

# THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

(Reformed Church in America)

110 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12207 ~ (518) 463-4449

Email: [info@firstchurchinalbany.org](mailto:info@firstchurchinalbany.org) ~ Website: [www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org) ~ Sunday Worship: 10:30 am

## 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 all are loved.*

**First Sunday in Lent**

**February 18, 2018**

## THE APPROACH TO GOD

**Prelude:** *Yurba Lament*

Fela Sowanda

*Sojourner (I Want Jesus to Walk with Me, Hymn 363)*

Richard Hobby

*Kum Ba Yah (Come by Here)*

African Melody arr. Adolphus Hailstork

Announcements

Call to Worship

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 124:8

**Amen.**

*Continued p.2*

To you, O GOD, we lift up our souls, the spirit of our whole selves.

**We trust you without shame, seeking so to live that you are not ashamed of us.**

We commit to a Lenten journey begun in right relationship, asking you to:

**Teach us. Show us. Guide us in your paths. Raise in us the longing and courage to know your ways more clearly.**

You are the God of our salvation and the Sustainer of good relations.

**We wait for you.**

May passionate integrity, clean conscience, and upright living preserve us.

**Amen.**

\*Hymn 376

*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

HYFRYDOL

Prayer of Confession

**Creating and Renewing God,**

**we recognize the opportunity in this Lenten season to clear our eyes of the glaze of indifference, our hearts of apathy, and our minds of distractions, obsessions and self-pity. We begin today by asking for your forgiveness, and seeking your help. Give us courage to start over. Re-orient our heads and hearts so that we may fill our whole selves with life-affirming activities and thoughts. Empower us in thought, word and deed to treat all people and your creation with just and tender care.**

*The prayer may continue in silence.*

Assurance of Pardon

The Law of God

\*The Peace

Reminded of the simplicity of God's way and having received the power of God's merciful love, the peace of God made known in Christ is within our reach. God is always reaching out to us. Let us live into that love with one another.

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

\*Response (Sung to #98 – PASSION CHORALE)

**Yet humbly, in our striving, we rise to face the test.**

**We crave the power to do your will as once you did it best.**

**On us now let the healing of your great Spirit fall,**

**And make us brave and full of joy to answer to your call.**

Text: David Blanchard

THE WORD OF GOD

The Prayer for Illumination

**Eternal God, in the reading of the Scripture, may your word be heard; in the meditation of our hearts, may your word be known; and in the faithfulness of our lives, may your word be shown. Amen.**

The Gospel Lesson

Mark 1:9-15

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

A Word with Children

Anthem      *We Shall Walk through the Valley*

*African-American Spiritual*  
*arr. Moses Hogan*

*We shall walk through the valley in peace. For Jesus himself will be our leader. We shall walk through the valley in peace. We will meet our loved ones there. For Jesus himself will be our leader. We shall walk through the valley in peace. There will be no more trials there: For Jesus himself will be our leader. We shall walk through the valley in peace.*

The Sermon

“Passionate Care”

The Prayer for Blessing on the Word

### THE RESPONSE TO GOD

Hymn    *When we are tested*

SURSUM CORDA (Tune #248)

***When we are tested and wrestle alone,  
famished for bread when the world offers stone,  
nourish us, God, by your word and your way,  
food that sustains us by night and by day.***

***When in the desert we cry for relief,  
pleading for paths marked by certain belief,  
lift us to love you beyond sign and test,  
trusting your presence, our only true rest.***

***When we are tempted to barter our souls,  
trading the truth for power to control,  
teach us to worship and praise only you,  
seeking your will in the work that we do.***

***When we have struggled and searched through the night,  
sorting and sifting the wrong from the right,  
Savior, surround us with circles of care,  
angels of healing, of hope, and of prayer.***

Offering

Offertory

*The Serpent*

Thomas Pavlechko

*What do you see?" the serpent said. The woman answered "Death."  
"It is not death," the serpent said, "It surely is not death."  
"I see what God told us to see," The woman quickly said.  
"See what I say," the serpent said. "See what I say," it said.  
"What do you see?" the tempter said, The Savior answered, "Stone."  
"Must it be stone?" the tempter said, "It surely could be bread."  
"Let it be stone," the Savior said, "For life is more than bread.  
See what the scripture says," he said, "See what the scripture says."  
We see what we are told to see, whom shall we listen to?  
Give us the grace, O God, to see what we are told by you.*

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\*Doxology (Hymn 591)

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

The Joys and Concerns of the Church

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

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.**

\*Hymn 85

*What Wondrous Love Is This*

WONDROUS LOVE

\*Charge and Blessing

Choral Response

*Masithi, Amen Siakudumisa*

Stephen C. Molefe

Amen, we praise your name, O Lord

**Postlude:** Fanfare on “McKee”

*(In Christ There is No East or West, Hymn 440)*  
African American Spiritual Arr. Charles Callahan

AΩ

\*Those who are able, please stand

**WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS:** Preacher: The Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden; Minister of Music: Mary Bon

We welcome all who gather to worship God this morning. If you are a visitor please sign our guest book or complete a visitor’s card (found in the pew rack) and place it in the offering plate. There is an elevator in our building, which makes every floor accessible. Please join us for refreshments and conversation after worship

**Hearing assist devices are available for your use. Please ask an usher.**

**The flowers this morning** are given by Kathleen Gregory in loving memory of Harriet Sinclair’s birthday, February 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Our opening liturgy this morning** is adapted from the work of Rev. Rosemary McCombs Maxey.

**Children and Worship: A Joyful Way to Worship God**

Children ages 4-12 are invited to go to the Children’s Worship Center after a Word with Children.

