

If this season presents a bit of a  
challenge, we invite you to the

# Blue Christmas

SERVICE

WITH FCIA & FOCUS CHURCHES OF ALBANY

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17 DECEMBER, 2025

WEDNESDAY, 7:00PM  
IN THE STEPHEN JAMES  
CHAPEL

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The First Church in Albany  
110 North Pearl St.  
Albany NY 12207  
518-463-4449

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





**Blue Christmas  
First Church in Albany  
December 17, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m.**

**Prelude** Sarabande and Aria from “*Orpheus and Eurydice*”  
Christoph Willibald Gluck

**Welcome & Opening Blessing**

**Call to Worship** *Based on Psalm 130:1-2, 5-7*

One: Out of the depths we cry to you; O Lord, hear our cry!

**All: Let your ears be attentive to our prayers!**

One: We wait for the Lord; our souls wait.

**All: In God’s Word, we hope; our souls wait for the Lord;**

One: More than those who watch for the morning;

**All: More than those who watch for the morning.**

One: O people of God, hope in the Lord!

**All: For with the Lord there is steadfast love and the power to redeem.**

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*Congregational Hymn**

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” #9  
*Eugene Sit, keyboard*

VENI EMMANUEL  
*See p. 6*

**Scripture Reading**

*Psalm 22*

**Homily**

“*Can It Get Much Darker?*”

Dr. Rev. Mark Mast

**Scripture Reading**

2 Corinthians 1:3,4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.

## A LITURGY OF REMEMBRANCE

### *Lighting of the Advent Candles*

#### **First Candle**

One: The first candle we light to remember those persons whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their name, their voice, their face, the memory that binds them to us in this season. We hold them before God, giving thanks for their lives in ours.

Please take a moment to remember those who have died. I invite you to name them in the silence of your hearts....

**All: Lord, each of us takes our loved one by the hand and leads them to you, the God of love, Here we present them to you. Accept our love and thanksgiving as we entrust them to your loving care. We want our loved ones to be free at home with you. We ask that you save a place for us beside them. We ask that you fill us with motivation and energy in the days ahead when we feel like giving up; remind us often of our true homeland when we are caught up in the desolation of the journey. Help us to find joy in the people, events and the beauty of nature which surrounds us.**

One: Thank you for the gift each of these people has been in our lives. We want to believe that we will celebrate the treasure of love with them again, when we are all in your presence forever. May this truth sustain us in the days to come. Take our sad and aching hearts and comfort us. Comfort us, for we only feel hollowness and emptiness. God of sorrowing, draw near!

**Solo**

*"Different Kind of Christmas"*  
*Glenn Claydon, guitar*

Mark Schultz

#### **Second Candle**

One: The second candle we light is to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs with the security they bring, the loss of health in ourselves or in family members, the loss of joy and peace in our lives from the stresses which surround us, the loss and loneliness we experience. As we gather up the pain of the past we offer it to you, O God, asking that into our open hands you will place the gift of peace. Please take a moment to remember the losses. I invite you to name them in the silence of your hearts....

**All: God of mystery, we turn our hearts to you. We come before you in need of peace, grateful for the mystery of life and ever keenly aware of your promises of guidance and protection. We want to place our trust in you, but our hearts grow fearful and anxious. We forget so**

**easily that you will be with us in all that we experience. Teach us to be patient with the transformation of our lives and to be open to the changes which we are now going through.**

### **Third Candle**

**One: God of the Exodus, you led Moses and your people through the wilderness to a new land. Hear our prayer. We want so much to have a sense of direction, to know where we are and where we ought to be headed. But the darkness and the questions stay. You ask us to be full of faith, to believe deep within that you are our signpost, that you are our wisdom and our guide, and to trust in your presence. Your words to us are clear: "Do not fear, I go before you."**

**All: God of our depths, we cry out to you to be our guide. Help us to have a strong sense of inner direction and grant that we may have the reassurance of knowing that we are on the right path. Take our lives and use them according to your will. Take all that is lost in us and bring it home with you.**

