

The First Church FAMILY

*The First Church in Albany · Founded in 1642
Reformed Church in America*

April 2016

WORSHIP:

3 Second Sunday of Easter

10:30 am Sanctuary Service (Communion)
(During Worship: Children & Worship)
11:30 am Coffee & Conversation

10 Third Sunday of Easter

10:30 am Sanctuary Service
(During Worship: Children & Worship)
11:30 am Coffee & Conversation
Post-service: FOCUS Presentation

17 Fourth Sunday of Easter

10:30 am Sanctuary Service
(During Worship: Children & Worship)
11:30 am Coffee & Conversation
Post-service: First Church Readers

24 Fifth Sunday of Easter

10:30 am Sanctuary Service
(During Worship: Children & Worship)
11:30 am Coffee & Conversation

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

From the Pastor:

Dear Friends,

Over the past several weeks the Sunday morning scripture texts have been stories of Jesus at table. When Jesus was at table he was frequently criticized for eating and drinking with sinners. It was while he was at table that he told stories about a lost sheep, a lost coin, about a father with two sons. He was at the table when a woman came, upsetting polite company by bathing his feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair. He was at the table when he noticed guests choosing places of honor, so he told a story about giving a dinner party and inviting the poor, the lame, the blind. He was at the table on the night he was betrayed when he shared the Passover meal with his disciples, and gave them bread, saying, "This is my body," and wine, saying, "This is my blood." And he was at the table with two disciples after his resurrection, when he took bread, and blessed and broke it and gave it to them and their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

So much of Jesus' teaching and ministry took place when people were gathered around a table to share a meal.

The practice continued among the first followers of Jesus: *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2: 42-47).*

Table fellowship was an essential characteristic of this new and growing community of Jesus' followers. Their table fellowship involved more than just eating together but it was at least that.

I've been thinking about how we can encourage that practice in our own congregation. I know of one church where a group of people from the congregation meet once a month to cook and share a meal together. They always prepare more than they need and set aside the left overs so they can be bought later to those who have recently returned home from the hospital, or to others in the congregation who need to be remembered. The Third Reformed Church in Albany prepares and serves a monthly community dinner for people in the neighborhood. Perhaps we could plan for small groups in our congregation to meet together in homes for food and fellowship. Good things happen around the table.

Jesus often gathered around the table with friends and strangers alike. I think we can, too. How shall we do that?

Sincerely, John Paarlberg

Guest Preachers in April

On **Sunday, April 3**, we will welcome the Rev. David Corlett as our guest preacher. Rev. Corlett is a retired RCA pastor who has most recently served the Reformed Church in Delmar. The following Sunday the Rev. Jim Ketcham will be in our pulpit. Rev. Ketcham is the new Executive Director of FOCUS. During the post-service time on **April 10** he and Joe Paparone, Advocacy Coordinator for FOCUS, will lead a presentation about the ministry of FOCUS.

On **Sunday, May 1**, the Rev. Richard Otterness will be our guest preacher. Richard and his wife Carolyn are Reformed Church missionaries serving in Hungary, helping to train volunteers who work with the Roma (Gypsy) people, and helping to establish new Roma congregations, and improve access to health care and education.

At Home with the WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary
April 1st - April 30th

Now available online at: www.rca.org/resources/home-word

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|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. John 20:19-23 | 16. John 10:22-30 |
| 2. John 20:24-31 | 17. Fourth Sunday of Easter |
| 3. Second Sunday of Easter | 18. Acts 11:1-10 |
| 4. Acts 9:1-9 | 19. Acts 11:11-18 |
| 5. Acts 9:10-20 | 20. Psalm 148 |
| 6. Psalm 30 | 21. Revelation 21:1-4 |
| 7. Revelation 5:11-14 | 22. Revelation 21:5-6 |
| 8. John 21:1-14 | 23. John 13:31-35 |
| 9. John 21:15-19 | 24. Fifth Sunday of Easter |
| 10. Third Sunday of Easter | 25. Acts 16:9-15 |
| 11. Acts 9:36-38 | 26. Psalm 67 |
| 12. Acts 9:39-43 | 27. Revelation 21:10, 22-27 |
| 13. Psalm 23 | 28. Revelation 22:1-5 |
| 14. Revelation 7:9-12 | 29. John 14:23-29 |
| 15. Revelation 7:13-17 | 30. John 5:1-9 |

