

Christmas Eve

at The First Church in Albany

December 24, 2022, 7pm

Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols



The First Church in Albany
(Reformed Church in America)

Founded in 1642; Continuing in Ministry Today

Christmas Eve
December 24, 2022



*** *Rise in body or in spirit***

Bold = Speak aloud.

We Gather in the Presence of God

Prelude

“Aria” and “Chanson”
NOEL NOVELET

J. Rutter
J. Wilson

Welcome, Announcements & Blessing

People of goodwill, tonight we celebrate that “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” because we remember that Jesus Christ was born into this very world to save us from darkness.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:14

***Call to Worship** *Adapted from Rev. Nancy C. Townley*

Leader: We are people who once lived in darkness,

People: but have now been given a great light!

Leader: Praise be to God who hears our cries! Let our souls sing out,

People: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of goodwill!”

Leader: We sing because Jesus Christ, the Light of God, has been given to us.

People: He is our light of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Leader: He has broken through the darkness,

People: And we shall see that light and let it shine through our lives.

Amen.

*Carol 1

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES 6.6.10.5.6 with refrain

John Francis Wade (c. 1740–1743)
Trans. Frederick Oakeley, 1841

John Francis Wade (c. 1740–1743)
Harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906

1. O come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
2. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this hap - py morn - ing,
3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion!

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem!
Je - sus, to Thee be all glo - ry given;
Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove!

Come, and be - hold Him, Born the King of an - gels!
Word of the Fa - ther, Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
Glo - ry to God, all Glo - ry in the high - est!

Refrain
O come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a -
dore Him, O come, let us a - dore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Prophecy of the Birth of the Messiah: Isaiah 7:14-15

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel (which means “God with us”). He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Carol 2

*“When God’s Time Had Ripened”
Rose Hunsberger & Susan Fedak, duet*

A.V. Fedak

*When God’s time had ripened Mary’s womb bore fruit, scion of the God
head, spring from Jesse’s root: So the true vine branches from the lily
stem, the Rose without blemish blooms in Bethlehem.*

*More than mind can fathom, limit or entwine, this mysterious yoking, human
and divine, but what reason fetters faith at length unlocks, and wise hearts
discover truth in paradox.*

*As the bread of heaven, that we might be fed, chose a manger cradle in the
House of Bread, so has Life Eternal mingled in the womb with our mortal
nature to confound the tomb.*

*For this swaddled infant in a humble place holds our hope of glory and our
means of grace; in the Love enfleshed here dawns the world’s rebirth,
promise of salvation, pledge of peace on earth.*

The Annunciation of the Birth of the Messiah: Luke 1:26-33

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

*Carol 3

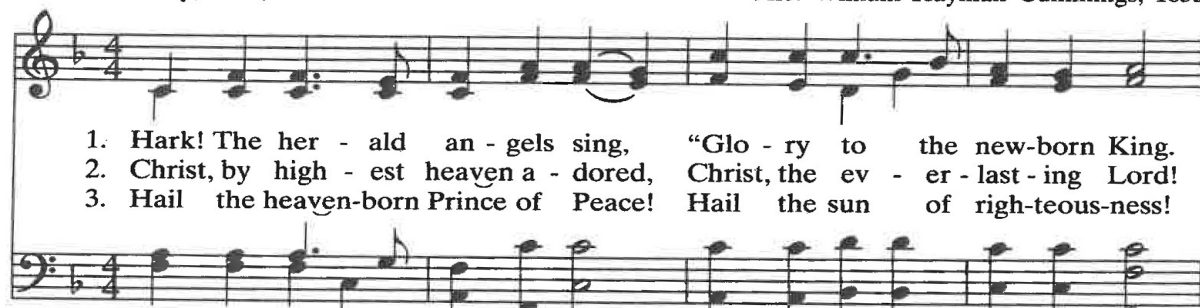
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN 7.7.7.7 D with refrain

Charles Wesley, 1739; alt.

