

Christmas Eve



at **The First Church in Albany**

December 24, 2024 at 7pm

**The First Church in Albany
(Reformed Church in America)**

Founded in 1642; Continuing in Ministry Today



Christmas Eve
December 24, 2024



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

We Gather in the Presence of God

Bridge

*“Oh What Can I Give Him?”
Clover Pagerey*

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: Come, all you who walk in darkness, and see the great light!

People: The light of Christ has come into the world.

Leader: Lift up your hearts and sing with joy, for the ancient promises are fulfilled in the child of the young woman, Mary.

People: A child is born to us, a Son is given, and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Leader: Tonight, the angels proclaim the good news of great joy.

People: Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to all!

Leader: Let us worship the Christ who is Emmanuel—God with us.

O Come, All Ye Faithful 133

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant; O come
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels; sing in ex - ul - ta - tion; sing,
4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing; Je -

ye; O come ye to Beth - le - hem! Come, and be - hold him,
all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove! Glo - ry to God, all
sus, to thee be all glo - ry given; Word of the Fa - ther,

Refrain

born the King of an - gels!
glo - ry in the high - est! O come, let us a - dore him; O come, let
now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

us a - dore him; O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord!

From its Roman Catholic origins, this 18th-century hymn has spread to worldwide use by many denominations in both Latin and vernacular versions. Once popular with a wide range of hymn texts, this tune is now firmly associated with this Christmas text from which it is named.

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

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

Of the Father's Love Begotten 108



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
6 Christ, to thee with God the Fa - ther, and, O Ho - ly Ghost,



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
to thee, hymn and chant and high thanks-giv - ing and un -



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 -
wea - ried prais - es be. Hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



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,
min - ion, and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry,

(after stanza 6)



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

"Sleep Now Dear Jesus"
Becky Hudak, soloist

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

As is First Church's custom every Christmas Eve, our offering tonight is going to two places, one for a local cause, Justice for Orphans, and one for an international cause, the Reformed Church European Crisis Response Fund. The total will be split between the two organizations. Please see the back of your worship guide for more information about these organizations.

Justice for Orphans (Albany)



justicefororphansny.org

and

Reformed Church European Crisis Response Fund



rca.org/give/2022-european-crisis-response/

He Came Down

137

He came down that we may have love; he

came down that we may have love; he came down that we may

have love; hal-le-lu-jah for-ev-er-more.

Leader: Why did he come?

Additional stanzas: ... that we may have light
 ... that we may have peace
 ... that we may have joy

TEXT: Cameroon song
 MUSIC: Cameroon melody; transcr. and arr. John L. Bell, 1986
 Music Arr. © 1986 WGRG, Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

HE CAME DOWN
 LM

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

121 O Little Town of Bethlehem

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
2 For Christ is born of Mar - y and, gath - ered all a - bove,
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.
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
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;
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad ti - dings tell;

the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.
O come to us; a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

Though he was famed during his lifetime as a great preacher, no sermon Phillips Brooks ever preached has been heard or read by as many people as have sung this carol he wrote in December 1868 for the Sunday School children of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

TEXT: Phillips Brooks, 1868
MUSIC: Lewis Henry Redner, 1868

ST. LOUIS
8.6.8.6.7.6.8.6
(alternate tune: FOREST GREEN)

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.

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

*Carol 6

134

Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their songs
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na -

her king; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow
 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
 sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heaven and na - ture sing,

TEXT: Isaac Watts, 1719, alt.
 MUSIC: Attr. George Frederick Handel, 1742; arr. Lowell Mason, 1836

ANTIOCH
 CM with repeat
 (alternate tune: RICHMOND, 266)

A Christmas Prayer

Rev. Trey Tirpak

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

The People That in Darkness Sat

EPIPHANY

$\text{♩} = 120$

1. The peo - ple that in dark - ness sat A glo - rious
 4. To us a Child of hope is born, To us a
 5. His name shall be the Prince of Peace, The Ev - er -

light have seen; The light has shined on them who long In
 Son is giv'n, And on His shoul - der ev - er rests All
 last - ing Lord, The Won - der - ful, the Coun - se - - lor. The

shades of death have been. In shades of death have been.
 pow'r in earth and heav'n. All pow'r in earth and heav'n.
 God by all a - - dored. The God by all a - - dored.

