



# The First Presbyterian Newsletter

Volume 71, Number 4

December 2015



And he came to her and said,  
Greetings, favored one. The Lord  
is with you.+ Luke 1:28

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## Advent and Christmas

### Preparation and Celebration

Join us as we journey toward Bethlehem during Advent, the season of waiting, and as we celebrate the birth of our Savior at Christmas.

**Sunday, November 29, First Sunday in Advent;** the first Advent Wreath candle is lit.

- ~ 8:30 and 10:45 . Morning worship Services, Advent hymns
- ~ 9:30 - Education for all ages! Advent themed adult class begins.
- ~ Gifts for the Parsons Christmas Project are available (see p. 3)

**Sunday, December 6, Second Sunday in Advent;** the second candle is lit; anticipation builds as more decorations adorn the sanctuary.

- ~ 8:30 and 10:45 . Morning worship Services
- ~ 9:30 - Education for all; Advent themed adult class
- ~ Parsons gifts, unwrapped, can be placed in Assembly Hall

**Sunday, December 13, Third Sunday in Advent;** the third candle is lit.

- ~ 8:30 and 10:45 - Worship Services with Chrismon tree and wreaths
- ~ 9:30 - Education for all; Advent adult class continues
- ~ Last day to return Parsons gifts
- ~ Fair Trade Market in Assembly Hall with coffee, tea, chocolate

**Sunday, December 20, Fourth Sunday in Advent;** the fourth candle lit

- 8:30 and 10:45 - Worship Services
- 9:30 - Education for all; Advent themed adult class
- The Christmas Joy Offering will be received during worship
- The chancel will be full of poinsettias as the church is almost ready for the Christmas season to begin.

**Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve**

- 7:00 pm – Musical Prelude
- 7:30 pm - The star is shining, and a candlelight service of Lessons and Carols enhances an especially moving worship experience
- Nursery care is available.

**Friday, December 25, Christmas Day**

- 11:00 am - "On the first day of Christmas" worship will feature Christmas carols and a story. The Christmas season has arrived; the Christ child is born

**Sunday, December 27**

- 10:00 am . Worship Service . We mark the third day of Christmas+in worship - more carols!
- No education hour

**Sunday, January 3, 2016**

- 8:30 and 10:45 . Worship Services - We mark the tenth day of Christmas+with worship
- ~ 9:30 - Education hour

# The First Presbyterian



**First Presbyterian Church**  
Albany, NY  
Founded in 1763

**Dr. Miriam Lawrence Leupold**

**Dr. Glenn D. Leupold**  
Co-Pastors

**Dr. Michael Lister**  
Director of Music

**Trevor Kahlbaugh**  
Organist

**Christy D'Ambrosio**  
Youth Director

**Robert C. Lamar**  
Pastor Emeritus

#### **Elders**

Keith Barber  
Joyce Bascom  
Carol Bullard  
Debra Fagans  
Richard Gascoyne  
Ray Henrikson  
Charles Kite  
Stephanie Kite  
Harry (Skip) Meislahn  
John Myers  
Phillip Riddle  
Roseline Takor

#### **Deacons**

**Lee Helsby**  
Moderator  
Diane Cornell  
David Hitchen  
Prudence Iyok  
Annette Johnson  
Ellen Kemp  
Judith Mark  
Ron Pettis  
Jessica Piacente  
Stephanie Ragone  
Leslie Roccario  
Peg Schalit  
Gail Scott  
Deb Shoup  
Grace White  
Robert Willower  
Barbara Woodruff  
Margaret Zettle

## Stewardship Update

### With Abundant Joy & Appreciation

By Stephanie Kite, Stewardship Committee Chairperson

It is with sincere gratitude and awe that the Stewardship Committee thanks the congregation for their 2016 pledges of time, talent, and treasure. We have not yet finished compiling all of the data regarding how you all will be giving of your time and talents in the upcoming year, but the initial assessment shows many of you maintaining or increasing your selfless sharing.