Felix Mendelssohn, 1840

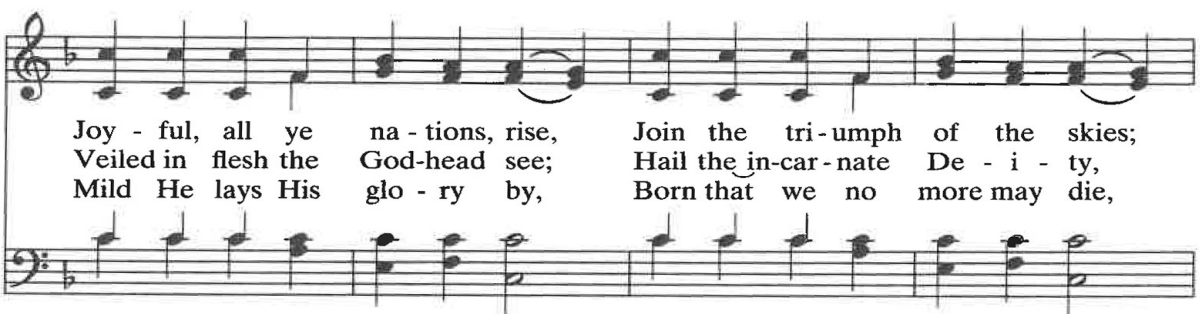
Arr. William Hayman Cummings, 1855



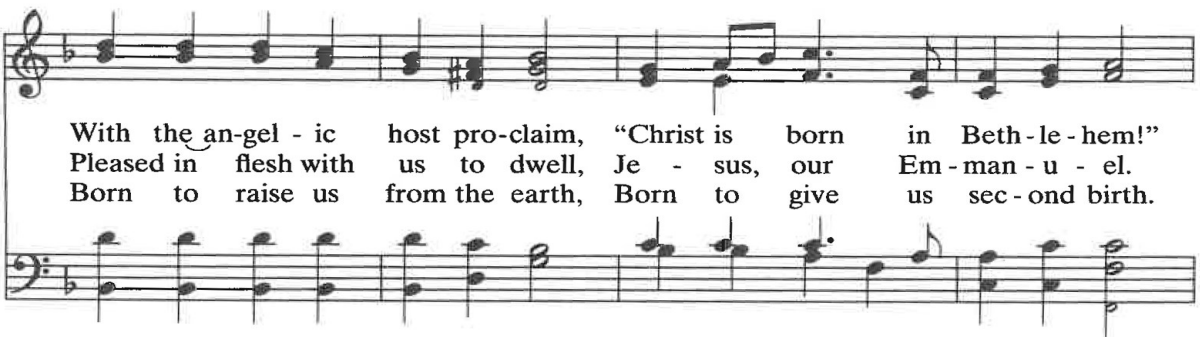
1. Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King.
2. Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord!
3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righ-teous-ness!



Peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
Late in time be - hold Him come, Off - spring of the vir - gin's womb.
Light and life to all He brings, Risen with heal - ing in His wings.



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; Hail the in-car - nate De - i - ty,
Mild He lays His glo - ry by, Born that we no more may die,



With the an - gel - ic host pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
Pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King!"

Prophecy of God's Promise to Make a Way for Salvation: 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 people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Offering & Carol 4

"From Bethlehem, Fair City"
The First Church Choir

setting R. Proulx

From Bethlehem, fair city comes forth a little Son; In him all gentle graces are gathered into one. Eja, Eja, are gathered into one.

Now all our love and fortune like in his mighty hands; Our sorrow, joy and failure He sees and understands. Eja, Eja, he sees and understands.

O Shepherd-King from heaven, we go where you will lead; We fear no distant pasture with you at hand to feed. Eja, Eja, with you at hand to feed.

No grief can ever part us how-ever sharp it's edge; we serve you and each other; take now our hearts in pledge. Eja, Eja, take now our hearts in pledge.

