



*Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.*

Sunday, February 4, 2024 — Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

**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

Hymn Medley

W. Held

Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing *Based on 2 John 1:3*

Grace, mercy, and peace to you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen!**

Call to Worship

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

Leader: Praise the LORD! How good it is to sing praises to our God;

People: for He is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.

Leader: The LORD builds up Jerusalem;

People: He gathers the outcasts of Israel.

Leader: He heals the brokenhearted,

People: and binds up their wounds.

Leader: He determines the number of the stars;

People: He gives to all of them their names.

Leader: Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;

People: His understanding is beyond measure.

Leader: The LORD lifts up the downtrodden;

People: He casts the wicked to the ground.

Leader: Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;

People: make melody to our God on the lyre.

All: Praise the LORD!

***Opening Hymn** *“Come Sing, O Church, In Joy!”* (see insert)

Prayer of Confession

God of Life, you come to us as an infant in a manger. You promise us a kingdom that cannot be shaken and call us to serve you with praise and thanksgiving. But we forget, and yield to fear. We trust in the tangible rewards of this world, and neglect your promises. We confess that we are a divided people; we foster separations and widen rifts in our families, our communities, and in the world.

Open us to your healing. Free us from all that distances us from your presence. Give us your grace and inspire us to serve you with courage; through Jesus Christ who comes to save we pray. Amen.

Time of silence

Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law

The Apostle Paul writes: “All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image...” and “If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new.” The good news therefore is this: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. - 2 Corinthians 3:18 and 5:17

***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

Lord God, let the words of your servant's mouth and the meditations of our hearts be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and Redeemer. Through Christ. Amen

Sermon Text Isaiah 40:21-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers,
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain
and spreads them like a tent to live in,
who brings princes to naught
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.
Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.
To whom, then, will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes on high and see:
Who created these?
He who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;
because he is great in strength,
mighty in power,
not one is missing.
Why do you say, O Jacob,
and assert, O Israel,
“My way is hidden from the LORD,
and my right is disregarded by my God”?
Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint
and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted,
but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Have you not heard?

A Prayer of Blessing on the Word

***Hymn of Response** “*Just A Closer Walk With Thee*”

(see insert)

Profession of Faith The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
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

“It Is Well with My Soul”

W. Held

***Doxology**

**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.**

Eucharistic Anthem “We Come To You For Healing, Lord”

(see insert)

Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper

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

Intercession

We, indeed, praise and thank you, O Lord, that you have fed us at your Table.

Grateful for this gift and mindful of the communion of your saints, here and in all places,

we offer to you our prayers for all people:

Prayers of the people and world offered here

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.**

Prayers, Concerns & Joys

- Ned Monthie, recovering from surgery
- Michelle Williams, for recovery
- Matt, cousin of Barb Andrews with health issues
- Rev. Dr. Mashona as she continues her health journey
- Rose Hunsberger, for her dad in hospice care
- Mia Westman
- Becky Gardner
- Requests for the Tirpak Family
 - Trey's uncle, with cancer, family friend, with cancer, and a family friend who is caring for a terminally ill child
- Ginny Giguere
- Donna Schultz
- Jeff Curry
- Family of Gillian Persons and for her sister Sylvia
- Becky Gardner
- Sam, son of Barb and Dave Andrews, recovering
- 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
- 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 begin a new year of planning and programming.
- 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.

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

February 2024

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

1 <i>G</i> Potluck & First Thursday Night of Worship		 Choir Rehearsal				Albany Classis Meeting 9am Bethany Ref.	
4 <i>G</i> Communion Sunday Focus Worship Delmar		5 Prayer Shawl Meeting		6 Elders' Meeting		7 AA	
8 <i>G</i> Soup & PB&J 11:30am Choir Rehearsal		9		10			
11 <i>T</i> Communion Sunday		12 		13 Book Study		14 AA 	
15 Soup & PB&J 11:30am Castle Island Play 6pm		16 Castle Island Play 6pm		17			
18 <i>M</i> Communion Sunday		19 PRESIDENTS DAY Pantry & Office Closed		20 Book Study		21 AA Weather vanes	
22 Soup & PB&J 11:30am		23		24			
25 <i>T</i> Communion Sunday		26 		27 Focus Board Mtg.		28 AA WMA Mtg.	
29 Soup & PB&J 11:30am Choir Rehearsal							