The financial pledges have been easier to compile and here again, we are struck by the immense generosity of all of you. The total pledged as of November 5 is \$305,382.00. This amount is reflective of 113 gifts and is an increase of \$3,152.00 over the total pledges for the 2015 year. There were eighteen pledging units (individuals or families) who were able to increase their gifts by a total of \$12,714.00. We also received wonderful pledges from ten pledging units who had to lower their pledges by a total of \$8,114.00. Additionally, we received nine new pledges totaling \$12,714.00, including four generous pledges from our youth who aren't even old enough to be active members. We are also hopeful that our overall total will significantly increase because there are still eighteen pledging units who pledged a total of \$16,164.00 in 2015 and have not yet informed us of their 2016 pledges. We are also hopeful that the many among us who have not pledged in recent years will hear God's call for this act of participation in the life of our church this year.

After digesting all the numbers above, the \$3,152.00 increase over last year's total pledges is not a number that will make a large dent in the gap in our current or coming three year budgets that our anonymous donor is covering. Hopefully those pledges still outstanding will bring us to a figure that moves us closer to maintaining the work of First Presbyterian after the anonymous gifts are no longer available.

So, thank you, thank you, and thank you. As we enter the Advent season and prepare for the greatest gift of all . Our Lord Jesus Christ . may each of you feel the peace of God and know that you help First Presbyterian share that peace with all.

## Got old CDs, DVDs, Game Discs?

If the answer is **YES**, bring them in to church and look for the collection box in Assembly Hall. The youth will be collecting old DVDs, CDs and Game Discs all fall as a Fundraiser for Triennium 2016 and other events during the 2015-16 curriculum year. Help the Youth and Clean Up your Entertainment cabinet at the same time. Thanks for your support!

***First Presbyterian Church - Called by God to reduce the widening gap between rich and poor.***

## Christmas Potluck and Carol Sing!

Vote now on the inserted form in this edition of *The Newsletter*

By David Hannay

You are invited to join in the Advent/Christmas fun on Friday, December 18, 6 p.m. and attend the Potluck Dinner and Annual Christmas Carol Sing! Children are especially encouraged to attend!

Come to the annual Christmas Carol Sing during the Potluck Dinner on Friday, December 18. It is a chance to sing your favorites; and to make sure that they really ARE your favorite carols you get to VOTE! The two-sided green ballot, **inserted in your newsletter**, lets you express your preference by assigning points to the carols that you would most like to sing with our accompanists, Nancy Frank and Trevor Kahlbaugh.

On your ballot, you get to vote 15 points. If you have a single favorite, you can put all 15 of your points on that one; if you can't decide among, say, 3 different carols, you can split your points three ways and assign 5 points to each one. If you have 15 favorites you can give each one a single vote. You can even get creative and assign 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 points to five different carols. (No fractional votes or write-in songs will be counted.) After voting, give your ballot to David Hannay or leave in church office by Sunday, December 13. And don't forget to tell the church office (449-7332 or [info@firstpresalbany.org](mailto:info@firstpresalbany.org) or) what you will be bringing for the Potluck Dinner! Childcare will be available if needed. A great event for families or

## Parsons Tree

Youth Service Project: Parsons Child and Family Center

Parsons, in conjunction with Northern Rivers Family Services, is collecting new, unwrapped gifts for adolescents. The First Pres Youth have decorated the small tree in the Assembly Hall with ornaments listing toys, clothes, and other gifts. Please choose an ornament and return your donation unwrapped, with the ornament attached, and place it next to the tree by December 13. This is a great Christmas project for a family or Small Group. More detailed information can be found in the bulletin. Thank you for helping the youth help others!



# The First Presbyterian

## Consecration Sunday and Elevator Dedication

October 25, 2015



On October 25 worship was at 10:30 am and ended with members and friends of the church making a pledge of commitment to support the church financially and otherwise in 2016. After filling out a pledge card and placing it on the communion table, everyone moved to Assembly Hall where they found not only a buffet lunch lovingly prepared by

Stephanie Kite, but at each table was an opportunity to create a thank you card to be given to the teachers and staff of Giffen Memorial Elementary School, our partner in education.



Afterward, everyone gathered in the church parking lot for a dedication of the elevator in the education building.



As you can see by the photos, a solemn act of consecration can turn out to be a lot of fun! A very big thank you to all those who made a gift to the church as part of our 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Not only was our building made more usable, but the music and mission areas also benefited. One of the joys of the day was to see several members visit the upper floors for the first time ever!