As is First Church's custom every Christmas Eve, our offering tonight is going to two places, one for a local cause, The Wizard's Wardrobe, and one for an international cause, Church World Service. If you would like to give to one specifically, please indicate that in writing. Please see the back of your worship guide for more information about these organizations.

Prophecy of the Location of the Messiah's Birth: Micah 5:2-4a

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

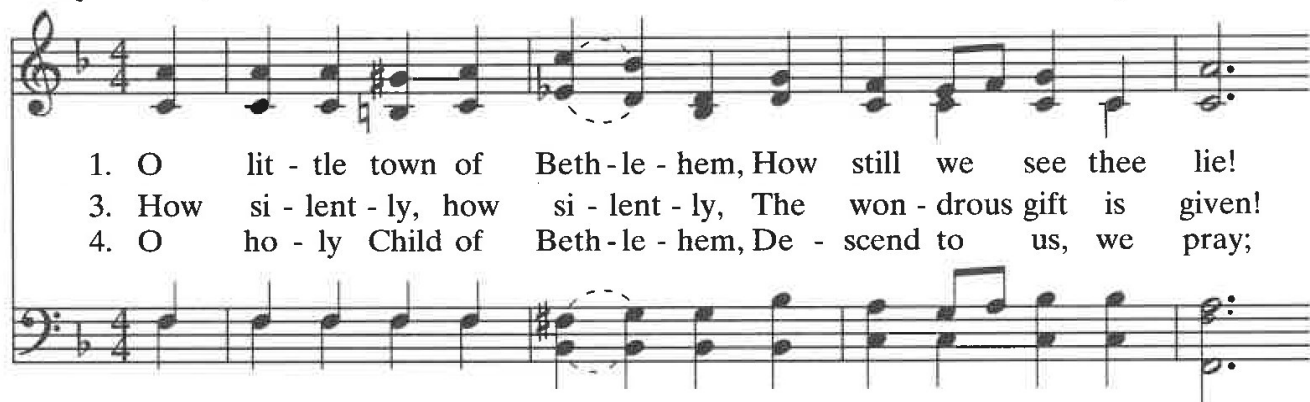
***Carol 5**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

