charnelle Jones
- Sam, son of Barb and Dave Andrews, recovering
- Carol LaBatte
- Charnelle Jones
- 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
- 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 DEC. 10

- 10am: Advent 2, (also on YouTube), See our website for links to worship info.

MON 11

- 9am: Food Pantry at Orange St. Door

TUE 12

- Noon: Adult Book Study on Zoom

WED 13

- 9am: Food Pantry at Orange St. Door
- Noon: Centering Prayer (Powell), AA Mtg (Parlor)
- 1pm: New Members Class
- 7pm: Blue Christmas Service

THU 14

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



Scan for  
full event  
calendar

Worship now streaming live on YouTube.

Blue Christmas Service  
Wed. Dec. 13, 7pm

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

# Blue Christmas

WORSHIP SERVICE

Wednesday, December 13th, 7:00pm

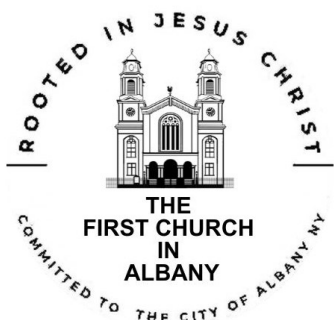
Keynote Speaker: Fred Boehrer  
Director of FOCUS Churches of Albany



The First Church in Albany  
110 North Pearl St.  
Albany NY 12207  
[www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org)



**FOCUS**  
CHURCHES OF ALBANY



## First Church in Albany

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# Advent Week 2



**"Clover's Peace" by Clover Pagerey**

Colored Pencil on Paper

# We Welcome Now the World's True Light

## SIMPLE CRÈCHE

86 86 88

Gracia Grindal (b. 1943)

Iteke Prins

Unison

1. We wel-come now the world's true light as dark-ness set-tles in.  
2. See, dark-ness can-not o-ver-come the shin-ing light that glows

So light the can-dles on this night, the fes-ti-val be-gins.  
through-out the world and in our homes, whom ox and don-key know.

We set in place a sim-ple crèche to show God's Son came down in flesh.  
They see the man-ger holds the Lord whom all cre-a-tion now a-dores.

# O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som  
 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest  
 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy  
 4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from



cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile  
 all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge  
 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the  
 Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple



here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joice! Re-joice!  
 law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.  
 save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>5 O come, thou Key of David, come,<br/>           and open wide our heavenly home;<br/>           make safe the way that leads on high,<br/>           and close the path to misery.<br/>           Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel<br/>           shall come to thee, O Israel.</p>             | <p>6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer<br/>           our spirits by thine advent here;<br/>           disperse the gloomy clouds of night,<br/>           and death's dark shadows put to flight.<br/>           Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel<br/>           shall come to thee, O Israel.</p> |
| <p>7 O come, Desire of nations, bind<br/>           all peoples in one heart and mind;<br/>           bid envy, strife, and discord cease;<br/>           fill the whole world with heaven's peace.<br/>           Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel<br/>           shall come to thee, O Israel.</p> |  |



# Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice

1 Wild and lone the proph - et's voice ech - oes  
 2 "Bear the fruit re - pen - tance sows: lives of  
 3 With such preach - ing stark and bold John pro -

Capo 3 Em Bm Em  
 Gm Dm Gm

through the des - ert still, call - ing us to make a  
 jus - tice, truth, and love. Trust no oth - er claim than  
 claimed sal - va - tion near, and his time - less warn - ings

A Em B Em  
 C Gm D Gm

choice, bid - ding us to do God's will: "Turn from  
 those; set your heart on things a - bove. Soon the  
 hold words of hope to all who hear. So we

D C Bm Em  
 F Eb Dm Gm

continued on p. 5

sin and be bap - tized; cleanse your heart and mind and  
 Lord will come in power, burn - ing clean the thresh - ing  
 dare to jour - ney on, led by faith through ways un -

Am Cm Em Gm A C Em Gm

soul. Quit - ting all the sins you prized, yield your  
 floor: then will flames the chaff de - vour; wheat a -  
 trod, till we come at last, like John, to be -

B D Em Gm D F

life to God's con - trol."  
 lone shall fill God's store."  
 hold the Lamb of God.

C Eb Bm Dm Em Gm

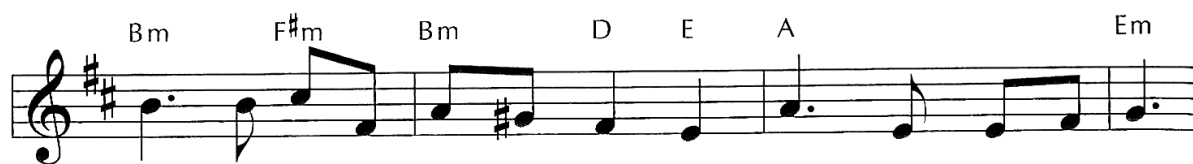
# O Day of Peace



1 O day of peace that dim - ly shines through all our  
2 Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb, nor shall the



hopes and prayers and dreams, guide us to jus - tice, truth, and  
fierce de - vour the small; as beasts and cat - tle calm - ly



love, de - liv - ered from our self - ish schemes. May swords of hate  
graze, a lit - tle child shall lead them all. Then en - e - mies



fall from our hands, our hearts from en - vy find re - lease, till by God's  
shall learn to love, all crea - tures find their true ac - cord; the hope of



grace our war - ring world shall see Christ's prom - ised reign of peace.  
peace shall be ful - filled, for all the earth shall know the Lord.

*Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.*

This text on peace was created to offer non-nationalistic words for a popular British tune. The first stanza depicts *pax*, a mode of peace focused on ending conflict, and the second (based on Isaiah 11:6–9) describes *shalom*, the condition of living in harmony and mutual good will.

TEXT: Carl P. Daw Jr., 1982

MUSIC: C. Hubert H. Parry, 1916; harm. Charles H. Webb, 1987

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JERUSALEM  
LMD