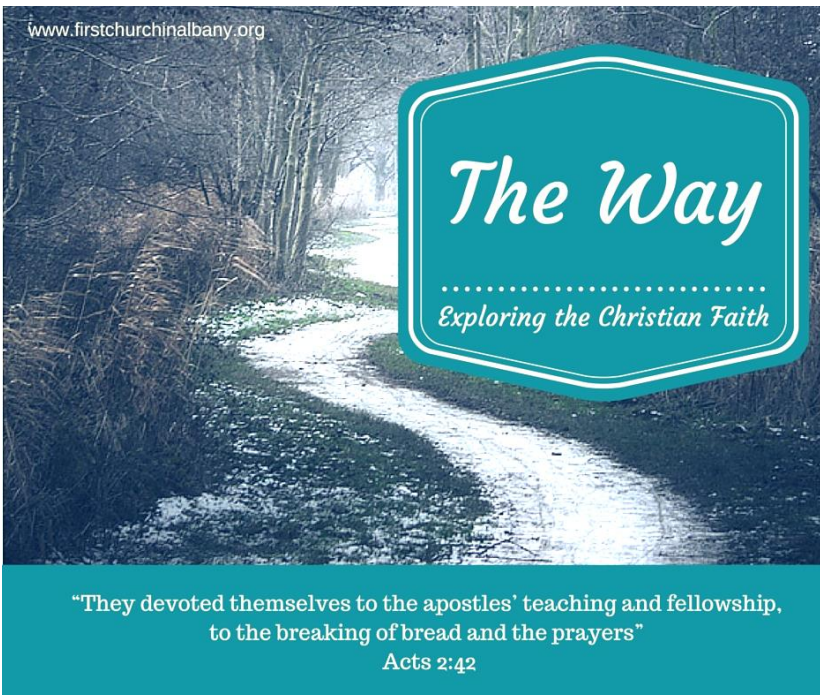
The Way: Walking Together on the Journey of Faith

Luke offers this description of the first followers of Jesus: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). Meeting in smaller groups, often over a shared meal, and talking and praying together about the life of faith was a central practice of the early Christian community.

At First Church *The Way* is an opportunity to explore the life of faith. Through prayerful reading of scripture and thoughtful questions and discussion we make space to listen for what God is saying and where God might be leading us today. *The Way* is an opportunity for your faith to be explored, nurtured, and renewed, your commitment to Jesus Christ affirmed, and your walk as a disciple of Christ to be strengthened. *The Way* is especially for those new to First Church and for those who are interested in further exploring the Christian faith.

Another *The Way* group will be forming later this month. If you have a friend or neighbor who is not already involved in a faith community, consider inviting them to come along on *The Way*. Offer to come with them. We meet after Sunday worship in the church parlor for a light lunch and then meet for 30-45 minutes in small groups for reflection and discussion of the scripture text for the day.

For more information please speak to Pastor John Paarlberg or email johnpaarlberg@verizon.net or contact the church office (463-4449).



www.firstchurchinalbany.org

The Way

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Exploring the Christian Faith

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers”
Acts 2:42

CROP Hunger Walk

Sunday May 1

The 2016 Albany CROP Hunger Walk will be held on May 1, at the First Lutheran Church on Western Avenue in Albany. The CROP Hunger Walk is an annual community-wide event sponsored by the Capital Area Council of Churches and the Church World Service. It is organized by local volunteers to raise funds to help end hunger globally and locally.

The walk will begin at 1:30 pm, preceded by registration at 12:30 pm. Walkers can follow a 3 mile loop or a shorter one mile loop.

Cindy Gillespie (439-4188) or Diane Wuerstlin (373-3271) will be available during coffee hours after worship for the month of April to provide information and for you to sign up. Go to www.firstchurchinalbany.org.

Last year First Church raised \$1,468 by 12 walkers.

Come walk with us...



Training Session on Israel/ Palestine

The Regional Synod of Albany is hosting a training session on Israel/ Palestine on Saturday, April 9. Come to learn about ways to advocate for peace and justice. This training is for everyone, whether you know a lot about the relationship between Israel and Palestine already, or are learning about it for the first time. **When:** 1:30–4:00 p.m., April 9, 2016 **Where:** Regional Synod of Albany office, 1790 Grand Blvd., Schenectady.

