



## The First Church in Albany

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

Sunday, February 9, 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**

*"Adoration"*

F. Price

**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.**

### **Prayers of the People**

#### **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. 8

### **Charge & Blessing**

**Postlude**                            *“Rejoice, for Christ Is King”*

J.B. Weber

**Preacher:** Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

**Liturgist:** Audrey Ming

**Organist:** Iteke Prins

**Vocalist and/or Specialist:**

**Audio/Visual:** Joshua Bliss and Stephen Reohr

*CCLI License #463379;  
One License #A-700689*

## Notes & Announcements:

- Join us in Zimmerman Hall after worship for refreshments and fellowship
- Thursday, February 13 at 6pm, Castle Island Bilingual Montessori School will be holding their annual play
- The February Consistory meeting has been rescheduled for Tuesday, February 11 at 6:30pm

## PRAYERS, CONCERNS & JOYS

- A praise for the Van Epps who welcomed their first great-granddaughter, Avery Emily on Sunday.
- For Payton, 12yrs, a friend of the Van Epps who is currently at Boston Children's Hospital.
- Wilma Sheffer
- From Kathleen Claydon, she sends thanks to all who reached out, sent cards and offered food as she recuperated. Prayers for continued healing.
- Mia Westman, home from the hospital, resting
- For Ian Leet, recovering from some health concerns, out of danger per Ian
- For John Haviland, recovering from some health concerns
- Teresa Wheeler and her family for the death of her father. Teresa recently lost her grandmother as well
- For David Allen with ongoing health concerns
- 
- Stephen Giguere, Virginia's husband, diagnosed with cancer
- Shawn Giguere, Virginia's son, with a health diagnosis
- Donna Jones
- Michelle Williams
- Becky Gardner
- Carol LaBatte
- For Jennifer Recene Gallagher
- Ken Lucas, friend of Philip Labatte
- Harold Bushnel
- Alex Bliss
- Mary Weijola
- Anthony, of the Brown Family
- Olivia Gaydushek
- For the staff, volunteers and guests of the CACC Overflow Shelter at First Church
- Ministers, staff, and leaders of First Church as they move forward into our everchanging world.
- For the people of California, dealing with the destruction of devastating wildfires. For first responders and aid workers as they serve
- 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.

**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. Likewise, if you know of an update or would like us to remove a concern, please let us know.**



# CREATING HEALTHIER CONGREGATIONS

Don't miss this opportunity to gather with others from Albany Classis for a day of learning and leadership development.

March 15, 2025



Delmar Reformed



9:00am-4:00pm



Gathering and refreshments at 8:30am

## Facilitators:

Rev. Greg Town  
Rev. Paige Convis

**REGISTRATION  
IS REQUIRED**



[bit.ly/AlbanyClassisCHC2025](https://bit.ly/AlbanyClassisCHC2025)

**ALL individuals within the churches of Albany Classis are invited to attend, *FREE of charge.***

Refreshments and lunch will be provided by the Classis.

**Questions?** Email...

Nancy: [classisofalbanyrca@yahoo.com](mailto:classisofalbanyrca@yahoo.com)

Greg: [gnbtown@gmail.com](mailto:gnbtown@gmail.com)

## 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

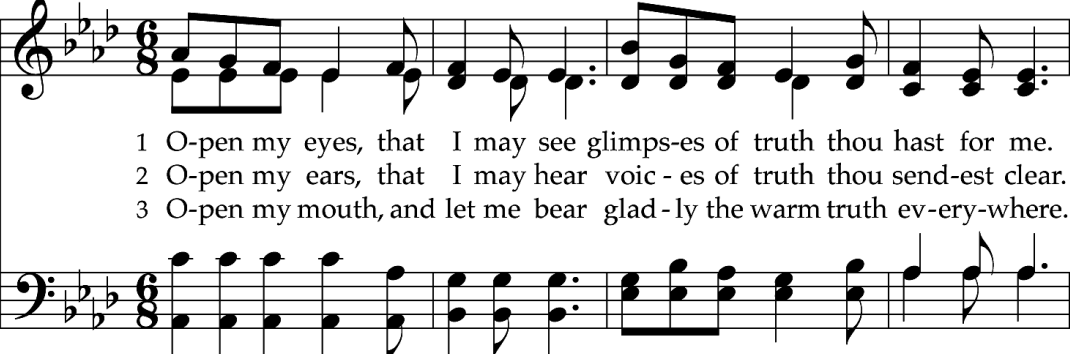
is lost in death, praise shall em - ploy my no - bler powers.  
 who made the sky and earth and seas with all their train;  
 the faint - ing mind and sends the la - boring con - science peace.  
 is lost in death, praise shall em - ploy my no - bler powers.

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

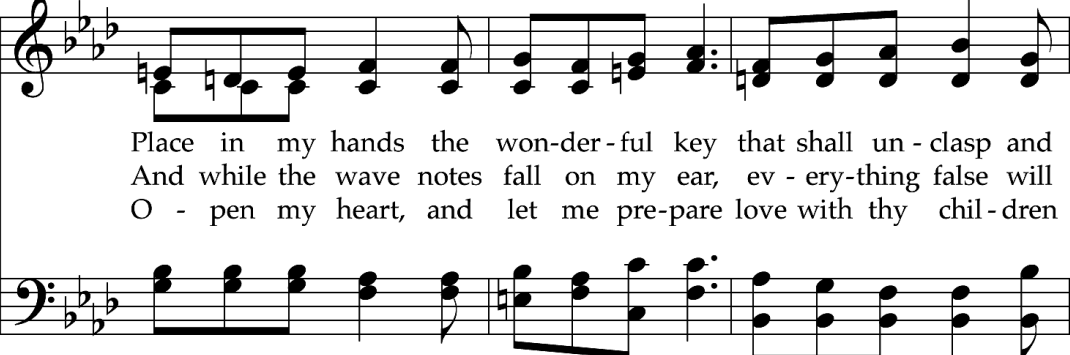
and be - ing last, or im - mor - tal - i - ty en - dures.  
 and feeds the poor, and none shall find God's prom - ise vain.  
 the par - ent - less, and grants the pris - oner sweet re - lease.  
 and be - ing last, or im - mor - tal - i - ty en - dures.