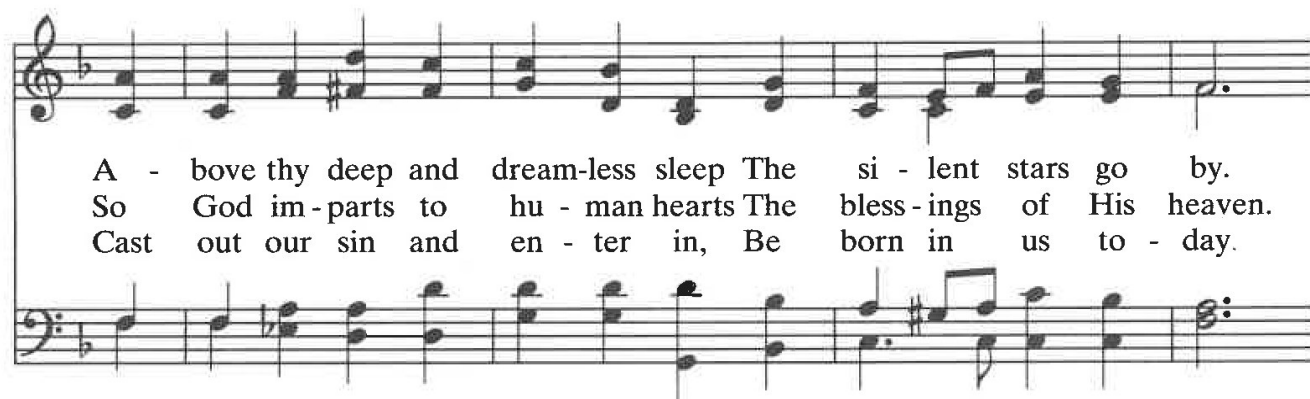
ST. LOUIS 8.6.8.6.7.6.8.6

Phillips Brooks, 1868

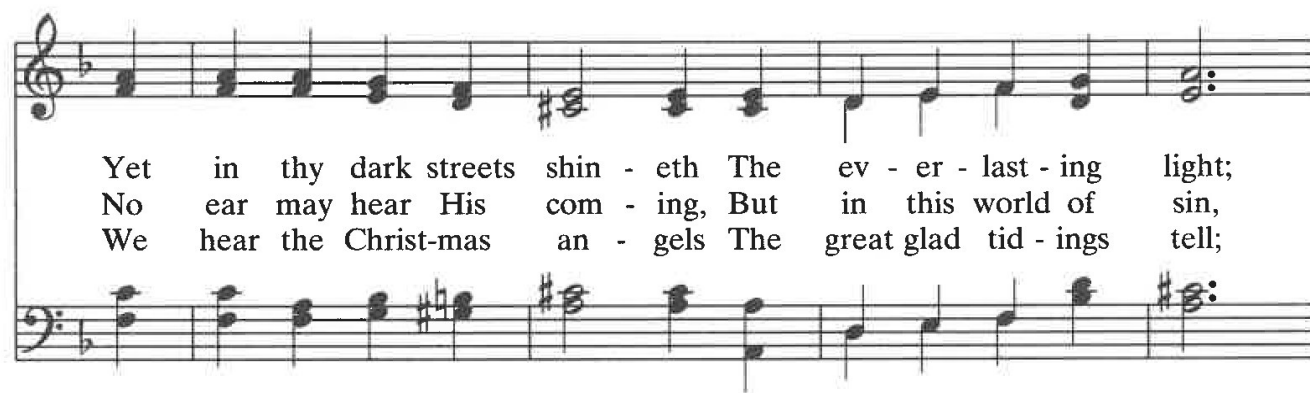
Lewis Henry Redner, 1868



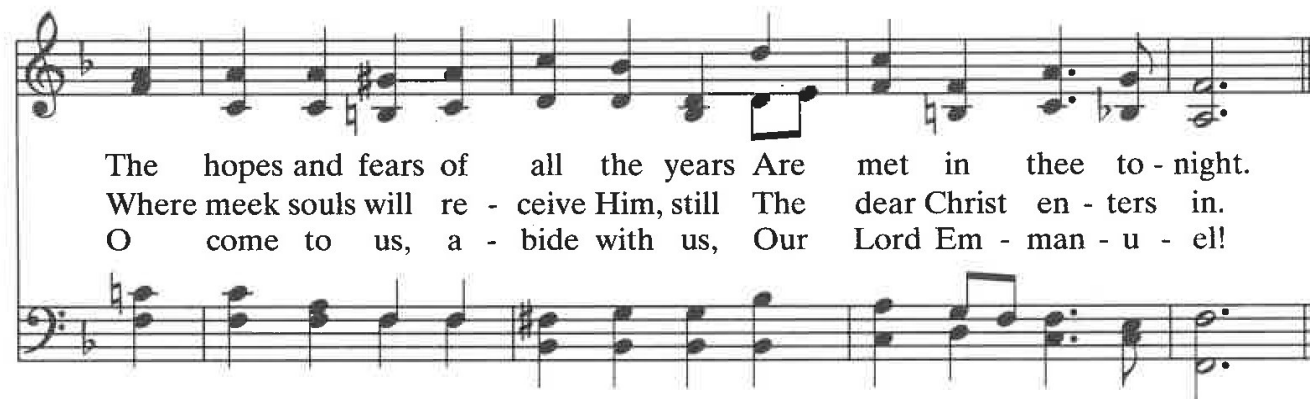
1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, The won - drous gift is given!
4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, De - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si - lent stars go by.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of His heaven.
Cast out our sin and en - ter in, Be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing light;
No ear may hear His com - ing, But in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ-mas an - gels The great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to - night.
Where meek souls will re - ceive Him, still The dear Christ en - ters in.
O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Em - man - u - el!

