



## The First Church in Albany

*"Open my eyes,  
that I may see  
glimpses of truth  
thou hast for me"*

Sunday, February 16, 2025, 10am

### 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**     *"I Call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ"*     J.S. Bach

**Tolling of the Bells**

**Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing**

Votum: Come unto me all who labor and are heavy  
burdened and I will give you rest. Says the Lord our  
God.

**Amen.**

**Call to Worship**

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;

**Our God is full of compassion.**

Let us walk in the presence of the Lord  
In the land of the living,  
Through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**\*Opening Hymn**     *"I'll Praise My Maker"*

See p.6

**Call to Confession**

The Lord listens to the cries of the people  
Who turn with full hearts to the One who has mercy.  
Let our tongues now confess in the presence of God  
And of this body.

**Holy God,**

**In the face of sin, our gravest enemy,**

**We call to you for help.**

**You know our fault before we speak.**

**Forgive us for what we have done in opposition to  
your will.**

**Forgive us for those things we have not undertaken  
And for which we know are wrong.**

**We have not loved you and our neighbors as we ought.  
We have denied our dependence on you.  
Lead us away from this grief and sorrow.  
Save us so that we may fulfill our vows to you  
And attend to the needs of your people. Amen**

(pause for silent confession)

### **Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law**

God, who is gracious and merciful, knows the human desire to save our lives by avoiding Jesus' call to carry the cross, God, who is full of compassion, also knows that those who repent have set their minds and hearts on what endures for all time. Your sin is forgiven. The Lord God is a very present help to those who seek to follow in the way of divine things, Go with God in joy as you take up your cross, in Jesus' name.

### **\*Passing the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us rise and greet one another with the peace of Christ.

### **Prayer for Illumination**

**You speak to us, Lord with tongues of wisdom.  
Let your Holy Spirit now open us to hear  
With greater clarity the teachings of today,  
That we may hold dear in yet new ways  
What it is you will for us, in Jesus' name. Amen.**

### **Sermon Text**

Mark 8:22-26

They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Can you see anything?" And the man looked up and said, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again, and he looked intently, and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Then he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even go into the village."

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to you, O Christ!**

### **Sermon**

It's a Process!

### **A Prayer of Blessing on the Word**

**\*Hymn of Response**     *“Open My Eyes that I May See”*

See p. 7

**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 Prayer**

Dedication: In this gifting season, O God, we are grateful for the gift of your dear Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Receive we pray these offerings we bring. May they be used to serve your Grace and Truth dwelling among us. In Christ’s holy name, we pray. **Amen.**

**Offertory Hymn**                     *“There Is a Balm in Gilead”*

**\*Doxology #592** in pew hymnal

**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.**

### **The Celebration of the Lord’s Supper**

**Communion Hymn**                     *“Your Table I Approach”*

See p. 8

### **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 offered*

### 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.**

**\*Sending Hymn**      *"We Cannot Measure How You Heal"*      See p. 9

### Charge & Blessing

**Postlude**      *"Rejoice, for Christ Is King"*      J.B. Weber

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**Preacher:** Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston  
**Liturgist:** Sara Bonam-Welge and Joanne Farrell  
**Organist:** Iteke Prins  
**Vocalist and/or Specialist:**  
**Audio/Visual:** Joshua Bliss and Stephen Reohr

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One License #A-700689*

### Notes & Announcements:

- Join us in Zimmerman Hall after worship for refreshments and fellowship
- Monday, February 17 is Presidents' Day. The office will be closed for the holiday
- Wednesday, February 19 is our February Weathervanes' Gathering at 12:30pm in Zimmerman Hall.



# 806 I'll Praise My Maker

(Psalm 146)

1 I'll praise my Mak - er while I've breath; and when my voice  
 2 How hap - py they whose hopes re - ly on Is - rael's God,  
 3 The Lord pours eye - sight on the blind; the Lord sup - ports  
 4 I'll praise my Mak - er while I've breath; and when my voice

is lost in death, praise shall em - ploy my no - bler powers.  
 who made the sky and earth and seas with all their train;  
 the faint - ing mind and sends the la - boring con - science peace.  
 is lost in death, praise shall em - ploy my no - bler powers.

My days of praise shall ne'er be past while life and thought  
 whose truth for - ev - er stands se - cure, who saves the op - pressed  
 God helps the strang - er in dis - tress, the wid - owed and  
 My days of praise shall ne'er be past while life and thought

and be - ing last, or im - mor - tal - i - ty en - dures.  
 and feeds the poor, and none shall find God's prom - ise vain.  
 the par - ent - less, and grants the pris - oner sweet re - lease.  
 and be - ing last, or im - mor - tal - i - ty en - dures.

This paraphrase of Psalm 146 was a great favorite of John Wesley: it appeared in his first hymn collection in 1737 (published in Charleston, South Carolina) and was on his lips when he died. The 16th-century tune to which it is set here is the one Watts had in mind for it.