Thank You Choir



The choir and soloists have been working hard this Lent and Easter to prepare and present special offerings of music both during the Pre-service time and in the worship Service. We are blessed to have these dedicated people who illuminating our worship through their faithful witness, hard work, and beautiful music. Thank-you choir!

April 8th - Our last Overflow Shelter Dinner of the Season

We'll be providing and delivering food for our last Overflow Shelter Dinner of the season on Friday April 8th. The theme is COOK'S CHOICE! Can you bring a dish to serve 6-8 shelter guests or deliver the meal? RECYCLABLE containers are available at the hospitality table. Sign up at the hospitality table or email Mary Bon at maryebon@verizon.net!



Bring your dishes Sunday after church, weekdays between 9 am and 1:00 pm or Thursday night between 6:30 and 7:30. Soft foods and foods that are easy to chew are appreciated. Also some guests do not eat pork products so if your dish contains pork please label it "**Contains Pork.**"

Sponsored by the Capital Area Council of Churches, the Overflow Shelter provides food and shelter each night to about 20 men: the working poor who can't afford regular housing, those with mental health or addiction issues that make them ineligible for other shelters, and some just down on their luck in hard times. It is "shelter of last resort" turning nobody away.

First Church Readers Group Meets April 17th



First Church Readers

Come join us to discuss on April 17th to discuss *To the Light House* by Virginia Woolf. An important twentieth century novel, it was named Modern Library's No. 15 on its list of the [100 best English-language novels of the 20th century](#).

On May 15th we'll meet to discuss *Hudson River Steamboat Catastrophes, Contests and Collisions* by our own congregation member, Tom Allison.

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. Contact Mary Bon at maryebon@verizon.net or 463-4449 for more information or ideas for books.

Growing Green

Making things greener

This is part of an ongoing series on how we can "grow green." Each month we share a few tips on simple practices that may increase our stewardship of God's good earth.

- For a greener spring cleaning use vinegar and baking soda instead of bleach.
- Use a toaster oven or microwave instead of a regular oven.
- Grow a pot of lettuce or a collection of herbs in your window; or plant early vegetables.
- The nice weather is coming! Get out side, take a walk or bike ride.

You may be affected by the Northeast Direct Pipeline

One of our sister congregations, the First Reformed Church of Bethlehem in Selkirk, is calling attention to the proposed Northeast Direct (NED) Pipeline. If constructed as planned, the pipeline would cut a huge swath through some of the church's forested land, land that was bought in 1795 from Stephen Van Rensselaer, one of the early Dutch patroons, and which is on the National Historic Registry. The proposed pipeline, which would carry gas extracted by fracking and would run from Pennsylvania through New York State and Massachusetts, also raises a number of environmental and health concerns. To learn more about the plans for this pipeline and efforts to oppose it, go to <http://stopnypipeline.org>

First Church to Host Habitat Workers

For the next several weeks First Church has the opportunity to host a group of college-age students who will be working on nearby Habitat for Humanity projects on Sheridan Avenue, Orange Street, and Clinton Avenue. From mid-April through the first week in June we will be providing sleeping and living space for eight to twelve young adults. They will also be using the church kitchen and Zimmerman Hall for breakfasts and dinners. These young adults are participating in the AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) program in partnership with Habitat for Humanity. They may also join us in worship from time to time and help out with projects around the church. We thank them for their service to our community and are glad to be able to provide some First Church hospitality.

Purchase Fair Trade Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Soap

Support the farmers of Palestine in the struggle for their livelihood and land.



Olives are an important crop for the people of Palestine. Purchasing olive oil and olive oil products through Palestinian cooperatives directly benefits families living in occupied Palestine. It is also a way of letting them know that they have not been forgotten in their hope for end to the illegal Israeli occupation and military rule.

Farmers are paid free trade prices through the Palestine Fair Trade Association. 750 ml bottles of olive oil from Zatoun (*Zatoun* is the Arabic word for olive) are \$20. 500 ml bottles from Canaan Fair Trade are \$18. Small bars of olive oil soap are \$4 each. Please call the church office or contact John Paarlberg if you would like to purchase some for yourself or as gifts for others.