The Savior's Birth: Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

*Carol 6

Joy to the World!

ANTIOCH CM with repeat

Attr. George Frederick Handel, 1742
Arr. Lowell Mason, 1836

Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come: Let earth re -
2. Joy to the world! the Sav - ior reigns: Let us our
3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, Nor thorns in -
4. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the

ceive her King; Let ev - ery heart pre - pare Him room,
songs em - ploy; While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
fest the ground; He comes to make His bless - ings flow
na - tions prove The glo - ries of His righ - teous - ness,

And heaven and na - ture sing, And heaven and na - ture
Re - peat the sound-ing joy, Re - peat the sound-ing
Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is
And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His
And heaven and na - ture sing,

And



A Christmas Prayer

Prophecy of Salvation, The Light of the World: Isaiah 9:2-3, 6-7a

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest.

*Carol 7

“Echoing Carols”

C. Cooman

Rose Hunsberger & Susan Fedak, duet

On the night the babe was thusly born, snow held its blue breath.
Light spiraled out of angel’s bodies and kissed the cloud-soft, newborn’s
cheek
while carols echoed inside night birds.

Stars flew like wild birds dazed by the frenzy of song slipping
over the edge of the universe.

The message of God had a crying mission: *sigh yourself unto salvation.*

Mary mild, Jesus sweetly stopped the world’s weeping. Grace cascaded
like a waterfall of melting crystals—go now and let love live in you
like that child’s quiet heartbeat.

The Angels Appear and Announce the Good News: Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward all!”

*Carol 8

Angels We Have Heard on High

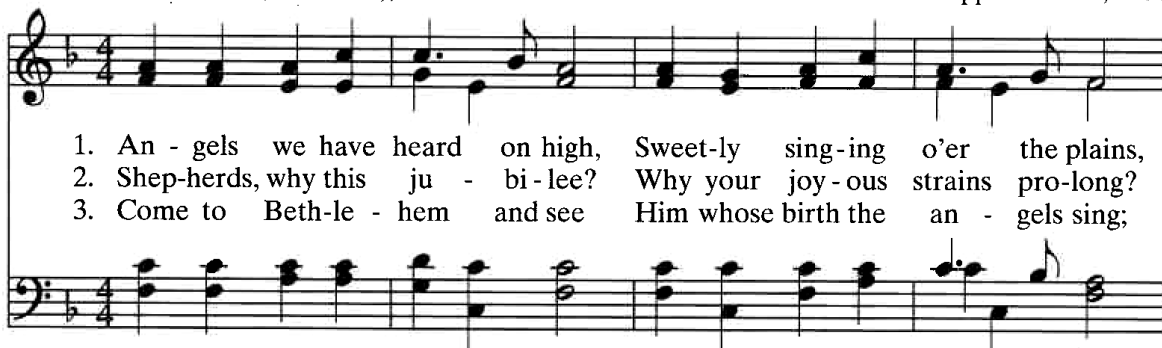
French carol

GLORIA 7.7.7.7 with refrain

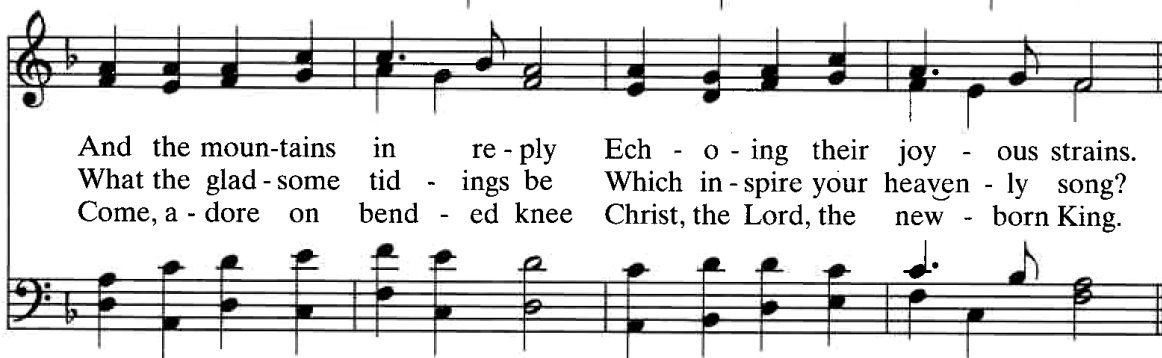
French carol

Trans. James Chadwick (1813–1882); alt.