**Solo**

*"Peace"  
Glenn Claydon, guitar*

Ed Cash

### **Lighting of Candles**

#### **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.**

#### **Words of Hope** John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

**Closing Hymn**

**"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" #5  
Eugene Sit, keyboard**

**PICARDY  
See p. 8**

**Benediction**

**Postlude**

*“What Shall I Do Without Eurydice?” from Orpheus and Eurydice*

*Christoph Willibald Gluck*

**Preacher:** Rev. Dr. Mark Mast

**Pianist:** Eugene Sit

**Vocalist and guitar:** Glenn Claydon

**Audio/Visual:** Joshua Bliss

*CCLI License #463379; One License #A-700689*

**Notes:**

## O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL LM with refrain

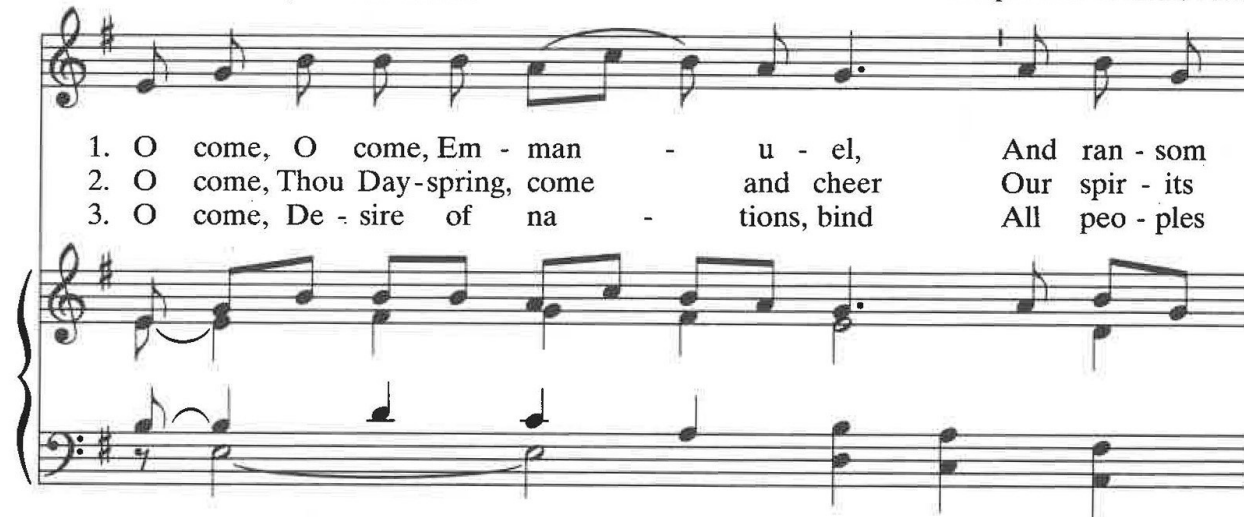
Latin, c. 12th century

Stanzas 1-2 trans. John Mason Neale, 1851; alt. 1854

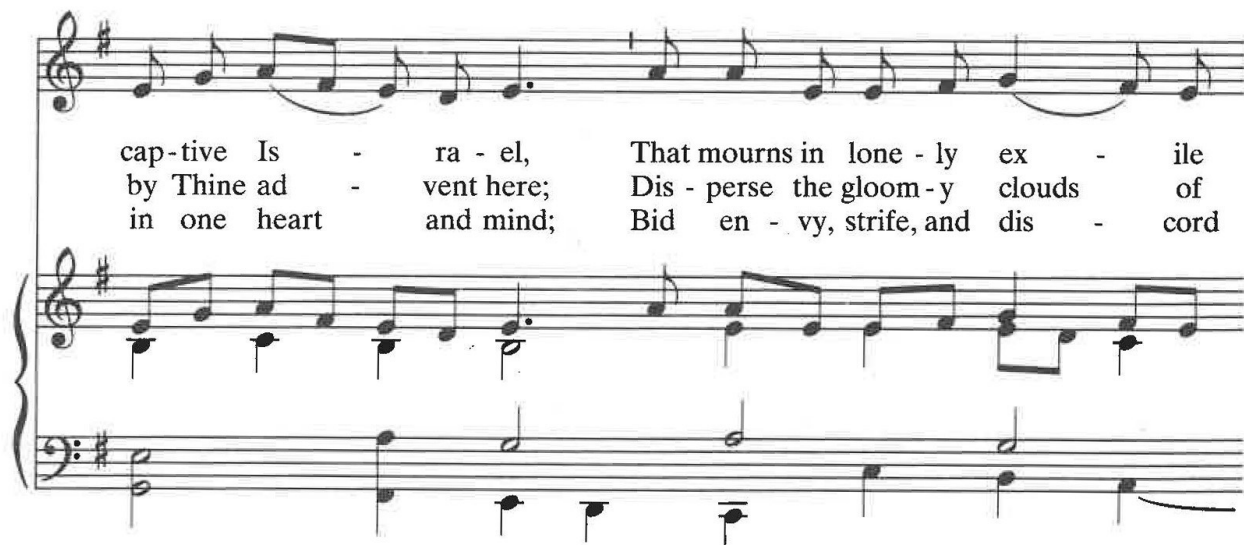
Stanza 3 trans. Henry Sloane Coffin, 1916

Adapt. Thomas Helmore, 1854

Accomp. John Weaver, 1988



1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som  
 2. O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer Our spir - its  
 3. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind All peo - ples



cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile  
 by Thine ad - vent here; Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of  
 in one heart and mind; Bid en - vy, strife, and dis - cord



here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 night, And death's dark shad - ows put to flight. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!  
 cease; Fill the whole world with heav - en's peace.