Words: John Morison, 1781. Music: 'Lobt Gott, ihr Christen Allzugleich' Nikolaus Hermann, 1554. Setting: "Kern des Deutschen Kirchengesangs", 1855, alt. copyright: public domain. This score is a part of the Open Hymnal Project, 2010 Revision.

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

113 Angels We Have Heard on High

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 ti - dings 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!

GLORIA
7.7.7.7 with refrain


TEXT: French carol; trans. James Chadwick, 1860, alt.
 MUSIC: French carol; arr. Edward Shippen Barnes, 1937
 Music © 1937, ren. 1965 H. Augustine Smith Jr.
 (admin. Fleming H. Revell Company, a div. of Baker Publishing Group)

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.

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

*Carol 9 136 Go, Tell It on the Mountain

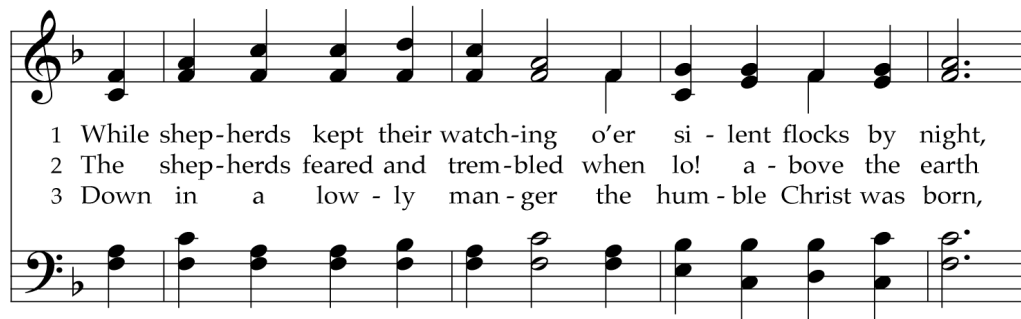
Refrain 



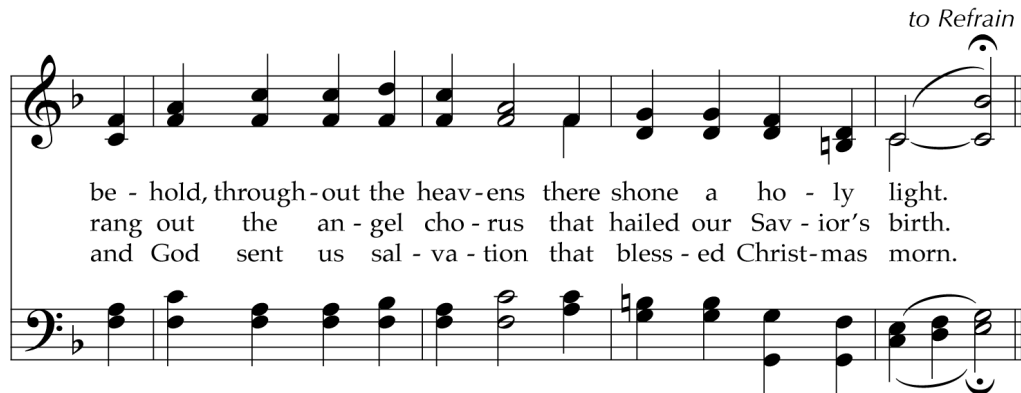
Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;



go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth
3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,



to Refrain

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

GO TELL IT
7-6,7,6 with refrain

TEXT: African American spiritual; stanzas, John W. Work II, 1940
MUSIC: African American spiritual; arr. John W. Work III, 1940; harm. Melva Wilson Costen, 1987
Music Harm. © 1989 Melva Wilson Costen

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

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.