Arr. Edward Shippen Barnes, 1937



1. An - gels we have heard on high, Sweet-ly sing-ing o'er the plains,
 2. Shep-herds, why this ju - bi-lee? Why your joy-ous strains pro-long?
 3. Come to Beth-le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;



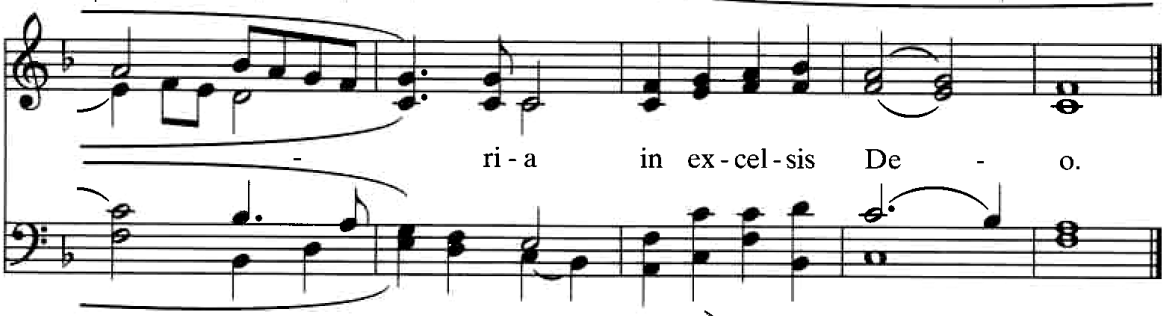
And the moun-tains in re - ply Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
 What the glad - some tid - ings be Which in - spire your heaven - ly song?
 Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.



Refrain
 Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; Glo



ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

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Prophecy Regarding the Messengers of Salvation: Isaiah 52:7-9

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.

Carol 9

In the Bleak Midwinter

CRANHAM Irregular

Christina Rossetti, c. 1872; alt.

Gustav Theodore Holst, 1906

1. In the bleak mid - win - ter, Frost - y wind made moan,
4. What can I give Him, Poor as I am?

Earth stood hard as i - ron, Wa - ter like a stone;
If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;

Snow had fall - en, snow on snow, Snow on snow,
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;

In the bleak mid - win - ter, Long a - go.
Yet what I can I give Him: Give my heart.

Christ Candle Reflection & Lighting the Advent Candles: (Minister)

An attendant will come and light the candle of whoever is on the outside of the aisle. Please then light the candles of those next to you.

The Shepherds Visit Christ the Messiah: Luke 2:15-20 (Minister)

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

*Carol 10

Silent Night, Holy Night

STILLE NACHT Irregular

Joseph Mohr, 1818

Trans. John Freeman Young, 1863

Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright, Round yon
2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight, Glo - ries
3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light Ra - diant

vir - gin moth - er and child! Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild,
stream from heav - en a - far, Heav - en - ly hosts sing: "Al - le - lu - ia;
beams from Thy ho - ly face, With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,

Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace,
Christ the Sav - ior is born, Christ the Sav - ior is born,"
Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Carol 11

*Let Heaven With Gladness Ring
The First Church Choir*

Bringle/Rowan

*Let heav'n with gladness ring!
Bright angels throng in flight
With splendor on the wing;
A child is born this night!*

*With shepherds now make haste;
our longing days are past.
All life is newly graced:
for Christ has come at last!*

*Refrain
Sing gloria and shout for joy,
to hail the new-born baby boy!*

*Behold the manger bed,
in wonderment and mirth:
our God in human stead
in Love appears on earth!*

