

# The First Church FAMILY

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

**February 2019**

## **WORSHIP:**

- 3     **Fourth Sunday after Epiphany** (Communion)  
10:00 am     FOCUS Churches of Albany  
                  Combined Winter Worship Service  
                  Emmanuel Baptist Church, 275 State Street, Albany  
12:30 pm:     Empty Bowls at Delmar Reformed Church
- 10    **Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**  
10:30 am     Sanctuary Service  
                  Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching  
                  Children & Worship (During Worship)  
Post Service: Coffee and Conversation  
                  First Church Readers  
12:00 pm     Confirmation  
1:00 pm     Mother's Group
- 17    **Sixth Sunday after Epiphany**  
10:30 am     Sanctuary Service – Healing Service  
                  Rev. Sue Vincent-Cox, preaching  
                  Children & Worship (During Worship)  
12:00 pm     Confirmation
- 24    **Seventh Sunday after Epiphany**  
10:30 am     Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching  
                  Nat Phipps Jazz Trio  
                  Children & Worship (During Worship)  
Post Service: Farewell Luncheon for Larry Underdue

# FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Members and Friends,

When I was growing up, February was an important month – because of Valentine’s Day. Perhaps like me, you spent considerable time decorating a shoebox to receive valentine cards from your classmates, and pasting hand-cut red hearts onto paper doilies, or figuring out just which kind of themed little cards to buy and to whom you would give them in your class. February was all about love: hearts and candy and flowers. And it was anxious: what did it mean if I sent *this* valentine to *that* person? What was the significance of what I received?

Love is all about communication. In the church we often say that God is Love. I believe that is true. Think about all the ways God communicates deep affection and great excitement and profound hope to us: in the beauty and abundance of creation, in the many instances of healing, freedom, forgiveness and justice we learn in scripture, in the incarnation, ministry and death and resurrection of Christ, in the gift of the Holy Spirit. God says to us each day: You matter. You are needed. Your gifts make a difference. Your life is valuable. You are not alone. I am with you. God in Jesus calls us to love one another: our families, our friends, our neighbors, strangers, even enemies.

For human beings, communication is often challenging. My dad had a little card he shared with me that contained a convoluted, yet insightful truth attributed to children’s author Robert McCloskey: “I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I’m not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.” Does that resonate for you?

In this day and age, it is even easier to miscommunicate or be misunderstood because we reach out by email or Facebook or Twitter, often reacting quickly and thinking less carefully about our words than we might. Studies have shown that only 7% of our communication is done with words! 38% is tone of voice and the remaining 55% is body language! Even old-fashioned letters, written by hand, perfumed, containing drawings, communicated more than what we send digitally.

I raise this because how we communicate in a time of transition is critical. As we face new things like a new pastor coming, an online newsletter, the retirement of long-time staff, anxiety, fear, and even anger can mingle with anticipation, excitement and hope. May we be mindful about the best ways to share concerns and hopes, questions and ideas, and seek always to speak our truth in love. Our clearest communication about important things, like the love of the God we know in the life of this church, comes when we are together face-to-face in community.

May the love of God made known in Christ surround us all!  
Lynn

## At Home with the WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary [www.rca.org/athome](http://www.rca.org/athome)  
February 1<sup>st</sup> – February 28<sup>th</sup>

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Luke 4:21-30                          | 15. Luke 6:17-19                  |
| 2. Presentation of the Lord; Psalm<br>84 | 16. Luke 6:20-26                  |
| 3. Fourth Sunday after Epiphany          | 17. Sixth Sunday after Epiphany   |
| 4. Isaiah 6:1-8                          | 18. Genesis 45:3-11, 15           |
| 5. Isaiah 6:9-13                         | 19. Psalm 37:1-11                 |
| 6. Psalm 138:1-6                         | 20. Psalm 37:39-40                |
| 7. Psalm 138:7-8                         | 21. 1 Corinthians 15:35-38        |
| 8. 1 Corinthians 15:1-11                 | 22. 1 Corinthians 15:42-50        |
| 9. Luke 5:1-11                           | 23. Luke 6:27-38                  |
| 10. Fifth Sunday after Epiphany          | 24. Seventh Sunday after Epiphany |
| 11. Jeremiah 17:5-8                      | 25. Exodus 34:29-35               |
| 12. Jeremiah 17:9-10                     | 26. Psalm 99:1-5                  |
| 13. Psalm 1                              | 27. Psalm 99:6-9                  |
| 14. 1 Corinthians 15:12-20               | 28. 2 Corinthians 3:12–4:2        |

## PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

On Wednesdays at noon for a half hour, the sanctuary is open for a weekly time of unstructured prayer the life and future of First Church. You are welcome to stay as long or as little as you have time for. If you are unable to be present physically, then join us by praying for the church wherever you are.