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

***Carol 10**

Silent Night, Holy Night! 122

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light

'round yon vir - gin moth - er and child! Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and
 glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav - en - ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu -
 ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing

mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 ia: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born!"
 grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

TEXT: Joseph Mohr, 1816; stanzas 1-3, English trans. John Freeman Young, 1863;
 stanza 4, English trans. Jane Montgomery Campbell, 1863, alt.
 MUSIC: Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818
 Korean Trans. © The Christian Literature Society of Korea

STILLE NACHT
 Irregular

Charge & Benediction

Postlude

Worship Leadership:

Ministers: Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston & Rev. Trey Tirpak

Liturgist: Various

Organist: Iteke Prins

Flutist: Jackie Wright

Brass Quartet: Brass Abbey

Soloist: Clover Pagerey, Becky Hudak

Choir: Erica Bliss, Norma Jean Ballou, Jean Lamere, Wendy Hughs, David Bradley, Zak Morton, Ian Leet

Hand Chimes: Choir members

Technical Team: Joshua Bliss, and Stephen Reohr

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Our 2024 Christmas Eve Offering

Justice for Orphans (Albany)



justicefororphansny.org

Justice for Orphans is a faith-based nonprofit in New York dedicated to addressing the needs of vulnerable children and families. Through their CarePortal initiative, they connect local churches with county-specific care-workers to meet critical needs in their communities, providing essential support to children in foster care, at risk of entering care, or being reunified with their families.

Reformed Church European Crisis Response Fund



rca.org/give/2022-european-crisis-response/

Reformed Church European Crisis Response Fund –

Established after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, this fund supports refugees at a crisis center in Hungary, once a summer camp created by the Reformed Church in America. The center provides shelter, food, education, counseling, and helps sponsor a pastor and church serving both the camp and surrounding resettled refugees. Most refugees in the camp are Roma, an already marginalized people.





PRAYERS, CONCERNS & JOYS

- For Kathleen Claydon, recovering from a broken leg after a fall.
- For the families of the two children who tragically passed after falling through the ice at Washington Park. For the first responders who worked valiantly to save them.
- For Melanie, sister of Monica Marsh as she recovers from a fall. For Monica who has traveled to be with her sister.
- For Baby Stella, home with her family, as she grows stronger. For Kaitlyn Bliss and Victor, Stella's parents as they settle in with their new baby.
- For the Johnson family, mother of three who passed. Prayers for children and grandchildren.
- Stephen Giguere, Virginia's husband, diagnosed with cancer
- Shawn Giguere, Virginia's son, with a health diagnosis
- David Allen, recovering from emergency surgery
- Teresa Wheeler's grandmother Cindy, with health concerns
- Donna Jones
- Michelle Williams
- Mia Westman
- Becky Gardner
- Carol LaBatte
- For Jennifer Recene Gallagher
- Ken Lucas, friend of Philip Labatte
- Harold Bushnel
- Alex Bliss
- Mary Weijola
- Cheryl Gowie
- Anthony, of the Brown Family
- Olivia Gaydushek
- Ministers, staff, and leaders of First Church as they move forward into our everchanging world.
- Those dealing with natural disasters exasperated by climate change.
- 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.
- For government officials at all levels as we move forward into the new year.

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



**Merry Christmas from the Staff of FCIA
and Happy New Year!**

Thank you for spending Christmas Eve with us.

We hope to see you again soon.

The First Church in Albany

Worships at 9am & 10am on Sunday

Everyone is welcome!

We invite you to Centering Prayer, Wednesday at noon.

The FCIA Pantry is open Tuesday & Thursday, 9am-11:30am

Visit firstchurchinalbany.org for information about all our ministries



First Church in Albany

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