# The First Presbyterian

## Consecration Sunday and elevator dedication



Sue Sneeringer and her father, Dr. Arthur Hengerer, take their first elevator ride with Pastors Miriam and Glenn. Dr. Hengerer and his late wife, Janet, served as Honorary Chairs of the 250th Anniversary Campaign. Their generous gift and contagious enthusiasm for the project helped to get our long awaited dream of equal access for all off the ground!

# The First Presbyterian

Called by God to reduce the widening gap between rich and poor ...

## Home Repair Project

By Christy D'Ambrosio, Youth Director

At the end of October, Home Repair Project volunteers began work on the Moore home on Liebel Street. Jordan Scarlett, Adam Sperry, Stephanie Kite, J. Coley, Eunai Joh, Bob Stevens, Debbie and Eric Fagans, with help from Ron Moore, tore down the old front steps and built new steps. A big thanks to all who have worked this fall.

While finishing up the front step railings, the home was primed and painted by George Rozell Painters, a group of professionals the Home Repair Project hires when the painting is just too high or difficult. There is still a bit more work to be done: repairing the front porch, replacing and painting the window trim, and possibly siding the back of the home.

This initiative began as an effort to help those homeowners who requested help from the big Group Work Camp last summer, hosted by First Presbyterian Church. This project is not just for youth, but rather is open to all ages to help out. The list above includes First Presbyterian folks in all age ranges. The Home Repair Project will continue its work on this home and others throughout the upcoming winter months. Below are photos that show the house before our work began (left) and after. Quite a difference! Contact Christy D'Ambrosio at either 423-4763 or [christy@firstpresalbany.org](mailto:christy@firstpresalbany.org) to find out what lies ahead for this project.



## Christmas Joy Offering 2015

By Deb Fagans, Outreach and Mission Committee

Spreading JOY at Christmas! Advent offers us many special opportunities to celebrate the season. One of these Presbyterians have been participating in for over 80 years: The Christmas Joy Offering, to be received on December 21. Our gifts to this fund will be equally divided between the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions which offers grants to pastors, church workers and missionaries in need of special financial assistance and to those racial ethnic schools and colleges historically related to our church for educational scholarships and leadership development. Taking advantage of this opportunity, we can strengthen the lives of those who have served or who are serving others through our church and also provide support for future leaders. Every dollar given goes to these two programs. No money will be used for staff or administrative expenses.

**PROMISES MADE  
PROMISES KEPT**



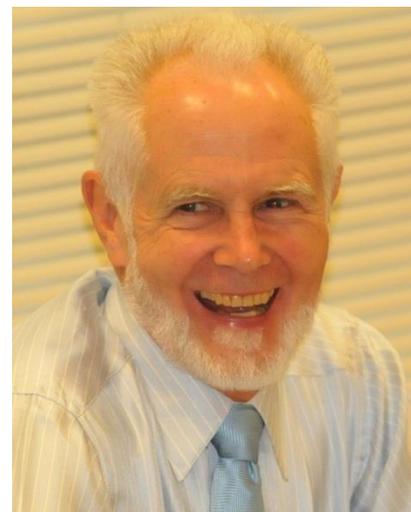
## TWO PROMISES IN EVERY GIFT

*God promised salvation—a promise kept with the birth of Jesus. In gratitude for that promise, the Christmas Joy Offering provides an opportunity to respond with promises of our own: to support church workers through assistance in their time of need and to develop and educate racial ethnic leadership for the future of our church. Each gift represents a promise kept to both of these communities.*

Special guest to lead Adult and High School class

## Paul T. Murray to be Guest Instructor in January

During the month of January, the adult education class will be joined by the High School CE class for an investigation of Voting Rights in America today. The first two Sundays will include a viewing of the film *Selma*. Paul T. Murray is Professor of Sociology at Siena College where he has taught for the past thirty-five years. His areas of specialization include race relations, collective behavior, and research methods. Dr. Murray earned his Ph.D. at Florida State University. He is the author of *The Civil Rights Movement: References and Resources* (G.K. Hall, 1993) and numerous articles and reviews in scholarly journals and reference works. His current research focuses on Catholic activists in the Civil Rights Movement. During the 1960s Dr. Murray was active in the Civil Rights Movement. He later served as a statistical consultant in voting rights cases for the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this informative series in the Rose Room beginning Sunday, January 3, at 9:30.



