



**December 24, 2023, 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, 2023



*\* Rise in body or in spirit*    **Bold** = Speak aloud.

**We Gather in the Presence of God**

**Prelude**

*Seasonal Music Selections*  
Organ & Flute

**Welcome & Blessing**

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”  
John 1:14

**\*Call to Worship** *Adapted from Feasting on the Word: Worship Companion*

Leader: Good news of great hope!

**People: People who walked in darkness now live in great light!**

Leader: Good news of great peace!

**People: Oppression and war will not have the last word!**

Leader: Good news of great joy!

**People: For unto us a savior is born, who is the Messiah, the Lord!**

Leader: Good news of great love!

**People: God sent the only Son into the world so that we might live through him!**

Leader: So come, one and all. Come and greet the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace born this night.

\*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      Of the Father's Love Begotten



1 Of the Fa-ther's love be - got - ten, ere the worlds be - gan  
2 By his Word was all cre - at - ed; he com-mand-ed; it  
3 O, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed when the Vir - gin, full



to be, he is Al - pha and O - me - ga; he the  
was done: heaven and earth and depths of o - cean, u - ni -  
of grace, by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing, bore the



source, the end - ing he, of the things that are, that  
verse of three in one, all that sees the moon's soft  
Sav - ior of our race, and the babe, the world's Re -



have been, and that fu - ture years shall see,  
shin - ing, all that breathes be - neath the sun,  
deem - er, first re - vealed his sa - cred face,



ev - er - more and ev - er - more!      A - men.

Seldom has the wonder of the Incarnation been expressed so beautifully as in this text, created in the era when the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds were being codified and mindful of similar theological affirmations. It is set here to a plainchant melody from the late Middle Ages.

TEXT Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 5th cent.;  
trans. John Mason Neale, 1854, alt., and Henry Williams Baker, 1859, alt.  
MUSIC: Plainsong, Mode V; harm. C. Winfred Douglas, 1940  
Music Harm. © 1943 1961 1985 Church Pension Fund

DIVINUM MYSTERIUM  
8.7.8.7.8.7.7

## 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

### Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly



1. Sing of Mar - y, pure and low - ly, Vir - gin Moth - er  
2. Sing of Je - sus, son of Mar - y, In the home at  
3. Glo - ry be to God the Fa - ther; Glo - ry be to



un - de - filed. Sing of God's own Son most ho - ly,  
Naz - a - reth. Toil and la - bor can - not wea - ry  
God the Son; Glo - ry be to God the Spir - it;



Who be - came her lit - tle child. Fair - est Child of  
Love en - dur - ing un - to death. Con - stant was the  
Glo - ry to the Three in One. From the heart of



fair - est Moth - er, God the Lord who came to earth,  
love he gave her, Though he went forth from her side,  
bless - ed Mar - y, From all saints the song as - cends,



Word - made - flesh, our ver - y broth - er,  
Forth to preach, and heal, and suf - fer,  
And the Church the strain re - ech - oes



Takes our na - ture by his birth.  
Till on Cal - va - ry he died.  
Un - to earth's re - mot - est ends.

## **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**

*"Light Dawns on a Weary World"*  
*The First Church Choir*

M. Bringle

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, Kekeli. Please see page 14 of this worship guide for more information about these organizations.



