

The First Church

FAMILY

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

May 2018

WORSHIP:

6 Sixth Sunday of Easter

9:00 am Drive-In Worship (Communion)

10:30 am Sanctuary Service (Communion)

(During Worship: Children & Worship)

Post-service: CROP Walk

13 Seventh Sunday of Easter, (Mother's Day), Heritage Sunday

9:00 am Drive-In Worship

10:30 am Sanctuary Service

(Last Children & Worship until Fall)

Post-service: Coffee & Conversation

20 Pentecost Sunday

9:00 am Drive-In Worship

10:30 am Sanctuary Service

11:30 am Coffee & Conversation

Post-service: Congregational Meeting & Pot-luck Brunch

27 Trinity Sunday

9:00 am Drive-In Worship

10:30 am Sanctuary Service

11:30 am Coffee & Conversation

FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR

No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Mt.5.15-16)

Jesus charges us as his followers to be bold in sharing our faith in the ways we speak and live. In that spirit, I want to share with you some ways I see God at work among us this season of resurrection:

- Members and friends of the church are saying “Yes!” when asked: Will you consider being a member of the Pastoral Search Committee? Would you lead a time with children? Are you interested and willing to pull together a contingent from this church for the Pride Parade? Do you want to explore joining the church? Will you in writing share the ways this church blesses you? Faith comes alive as we make it tangible.
- People are lining up to participate in this year’s CROP Walk as walkers and donors. Thank you, Patty Salisbury, for stepping forward to organize our congregation and to help us combat hunger around the world and right here in Albany in Christ’s name.
- Jeff Curry and Larry Underdue are at work hatching a plan to make Clee Park even more welcoming to those who pass by: Cleeo’s Hotdogs, free lunch available on Thursdays in July and August. You can help! Read more on page 11.
- At its April meeting, your Consistory voted to support the Poor People’s Campaign. Begun by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. fifty years ago, this moral movement, led by people of faith and others, declares that poverty is a sin, and that we have the ability to eradicate it. Beginning Mother’s Day weekend and continuing for forty days, people will gather on Mondays at statehouses in forty states and the District of Columbia to challenge the ways racism, materialism, militarism and environmental degradation and the policies which uphold these fosters and encourage continued poverty. As Christians, we remember Jesus challenged these same forces, and at First Church we are willing to be an overnight location for out-of-towners who come to participate in direct action in Albany on these Moral Mondays.
- When the Board of Elections asked about our being a polling site for the upcoming September primary and November general elections because of our building’s accessibility, we said “Yes!” Our sharing of space will welcome our neighbors in and show them we are a living faith community.

Look around this month. Where else do you see the light of First Church shining, responding to God’s call to share the love of Christ?

Lynn

AT HOME WITH THE WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary

May 1st - May 31st Now available online at: www.rca.org/resources/home-word

1. Psalm 98:1-3
2. Psalm 98:4-9
3. 1 John 5:1-6
4. John 15:9-12
5. John 15:13-17
6. Sixth Sunday of Easter
7. Acts 1:15-71, 21-26
8. Psalm 1
9. 1 John 5:9-13
10. Ascension Day; Ephesians 1:15-23
11. John 17:6-10
12. John 17:11-19
13. Seventh Sunday of Easter
14. Acts 2:1-3
15. Acts 2:14-21
16. Ezekiel 37:1-14
17. Psalm 104:24-35
18. Romans 8:22-27
19. John 15:26-27; 16:4-15
20. Pentecost
21. Isaiah 6:1-4
22. Isaiah 6:5-8
23. Psalm 29
24. Romans 8:12-17
25. John 3:1-8
26. John 3:9-17
27. Trinity Sunday
28. 1 Samuel 3:1-10
29. Deuteronomy 5:12-15
30. Psalm 81:1-10
31. Psalm 139:1-6

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.

LITURGISTS

If you have ever wanted to help lead worship as a liturgist, please speak with Lynn Carman Bodden, Sue Vincent-Cox or a member of the Elders.

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 Avenue in Albany. Anyone can join us starting starting at 12:15 pm and stay until you wish to leave. We all pay for our own. Contact Donna E. Schultz at deschultz07@aol.com

TRANSITION UPDATE

At the forum in March, we asked those present where they were willing to commit to making some of the church's dreams a reality. Some things from that meeting are already in the works!