Em - man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Emmanuel'. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time, with lyrics 'Em - man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!'. The middle and bottom staves are piano accompaniment, with the right hand in the treble clef and the left hand in the bass clef. The piano part features a steady accompaniment of eighth and sixteenth notes.

*Music: Accompaniment © 1990 John Weaver. All rights reserved. Used by permission.*



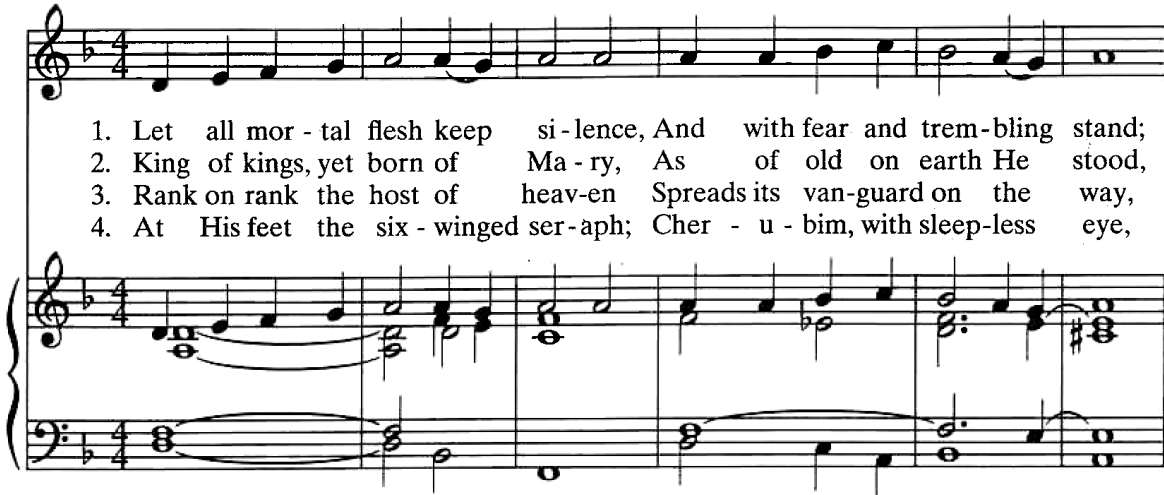
# Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