# The First Presbyterian

First Friday Concert Series, December 4, 6:00 PM

## Celebrating Advent

Music for the Holiday, Art of the Nativity

By Michael Lister, Director of Music

This December our First Friday will present sights and sounds celebrating the season. This concert will feature members from Zephyr Winds, First Presbyterian's fabulous ensemble-in residence, as well as members from Capitaland Chorus. This Chorus is a member of the Sweet Adeline's International, a musical organizational for female barbershop groups. Capitaland Chorus has been a part of the Capital Region since 1977 and has been active on the music scene as well as in their charitable outreach programs. It is a pleasure to partner with this ensemble, which has received numerous accolades for their performances, and their arrangements of holiday music will no doubt be a delight to all.

This concert is paired with a gallery entitled *Nativity*, which features a variety of nativity scenes. **We encourage members of First Presbyterian to be a part of the gallery this December by contributing your nativity set for the exhibit.** Please contact David Hinchey at [ds.hinchen@verizon.net](mailto:ds.hinchen@verizon.net) or (518)489-1854 for more details. We hope that you will be able to join us for another great evening of music and art! Thank you for your support by attending these events and continuing to invite members from outside of our community to attend.



New Tutoring Initiative

## South End Neighborhood Tutors

Whether you call us the South End Neighborhood Tutors, SENT, or Wizard's Wardrobe, it all adds up to a new after school tutoring program that is in its beginning stages.

We hope to work with students from Giffen Memorial Elementary School who need individual tutoring in reading and writing skills. You would meet with the same student once or twice a week for an hour and a half. Training will be provided for those wishing to participate in this program. We hope that you will seriously consider this new endeavor. If you are, you may contact Bruce Brynolfson, Eric Fagans or Ray Newkirk.

# The First Presbyterian

## Frustrating! ...in a good way

### Poverty Simulation Exercise

Frustrating seemed to be the word of the night at the conclusion of a Poverty Simulation exercise that took place in the Assembly Hall on Monday November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Over 60 people from three different organizations participated, including members of First Pres, Leadership Tech Valley and Educators. After a light supper, Valerie Lovelace, facilitator from the Capital Region Teachers Center explained the exercise. Participants were provided with a temporary identity and background for the evening, most were part of a family living on the edge of poverty. Others were asked to portray various vendors such as a grocery store, bank, social services, general employer, utility, quick cash payday loan company, pawn shop, teacher, police, daycare center etc. The role play went for approximately one hour with 15 minutes representing one week for a total of one hypothetical month. Families were provided with some money and informed of their particular circumstances. Some were old, some were young, some unemployed, some incarcerated, some pregnant, some homeless.

At the end of the hour, after discussion, the most common theme was frustration. Frustration at having only 15 minutes for each week and only so many resources to do all that has to be done just to provide yourself and/or family with the basic necessities of life, food, clothing shelter. As an added challenge, the facilitator explained that wherever a participant travelled, it was necessary to have a transportation pass which were of course, limited among the participants. This represented the difficulty those living in poverty have with transportation. There was talk about the difficulty of prioritizing, having to choose to keep a child home from school to help watch younger children so the adult of the family could work or seek services or pay bills. The decision to choose a less than legal option as a last resort just to try to stay afloat was a great temptation and it surprised many that they availed themselves of that opportunity. For some families, it was the only option. The frustration of needing to choose between paying rent/mortgage or paying for food or healthcare or utilities was overwhelming. In the end, it was quite a remarkable experience of walking in another's shoes even for an hour.



Giffen Principal,  
Jasmine Brown

## Author/Illustrator Day 2016

Please mark your calendars now! April 9<sup>th</sup> is our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Author & Illustrator Day at Giffen Memorial Elementary School. Last year's authors and illustrator were quite impressed with our program. Alexis O'Neill has written an article about it on her website. (You can see it at [schoolvisitexperts.com](http://schoolvisitexperts.com) and click on *A Vibrant Author Visit Partnership: Giffen Memorial Elementary School & First Presbyterian Church of Albany*) Katherine Patterson has put a link to that article on her web page and James Ransome has joined the planning team and has procured all the authors and illustrators for this school year!