The Weathervanes : Christian Humor



Join the Weathervanes for fellowship, lunch, and program on Wednesday, April 20th, at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich. Coffee, tea, and dessert will be served. After lunch, John Bowen will show some video clips he has prepared of the Christian Humor of Jeanne Robertson. Come and enjoy. Please phone Audrey Ming (456-5485) to let her know you plan to attend.

First Church Now on Facebook

First Church is now on Facebook. Please take a look. And, as they say: “like” us and “share” us with your friends. <https://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchinAlbany> We will be posting a few times each week so check us out!

Rev. Cameron Monthly Brunch

Rev. Bill Cameron began gathering a group for lunch on the first Thursday of the month. The group continues to meet each month at the Gateway Diner, 899 Central Ave. in Albany. Anyone can join us starting at 12:15 and stay until you wish to leave. We all pay for our own. Contact Donna E. Schultz at deschultz07@aol.com or 518.429.1255.

375th Anniversary Committee

2017 will mark the 375th year that First Church has been doing the work of God in this community and we will be planning special worship, artistic and historical events to celebrate. A committee is being set up to coordinate these events, and we would like three members from the congregation to join in the planning. If you are interested in the history of the church or in just helping to plan the events of what will be a festive year, contact Ian Leet at 482-6612 or at ian.leet@outlook.com.

A Reminder About Easter Flowers

If you haven't made a contribution for your Easter plant you may make your check payable to “**First Church in Albany**” (marked: lilies) in the amount of \$10 or more a plant.

Drive-in worship begins Sunday, May 1, 9 a.m.

Each Sunday in May through the first Sunday in September worshippers gather in the Sheridan Avenue parking lot and in Clee Park for a half-hour worship service led from the outdoor pulpit.

CURRENT ELDERS, DEACONS and TRUSTEES

BOARD OF ELDERS

Ian Leet	2016*
Tom Allison	2016
Monica Marsh (Sr. Elder)	2016
Mary Wiejola	2016
Joeanna Brown	2017*
Jay Reohr (Asst. Sr. Elder)	2017*
Peter Pagerey	2017
Becky Hudak	2017

BOARD OF DEACONS

Andrew Mondore (Asst.Sr. Deacon)	2017*
Deborah Anderson	2017*
Chip Welge (Sr. Deacon)	2016*
Erica Bliss	2016
Richard Gardner	2017
Sandra Scudder	2017

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

James Folts	(President)
Ross Westhuis	(Vice President)
Andrew Mondore	(Secretary)
Ray Van Epps	(Treasurer)
Wayne Sivaslian	(Financial Secretary)
David Bradley	
Shirley Bone	
Diane Wuerstlin	
Ann Burek	
Edward Monthie	
Dave Mortenson	

*indicates second term

Parking Lots:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION-SNOW-TOW WARNING

If you are parked in either First Church parking lot when the church offices are closed (after 5 or weekends), and the plowing company comes to clear the snow, you will be TOWED whether you display a First Church permit or not.

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The deadline for the May issue of *FAMILY* is April 15.

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Thank You

Thank you for prayers, pastoral visits, get well cards/wishes, text messages and phone calls during my recent illness. Also, thank you to Larry Underdue, Noel Concepcion, Cindy Gillespie, Norma McClement, Jane Ward and Ray Van Epps for their assistance in keeping my office work up-to-date. I appreciate it so very much. Denise

Memorial

In celebration of the life of **Dan and Suzanne Clayton** gifts have been received from William Staats, Carolyn and Robert Akland, James D. Daly II and Jill M. Daly, and Maggi Kemna Ventura and Joe Ventura for the **Music Fund**.

In celebration of the life of **Suzanne Clayton** gifts have been received from Anita Wise and Carol Mahon DeCandia for the **Music Fund**.

In celebration of the life of **Elsa Marie Kelp** a gift has been received from Gilbert J. Molella for the **Music Fund**.

In Sympathy

Our sympathy is extended to Gregory Clayton, family and friends on the death of his mother, Suzanne Clayton on March 5, 2016.



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FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

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RETURN SERVICE REQUIRED