## 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](mailto:deschultz07@aol.com) or 518.429.1255.

## SENIOR MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

After several months of detailed research, prayerful discussions, and complex production, the First Church Profile has been completed. Scale and scope are indicated by the profile's length, 23 pages of main text, plus 45 pages of appendixes. Color illustrations depict the people of First Church, our programs, and our historic structure. The profile tells prospective candidates for the Senior Minister position who we are--about our worship services and music program, our ministries to our congregation and the community, our finances, our demographics, our community, and most important our hopes for the future, as expressed in many ways by the congregation. The appendixes include worship bulletins (sanctuary and drive-in), Family newsletter, 2019 budget, annual consistorial report to the RCA, and internet links of interest.

The First Church profile has been reviewed and approved by our Classis of Albany supervisor, Rev. Dave Jones. Nancy Landrigan, Clerk of Classis has provided us with valuable advice. The profile has now been sent to the Reformed Church in America, Office of Ministry Services, in Grand Rapids. That office reviews church profiles, compares them with profiles of ministers seeking a call, and forwards ministers' profiles to First Church for the search committee's consideration. An announcement of our senior minister position has been or soon will be posted on the web sites of the RCA's Albany Synod and New York Synod. The search committee will also share information about the position with other denominations that are members of the Formula of Agreement (United Presbyterian Church, United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

The search committee again extends its thanks to the congregation for its interest in and support of our important mission. Let us all hope, pray, and work together for a successful recruitment of a senior minister who will be the right person to lead us into the future where God is leading us.

Norma Jean Ballou  
Imani Brewer  
Janet Conti  
Jim Folts  
Monica Marsh  
Jean Lamere  
Andy Mondore  
Jay Reohr  
Ross Westhuis



## **CONFIRMATION CLASS**

On January 26, the newest class of confirmands gathered for a group-building retreat. Over the course of four hours, they played the game “Lifestories,” drew their faith timelines, made bible cake (which they shared in coffee hour on January 27), and learned more about First Church through a scavenger hunt in the building. This group of youth along with mentors will meet twice a month. After meeting with the Elders, those who feel called to church membership will confess their faith on Pentecost, June 9. Please pray for them during this winter and spring!

## **THINKING ABOUT OUR GIVING**

If you attended the congregational meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup> or picked up a packet containing the budget for 2019 in numbers and graphics, you heard the good news that we are close to our 2019 pledge goal of \$140,000. You also heard the sobering news that pledges together with other envelope giving provides only 20% of the annual budget, the remainder coming from the endowment fund for both operating expenses and the loan management account for the 2014 capital improvements, the parking lot contract, and other income from community outreach, congregational support, and accounts restricted to specific purposes.

At a recent gathering of clergy, I heard colleagues express concern about how recent changes in tax law may impact individual support of religious communities. In the past tax breaks have offered an encouragement to many who give. But none of us gives to this community because of government reinforcement. We give because we love what God is doing in and through the life of our church. We give because we have been blessed in our lives and are moved to share. We give because we can.

Thank you to all who pledge and give regularly. Thank you to all who give as you can. Thank you when you are moved to do even more than you anticipated at pledge time! Our giving is love translated into action for the sake of all whom Jesus loves.

Lynn



## FEBRUARY IS AMERICAN HEART MONTH

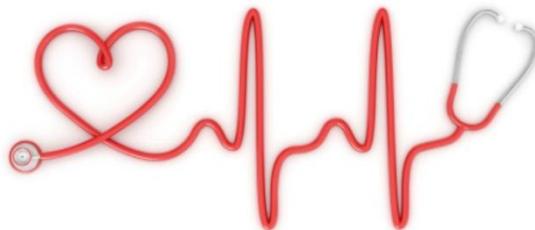


Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women. To prevent heart disease and increase awareness of its effects, **First Church in Albany** is proudly participating in American Heart Month. Locally, about one-third of Capital Region adults (244,000 people) are affected by heart disease.

