

# The First Church **FAMILY**

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

**May 2017**

## **WORSHIP:**

- 7 **Fourth Sunday of Easter**  
9:00 am Drive-In Worship (Communion)  
10:30 am Sanctuary Service (Communion)  
(During Worship: Children & Worship)  
Post-service: CROP Walk
- 14 **Fifth Sunday of Easter, (Mother's Day), Heritage Sunday**  
9:00 am Drive-In Worship  
10:30 am Sanctuary Service The Rev. Dr. Allan Janssen, preaching  
(During Worship: Children & Worship)  
Post-service: Coffee & Conversation
- 21 **Sixth Sunday of Easter**  
9:00 am Drive-In Worship  
10:30 am Sanctuary Service  
(During Worship: Last Children & Worship until Fall)  
11:30 am Coffee & Conversation  
Post-service: Congregational Meeting & Pot-luck Luncheon
- 28 **Seventh Sunday of Easter**  
9:00 am Drive-In Worship  
10:30 am Sanctuary Service  
11:30 am Coffee & Conversation

**Our Sunday morning service may be found anytime at [www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org).**

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# From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

On Sunday, May 21, we will have a pot-luck luncheon and congregational meeting following the worship service. The election of elders, deacons and trustees is one of the purposes of this meeting. We will also hear from the leadership committee about what will happen over the next several months as you enlist the services of an interim minister and begin the search process for a new pastor.

As I said in last month's newsletter, times of transition in our lives and in the life of a congregation are often important occasions for learning and growth. We discover things about ourselves we didn't know before. We face new challenges, develop new skills, and gain new insights. In the life of a congregation the time between pastors can provide the space to ask questions, to re-assess who we are, and begin to envision a new future. An interim minister who serves in this 'time between the times' can help guide the congregation in this process.

An interim minister is not simply a 'place-holder' while the congregation waits for the next pastor to arrive. Nor will he or she be a potential candidate for pastor. Rather, the interim engages in a specific ministry of facilitating and supporting the work of the congregation as it moves through a time of transition.

The Interim Ministry Network (Yes, there is a special institution for this kind of ministry!) suggests that there are at least five important areas of conversation that the congregation needs to engage during this time:

- **Where have we been?** What people, events and circumstances have shaped us as a congregation? What is our defining story? This may be the time to tell each other your personal faith journeys and think about how they relate to the church's story.
- **Where are we going?** What is our mission today? The world and the context for the church's mission are changing. Rather than perpetuate the past, how do we build on the past and develop new ways of engaging the community and the world around us? "New occasions teach new duties."
- **Who are our neighbors?** Who are the neighbors we are being called to serve? But also, who are the neighbors who are our partners? Who work will work us in a shared ministry?
- **How do we cultivate and equip leaders?** Do we need new approaches to leadership? Do present structures need to be modified? What should we let go of? What new structures need to be created? Developing leaders from within the congregation is our shared responsibility. This is far better than to wait and hope that a new leader will come and "tell us what to do."

- **Where is God leading us?** As you participate in the conversations centered on the above questions, can you begin to discern a vision for the future?

All of this takes time, of course. Typically the interim period between pastors can last for a year or more. We've already begun the process of preparing for transition in our "Changing the Conversation" discussions and we'll be continuing those conversations in the months leading up to the arrival of an interim.

In addition to an interim minister, the Classis of Albany will appoint a supervisory team (an elder and a minister from our neighboring Reformed Churches) to guide and support the church leadership. They will attend consistory meetings and meetings of the pastor search committee when it is formed later this fall.

I encourage you to participate in the May 21 congregational meeting when we will have additional opportunity to talk about this transition process. I also hope that over the course of the next few months you will be able to participate in several other such conversations as we celebrate and learn from our past, and talk and pray and discern together where God is leading us.

Sincerely,  
John D. Paarlberg

## **At Home with the WORD**

**Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary**

**May 1<sup>st</sup> - May 31<sup>st</sup> Now available online at: [www.rca.org/resources/home-word](http://www.rca.org/resources/home-word)**

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|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Acts 2:42-47            | 17. Psalm 66:16-20                     |
| 2. Psalm 23                | 18. 1 Peter 3:13-16                    |
| 3. 1 Peter 2:19-20         | 19. 1 Peter 3:17-22                    |
| 4. 1 Peter 2:21-25         | 20. John 14:15-21                      |
| 5. John 10:1-6             | 21. Sixth Sunday of Easter             |
| 6. John 10:7-10            | 22. Acts 1:6-14                        |
| 7. Fourth Sunday of Easter | 23. Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35               |
| 8. Acts 7:55-60            | 24. 1 Peter 4:12-14                    |
| 9. Psalm 31:1-5            | 25. Ascension of the Lord; Acts 1:1-11 |
| 10. Psalm 31:15-16         | 26. 1 Peter 5:6-11                     |
| 11. 1 Peter 2:2-10         | 27. John 17:1-11                       |
| 12. John 14:1-7            | 28. Seventh Sunday of Easter           |
| 13. John 14:8-14           | 29. Acts 2:1-21                        |
| 14. Fifth Sunday of Easter | 30. Numbers 11:24-30                   |
| 15. Acts 17:22-31          | 31. Psalm 104:24-35                    |
| 16. Psalm 66:8-15          |  |

# CROP Hunger Walk

**Sunday May 7**

The 2017 Albany CROP Hunger Walk will be held on May 7, 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 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.