*Benediction

Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

Postlude

"Fantasy on Ukrainian Carol"

A. Fedak

CCLI License #463379; One License #A-700689



Worship Leadership:

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

Liturgist: Various

Organist: Itke Prins

Flutist: Jackie Wright

Contralto: Susan Fedak

Soprano: Rose Hunsberger

Technical Team: Joshua Bliss, and Stephen Reohr



Our 2022 Christmas Eve Offering



The Wizard's Wardrobe is a fantastic and growing organization right here in Albany. It is a free one-to-one, after-school tutoring program with an emphasis on reading and writing. Their tutoring model enables a strong bond between student and tutor and creates a calm, safe, and encouraging environment for learning. Not only do students learn literacy skills, but there is also a focus on developing non-cognitive skills such as self-control, self-motivation, as well as confidence that can have positive, long-lasting influences throughout life.



Church World Service is a trusted ecumenical initiative that works in over 65 countries. The two areas of work they focus on are relief and development, summarized as CROP, and immigration and refugee services, summarized as IRP+. Their CROP work includes the CROP Hunger Walks, Blankets and Kits, and individual programs in each country working alongside local responders in disaster and underserved areas to give immediate relief. Their IRP+ work is actively helping Ukrainians, Syrians, Central Americans, and many others. We're delighted to be supporting such an impactful organization!

Prayer Joys & Concerns

- Kokese Ballou
- For Jennifer Recene Gallagher
- Larry McCarthy, friend of the Andrews Family
- Ruth and Josue Torres
- Rose Hunsberger, her father Jim and their extended family as they mourn her mother's passing.
- The Reohr Family
- Jason Shahid
- Joe Vasta and wife Albie, friends of the Persons
- Deborah Paris, daughter of Betty Pierce
- 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
- Brian Zapel, friend of Dave Andrews
- Ronald Stockhoff.
- For Mia and Wim Westman
- For Barbara W., dear friend of Barb & Dave Andrews and Donna Jones
- Harold Bushnel
- Alex Bliss
- Mary Weijola
- Cheryl Gowie
- Norma McClement
- Ralph McNeil, brother of Norma Jean Ballou
- Mary Ann Selmer
- Anthony, of the Brown Family
- Donna Schultz
- Jeff Curry
- Olivia Gaydushek
- Clergy, staff and leaders of the First Church in Albany
- Prayers for this burden of gun violence and its aftermath.
- An end to the war in Ukraine

Prayer Concerns? If you would like your church family to join you in prayer, please share your concerns and joys with us. Call the office at 518-463-4449 or email office@firstchurchinalbany.org.



This year's program is hosted by our Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston. More info to follow...



This Week at the First Church in Albany

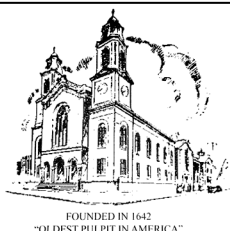
- **Saturday 12.24 7pm Christmas Eve Service (in person and on Zoom)**
- **Sunday 12.25 10am Christmas Sunday Worship (in person and on Zoom) Wear your pjs!**
- Monday 12.26 Office Closed due to holiday
- 9am No Food Pantry due to holiday
- Tuesday 12.27 12pm No Adult Book Study this week
- Wednesday 12.28 9am No Food Pantry due to holiday
- 12pm AA Meeting
- 12pm Centering Prayer
- Thursday 12.29 11:30am Soup Lunch in Clee Park
- Sunday 1.1 10am New Year's Sunday Worship (in person and on Zoom)

*Happy
New Year*

- Monday 1.2 Office **Closed** due to holiday
- 9am Pantry **WILL BE** open

Upcoming Events

- Thursday 1.5 7:00pm A Night of Worship
- Sunday 1.18 11:15am Annual Congregational Meeting



First Church in Albany

110 North Pearl St., Albany NY 12207

518-463-4449 www.firstchurchinalbany.org