You can make healthy changes to lower your risk of developing heart disease. Controlling and preventing risk factors is also important for people who already have heart disease. To lower your risk:

- Watch your weight.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
- Get active and eat healthy.

For more information, visit <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle>





# FOCUS

CHURCHES OF ALBANY

*Combined Worship  
Service  
@ 10:00 am*

SUNDAY February 3rd  
EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH  
275 State Street, Albany 12210

FOLLOW US TO EMPTY BOWLS  
@ DELMAR REFORMED CHURCH  
FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

[www.FOCUSchurches.net](http://www.FOCUSchurches.net)

please join us!  
as we gather for  
praise and fellowship

All are  
welcome!

\$25 for a  
beautiful  
handmade bowl,  
homemade  
soups &  
desserts.

2019

# EMPTY BOWLS



**SUNDAY FEBRUARY 3RD**

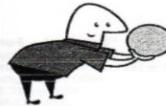
Delmar Reformed Church  
386 Delaware Ave, Delmar, NY  
12:30-2:30

HUNGER ACTION NETWORK OF NEW YORK STATE  
& FOCUS CHURCHES OF ALBANY

**WORKING TOGETHER TO END HUNGER**

Reservations Requested: [hungeractionnys.org](http://hungeractionnys.org)

SAVE  
THE  
DATE!



## **BOWLING FOR BEDS BOWL A THON**



**TO BENEFIT  
EMERGENCY HOMELESS SHELTER  
All Ages Welcome—Children, Youth, Adults  
SATURDAY—FEBRUARY 9, 2019  
12:30—4:30 P.M.**



**Del Lanes  
4 Bethlehem Court in Delmar**

If you would like to receive a registration packet for your group, please contact Rev. Sandy Damhof, Protestant Campus Ministry, Interfaith Center at University at Albany—CC#346, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222. You may also call or email your request to: Email: [sdamhof@albany.edu](mailto:sdamhof@albany.edu) Phone: 518-442-4491. We need to hear from you NO LATER THAN JANUARY 2 TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE - ROOM IS LIMITED SO ACT NOW!!!!

## **OUR NEXT HOMELESS SHELTER DINNER IS FEBRUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>**

Thank you to all who contributed food and time to our Dinners for the Overflow Homeless Shelter so far.

Our next dinners are: Friday February 8th, Chicken Dishes  
Friday March 15 – Casseroles and Comfort Food

CAN YOU contribute a main dish, side, bread or dessert for 6-8 people?

Sign-up at the Hospitality Table or drop Mary an email. Bring your dishes to church any day from 8:30 – 1:00 pm, Thursday evening from 6:30 – 7:30 pm or Friday before noon. We'll deliver them to the shelter on Friday afternoon. USE NON-RETURNABLE DISHES, label food "Shelter Dinner," and clearly label all pork dishes. Thanks!

Questions? Contact Mary Bon 518-463-4449 (church,) 518-339-5460 (cell),  
or [maryebon@verizon.net](mailto:maryebon@verizon.net).

*The Emergency Overflow Shelter at First Lutheran Church in Albany, sponsored by the Capital Area Council of Churches, is a "shelter of last resort" when other shelters are full or for those not eligible for other shelters because of addictions or mental health issues. It is open during the winter months and turns nobody away. First Church has been providing meals each month for the Shelter since 2008.*

## **MOTHER'S GROUP AT FIRST CHURCH**

Being a mom is hard. It's not an easy thing to say because as moms we think we can do it all: running our kids to soccer games, dance, or gymnastics, helping with homework until bedtime, being up in the morning when your kids get up and up in the evening when they go to bed, cooking, cleaning, laundry ... The list goes on and on and on. When was the last time you took time for yourself?

To completely be there for your kids you need that time for you. Time to do what you want, time away from the kids, time with other moms. That's why we have created the Mother's Group. This is a group that is meeting at First Church once a month for the next six months or so. We are still exploring what we want to get out of this group, but right now we are getting to know each other and what we, as moms, need. This group is intended for those that are "active moms", parenting kids up to 21 yrs. of age.

We hope you'll join us at our next meeting on Sunday, February 10 @ 1 p.m. Just ring the doorbell at the entrance off the big parking lot. We will be there.

Kim Gattie

## **PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY**



The Prayer Shawl Ministry continues to meet monthly. While we knit and crochet, we share our joys and concerns with each other. We discuss who should receive a shawl and how best to get the shawl to the individual. During worship on December 16 we blessed prayer shawls, pocket prayer shawls and scarfs for the Focus breakfast program.