5

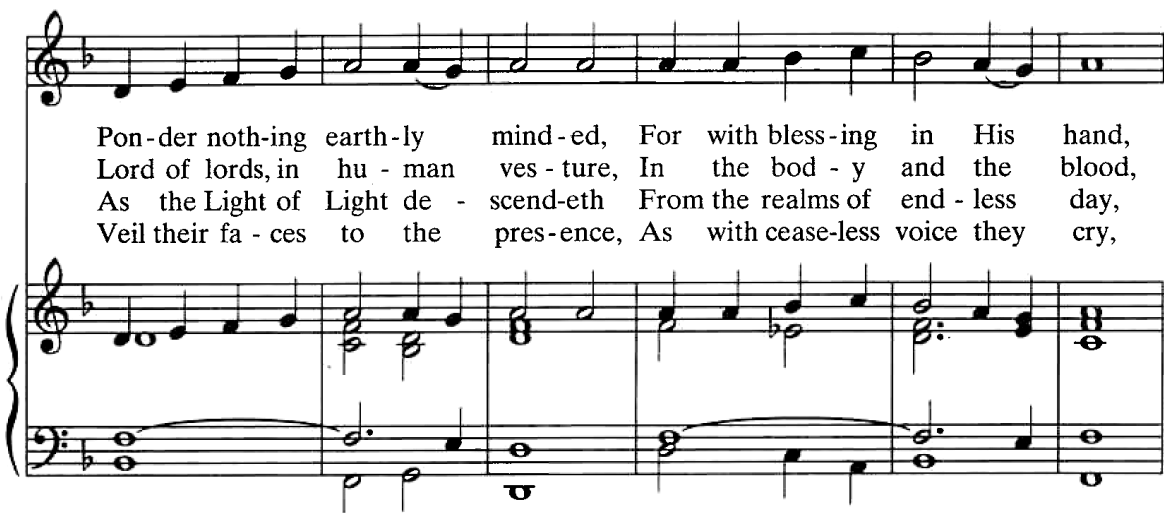
PICARDY 8.7.8.7.8.7

From Liturgy of St. James, 4th century  
Trans. Gerard Moultrie, 1864

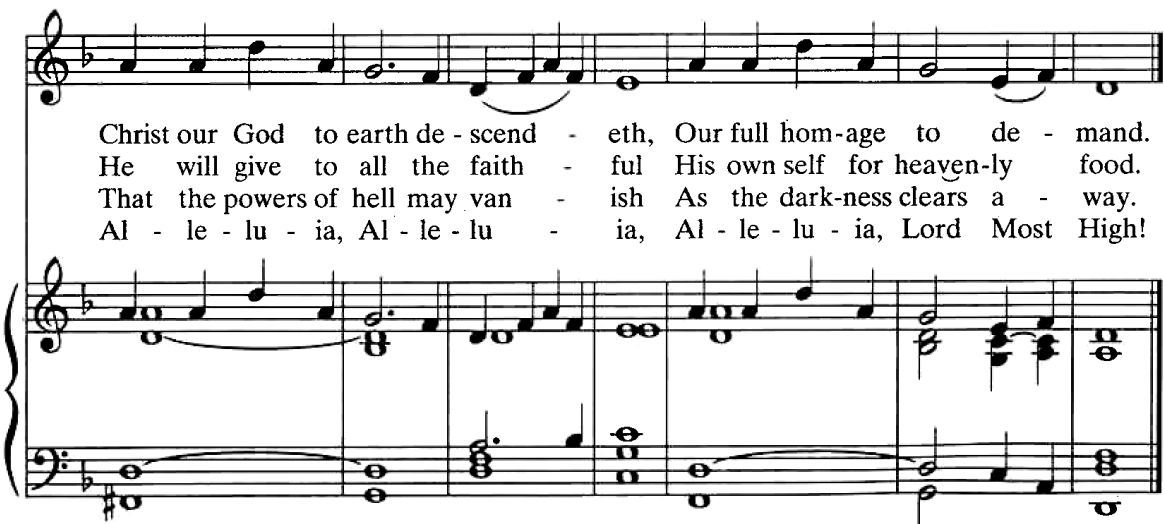
French carol  
Harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906



1. Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, And with fear and trem - bling stand;  
2. King of kings, yet born of Ma - ry, As of old on earth He stood,  
3. Rank on rank the host of heav - en Spreads its van - guard on the way,  
4. At His feet the six - winged ser - aph; Cher - u - bim, with sleep - less eye,



Pon - der noth - ing earth - ly mind - ed, For with bless - ing in His hand,  
Lord of lords, in hu - man ves - ture, In the bod - y and the blood,  
As the Light of Light de - scend - eth From the realms of end - less day,  
Veil their fa - ces to the pres - ence, As with cease - less voice they cry,



Christ our God to earth de - scend - eth, Our full hom - age to de - mand.  
He will give to all the faith - ful His own self for heav - en - ly food.  
That the powers of hell may van - ish As the dark - ness clears a - way.  
Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!



## Christmas Prayer

Heavenly Father,  
On this holy day, we thank You for the gift of Your  
Son, Jesus Christ — the light of the world and the  
hope of all hearts.

Fill our homes with peace, our hearts with love,  
and our lives with joy.

May the spirit of Christmas remind us to give  
generously, forgive freely, and cherish one  
another deeply.

Bless those who are lonely, those in need, and  
those far from home.

Let Your love shine through us so that we may  
bring comfort and kindness wherever we go.

Amen.

*You Are Invited!*

**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
*Candlelight*  
**SERVICE**

**Wednesday, December 24**

**7:00PM**

*Join us for a service of lessons  
& carols, followed by Wassail  
Hour in Zimmerman Hall!*

**All are welcome!**

# JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY					
<b>FEBRUARY 2026</b> S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28				1  Pantry and Office Closed for holiday	2	3					
 Indoor Worship 10am  Coffee Hour  Communion Sunday	4	5	 Pantry 9am  Prayer Shawl Mtg 11:30am Epiphany  AA 12pm	6	 Centering Prayer 12pm  Soup & Sandwiches  AA 12pm	7	 Pantry 9am	8	9	10	
 Indoor Worship 10am  Coffee Hour	11	12	 Pantry 9am	13	 Centering Prayer 12pm  Soup & Sandwiches  AA 12pm	14	 Pantry 9am	15	 <b>MLK Jr. Day</b> Office Closed	16	17
 Indoor Worship 10am  Coffee Hour	18	19	 Pantry 9am	20	 Centering Prayer 12pm  Soup & Sandwiches  AA 12pm  Weathervanes 12:30pm	21	 Pantry 9am	22	23	24	
 Indoor Worship 10am  Coffee Hour	25	26	 Pantry 9am	27	 Centering Prayer 12pm  Soup & Sandwiches  AA 12pm	28	29	30	31		



Key:

- Indoor Worship 10am
- Communion Sunday
- Coffee Hour
- Pantry 9am
- Centering Prayer 12pm
- Soup & Sandwiches
- AA 12pm
- First KIDS
- BIBLE Zoom Study 1pm

# **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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**[www.focuschurches.net](http://www.focuschurches.net)**



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