



**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** 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."

**Prelude** "Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light" arr. C. Callahan

**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. 1-4 (see insert)

Theresa & Nick will share a reflection about love and light our Advent candles.

Titus 2:11-14

## **Call to Worship** *Based the Worship Sourcebook of the Christian Reformed Church in North America*

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

**Amen.**

Leader: We gather in preparation

**People: for good news is about to be proclaimed from the heavens.**

Leader: We gather in expectation

**People: for love is about to be birthed in our midst.**

Leader: We gather in celebration as people who say "Yes!"

**People: Yes to the manger, then and now.**

**Yes to the love of God shown to us in a child.**

**Yes to love enfleshed, in Christ and all those who live in love.**

**Yes to the one incarnate – that the Divine can and does dwell in our world.**

Leader: With preparation and in expectation, let us celebrate this divine love!

**\*Opening Hymn**      *"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"*      (see insert)

### **Prayer of Confession** *Based on Colossians 3:1-17*

**God of Love, we confess to wearing the clothes of our old selves – clothes of impurity, greed, and unkindness. Forgive us. Send your Holy Spirit to empower us to clothe ourselves in Christ's righteousness so we might live pure lives of generosity and kindness. Above all, fashion us with love. Amen.**

*Time of silence*

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

Like Mary who wraps Christ in swaddling clothes, Christ by the power of his Holy Spirit wraps us in his righteousness. We are a forgiven people, clothed in his righteousness. Let us live a life worthy of this love and new life! 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**

## **Prayer for Illumination**

**“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” With your light, O God, illuminate what we need to hear today, and give us the strength to love as you have shown us to love. Amen.**

## **Sermon Text Colossians 3:1-17**

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, enslaved and free, but Christ is all and in all!

Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## **Sermon**

## **Clothe Yourselves With Love**

## **A Prayer of Blessing on the Word**

**\*Hymn of Response**

*“Love Has Come”*

*(see insert)*

**Profession of Faith** *1 John 4:7-12*

**Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love, does not know God, for God is love. God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.**

**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**

*“Love Uncreated, Ever Creating”*  
Choir

J. Brumm/I. Prins

**\*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**

*“We Are One in the Spirit”*

*(see insert)*

**\*Charge & Blessing**

**Postlude**

*“Watchman Tell Us of the Night”*

C. Callahan

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

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



**Minister:** Rev. Trey Tirpak  
**Organist:** Iteke Prins  
**Musician(s)/Specialist(s):** Choir  
**Audio/Visual:** Joshua Bliss, Stephen Reohr

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# 2023 DECEMBER




SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>17</b>  <i>T joy</i>	<b>18</b> 	<b>19</b>  Castle Island Talent Show & Potluck Lunch 10am-1pm Zimmerman	<b>20</b>  AA	<b>21</b>  	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> Morning 10am  Candlelight Service 7pm followed by Wassail <i>T love</i>	<b>25</b> <b>Christmas Day</b> Christmas Morning Worship 10am in the Chapel  Pantry & Office Closed	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>  AA	<b>28</b> 	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b>  	<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
- Mia Westman
- Friends & Family of Doug Plummer, friend of the Bradley family. Doug passed away recently
- Kathleen Claydon
- 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 Joe Vasta who passed, friend of Doug and Gillian Persons
- Ginny Giguere
- Donna Schultz
- Jeff Curry
- From our pantry family, Maureen Jackson and her brother Maurice, both dealing with health issues
- Family of Gillian Persons and for her sister Sylvia
- Becky Gardner
- Sam, son of Barb and Dave Andrews, recovering
- Carol LaBatte
- Marilyn and David Bradley give thanks for the blessing of continued healing for those recently on their prayer list
- Carol LaBatte
- Sam, son of Barb and Dave Andrews, recovering
- Charnelle Jones
- 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
- 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.

## Reaching out to Pastor Mashona

We've had some requests regarding contacting Pastor Mashona with get-well cards and Christmas Greetings. We ask you to understand our heart to honor her time away by not distributing her address widely. Anyone who would like to send a card, please drop them off at the office or place them in the offering. They will be collected and sent to Pastor Mashona from the office.