We welcome anyone to join our group. If you knit or crochet, but are unable to get to the meetings, you could work at home and still be a part of this ministry. Our next meeting is February 11, at 11:30 am in the Powell Room.

## **HEALING WORSHIP SERVICE FEBRUARY 17<sup>TH</sup>**

Please join us for a service of worship and healing during our regular Sunday service. Healing is the core longing of human life and is God's loving covenantal response to our need. Resurrection, New Birth, New Life are all healing concepts/events we hear in in our Gospel and all throughout the New Testament. We hear numerous stories in our Gospel of Christ's healing of individuals and of his teachings urging us and our communities to wholeness.

It is indeed God's plan to heal the world and make it a New Creation. At this service we will hear a message on healing and then have an opportunity to express our petitions to God: our need for healing of self, relationship, others, the earth, all creatures, those in poverty or war torn places, our nation. What is on your heart? In response to our prayers and meditations for healing we also will have time to come forward to light a candle, pray with one of our elders or pastor, or leave a petition for People's Prayer.

Hope you will join us for this special service on Feb 17<sup>th</sup>.

Peace Be With You,

Pastor Sue Vincent Cox

## WEATHERVANES - NAME THAT FLOWER



Join the Weathervanes on Wednesday, February 20th at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich.

Dessert and beverages will be served. Cheryl Gowie will show pictures of flowers and test our ability to identify them!

Please contact Audrey Ming (518-456-5485) to let her know you are coming.

## FIRST CHURCH READERS – JANUARY MEETING RESCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>



First Church Readers was unable to meet on January 27th because of the rescheduled the Potluck Luncheon and congregational meeting. The Readers Group meeting has been postponed until February 10<sup>th</sup> when we will discuss *A Dictionary of Mutual Understanding A Novel* by Jackie Copleton. It follows a family from prewar Japan through the utter horror of August 9, 1945 to the struggle to adapt to post-war life. Explore themes of heartbreak, guilt and family secrets, and get a glimpse into Japanese culture and traditions before, during and after WW II.

**Because of the rescheduled January meeting, the February Meeting on the 24th will be postponed until March.**

**March** - *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman. It's a simultaneously hilarious and heartbreaking story of a young woman learning to find herself and make peace with her roots.

**April** - *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown, noted preacher, theologian and author explores darkness and light. Why is light associated with goodness and darkness with evil? "How to find our footing in times of uncertainty and giving us strength and hope to face all of life's challenging moments."

Questions? Contact Mary Bon at [firstchurchmeb@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurchmeb@gmail.com) or 518-463-4449.

## LENT 2019

First Church will hold an Ash Wednesday worship service at 7:30 pm on March 6. The first Sunday of Lent is March 10, continuing through April 7. Sunday worship is at 10:30 am. Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday April 21, and includes a Maundy Thursday service at 7:30 pm on April 18. Easter celebrations will include the FOCUS Sunrise service at the West Capitol Plaza around 6:30 am and the Easter Festival service in our sanctuary at 10:30 am on April 21. Join us as we explore our faith in this holy season.

## PRE-SERVICE MUSIC IN LENT BEGINNING MARCH 10<sup>TH</sup>

Pre-Service music is held each Lenten Sunday in the sanctuary at 10:15 am beginning March 10<sup>th</sup>. Come to pray, meditate, refresh yourself, or just listen to some beautiful music as we follow the Lenten road from cross to resurrection.

## CONCERT WITH *THE COLLECTIVE BRASS QUINTET*

March 10<sup>th</sup> at First Church, 3 pm



*The Collective Brass* is a young, high-energy brass quintet performing a broad range of exciting and virtuosic brass music. Its members come from the finest professional performing ensembles including the *West Point Band*. Join us for a wonderful hour of music from early music to contemporary favorites.



## FAREWELL – JEFFREY CURRY – Asst. Sexton & Food Pantry Worker



On January 27<sup>th</sup> after the congregational meeting, we bid farewell to Jeffrey Curry. Jeff served as our Assistant Sexton and Food Pantry Worker from June 2007 until July 2018, when he suffered a major health event that rendered him unable to continue his work here. Jeff was a bright ray of sunshine in the life of First Church, staffing and stocking our Food Pantry, working closely with Larry Underdue on building maintenance, greeting members and visitors at evening meetings, keeping our sidewalks cleared of snow and initiating the Cleo's Hotdogs project last summer. We send him off with our love and prayers, knowing just how much God blessed us with his presence and hard work and hoping we will remain in close contact in the days ahead.