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.

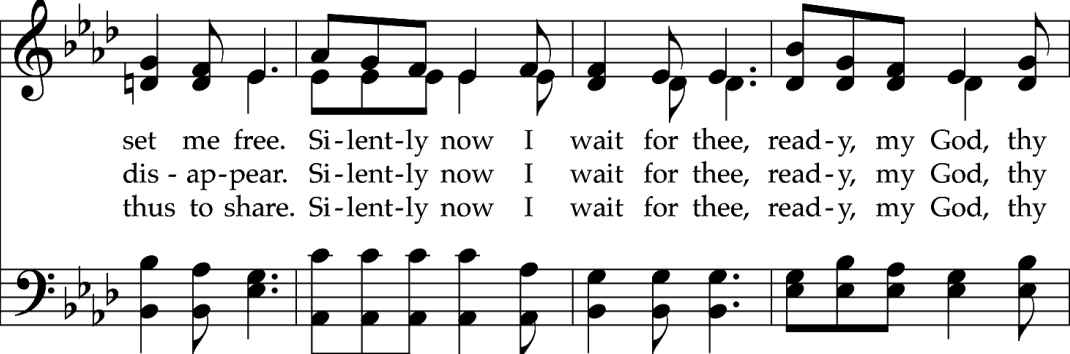
## Open My Eyes, That I May See 451



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.

## 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.



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 12: Philippians 3:1-11  
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!








# February

2025



**Key:**

-  Indoor Worship 10am
-  Communion Sunday
-  Coffee Hour
-  Pantry 9am
-  Centering Prayer 12pm
-  AA 12pm
-  First KIDS
-  Choir
-  Zoom Study 1pm
-  Soup & Sandwiches 11:30am

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
						Keys for Kids 10am Albany Classis Mtg. Delmar Reformed 9am	
2 <b>FOCUS</b> CHURCHES OF ALBANY <b>Combined Winter Service</b> Emmanuel Baptist Church 10am	3	4 Prayer Shawl Group 11:30am Pantry 9am BIBLE Zoom Study 1pm	5 Soup & Sandwiches 11:30am Centering Prayer 12pm AA 12pm Zoom Bible Study 7:30pm	6 Pantry 9am	7	Keys for Kids 10am	
9 Lectio Divina 9:15am Indoor Worship 10am Coffee Hour 2nd HOUR Communion Sunday AA 12pm	10	11 Pantry 9am BIBLE Zoom Study 1pm Consistory (Zoom) 6:30pm	12 Soup & Sandwiches 11:30am Centering Prayer 12pm AA 12pm Zoom Bible Study 7:30pm	13 Pantry 9am Castle Island School Play 6pm			Keys for Kids 10am
16 Lectio Divina 9:15am Indoor Worship 10am Coffee Hour 2nd HOUR	17 HAPPY Presidents Day <b>Office Closed</b>	18 Pantry 9am BIBLE Zoom Study 1pm	19 Soup & Sandwiches 11:30am Centering Prayer 12pm AA 12pm Zoom Bible Study 7:30pm	20 Pantry 9am	21	Keys for Kids 10am	
23 Lectio Divina 9:15am Indoor Worship 10am Coffee Hour 2nd HOUR	24	25 Pantry 9am BIBLE Zoom Study 1pm FOCUS Board Mtg. 6:30pm	26 Soup & Sandwiches 11:30am Centering Prayer 12pm AA 12pm Zoom Bible Study 7:30pm	27 Pantry 9am	28		

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

# FEBRUARY 2025



<b>MON</b> <b>3</b>	<b>WELCOME &amp; PRAYER FOR SHELTER STAFF &amp; VOLUNTEERS</b>	<b>5PM</b>
<b>TUE</b> <b>4</b>	<b>PANTRY</b> <b>PRAYER SHAWL MTG</b> <b>ZOOM BIBLE STUDY</b>	<b>9AM</b> <b>11:30AM</b> <b>1PM</b>
<b>WED</b> <b>5</b>	<b>SOUP &amp; SANDWICHES</b> <b>CENTERING PRAYER</b> <b>AA MEETING</b> <b>FOOD PANTRIES OF THE CAPITAL DISTRICT</b> <b>MONTHLY MEMBER MEETING</b> <b>ZOOM BIBLE STUDY</b>	<b>11:30AM</b> <b>NOON</b> <b>NOON</b> <b>2PM</b> <b>7:30PM</b>
<b>THU</b> <b>6</b>	<b>PANTRY</b>	<b>9AM</b>
<b>SAT</b> <b>8</b>	<b>KEYS FOR KIDS</b>	<b>10AM</b>
<b>SUN</b> <b>9</b>	<b>LECTIO DIVINA</b> <b>WORSHIP FOLLOWED BY COFFEE HOUR</b> <b>2ND HOUR STUDY</b>	<b>9AM</b> <b>10AM</b> <b>11:15AM</b>

**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)**



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110 North Pearl St., Albany NY 12207

518-463-4449

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