- The group on spirituality is actively planning an all-church retreat up at Camp Fowler in the fall. Mark your calendars for October 26- 28 and be on the lookout for more information as planning continues.
- The group on enrichment is reaching out to other FOCUS churches about a possible shared lecture series.
- The worship group's interest in using James Chapel will get a trial run on non-FOCUS Sundays in July and August. Gathering to worship there will get creative ideas flowing for how the space might be redesigned for the future.

The Transition Team is hosting a conversation and pizza dinner for young adults including parents of children May 5th at 5:30 pm to explore and expand the dreaming done by long-time members. We'll be asking this group: where's YOUR energy? We want to explore how life and church intersect and offer support to our members and friends in this age group.

We'll be gathering more information for the church profile and search this month. Please take time to locate your home on the pin map on May 13 or 20th. And please join us for ongoing conversation at the congregational meeting on May 20th after worship!

Joanna Brown, Ella Campbell, Monica Marsh, Jay Reohr and Lynn Carman Bodden

CONGREGATIONAL BRUNCH AND MEETING

On May 20 after worship, we'll gather to share a potluck brunch and elect officers for the coming year. Because May 20 is Pentecost, we'll celebrate the birthday of the church with cake! At table groups, we'll share in conversation to gather more information for the church profile. AND if you haven't yet stuck a pin in the map to show where you live (we're making a visual of the catchment area of our membership for our pastoral candidates), May 20th is the day. You don't want to miss it!!!

At the time of this printing, the nominees for Elder: Chip Welge and Joanna Brown and for Trustee: James Folts and Wayne Sivaslian.

Consistory will announce the composition of the Pastoral Search Committee.

Hello First Church Family,

As mentioned in April's newsletter my job description (Minister for Discipleship and Mission) is changing as of May 1st. My hours at First Church will change from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ time. I will be at First Church on Mondays and Tuesdays (no longer Wednesdays) and will continue to assist with worship two Sundays per month. I will also work with Lynn, our Sr. Minister (interim), and our care team providing pastoral care. Since I became a pastor here in 2012, I have been bi-vocational, so I will continue my work as a psychotherapist, workshop/retreat leader, spiritual director and clearness committee leader during my other professional hours.

A few changes in small group leadership will unfold:

Children and Worship will now be led by Sara Bonam Welge.

Nonviolent Communication practice group will meet through June and then the group will determine a new facilitator for the fall.

Prayer Shawl continues to meet monthly and we will explore leadership for the fall.

I will continue to lead the Tuesday noon *adult bible study* which will meet until mid-June, stopping for the summer months, to resume in mid-September.

Under my new job description, I will partner with and train others in our congregation who are interested in leading new ministries and/or small groups. I will assist deacons in their role in mission and help lead retreats. As we move to understand more deeply our mission as a church and seek to grow spiritually in this, small groups will be most important for our relational bonds both within our congregation and in ministry together with our community. Leadership and involvement in these groups is a most empowering experience enabling us to engage and explore more deeply our spiritual life in God. If you feel called to small group leadership, please speak with me!

I look forward to this upcoming year together,

Peace in Christ
Sue

CROP HUNGER WALK

Sunday May 6

The 2018 Albany CROP Hunger Walk will be held on May 6, at the First Lutheran Church on Western Avenue in Albany. The CROP Hunger Walk is an annual community-wide event sponsored by Church Wide Service and 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. Last year First Church raised (\$1,075.00) with (10 walkers). Plan to walk yourself or sponsor another first church walker. Pick up a packet after worship in the lobby. Thank you to Patty Salsbury for being this year's coordinator.



DRIVE-IN WORSHIP SERVICES

Drive-In worship services begin Sunday, May 6, and will be held each Sunday at 9:00 am through September 2nd with the exception of the last Sunday in June (June 24) when we will worship at 10 am in Clee Park. We gather in the Sheridan Avenue parking lot and in Clee Park for a half-hour worship service led from the outdoor pulpit.

We thank the Drive-In Committee, its chair Marilyn Bradley, and the hard-working Drive-In volunteers who set up each Sunday morning and greet our Drive-In Worshipers with a cheerful hello - rain or shine. Drive-In Worship services also include special music and we depend on the generosity of guest musicians to supply music for our services.

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

Can you help supply music for our Drive-in Worship Service?