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. [www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org).



## Drive-In & FOCUS Worship Services

Drive-in worship services begin Sunday, May 7, and will be held each Sunday at 9:00 am through September 3 with the exception of the last Sunday in June (June 25) when we will worship at 10 am in Clee Park. Drive-In Worship services include special music and we depend on the generosity of guest musicians to supply music for our services. We gather in the Sheridan Avenue parking lot and in Clee Park for a half-hour worship service led from the outdoor pulpit.

The FOCUS congregations will worship together at 10:00 am the first Sunday of July (Trinity United Methodist), August (Emmanuel Baptist) and September (First Presbyterian Church). There will not be a worship service in the First Church sanctuary on those Sundays. Drive-in worship will be held each Sunday at 9 am through the summer.

## **Drive-In Offering**

The special offerings received at the Drive-In Worship this summer will be designated for Koinonia Primary Care/Compassion in Action, a ministry providing access to quality primary and mental health services for the underserved in West Hill and surrounding neighborhoods in Albany. Koinonia Primary Care, under the leadership of Dr. Robert Paeglow, has been serving people in Albany since 2002.

*I've come to the realization that life is not designed for our comfort, or pleasure, but for us to discover our gifts and contribute what we can to make life better for others.* Dr. Robert Paeglow

## **Heritage Sunday is May 14**

Join us on May 14<sup>th</sup> to celebrate Heritage Sunday.

The Psalmist says: Come into God's presence with singing. Praise God with trumpet, tambourine, strings and organ.

This Heritage Sunday we will celebrate 375 years of service and ministry in Albany with trumpets, pipes and singing. We will travel from music of 16th century Amsterdam, to Early American music, to music of our diverse musical heritages. "...through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." Colossians 3: 19b We'll eat Dutch cookies in the coffee hour. We'll have tours of our sanctuary. And, as First Church in Albany has each Sunday for 375 years, we will worship together.

## **Festival choir will sing on May 21.**

Like to sing? Can't find the time to join the choir? Join the Festival Choir for a Sunday! No Mid-week rehearsals! No Long-term commitment! Fun music! Just come at 9:30AM on Sunday, May 21st to rehearse; then sing with the choir during worship. It's easy and it's fun! Talk to Mary Bon for more information, or just join us on May 21st. (If you let us know you're coming we can be sure to have enough music.)

## **First Church Readers Group Will Meet June 4<sup>th</sup>**



The First Church Readers will meet June 4th to discuss *Lady Copy Makes Trouble* by Amy Stewart. Based on the true story of the first woman Deputy Sheriff and her struggles and adventures in the early 1900s where women who eschewed the traditional roles of homemaker and mother had to fight to find a place in a man's world. There is no May meeting.

## May 12th Organ Concert at First Church in Albany

Co-sponsored by the Northeastern NY Chapter AGO (American Guild of Organists)  
and The First Church in Albany

On May 12th at 7:30 Berry Van Berkum will play a free concert at First Church as part of our Heritage Weekend. Mr. Van Berkum is a well-known Dutch organist, active as an improviser, composer, and soloist. He is a master of many styles including classical repertoire, improvisation and jazz.

Graduating from the Arnhem Conservatory in Holland where he studied both organ and piano, he went on to win several prizes at international organ competitions. He has concertized throughout Europe and has recorded many CDs. He also appears regularly as part of the jazz trio HOT (Het Orgel Trio). In 2011, Berry van Berkum was appointed organist of the Nicolaïkerk in Utrecht.

He will be playing music of Vierne, Widor, Bach and Messiaen as well as improvising on our magnificent 4 manual First Church Austin organ. You can hear some of his music and learn more about Mr. Van Berkum at <http://hetorgeltrio.nl/> or <http://www.berryvanberkum.nl/>

It promises to be a great event. The concert is made possible by the many people who have made memorial gifts to the Music Fund. Thank you!

THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

Friday, May 12, 2017  
7:30 pm  
Heritage Weekend Organ Concert

Berry van Berkum  
from Nijmegen, Netherlands

# The Weathervanes



## ***“OLD FRIENDS” TO LUNCH***

The Weathervanes will again host the “Old Friends Luncheon” on Wednesday, May 17th at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. If you would like to renew some friendships or make some new friends, partake of an excellent Chicken a la King lunch, and enjoy a great program, please plan to join the “regulars” at this Weathervanes Special. After lunch, enjoy a story told by our favorite storyteller – John Bowen! Come and enjoy!

Make your reservation BEFORE May 7th by telephoning Audrey

Ming (456-5485).



Tom Allison giving his history of First Church “armchair tour” at the April Weathervanes.

## **Prayer Shawl Ministry**



Prayer Shawl Ministry team with prayer Shawl recipient Bob at a recent Weathervanes meeting when he was presented with a shawl .



