

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



FOCUS
CHURCHES OF ALBANY

FOCUS Blue Christmas 2023

First Church in Albany
110 N Pearl St, Albany, NY 12207
Wednesday, December 13, 7 pm



* Rise in body or in spirit

Prelude

*Selection on Cello
Erica Pickhardt, cellist*

Welcome & Opening Prayer

Kathy Donley

Call to Worship

Amy Steiner

One: In the stillness of the night, we gather here.

All: In the shadows of our hearts, we draw near.

One: For those who carry burdens heavy and deep,

All: In this sacred place, we find solace to weep.

One: For dreams deferred or joy restrained;

All: In tonight's litany of lament, no voice is disdained.

One: And so, in the blue hues of this eve,

All: We come seeking hope, for we believe!

One: Let us share our burdens and our pain!

All: For in this togetherness, healing begins to reign.

One: For every heart that echoes a silent plea,

All: May the love of God in Christ set us free.



Opening Song

"A Stable Lamp Is Lighted "

M. Praetorius

(advent candles of hope & peace are lit)

Susan Fedak, solo contralto, Itke Prins, piano

<i>A stable lamp is lighted whose glow shall wake the sky;</i>	<i>Yet he shall be forsaken, and yielded up to die;</i>
<i>The stars shall bend their voices, and every stone shall cry.</i>	<i>The sky shall groan and darken, and every stone shall cry.</i>
<i>And every stone shall cry, and straw like gold shall shine;</i>	<i>And every stone shall cry, for hearts made hard by sin:</i>
<i>A barn shall harbor heaven, a stall becomes a shrine.</i>	<i>God's blood upon the spearhead, God's love refused again.</i>
<i>This child through David's city shall ride in triumph by;</i>	<i>But now, as at the ending, the low is lifted high;</i>
<i>The palm shall stew in branches, and every stone shall cry.</i>	<i>The stars shall bend their voices, and every stone shall cry;</i>
<i>And every stone shall cry, through heavy, dull, and dumb,</i>	<i>And every stone shall cry, in praises of the child</i>
<i>And lie within the roadway to pave his kingdom come.</i>	<i>By whose descent among us the worlds are reconciled.</i>

Psalter Litany Based on Psalm 36

Jake Chipka

One: Your steadfast love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens,

All: Your faithfulness stretches to the skies.

One: Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,

All: Your wisdom, like the great deep.

One: How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

All: We the children of humanity take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

One: For with you is the fountain of life,

All: In your light, we see light.

One: Continue your steadfast love to those who seek you,

**All: For the upright will one day behold your face with joy, for you are the
source of all joy and delight.**

Who Weep and Mourn

Capo 3: (Am) (F) (Am) (F) (G) (C)
Cm Ab Cm Ab Bb Eb

1 God weeps with us who weep and mourn; God's
2 Through tears and sor - row, God, we share a
3 And yet be - cause, like us, you weep, we

(Am) (Dm) (Esus) (E)(C) (F) (Am)
Cm Fm Gsus G Eb Ab Cm

tears flow down with ours, and God's own heart is
sense of your vast grief: the weight of bear - ing
trust you will re - ceive and in your ten - der

(F) (G) (C) (Am) (Dm) (G7) (C)
Ab Bb Eb Cm Fm Bb7 Eb

bruised and worn from all the heav - y hours
ev - ery prayer for heal - ing and re - lief,
heart will keep the ones for whom we grieve,

(F) (Am) (F) (C)
Ab Cm Ab Eb

of watch - ing while the soul's bright fire burned
the bur - den of our ques - tions why, the
while with your tears our hearts will taste the

(Am) (C) (D) (Esus) (E)(C) (F) (Am)
Cm Eb F Gsus G Eb Ab Cm

low - er day by day, and pulse and breath and
doubts that they en - gage, and as our friends and
deep, dear core of things from which both life and

Ab Eb Fm Gsus G Cm

love's de - sire dimmed down to ash and clay.
loved ones die, our hope - less - ness and rage.
death are graced by love's re - new - ing springs.

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

This hymn especially appropriate for funerals began as a wordless tune composed upon reading the obituary of Thomas Layton Moshier, a friend who died from AIDS. Several months later the tune was sent to the author, who created this text incorporating a reference to Romans 12:15.



Musical Selection *“Comfort, Comfort These My Peoples”* arr. C. Calahan

Candle Lighting Litany

Leaders will say some words about each candle to be lit, and then light the candle.

The first candle is lit in grief, for all those we are missing and whatever else grieves us.

Rev. Trey Tirpak

The second candle is lit in lament, for those facing violence or were victims of violence.

Becky Hudak

The third candle is lit as an act of advent hope, reminding us that Christ is with us.
Heather Kirk-Davidoff

*The congregation is now invited to rise and light the candles on the communion tables.
We will conclude our candle lighting time by saying the Lord’s Prayer together.
Please take your lit candle with you back to your pew. You can take your candle home, too.*

Lord’s Prayer

Rev. Trey Tirpak

**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.**

***Congregational Song**

sing 3x

In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful

The musical score is written for a congregational song in 3/4 time, featuring a treble and bass staff. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score consists of three systems of music. The first system has two lines of music. The second system has two lines of music. The third system has two lines of music. The lyrics are: "In the Lord I'll be ev - er thank - ful; in the Lord I will re -", "joice! Look to God; do not be a - fraid. Lift up your", "voic - es; the Lord is near. Lift up your voic - es; the Lord is near." There are triplets marked with a '3' in the second and third systems.

In the Lord I'll be ev - er thank - ful; in the Lord I will re -

joice! Look to God; do not be a - fraid. Lift up your

voic - es; the Lord is near. Lift up your voic - es; the Lord is near.

This refrain from the ecumenical monastic community at Taizé, France, is meant for repeated singing. A wonderful quilt of psalm-like phrases, it would be appropriate at any time but the concluding emphasis on the nearness of the Lord makes it especially fitting for use in Advent.

TEXT: Taizé Community, 1986

MUSIC: Jacques Berthier, 1986

Text and Music © 1991 Les Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

IN THE LORD I'LL BE EVER THANKFUL

Irregular

Closing Prayer & Blessing

Chris Vande Bunte

Postlude

"CONSOLATION"

arr. C. Callahan

*You're also welcome to remain in the Sanctuary, if you need some time of solitude.
You're invited for some refreshments and fellowship outside the Sanctuary.*



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.

www.firstchurchinalbany.org



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www.focuschurches.net

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



The First Church in Albany is committed to the city and people of Albany NY. This feeding ministry is part of our commitment.

Pantry Hours

**Monday and
Wednesday
9am - 11:30am**

The pantry entrance is on Orange St.

518-463-4449

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