We ask for continued prayers as she takes this time away and as she celebrates this hopeful time in our faith life.

Thank you, The Staff

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



**YOUR FIRST CHURCH  
STAFF AND PASTORS WISH YOU**

*a Blessed  
Christmas*



*Not pictured: Kim Reohr*



# Worship Events

at the  
First Church in Albany

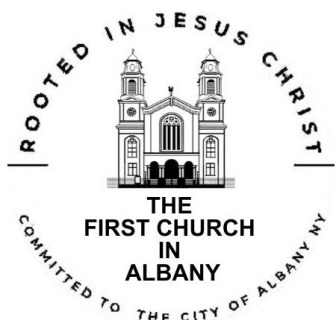
**Sunday, Dec. 24, 2023**

- **10am** - Sunday Morning Worship
- **7pm** - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, followed by a Wassail in Zimmerman Hall

**Monday, Dec. 25, 2023, 10am**

*Christmas Morning Worship in the Chapel*

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



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

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**“...for unto us a child is born.”**



**“Nativity—Our Version”**

*by Students of the 9Up Ministry*

*Air-dried clay and paint*

# We Welcome Now the World's True Light


## SIMPLE CRÈCHE

86 86 88



Gracia Grindal (b. 1943)

Iteke Prins


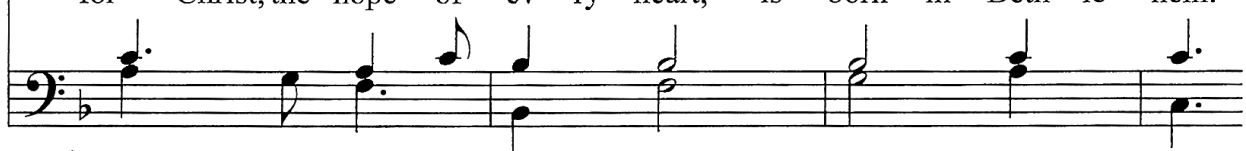
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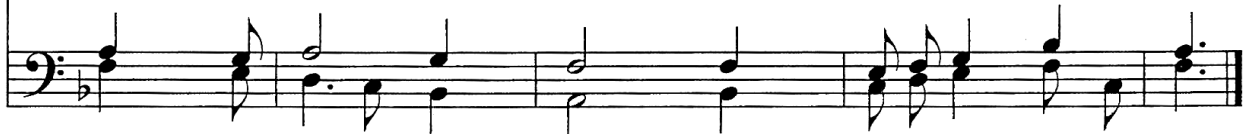
1. We wel-come now the world's true light as dark-ness set-tles in.  
2. See, dark-ness can-not o-ver-come the shin-ing light that glows  
3. We see his glo-ry gleam and shine so all might see his truth.  
4. Light, light the can-dles in the dark; lift up your songs to him,



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.  
The an-cient sag-es read the signs, and shep-herds in their youth  
for Christ, the hope of ev-'ry heart, is born in Beth-le-hem.

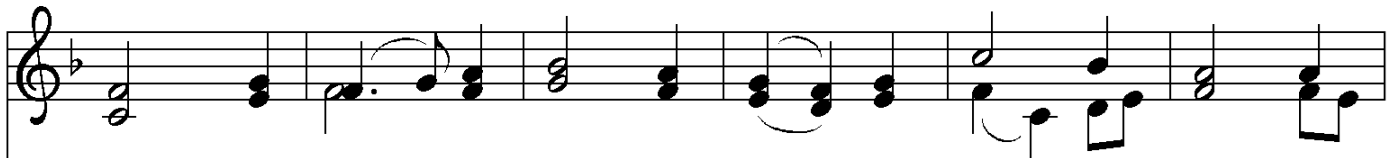


We set in place a sim-ple crèche to show God's Son came down in flesh.  
They see the man-ger holds the Lord whom all cre-a-tion now a-dores.  
felt drawn to see his glo-ry near when God's own Son in flesh ap-peared.  
Now wel-come him to take his place, and fill your heart with truth and grace.