## FAREWELL – LARRY UNDERDUE – Church Sexton



On February 28, Larry Underdue will complete more than 22 years of service as Sexton at First Church and retire. Larry's gifts as a mason, carpenter, cleaner, painter, among others; his knowledge of this building and how it works; his good-natured and even-tempered spirit and his deep faith have made him a tremendous asset to the First Church staff. Larry and his wife, Dolly, are headed back to North Carolina sometime this spring.

On February 24 after worship, we invite you to join us in thanking Larry for all he has done for us at a catered luncheon. Please call the office or sign-up online

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0549AFAD2DAAFA7-farewell>. You are welcome to contribute to a gift purse for Larry, too. Please mark your gift: Larry Underdue, so that we make sure to credit it properly.

## **WELCOME – KEITH CURRY – Church Sexton**



On January 23<sup>rd</sup> Keith Curry began his work with us as our new Sexton. Keith will overlap with Larry for a month to absorb as much knowledge as possible and to begin to formulate his own system of working at First Church. Keith comes to us from the Albany Housing Authority, where he has been senior Maintenance Worker for five years. He comes highly recommended by those who have worked with him. Keith is also Jeff Curry's uncle, and recommended Jeff for his job!

As part of his compensation, Keith will be living in the third-floor apartment. He will maintain regular work hours, but also keep an eye on the building in off hours.

## **WELCOME – KENNY JACKSON – PT Food Pantry & Asst. Sexton**



Kenny Jackson will be working with us as part time Food Pantry and Sexton Assistant! Kenny, who grew up in First Church. He will work with Lorraine Houk and the Food Pantry volunteers Mondays and Wednesdays, and on Thursdays assist Keith Curry with care of the building and welcome choir members to rehearsal.



## FOOD PANTRY

During the month of December, our Food Pantry was open seven days and served 153 households. Each one of the 233 people (only 5 of whom were new to our pantry) received food for 18 meals per visit. In December 2017, we served 213 people from 126 households.

Let us give thanks to God for being able to help our neighbors combat the food insecurity they experience, and to all our staff and volunteers for acting as Christ's hands and heart through this ministry.



## ADOLPHUS HAILSTORK CONCERT

Saturday, March 2, 2019 – 3:00 PM

Cathedral of All Saints, 62 S. Swan St, Albany, NY

Sponsored by the Eastern New York American Guild of Organists



**Mary Bon** will be one of the performers in a concert to recognize Adolphus Hailstork, composer and educator who was chorister at All Saints Cathedral as a youth. Many of his organ works will be performed at the concert including preludes on “Every Time I Feel the Spirit” and “Kum Ba Yah.” Other performers will include William Douglas, Alfred Fedak, Brian Gurley, and Trevor Kalbaugh.



## IN SYMPATHY

- Our prayers are with the family and friends of Shirley Farrell, who died on January 17, 2019.

## MEMORIALS

- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Mechanicville Teachers Association for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Jean & James Burns for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Wilma Sheffer for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Kevin & Judith Young for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Beverly Shuhart for the Music Fund.
- In memory of **Leigh Walker**, a gift has been received from Administration and Operations Department at the State University Construction Fund (where is daughter is employed) for the Clee Park Fund
- In memory of **Leigh Walker**, a gift has been received from Linda & Sarah Rohrwasser for the Clee Park Fund.
- In memory of **Leigh Walker**, a gift has been received from Wanda J. Raymond for the Clee Park Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Thora Paton**, a gift has been received from the Rev. LeRoy & Judith Sues for the Youth Program
- In celebration of the life of **Thora Paton**, a gift has been received from Wilma Sheffer for the Weathervanes Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Thora Paton**, a gift has been received from Betty Pierce for the Clee Park Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Shirley Mae Farrell** a gift has been received from Denise Lobdell for the Lynn T. Joosten Scholarship Fund.
- In memory of **Dorothy Ulrich**, a gift has been received from Shirley Bone for the Clee Park Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Lynne Hiemstra** a gift has been received from Wilma Sheffer for the Clee Park Fund.



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Albany, NY

## **FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUIRED