

Volume No. 22

FEBRUARY 2012

Issue No. 2

WORSHIP: 10:30 AM

- 5 Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
- 12 Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany
- 19 Transfiguration Sunday
- 22 Ash Wednesday
 - Noon Service
 - 7:30 PM Service
- 26 First Sunday in Lent

Our Sunday morning service may be found anytime at www.firstchurchinalbany.org.

FAMILY is published eleven times a year by First Church in Albany, 110 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12207-2231.

Dear Friends,

This month we will welcome the Rev. Susan Vincent Cox as our new Minister for Discipleship and Mission. Sunday, February 19, will be her first Sunday with us and we are planning a special reception after the service. We will also plan several smaller gatherings in homes during February and March so we have additional opportunities to get to know each other better.

Part of Susan's responsibility will be to help us develop and nurture small groups in our congregation—groups that both nurture our faith and call forth gifts of ministry as we reach out in service to others beyond the congregation. That will take time and prayer and some careful listening. Rather than impose our own programs and ideas we want to work together to try discern where God is leading us—and then follow.

“Discernment” has become a trendy word in church circles of late, but it’s a good word and an important concept. What lies behind it is the belief that God is already involved in our lives and in the life of the church, and that guided by scripture and God’s Spirit, through prayerful thought and conversation we can begin to discover where God is at work and become God’s co-workers in the healing of the world.

The Reformed Church in America has also embarked on a discernment process, looking to get a clearer sense of direction for the denomination as we set some priorities and establish goals for the next several years. The leadership of the church has invited wide participation in this process. Consistories and other assemblies and groups in the Reformed Church have all been asked to think and talk together about where they see God working in us and through us. Our consistory has had some of those discussions and will be continuing those conversations. (Discernment is never done!) Another step in the process is a gathering of people from congregations from across the denomination in Orlando, Florida, February 10-12. I will be participating as a member of the RCA Commission on Theology, but my primary experience is as pastor of First Church. We’ll share stories of what is happening in our churches, listen to each other and pray together. I also invite your prayers for that gathering as well as for continuing discernment in our own congregation.

Sincerely,

John D. Paarlberg

- **MEMBERSHIP & CONGREGATIONAL CARE**

FIRST CHURCH READERS GROUP MEETS FEBRUARY 22ND

First Church Readers Group is a group of First Churchers who like to read and get together once a month to discuss a book they have been reading during that month. Everyone is welcome to join us. In February we are reading *So Big* by Edna Ferber. We’ll get together on the last Sunday in February to discuss the book. Come join us.

PRAYERS FOR HEALING

On the third Sunday of each month, those who wish to give their thanks to God and want to pray for healing of body and soul meet immediately after the service in James chapel for a brief service of prayers and petition. We express our gratitude to God and lift up those in need of healing or comfort. Those who are chronically ill, newly sick, in hospital or dealing with bereavement are the focus of our attention. Even if you don’t have anything to express, we’d like you come anyway. Won’t you join us as we gather to give thanks or raise our petitions to God?

At Home with the WORD
Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary
February 1-29

| | | | |
|----|---|----|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Psalm 147:7-11, 20 | 15 | Psalm 50:1-2 |
| 2 | 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 | 16 | Psalm 50:3-6 |
| 3 | Mark 1:29-34 | 17 | 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 |
| 4 | Mark 1:35-39 | 18 | Mark 9:2-9 |
| 5 | 5 th Sunday after the Epiphany | 19 | Transfiguration Sunday |
| 6 | 2 Kings 5:1-7 | 20 | Genesis 9:8-17 |
| 7 | 2 Kings 5:8-14 | 21 | Psalm 25:1-10 |
| 8 | Psalm 30:1-5 | 22 | Ash Wednesday; Psalm 51:1-17 |
| 9 | Psalm 30:6-12 | 23 | 1 Peter 3:18-22 |
| 10 | 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 | 24 | Mark 1:9-11 |
| 11 | Mark 1:40-45 | 25 | Mark 1:12-15 |
| 12 | 6 th Sunday after the Epiphany | 26 | 1 st Sunday in Lent |
| 13 | 2 Kings 2:1-8 | 27 | Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 |
| 14 | 2 Kings 2:9-12 | 28 | Psalm 22:23-31 |
| | | 29 | Romans 4:13-15 |



REMINDERS FROM YOUR MONEY COUNTERS

There are a few things you can do to help us assure that your contributions go where you want them to go:

Write on all checks what the contribution is for - pledge, denominational dues, community ministries, etc. Some of you put your envelope number on the check. This is helpful but it would be even better if you gave us this additional information. You may abbreviate if you wish.

When envelopes are available for specific purposes (pledge, denominational dues, community ministries, etc.) it is helpful if you use those envelopes. Putting a contribution in the wrong kind of envelope delays processing and can increase errors.

If possible, please write a separate check for your pledge and for each special fund to which you are contributing. The process for dividing a check among different funds is a little complicated, therefore increasing the possibility of error.

Doing these few things will enable us to better serve you by assuring that your money goes where you want it to go. Thank you for your help!