# Open My Eyes, That I May See 451

1 O-pen my eyes, that I may see glimps-es of truth thou hast for me.  
 2 O-pen my ears, that I may hear voic - es of truth thou send-est clear.  
 3 O-pen my mouth, and let me bear glad - ly the warm truth ev-ery-where.

Place in my hands the won-der-ful key that shall un - clasp and  
 And while the wave notes fall on my ear, ev - ery-thing false will  
 O - pen my heart, and let me pre-pare love with thy chil-dren

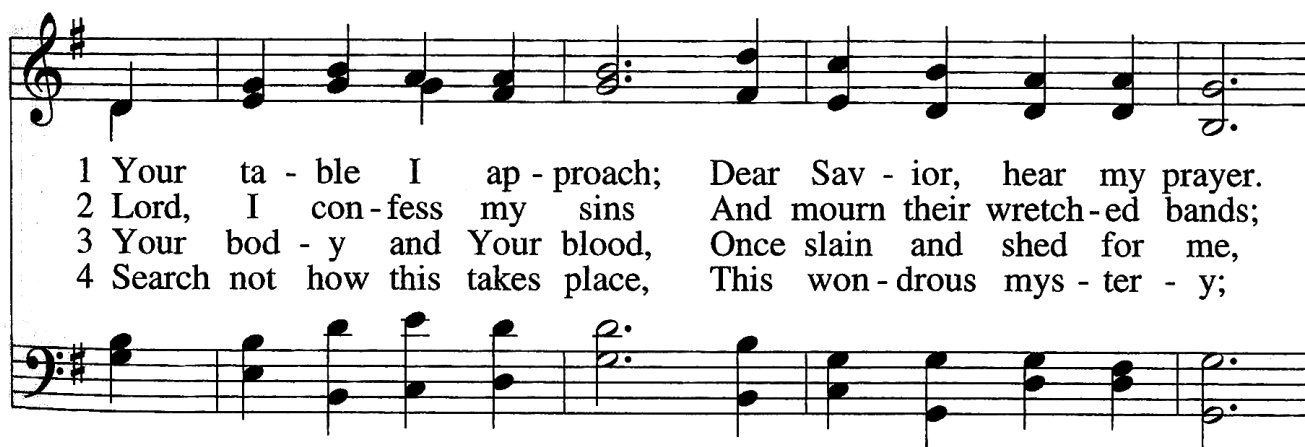
set me free. Si-lent-ly now I wait for thee, read-y, my God, thy  
 dis - ap-pear. Si-lent-ly now I wait for thee, read-y, my God, thy  
 thus to share. Si-lent-ly now I wait for thee, read-y, my God, thy

will to see. O - pen my eyes; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!  
 will to see. O - pen my ears; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!  
 will to see. O - pen my heart; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!

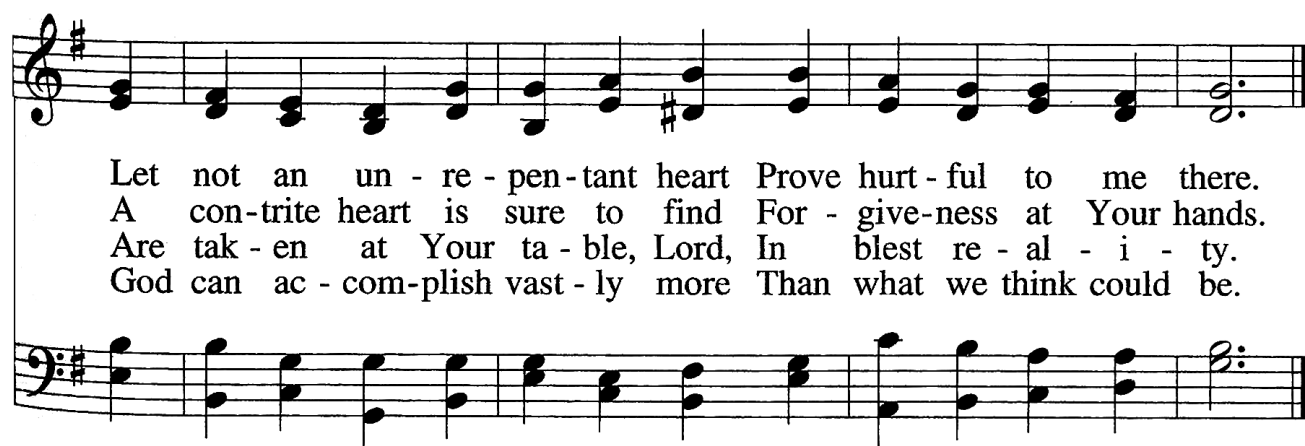
The first woman to publish a collection of her own anthems, this author/composer has created in this hymn a sung prayer for illumination. It not only asks God to help us understand Scripture but also prays for the strength and courage to make God's love known to others.