This year's line-up is Nina Crews for Pre K-K, Pat Cummings for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, Jerry Pinkney for 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>, and Renee Watson for 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>.

There might be some new twists and turns, but one thing that will be the same is our need for many people to help with the day. If you'd like to start sooner, we are in need of someone who is willing to coordinate selling ads for our program. This will go towards defraying the expenses for the books given free to the students. Please speak with Debbie Fagans (371-0131) if you are interested in doing this or taking out an ad in the program.

# The First Presbyterian

## Poinsettias for the Sanctuary

You can honor a loved one with a poinsettia plant this Advent and Christmas as part of our sanctuary decorations. A suggested donation of \$16 per plant is due to the church office by Monday, December 14. You can use the form in the pew rack or send a check made out to First Presbyterian Church for the number of plants you want to sponsor, along with a note with the name of the person or persons you are honoring, written and spelled exactly the way you want it to appear in the bulletin. The names that arrive with payment by the 14th will appear in the bulletin on December 20 and on Christmas Eve.



## The Prayer Chain is Here for You

Do you have a need with which prayer could help? Email or call the Prayer Chain to request that its members pray for you immediately and every day until you no longer need it for your particular circumstance. It can be anonymous if you wish. You will not be contacted or judged, just prayed for.

Email [lesroccario@nycap.rr.com](mailto:lesroccario@nycap.rr.com) or call Leslie Roccario 674-8730.

## Deacons Doings

As we anticipate the joyous Christmas Season, the Deacons will be helping us to celebrate Christ's birth. The Delmar flock will be hosting the coffee hour following worship during December. We invite our fellow Delmar flock people to contribute food or serve coffee. Could you help? Please speak to Stephanie Ragone, Gail Scott or Barbara Woodruff if you can share in this special time of fellowship. Regardless of which flock is yours, whenever your Deacon invites you to a gathering, we hope you will attend.

You will soon see the beautiful poinsettias grace our chancel. Deacons gladly arrange them and you are welcome to honor loved ones through your gifts (see article this page). Look for a Christmas card from your flock Deacons. And remember, if they can help in any way, they are there for you.

## Ushers and Greeters

<b>Dec 6</b>	<b>8:30 am</b>	John Myers
	<b>10:45 am</b>	Team 4 - Keith Barber, Jeff Durgee, Ray Henrikson, Prudence Iyok, Roseline Takor
<b>Dec 13</b>	<b>8:30 am</b>	Jackie & Lynn Ellsworth
	<b>10:45 am</b>	Team 5 - Don Mark, David Munoz, Ron Pettis, Marilyn Riddle, Phillip Riddle, Barbara Woodruff
<b>Dec 20</b>	<b>8:30 am</b>	Ellen Eisenbraun
	<b>10:45 am</b>	Team 6 - Diane Cornell, Dee Dee Edwards, Lee Helsby, Harriet Seeley, Cynthia Winter
<b>Dec 24</b>	<b>7:30 pm</b>	Team 7 - Carol Bullard, Joseph Mathias, Alice Schrade, Deb Shoup, Ann Songaylo
<b>Dec 25</b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	Margaret and Elizabeth Leupold
<b>Dec 27</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	Team 1 - Ben & Maddy Eisenbraun, Lydia Green, Arthur & Daniel Iyok, Lauren Kuo, Sophia Pruzek, Mia & Maggie Robinson, Akap Takor

## Deacons' Flower Ministry

<b>Dec 6</b>	<b>Albany West</b>	Lee Helsby, Judy Mark, Bob Willower
<b>Dec 13</b>	<b>Delmar</b>	Stephanie Ragone, Gail Scott, Barbara Woodruff
<b>Dec 20</b>	<b>Poinsettias</b>	
<b>Dec 27</b>	<b>Poinsettias</b>	

The Delmar Flock hosts December Coffee Hours

Fair Trade Market is Sunday, December 14.