PEOPLE OF THE WAY: ON THE JOURNEY OF FAITH

At a recent worship service we welcomed inquirers (and their sponsors) Deborah Anderson (Norma Jean Ballou), Theresa Brewer (Erica Bliss), Joeanna Brown (Audrey Ming), and Janice Rowell (Norma McClement) who have been meeting together to explore the Christian faith. Please support these friends with your prayers as they continue the journey and prepare for their public profession or reaffirmation of faith and membership in the church.

- **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

Youth Group Schedule

January 28, Regional Food Bank @ 930am - meet at church at 9am.

February 4, Sunset Lanes @ 12:15pm – meet at church at 1145am.

On Saturday, February 4, 2012 members of the Youth Group will be participating in a “Bowling for Beds” Bowl-A-Thon to raise money for the Emergency Overflow Homeless Shelter in Albany. The event will be held at Sunset Recreation Center, 1160 Central Avenue in Albany. Children, Youth and Adults from around the capital region will be working together with a goal of raising over \$10,000. For more information or to make a donation, please contact Monica Marsh or Andy Mondore.

February 5, Super Bowl Subs – Youth Group meet at church at 7am.

Order your favorite sub Turkey, Ham or Italian Mix for only \$6.00. Proceeds will go towards the Youth Group mission trip in July 2012. Don't forget to bring a can of soup or donation to vote for favorite team Super Bowl team. All donations of soup or money will go to the First Church Food Pantry.

Do you or does someone you know need a ride to worship? Are you able to offer a ride to someone? Call the church office and please let us know. We'll help to arrange rides for those who need them.

- **WORSHIP & MUSIC**

MUSIC NOTE

From its foundations we have been a singing faith - a musical faith.

- God asks Job “where were you... when the morning stars sang together”
- The scriptures mention music in over 1150 verses.
- David comforts Saul by playing on his harp
- Jesus sang a song before he went out after the last supper.
- The scriptures tell us to praise the Lord with singing, trumpets, stringed instruments, organ and other stringed instruments.
- The theologian, William B. McCain, in speaking of African American Spirituals, says:
“Singing is as close to worship as breathing is to life (and) reflect the truth of an old African saying; The spirit will not descend without song.”

So” with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. “
Colossians 3:12–1

SUNDAY BACH IS BACK

On the second Sunday of the month we'll have an extended postlude featuring one of the major works of Johann Sebastian Bach. In February it's the Prelude and fugue in C Major. This sunny, bubbly Prelude is the only prelude Bach wrote in 9/8 time, giving it a waltzing dance-like feel. The hands playing jubilant upward figures, while the feet provide descending punctuation marks which test the organist's pedal accuracy. The majestic fugue is unusual because the pedal doesn't enter until almost two thirds of the way through the fugue. At the end of the fugue there is an exciting section where the fugue subject enters in different voices almost right on top of each other. The celebratory mood of the prelude is a fitting end to our epiphany season while the more reflective and profound fugue foreshadows the more serious mood to come in Lent.

GUEST PREACHER: DR. ROBERT WHITE

New York State Council Of Churches

The Rev. Dr. Robert A. White was recently appointed Interim Executive Director of the New York State Council of Churches and will serve until a permanent Executive Director is appointed. Dr. White is Minister Emeritus of the First Reformed Church of Schenectady. He has also served the Reformed Church in America as Minister for Social Witness, and as President of the New Brunswick Theological Seminary. We will welcome Dr. White as our guest preacher at First Church on Sunday, February 12.

- **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**



GIVE-A-MEAL-A-MONTH

cocoa, coffee, soup
dishwashing liquid

The items listed are suggestions.

All donations to the Pantry are gratefully received.



OVERFLOW SHELTER DINNERS

Thanks to the generosity of many of you, we have been providing dinner twice a month to the Albany Emergency Overflow Shelter. During the cold weather, the Shelter provides food and shelter each night to about 20 men. Some are working poor who can't afford regular housing, some are dealing with mental health or addiction issues that make them ineligible for other shelters, and others just are down on their luck in these hard times. A "shelter of last resort," they turn nobody away.

In February we will be supplying dinners on the 3rd and 24th. Can you help by: contributing a dish (main dish, pasta/starch, vegetable, bread, drinks or dessert) or helping to deliver? Sign up at the Hospitality Table! The week we provide dinner, bring your dishes Sunday after church or weekdays between 8:30 and 3 p.m. **USE NON RETURNABLE DISHES.** For more info, contact Mary Bon at 463-4449 - and thank you for your generosity.

Did you know? That last year the Food Pantry provided 68,410 meals as well as diapers and infant formula. 1,640 households were served, of which 149 were new to the food pantry; many were served month after month. Thank you volunteers! Thank you to all who contributed gifts of food and offerings for this ministry.

- **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

A VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND

Join the Weathervanes for fellowship, lunch and program on Wednesday, February 8 at 12:30 p.m., in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich; dessert, coffee and tea will be served. After lunch, Ned and Kathie Monthie will share stories and pictures of their trip last fall to New Zealand. Please telephone Audrey Ming (456-5485) to let her know that you plan to attend.