# Love Divine, All Loves Excelling



1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heav'n, to  
 2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - 'ry  
 3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; let us all thy  
 4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion, pure and spot - less



earth come down! Fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy  
 trou - bled breast; let us all in thee in - her - it; let us  
 life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -  
 let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -



faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion,  
 find thy prom - ised rest. Take a - way the love of sin - ning;  
 more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing,  
 ly re - stored in thee! Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,



pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with  
 Al - pha and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as  
 serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee  
 till in heav'n we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.  
 its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.  
 with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.  
 crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise!

# Love Has Come

Capo 3: (D) F (Bm7) Dm7 (Em7) Gm7 (A) C

1 Love has come: a light in the dark - ness!  
 2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der.  
 3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us!

(D) (Bm7) (Em) (A7) (D)  
 F Dm7 Gm C7 F

Love shines forth in the Beth - le - hem skies. See, all  
 Love is God now a - sleep in the hay. See the  
 Love is life ev - er - last - ing and free. Love is

(A) (D) (Bm) (D) (A) (G) (D)  
 C F Dm F C B<sup>b</sup> F

heav - en has come to pro - claim it; hear how their song of  
 glow in the eyes of his moth - er; what is the name her  
 Je - sus with - in and a - mong us. Love is the peace our

(Em7) (F#7) (G) (A) (Bm) (A7)  
 Gm7 A7 B<sup>b</sup> C Dm C7

joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to you, a  
 heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the name she  
 hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the gift of

(D) (A) (G) (A) (D) (A) (A7) (Dsus) (D)  
 F C B<sup>b</sup> C F C C7 Fsus F

Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.  
 whis - pers. Love! Love! Je - sus, Em - man - u - el.  
 Christ-mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Here is a chance to sing a familiar French carol tune with new words, the most important clearly being "Love." The senses "seen and heard" (as in Acts 4:20 and elsewhere) organize the first two stanzas, while the third holds the summary statement: "Love is the gift of Christmas."

TEXT: Ken Bible, 1996

MUSIC: French melody; arr. Eric T. Myers, 2012

Text © 1996 LNWhymns.com (admin. Music Services, Brentwood, TN)

Music Arr. © 2012 Eric T. Myers

BRING A TORCH

9.9.10.9.9.8



# Love Uncreated, Ever Creating

James Hart Brumm

Iteke Prins

1. Love un - cre - a - ted, ev - er cre - a - ting, Love so un -  
2. Touch - ing our faith by giv - ing us pro - mise, lif - ting our  
3. Love un - cre - a - ted, ac - tive, in - car - nate, Love lif - ted

The first system of music is written in 3/8 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). It features a piano accompaniment with a simple harmonic melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The lyrics are arranged in three lines, corresponding to the three parts of the hymn.

like us, dwell - ing a - bove, reached out in mer - cy, born as a  
spir - its, help - ing us cope, Love molds our pain and turns us to  
up to give us so much, Christ's arms stretch out to ga - ther cre -

The second system of music continues the melody and bass line from the first system. The lyrics are arranged in three lines, corresponding to the three parts of the hymn.

mor - tal, simp - ly to touch us, sim - ply for love.  
heal - ing aid - ing our vi - sion, show - ing us hope.  
a - tion, mak - ing us new with simp - ly a touch.

The third system of music concludes the piece. The lyrics are arranged in three lines, corresponding to the three parts of the hymn. The music ends with a final chord in the piano accompaniment.

# We Are One in the Spirit

## They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love



1 We are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord;  
 2 We will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand;  
 3 We will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side;  
 4 All praise to the Fa - ther, from whom all things come,



we are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord,  
 we will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand,  
 we will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side,  
 and all praise to Christ Je - sus, God's on - ly Son,



and we pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored:  
 and to - geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our land:  
 and we'll guard hu - man dig - ni - ty and save hu - man pride:  
 and all praise to the Spir - it, who makes us one:



And they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love, by our



love; yes, they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love.

A parish priest at St. Brendan's on the South Side of Chicago in the 1960s was very involved in the local Civil Rights movement and needed something for his youth choir to sing at ecumenical, interracial events. Finding nothing, he wrote this song in a single day.