# The First Presbyterian

## December 2015

### 1 Tuesday

9:00 am Men's Bible Study  
1:00 pm Staff Meeting

### **Committee Night**

5:30 pm Membership  
Outreach & Mission  
Property  
Worship  
7:00 pm Dinner  
7:30 pm Comm & Tech  
Christian Education

### 2 Wednesday

12:00 pm Finance Committee  
7:15 pm Small Group B<sup>3</sup>  
7:30 pm *Zephyr Winds*

### 3 Thursday

7:00 am Men's Bible Study  
9:30 am *Music Together*  
6:00 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal  
7:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

### 4 Friday

5:30 pm First Friday Art Display  
6:00 pm First Friday Concert

### **6 Sunday**

8:30 am Worship (Communion)  
9:30 am Education for all ages  
9:45 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal  
10:45 am Worship (Communion)  
11:45 am Fellowship  
12:00 pm Membership Committee

### 7 Monday

6:00 pm Musical Rehearsal

### 8 Tuesday

9:00 am Men's Bible Study  
6:00 pm Deacons-Session Dinner and Meetings

### 9 Wednesday

6:30 pm Small Group B  
7:30 pm Dads' Small Group

### 10 Thursday

7:00 am Men's Bible Study  
6:00 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal  
7:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

### 11 Friday

12:00 pm Newsletter deadline

### **13 Sunday**

8:30 am Worship (Communion)  
9:30 am Education for all ages  
9:45 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal  
10:45 am Worship  
11:45 am Fellowship & Fair Trade Mkt

### 14 Monday

6:00 pm Musical Rehearsal

### 15 Tuesday

9:00 am Men's Bible Study  
10:00 am Clergy Meeting

### 16 Wednesday

7:30 pm *Zephyr Winds*

### 17 Thursday

7:00 am Men's Bible Study  
6:00 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal  
7:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

### 18 Friday

6:00 pm Potluck Dinner and Carol Sing  
TBD Wedding rehearsal

### 19 Saturday

12:00 pm Wedding

### **20 Sunday**

8:30 am Worship (Communion)  
9:30 am Education for all ages  
9:45 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal  
10:45 am Worship (Communion)  
11:45 am Fellowship  
12:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal  
1:00 pm *Vintage Pride*

### 21 Monday

6:00 pm FOCUS Board at Delmar Reformed  
6:00 pm Musical Rehearsal

### 22 Tuesday

9:00 am Men's Bible Study

### 24 Thursday Christmas Eve

6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal  
7:00 pm Musical Prelude  
7:30 pm Worship

### 25 Friday Christmas Day-office closed

11:00 am Worship

### **27 Sunday**

10:00 am Worship  
11:00 am Fellowship

### 29 Tuesday

9:00 am Men's Bible Study  
12:00 pm Newsletter Folders

### 31 Thursday

9:00 am Men's Bible Study



### **AA Meeting Schedule**

Mon 5:30 pm  
Tue 5:30 pm  
Wed 5:30 pm  
Thurs 5:30 & 7:30 pm  
Fri 5:30 pm  
Sat 5:30 pm

### **Get Well Group Schedule**

Wed 7:30 pm  
Fri 7:30 pm

*Note: Italics indicate outside groups.*

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
362 State Street  
Albany, NY 12210

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## The First Presbyterian

### Lectionary

- Nov 29 1st Sunday of Advent**  
Jeremiah 33:14-16 Psalm 25:1-10  
1 Thess. 3:9-13 Luke 21:25-36
- Dec 6 2nd Sunday of Advent**  
Malachi 3:1-4 Luke 1:68-79  
Philippians 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6
- Dec 13 3rd Sunday of Advent**  
Zephaniah 3:14-20 Isaiah 12:2-6  
Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18
- Dec 20 4th Sunday of Advent**  
Micah 5:2-5a Luke 1:46-55  
Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)
- Dec 27 1st Sunday after Christmas Day**  
1 Sam. 2:18-20, 26 Psalm 148  
Colossians 3:12-17 Luke 2:41-52

See the Newsletter on line and in color at  
[www.firstpresalbany.org](http://www.firstpresalbany.org)  
Also visit and like us on facebook. 



**Office Hours**  
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*The First Presbyterian Newsletter* is  
published 11 times a year.

**Editor** Rev. Glenn D. Leupold

Please notify the church office of any  
change in address.

Recordings of the worship service  
are available from the church office.