## **Camp Fowler**

Is your child or grandchild registered for summer camp at Camp Fowler? Some children (in grades 3-8) from the church are planning to register for "Mini Una Tierra," June 25-29 (Sunday to Thursday). Pastor John Paarlberg will be one of the cabin counselors that week. Other weeks (both in-camp and out-camp) for other ages groups are also available. Or consider going with the whole family to Family Camp, August 21-25. For more information and to register go to the Camp Fowler website. <http://www.campfowler.org/online-registration> First Church will cover up to half the registration cost and additional aid is available. Please contact Pastor Paarlberg or the church office.

## **Easter Offering Thank You**

**A portion of the Easter Offering was designated for Habitat For Humanity**

Here is an example of the work Habitat is doing in the Albany area.

Habitat partnered with a Karini family through the US Committee for Refugees & Immigrants (the group who spoke at a post-service). The Karini people are native to the former Burma and are being cleansed from their society. The lucky ones are shipped to a relocation camp in Thailand. After 18 months to 3 years in the camp, some are able to make their way to the United States, Canada and some European countries.

Steah and her family now live in a warm, comfortable home in the South End of Albany. Both parents work full time at just slightly more than minimum wage, and the two grandparents who were able to come to the US with them take care of their four children. The family is also serviced by Albany Sponsor a Scholarship. After growing up in the camp and coming to the United States not knowing how to speak English, all four children are high performing students in the public school system. One child is musically gifted and is working towards a music scholarship to college. He wants to be a dentist.

Thank you so much for helping Habitat to help our brothers and sisters realize the American dream.

Diane Wuerstlin



## **Thank you, Choir!**

The trumpet fanfares, the roar of the organ and the excitement of the Hallelujah Chorus are gone, but the joy of the Easter season is still with us. The choir and soloists are still hard at work and, again, we thank them for their faithful witness and hard work, illuminating our worship together with their music.

The choir always welcomes new members. How about joining the choir? It's fun, relaxing, and inspiring - and the company is great.

## **Youth and Americorps Night Out**

A fun night out on April 11 with young adults from First Church and Americorps guests who were staying at the church while they worked here in Albany. The Americorps workers were at the First Church for 6 weeks) while installing dry-wall on a Habitat for Humanity project up the street. The Americorps group receives only \$4.75 per person a day for food so they were very appreciative for the company and a night out.



## **Save the Date: 375 Anniversary Celebration**

Mark your calendars! The date for the Anniversary Dinner has been modified to become the 375 Anniversary Luncheon on Sunday, October 29th starting at 2 pm at the Normanside Country Club in Delmar. Lots of parking, easy access for all and a delicious sit-down meal including kid friendly menu options. It will be a great event for all! This is the same day as our 375 Year Celebratory Service with Gregg Mast as our guest preacher. Mark your calendars now and plan to come!

## **First Call for the Next Church Directory**

Plans are coming together for a new directory for First Church. All photos will be taken in-house with options for everyone to print their own. We'll need some volunteers. The bulk of the work will be done during this summer so that the directory can be ready for the interim pastor. If you are going to be away for the summer you'll need to make arrangements to have photos done before you go. More info soon!

## **Congregational Brunch. Sunday May 21st**

**Save the Date for our Pot-luck Luncheon and Congregational meeting.** It will be on Sunday, May 21 after the sanctuary service.

## **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. Each person pays for their own meal. Contact Donna E. Schultz at [deschultz07@aol.com](mailto:deschultz07@aol.com) or 518.429.1255.

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

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## **Thank you**

Thank you to everyone who sent cards, telephoned, and brought tasty dishes, while I was recovering from Ankle Replacement Surgery. Thanks also to the people of First Church who supported me with their prayers and best wishes. Special thanks to the congregation and choir who cheerfully weathered the change in routine and to Iteke Prins who continued to provide great music while I was gone. I'm not dancing in the aisles with my new ankle yet, but I am glad to be back. Mary Bon

Ronald Stockhoff has given an Easter flowers and landscaping-care donation in gratitude to the congregation of First Church in Albany for your prayers and wonderful abundance of cards and notes (Harriet treasures each and every one) during our past two years of illness and disability. We love you, and pray God's continued blessing on your ever-evolving life and ministry in the city and environs of Albany, NY.

## **Memorial**

- In celebration of the life of Bea Gray a gift has been received from a **friend** for the Drive-In Ministry.
- In celebration of the life of Bea Gray a gift has been received from Jane Ward for the Drive-In Ministry.
- In celebration of the life of Gene Hartman a gift has been received from Shirley Bone for the Clee Park Memorial Fund
- In celebration of the life of Marcelle Olsen a gift has been received from Shirley Bone for the Clee Park Memorial Fund
- In celebration of the life of Thomas W. Carroll a gift has been received from Arlene E.Carroll for the Clee Park Memorial Fund
- In memory of Rev. Lynn Joosten a gift was received from the Joosten family for the Lynn T. Joosten Scholarship Fund

## **In Sympathy**

Our sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Bea Gray, who passed away on March 26.



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