Key:



Indoor Worship 10am



Communion Sunday



Coffee Hour



Pantry 9am



Centering Prayer 12pm



Book Study



Soup & PB&J 11:30am



Choir Rehearsal



Weather vanes

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



First Church in Albany

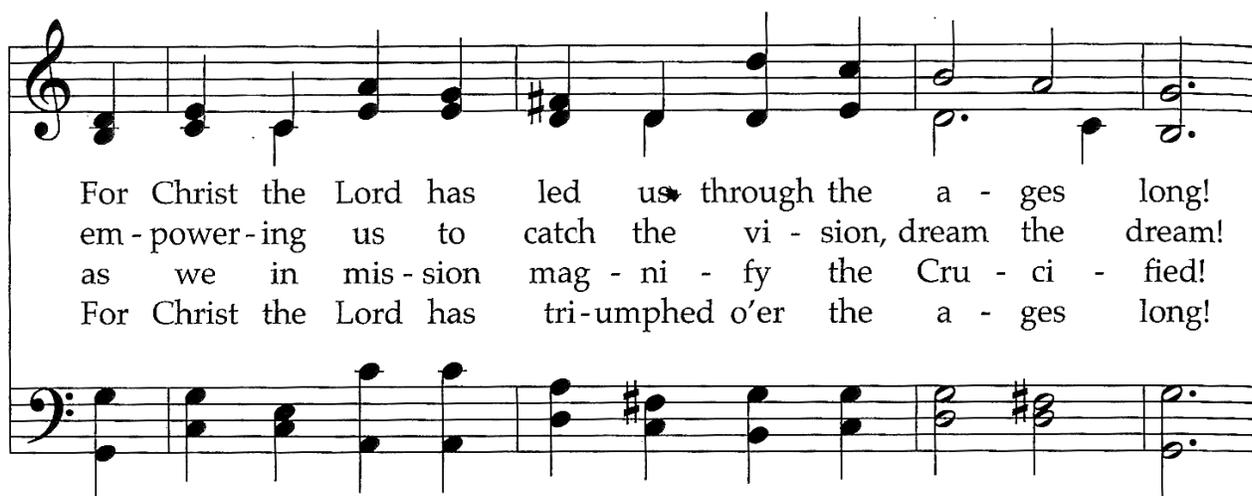
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Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!



1 Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!
2 Long years have come and gone, and still God reigns su - preme,
3 Let cour - age be our friend; let wis - dom be our guide,
4 Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!



For Christ the Lord has led us through the a - ges long!
em - power - ing us to catch the vi - sion, dream the dream!
as we in mis - sion mag - ni - fy the Cru - ci - fied!
For Christ the Lord has tri - umphed o'er the a - ges long!



In bold vac - cord, come cel - e - brate the jour - ney now and praise the Lord!

This text was the winner in a hymn competition sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Bicentennial Committee for the 1988–1989 observance, which had the theme “Celebrate the Journey.” The late 18th-century tune (first used with Psalm 148) is appropriately celebratory.

Just a Closer Walk with Thee

1 Just a clos - er walk with thee, grant it,
 2 I am weak, but thou art strong; Je - sus,
 3 Through this world of toil and snares, if I
 4 When my fee - ble life is o'er, time for

Je - sus, is my plea, dai - ly walk - ing close to
 keep me from all wrong; I'll be sat - is - fied as
 fal - ter, Lord, who cares? Who with me my bur - den
 me will be no more; guide me gent - ly, safe - ly

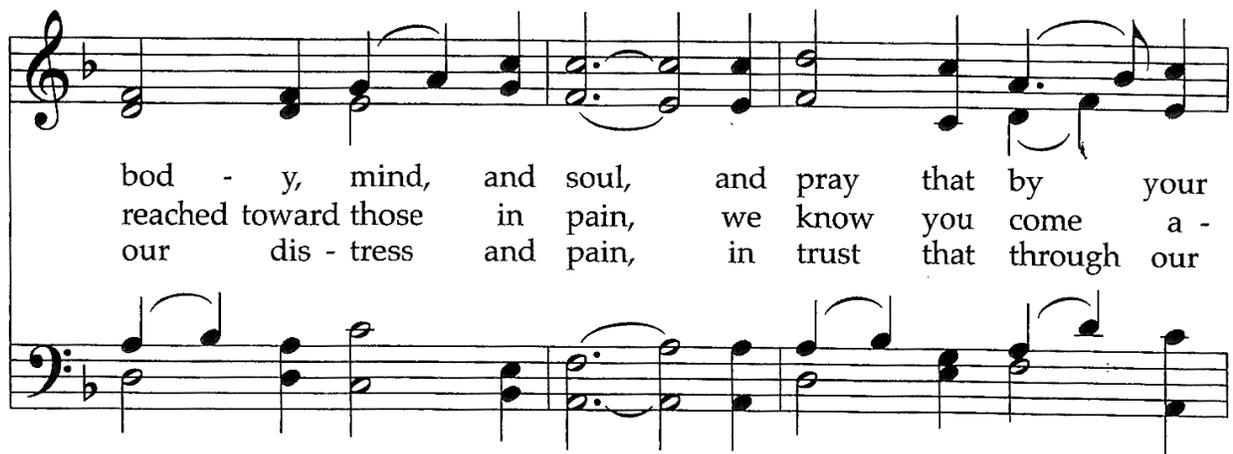
thee: let it be, dear Lord, let it be.
 long as I walk, let me walk close to thee.
 shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee.
 o'er to thy shore, dear Lord, to thy shore.

The chromatic musical style of this anonymous short hymn suggests that it probably dates from the early 20th century. It also seems to owe much of its popularity to radio broadcasts and recordings as well as to evangelistic meetings and singing conventions of that era.

We Come to You for Healing, Lord



1 We come to you for heal - ing, Lord, of
2 As once you walked through an - cient streets and
5 We come to you, O lov - ing Lord, in



bod - y, mind, and soul, and pray that by your
reached toward those in pain, we know you come a -
our dis - tress and pain, in trust that through our



Spir - it's touch we may a - gain be whole.
mong us still with power to heal a - gain.
nights and days your grace will heal, sus - tain.

Unlike many hymns on the theme of healing, this text appropriately includes the ministry of medical personnel as instruments of God's healing activity. It also acknowledges that illness is not limited to physical symptoms, but involves mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

TEXT: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., 2002

MUSIC: American folk melody; arr. Annabel Morris Buchanan, 1938

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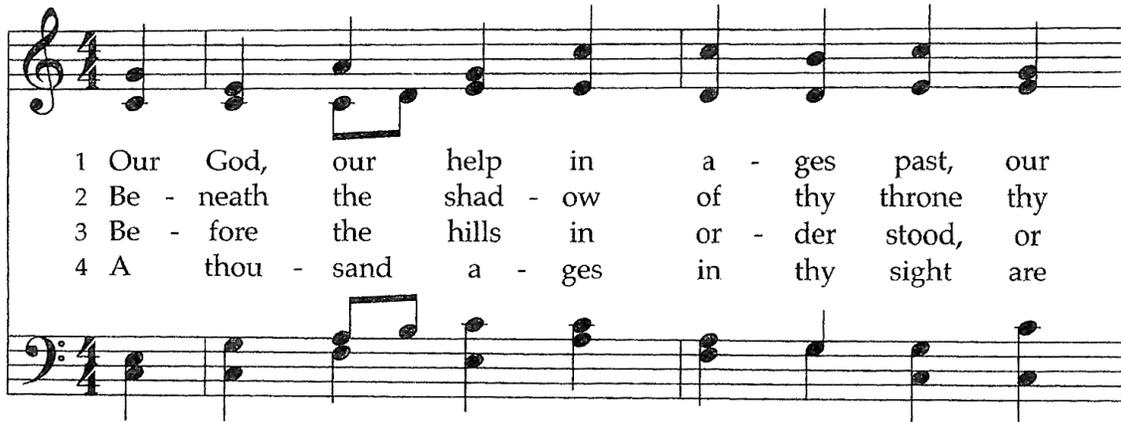
LAND OF REST

CM

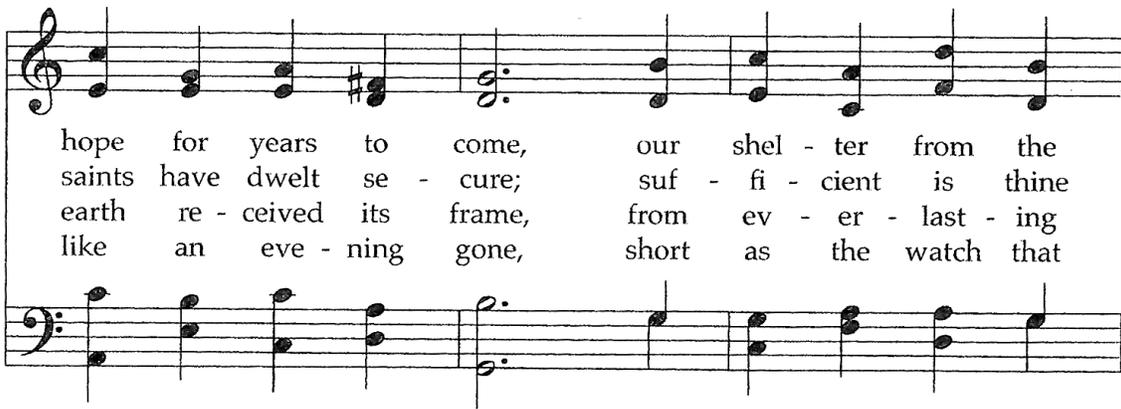
(alternate harmonization, 691)

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

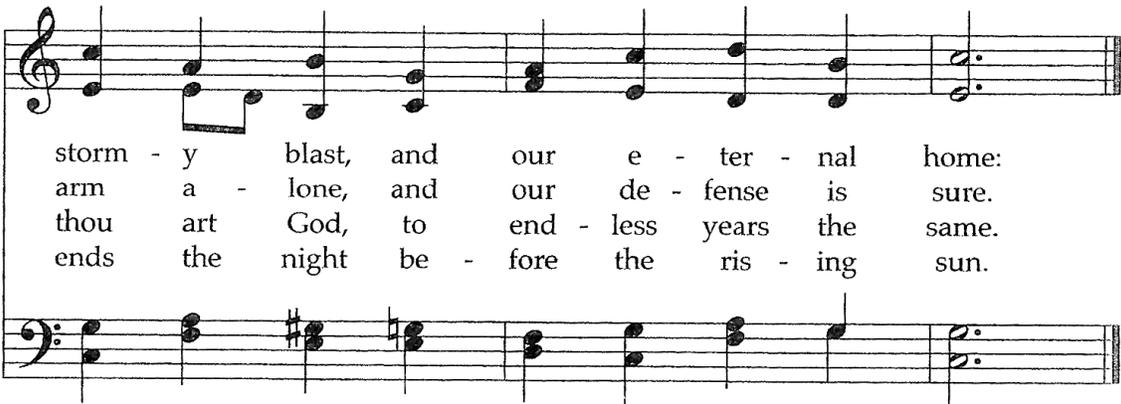
(Psalm 90)



1 Our God, our help in a - ges past, our
2 Be - neath the shad - ow of thy throne thy
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood, or
4 A thou - sand a - ges in thy sight are



hope for years to come, our shel - ter from the
saints have dwelt se - cure; suf - fi - cient is thine
earth re - ceived its frame, from ev - er - last - ing
like an eve - ning gone, short as the watch that



storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:
arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
thou art God, to end - less years the same.
ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ever rolling stream,
bears all our years away;
they fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.

6 Our God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
be thou our guard while life shall last,
and our eternal home.

Many people sing this hymn unaware that it paraphrases Psalm 90, partly because this text speaks so immediately to the human condition. Since the middle of the 19th century, it has usually been joined to this tune named for the London parish where the composer was organist.