**Join us for *A LITTLE LENTEN MUSIC*** each Lenten Sunday at 10:15 am.

Come early to pray, meditate, refresh yourself, or just listen to some beautiful music as we follow the Lenten road from cross to resurrection. Next week's offering is *African-American Spirituals* with our soloists. March 4<sup>th</sup> music is *Mass for the Convents* by Francios Couperin.

**Join in prayer for First Church Wednesdays at noon.** Come to the sanctuary or pray where you are.

**Thank you, Ian Leet,** for hosting the Choir Mardi Gras Party at your house. Everyone had a great time eating lots of homemade pancakes before Lent.

**The First Church Readers will meet today after worship in the Parlor,** to discuss *Lily and the Octopus* by Steven Rowley. The book deals with themes of love and loss through the eyes of a man and his dachshund, Lily. Everyone is welcome. Come join us.

**Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm,** you are invited to a forum on the Sheridan Avenue power plant slated to come online in the next year. The forum is sponsored by Sheridan Hollow Alliance for Renewable Energy and will meet in Zimmerman Hall.

**Transition Forum and Soup Lunch** will be held on February 25 after worship.

**Thank you to all who helped with our Overflow Homeless Shelter dinner** on February 9th. Our next dinner will be March 9<sup>th</sup> (Casseroles and Comfort Food). You can sign up at the hospitality table to bring a dish. Contact Mary Bon at 463-4449 or [maryebon@verizon.net](mailto:maryebon@verizon.net) for more information.

Leave your dish in the Zimmerman hall refrigerator or freezer Sunday after church or any weekday between 8:30 am and 1 pm. Label it 'SHELTER DINNER' and mention if it contains pork. Contact Mary Bon with questions or for more info [maryebon@verizon.net](mailto:maryebon@verizon.net) or 463-4449. Use disposable containers, dishes can't be returned. AND THANK YOU!

**Food Pantry collection** for February is SOAP. Personal care items cannot be purchased with food stamps yet are needed by all no matter their income level for good health and hygiene. Please place your contributions in the basket in front of the communion table.

**On Thursday evening, March 15**, at the Reformed Church in Scotia, Dr. Joshua Vis, the Church Engagement Facilitator for Israel and Palestine in the Reformed Church, and Dr. Mae Cannon, Executive Director of Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), will lead a presentation on “**Christian Perspectives on the Israeli Palestinian Conflict.**” The event will be March 15, 2018, 5:30-8:30pm at the First Reformed Church of Scotia, 224 N Ballston Avenue, Scotia, NY. A light supper will be served. The event is free but reservations are requested. For more information and to make a reservation go to: <https://joshvis.com/event-signup-mar-15-ny/>

**If you would like to be a liturgist for Sunday worship**, please talk with Lynn Carman Bodden.

***Pocket Prayer Shawls* are available at today’s Worship.** Please ask one of our greeters and they can provide a basket of pocket prayer shawls to choose from. Pocket Prayer Shawls are made and filled with prayers and can be given to someone in need of comfort, healing, or a reminder of the closeness of God.

**Music note:** As we celebrate Black History Month in February, much of our music today is drawn from that tradition. In the prelude, the first piece is by the Nigerian composer, Fela Sowanda, considered the father of Nigerian classical music. The last piece, a setting of *Kum ba yah* by African-American composer, Adolphus Hailstork, uses lush chords to create a restful painting of the hymn text, *Come by here*. Hailstork grew up in Arbor Hill, right around the corner from First Church. The anthem, *We Shall Walk through the Valley*, was arranged by the African-American composer, pianist, and conductor, Moses Hogan. With its rich, velvety harmonies and understated counterpoint, the serene setting offers a comforting musical painting of the text - walking through the trials and valleys of life with a sure and certain hope in the future. Although Hogan only lived to the age of forty-five he was internationally known for his rich and expressive arrangements of Spirituals and almost single-handedly sparked a revival of the Spiritual toward the end of the twentieth century.

# TRANSITION FORUM AND SOUP LUNCHEON



Sunday, February 25, 2018 - 11:45 am

All are welcome for lunch, activities, fellowship, learning and FUN!

The Transition Team will share more about what we heard in the Cottage Meetings, and then we'll participate in a couple activities to move us closer to the pastoral search. Please sign up in the lobby if you can join us. If you'd like to contribute soup or bread, there's room on the sign-up sheet as well!

## **THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH**

Sunday	2/18	<b>First Sunday in Lent</b>	
		10:15 am	Pre-Service Music
		10:30 am	Sanctuary Service
			Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
			Children & Worship (During Worship)
		Post Service:	Coffee and Conversation
			First Church Readers (Parlor)
Monday	2/19	<b>Church Office Closed</b>	
		<b>Food Pantry Closed</b>	
Tuesday	2/20	12:00 noon	Bible Study
		7:00 pm	Power Plant Meeting in Zimmerman Hall
Wednesday	2/21	9:00 am - 11:30 am	Food Pantry Open
		12:00 noon	AA Meeting
		12:00 noon	Prayer for the Church
		12:30 pm	Weathervanes
		6:00 pm	NVC Practice Group
Thursday	2/22	7:00 pm	Choir Rehearsal
Sunday	2/25	<b>Second Sunday in Lent</b>	
		10:15 am	Pre-Service Music
		10:30 am	Sanctuary Service
			Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
			Children & Worship (During Worship)
		11:45 am	Transition Forum/Soup Lunch

# February Is Heart Healthy Month.

**Please note:**



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An Automated External Defibrillator  
“**AED**” is located in the lobby attached to  
the wall outside of the **workroom**.