# Your Table I Approach

628



1 Your ta - ble I ap - proach; Dear Sav - ior, hear my prayer.  
2 Lord, I con - fess my sins And mourn their wretch - ed bands;  
3 Your bod - y and Your blood, Once slain and shed for me,  
4 Search not how this takes place, This won - drous mys - ter - y;



Let not an un - re - pen - tant heart Prove hurt - ful to me there.  
A con - trite heart is sure to find For - give - ness at Your hands.  
Are tak - en at Your ta - ble, Lord, In blest re - al - i - ty.  
God can ac - com - plish vast - ly more Than what we think could be.

5 O grant, most blessèd Lord,  
That earth and hell combined  
May not about this sacrament  
Raise doubt within my mind.

6 Oh, may I never fail  
To thank You day and night  
For Your true body and true blood,  
O God, my peace and light.

**Text:** Gerhard Wolter Molanus, 1633–1722; tr. Matthias Loy, 1828–1915, alt.  
**Tune:** *Trente quatre Pseaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551, ed. Louis Bourgeois;  
setting: *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941

ST. MICHAEL  
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Text and music: Public domain

*1 Cor. 11:23–29; Luke 5:31–32; Mark 2:17; 1 Cor. 10:16; Rom. 11:33–36*

## 797 We Cannot Measure How You Heal

1 We can - not mea - sure how you heal or  
 2 The pain that will not go a - way, the  
 3 So some have come who need your help and

an - swer ev - ery suf - ferer's prayer, yet  
 guilt that clings from things long past, the  
 some have come to make a - mends, as

we be - lieve your grace re - sponds where  
 fear of what the fu - ture holds, are  
 hands which shaped and saved the world are

faith and doubt u - nite to care. Your  
 pres - ent as if meant to last. But  
 pres - ent in the touch of friends. Lord,

This 20th-century text from the Iona Community grapples with the realities of illness and pain, not only as they afflict the body but even more as they lay waste to mind and soul. The traditional folk melody helps to convey the sort of communal experience assumed in the last stanza.

LAMENT AND LONGING FOR HEALING

hands, though blood - ied on the cross, sur -  
 pres - ent too is love which tends the  
 let your Spir - it meet us here to

vive to hold and heal and warn, to  
 hurt we nev - er hoped to find, the  
 mend the bod - y, mind, and soul, to

car - ry all through death to life and  
 pri - vate ag - o - nies in - side, the  
 dis - en - tan - gle peace from pain, and

cra - dle chil - dren yet un - born.  
 mem - o - ries that haunt the mind.  
 make your bro - ken peo - ple whole.

# Lectio Divina

Sunday, now through March 2  
9:15am - 9:45am  
in the Stephen James Chapel  
at  
**The First Church in Albany**  
110 North Pearl St. Albany NY 12207

In Latin, these words mean  
“holy” or “spiritual reading”

It is a form of intentional  
reading of bible verses once  
practiced solely by monks.

At First, we would like to  
invite you to begin your new  
year praying with us for all  
the things that lie before us.

## Bible Study

JOIN US ON ZOOM MEETING

[www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org) for link

WEDNESDAYS AT 7:30PM



### Schedule:

February 19: Philippians 3:12-21

February 26: Philippians 4:1-23

## Tuesday Afternoon Zoom Bible Study

1:00PM - 2:00PM

The Tuesday noon Bible study group meets each week. All are invited and will be most welcome. We will be following the common lectionary passages for the upcoming Sunday with Pastor Mashona. Links can be found on the website.

We are doing this on a week by week basis so anyone can drop into the Bible study at any time no need for a long-term commitment!



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

# FEBRUARY 2025



MON

**PRESIDENTS' DAY**



17

OFFICE CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY

TUE

**PANTRY**

9AM

18

**ZOOM BIBLE STUDY**

1PM

WED

**SOUP & SANDWICHES**

11:30AM

19

**CENTERING PRAYER**

NOON

**AA MEETING**

NOON



**WEATHERVANES' GATHERING**

12:30PM

**ZOOM BIBLE STUDY**

7:30PM

THU

**PANTRY**

9AM

20

SAT

**KEYS FOR KIDS**

10AM

22

SEE INSERT FOR INFORMATION ON THE 2025  
WORSHIP FESTIVAL OFFERED BY THE ALBANY  
SYNOD, FIRST REFORMED OF SCOTIA 9AM - 3PM

SUN

**LECTIO DIVINA**

9AM

16

**WORSHIP FOLLOWED BY COFFEE HOUR**

10AM

**2ND HOUR STUDY**

11:15AM

THE CACC OVERFLOW SHELTER IS NOW OPEN EACH EVENING 6PM - 8AM.

BEGINNINGS AT 9AM IS ON HIATUS THROUGH MARCH

FOR MORE INFO VISIT US AT [WWW.FIRSTCHURCHINALBANY.ORG](http://WWW.FIRSTCHURCHINALBANY.ORG)



## First Church in Albany

110 North Pearl St., Albany NY 12207

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[www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org)