**Wizard's  
Wardrobe**



*Kekeli*

## **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.

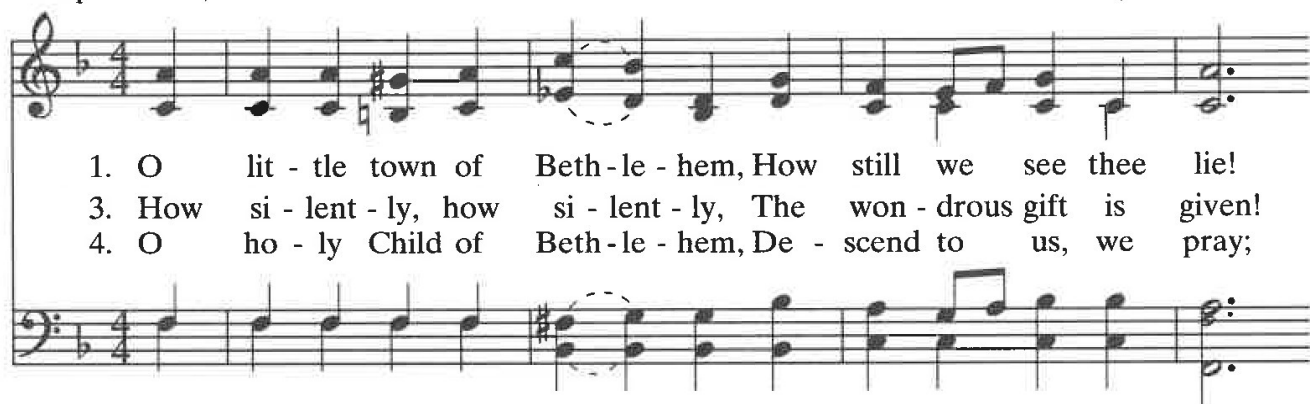
**\*Carol 5**

# O Little Town of Bethlehem


ST. LOUIS 8.6.8.6.7.6.8.6

Phillips Brooks, 1868

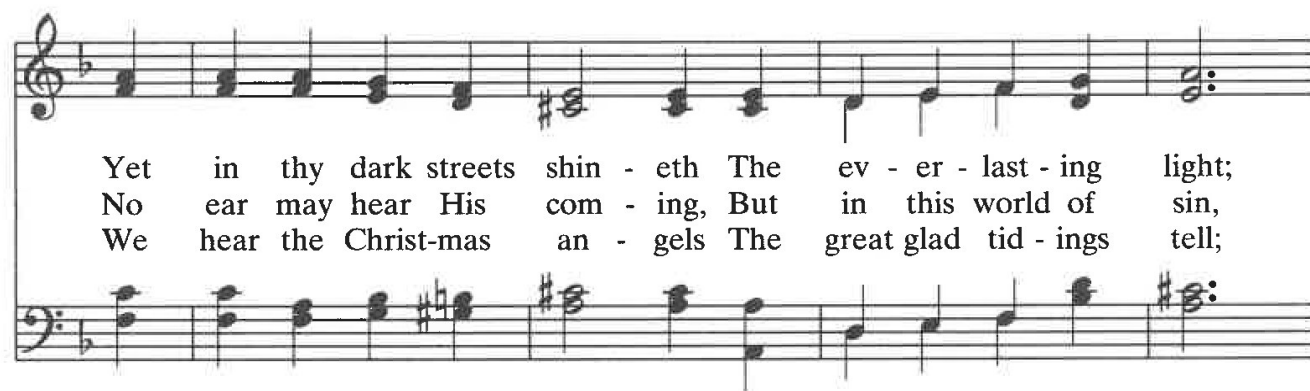
Lewis Henry Redner, 1868



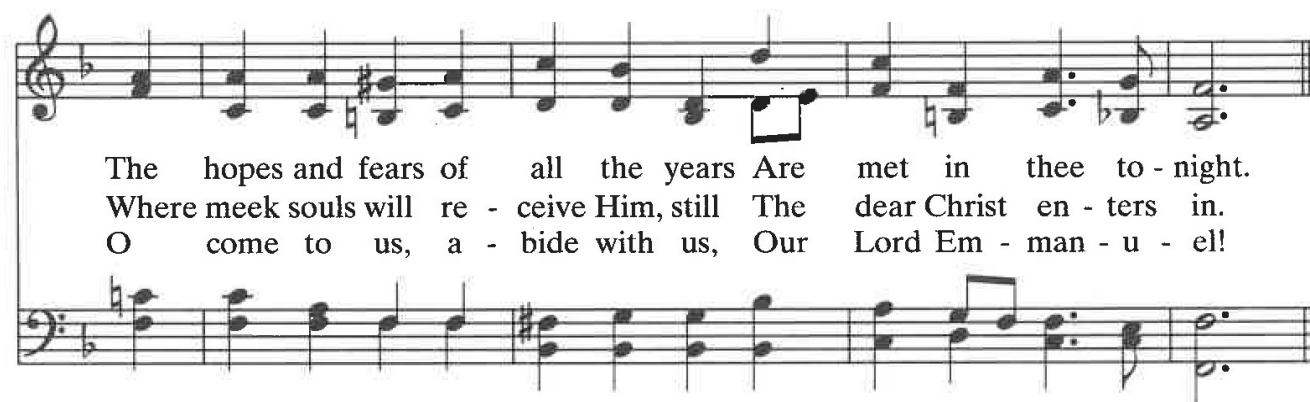
1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!  
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, The won - drous gift is given!  
4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, De - scend to us, we pray;



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

And



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

## 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 “Star of Wonder”

I. Prins

*The First Church Choir*

### 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.

*Music:* Copyright © 1937, renewed 1965, Fleming H. Revell Company, H. Augustine Smith, Jr., from the *New Church Hymnal*. All rights reserved. Used by permission.