EASTER FLOWER MEMORIALS

Orders for Easter memorials must be received in the Church Office no later than **Friday, March 30**. A donation of \$10 or more per plant is requested. Please make your check payable to First Church in Albany and mark it *Lilies*. After Easter, the plants will be distributed to our homebound members.

Poinsettia Reminder: *If you haven't made a contribution for your poinsettia plant(s), you may make your check payable to **First Church in Albany** (marked "Poinsettia") in the amount of \$10 or more per plant. Thank you.*

COFFEE HOUR RESPONSIBILITIES - FEBRUARY

FIRST SUNDAY:
SECOND SUNDAY: Becky Hudak
THIRD SUNDAY: Kim Dunne and Rich Gattie
FOURTH SUNDAY: Ann Burek & Shirley Bone



→ **The deadline for the March issue of *FAMILY* is February 15.**

Hearing assist devices are now available for use in the sanctuary during worship services. They are simple to use and very effective. Turn it on, put on the ear piece, and adjust the volume. The foam pads on the ear buds are replaced after each use. You can also purchase your own ear piece or head set to work with the device.

- **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **Ruth Reiner** (Kathie Monthie's mother), who celebrated her **90th birthday** on **January 7**.

THANK YOU

Natalie and George Parry thank the First Church family for the many Christmas cards they received and for the birthday cards for Natalie. They enjoyed every one.

Dear Reverend Paarlberg,

I just wanted to say Thank You for your beautiful Christmas late service. I am a pilot for Southwest Airlines and was on an Albany layover on Christmas Eve. I landed around 10:30pm and arrived at my hotel just long enough for me to change out of my uniform and make the cold walk down to your church. My wife and kids were back home in Toledo, Ohio attending our church there and I just couldn't bear sitting alone in my hotel room. Of course you reminded me during your service that I am never alone and that Jesus was spending the evening with me already but I still enjoyed the music and message of that night. So many people take for granted the fact that they can spend the holidays with those they love. Your service was just what I needed to hear that night and you have no idea how much it impacted my Christmas.

Please thank your soloist, organist and musicians for their fantastic music and thanks to you again for helping me keep my faith aligned on such a holy night.

*Godspeed,
Scott Koeppl*

SYMPATHY

Our sympathy is extended to Joline Mondore and her family on the death of her sister, **Alayne DiFranco**, who died on **January 18**.

Our sympathy is extended to John Selmer and his family on the death of his brother, **Robert**, who died on **January 17**.

Our sympathy is extended to Barbara Papale on the death of her good friend, **Jack Bennett**, who died on **January 16**.

MEMORIALS

In celebration of the life of **Howard Wygant**, gifts have been received from **Bruce R. Matt, Barbara Callahan & Bob Licari, Kay McCann, Henry & Alberta Fox** and an anonymous donor for **Clee Park**.

In celebration of the life of **Ann Suderly Ten Eyck**, gifts have been received from **Cheryl Gowie** for the **Music Fund**, and from **Helen Suderley Harris & Timothy M. Harris, MD** and **Joseph & Gail Sacco** for **Community Ministries**.

- **GROWING GREEN**

As part of an ongoing series on how we can “grow green”, each month we share a few tips on simple practices that we can do to increase our stewardship of God’s good earth.

- The meat industry produces one fifth of all the man-made greenhouse gas released and is a major polluter of our water.
- It takes 40 calories of fossil fuel energy to produce one calorie of feed lot beef but only 2.2 calories of fossil fuel to produce a calorie of plant based protein.
- If every American gave up meat once a week it would save almost 100 megatons of greenhouse emissions.

Here’s an easy vegetarian baked bean recipe that will save energy, money, and maybe a bit of the planet, too.

Crockpot Homestyle Vegetarian Baked Beans

- 1 pound dry beans (colored beans like black, pinto, or cranberry are the most nutritious but any beans will work)
- 1 large uncooked onion, chopped
- 2 carrots chopped
- 2 tbsp molasses
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 1 6 oz can tomato paste
- 1/4 cup(s) unpacked brown sugar or brown sugar splenda
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 4 clove(s) (medium) garlic clove(s), finely chopped
- 2 cup(s) water
- (chili powder optional 1 tsp to 1 tablespoon)

Soak the beans overnight; drain; add all the ingredients and cook on low for 12 hours in a crockpot. Add salt as desired. Serve with bread or cornbread to make an inexpensive, complete meal.

Have you got an energy saving recipe that you’d like to share? Send it to maryebon@verizon.net or drop in Mary’s box in the work room.

Don't Get *TOWED* – The parking spaces in our Orange St. lot (limited space is also available in the Sheridan Ave. lot) are for the use of members and friends while they are at church on weekdays. Except during worship services, a parking permit tag is required. **CARS WITHOUT A PERMIT TAG VISIBLE IN THE WINDSHIELD MAY BE *TOWED*.** If you have been issued a permit, please remember to display it in your vehicle's windshield. Call the Church Office (463-4449) for more information.

Please pass this newsletter along! There is no better way to introduce family and friends to our ministry than to share our monthly newsletter with them. Well, there is one way which is far better: invite them to share a Sunday morning with us!