## 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**


# On Christmas Night All Christians Sing

Capo 3: (D) (G) (D) (A7) (D)  
F B $\flat$  F C7 F




1 On Christ - mas night all Chris - tians sing, to hear the  
2 Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Re -  
3 When sin de - parts be - fore his grace, then life and  
4 All out of dark - ness we have light, which made the

(G) (A) (D) (G)  
B $\flat$  C F B $\flat$




news the an - gels bring; on Christ - mas night all  
deem - er made us glad; then why should we on  
health come in its place; when sin de - parts be -  
an - gels sing this night; all out of dark - ness

(D) (A) (D) (G) (A) (D)  
F C F B $\flat$  C F



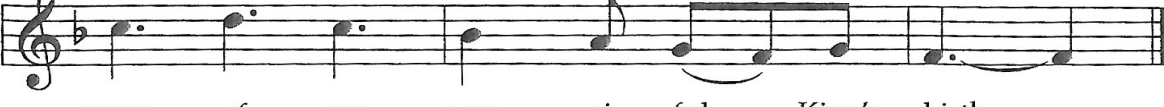
Chris - tians sing, to hear the news the an - gels bring,  
earth be sad, since our Re - deem - er made us glad,  
fore his grace, then life and health come in its place;  
we have light, which made the an - gels sing this night:

(A) (Em) (D) (A)  
C Gm F C



news of great joy, news of great mirth,  
when from our sin he set us free,  
heav - en and earth with joy may sing,  
"Glo - ry to God in high - est heaven;

(D) (G) (A) (G) (D)  
F B $\flat$  C B $\flat$  F



news of our mer - ci - ful King's birth.  
all for to gain our lib - er - ty?  
all for to see the new - born King.  
peace on earth and good - will. A - men!"

The words of this carol first appeared in 1684 in a collection by an Irish bishop, Luke Wadding. Whether they were his own work or something gleaned from popular use is not clear. The tune name recalls that the tune was collected in 1904 from Mrs. Verrall of Monk's Gate, Sussex.

## Christ Candle Reflection & Lighting the Advent Candles: (Rev. Tirpak)

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 (Rev. Tirpak)

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.



## Charge & Benediction

Rev. Trey Tirpak

Go forth into the world rejoicing.  
Spread the good news of Christ,  
and live in the light.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in your believing, and  
the Holy Spirit enfold you in the love of Christ on this holy night and  
forever. Amen.

## Postlude

*“For Unto Us a Child Is Born”*

G.F. Handel

## Worship Leadership:

**Preacher:** Rev. Trey Tirpak

**Liturgist:** Various

**Organist:** Iteke Prins

**Flutist:** Jackie Wright

**Saxophonist:** Joshua Bliss

**Choir:** Norma Jean Ballou, Erica Zetterholm-Bliss, David Bradley, Wendy Glasser, Becky Hudak, Jean Lamere, Ian Leet, Emily Pesnichak, and Emily Pesnichak

**Technical Team:** Joshua Bliss, and Stephen Reohr

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## Our 2023 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.



**Kekeli, Inc.** is a non-profit 501c3 in the United States dedicated to raising money to assist marginalized groups in Ghana. Kekeli began in 2007 with a focus on a wide variety of human rights issues and activities to address these issues, e.g. people with disabilities, child labor, children of cured lepers and all those who are victims of discrimination. Kekeli Foundation was registered in Ghana in 2008 as a related organization to Kekeli, Inc. The Foundation works to create self-advocacy groups to help young people with disabilities recognize their rights, establish parent self-help groups as a way of encouraging more involvement of their disabled children in their communities, promote the inclusion of people with disabilities within the education system and in society, and use both visual arts and music as a means to achieve greater awareness of human rights issues.



# 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.



CHRISTMAS MORNING  
*worship*

12.25.23, 10AM



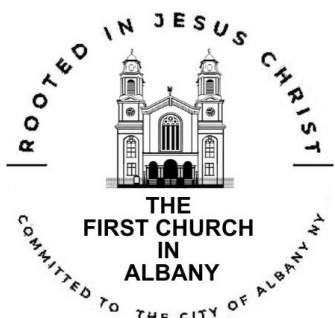


**YOUR FIRST CHURCH  
STAFF AND PASTORS WISH YOU**

*a Blessed  
Christmas*



*Not pictured: Kim Reohr*



**First Church in Albany**

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