We depend on the generosity of guest musicians who supply music for our services. Do you play an instrument? sing in the shower? have a musical group that might be willing to provide the music for the Drive-in Worship Service? Anything from a simple hymn or sacred song, to an instrumental solo to a praise band is appropriate. Contact Mary Bon if you are able to be part of this ministry at maryebon@verizon.net or 463-4449.

CHOIR

The choir always welcomes new members. How about joining the choir? After Easter is a good time to join. The pace of music is more relaxed. It's fun, inspiring – the company is great – and it's a great way to deepen and expand your faith.

CELEBRATE HERITAGE SUNDAY ON MAY 13TH

“Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy.” Ps.47.1

On May 13th, with gladness and praise in our hearts we will celebrate Heritage Sunday, thanking God for 376 years of faithful ministry at the First Church in Albany. In worship, we will explore our history through liturgy and music, beginning with forms from 16th century Amsterdam up through the diverse heritages we enjoy today. We will receive new members whose presence proves God's faith in our future. Some of our historical treasures will be on display, and tours of our sanctuary will be available. We'll eat Dutch cookies in coffee hour and enjoy one another's company. Please join us – and bring your friends!

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP

The children, youth and adults involved in our Children and Worship program have all enjoyed another rich and meaningful year. There have been many precious moments with the children as they come to know more deeply of their relationship with Jesus and of God's love told through our many biblical stories.

We added new stories last year to inspire our older children's imaginations. Next year we will welcome new children ages 4 and older.

Parents please drop in before or on May 13th and tell us how this year went for you and your child(ren). Our program grows by your feedback.

In September Sara Bonam Welge will be the director of this program. We are blessed by a worship team that is dedicated and full of love and care for our children. And the team is grateful for how C&W touches them and deepens their own relationship to God!

Thank you to Sara Bonam Welge, Kathie Monthie, Kim Gattie, and Dorey Bridge for being committed story tellers this year.

Thank you to Kaitlyn Bliss, Terry Gattie, Sue Hunter and Norma McClement for being such caring and supportive greeters.

Please keep these leaders and this ministry of First Church in your hearts and minds as we all support our children as they grow in faith.

Our last C&W for this year is May 13th. We look forward to beginning a new year in Children and Worship at the end of September.

Weathervanes – Old Friends Luncheon!



Join the Weathervanes on Wednesday, May 16th at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall for the annual Old Friends Luncheon. Enjoy a delicious chicken a la king lunch, some entertainment and time to talk with friends.

Please call Audrey Ming at 518-456-5485 by May 6th to let her know you are coming.

INTERFAITH CENTER CLOSING EVENT

Saturday, May 19th 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

For the last 50+ years the Interfaith Center at the University at Albany has served as the home for the Interfaith Work and the home of Cornerstone Campus Ministry, Hillel and Newman Catholic Ministry. In December 2016, the building was sold to the University and now UAlbany has made the decision to close the building. Although our “home” will be gone, our ministry continues. Please join us as we share the end of an era, as we honor the work that has been done and mark the closing of the building. RSVP’s are welcome. Open to all students, alumni and congregational partners who have been at the center of our work.

Rev. Sandy J. Damhof

(518) 489-8573 (office)

(518) 495-0029 (cell)

FIRST CHURCH READERS GROUP WILL MEET JUNE 3RD



The First Church Readers’s next meeting is June 3rd when we will discuss – *Best to Laugh: A Novel* by Lorna Landvik.

First Church Readers is a group of First Churchers who like to read and get together once a month to discuss a book they have been reading. Everyone is welcome to join us. Contact Mary Bon at maryebon@verizon.net for more information.

Summer is coming. Got an idea for summer reading? light or heavy? religious or not? current events or old classics? Pass them on to Mary or one of our other book group members: Cindy Gillespie, Joeanna Brown, Jean Lamere, Caroline Wirth, Joyce Recene or, better still, come join us on May 27th.

SPRING FLING CONCERTS

Wednesdays in June at Noon



Join us for a series of noon-time concerts in our sanctuary Wednesdays in June from 12:00 PM to 12:30 PM. We'll have special music from our soloists as well as guest instrumentalists. Bring a sandwich, relax in our historic sanctuary and listen to a half hour of beautiful music.

PRIDE 2018

The weekend of **June 9 and 10** will be the time of this year's Albany PRIDE celebrations. On Saturday, June 9 between noon and 5pm, In Our Own Voices – which serves the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender People of Color, and their friends and families – will sponsor a health and wellness expo in Washington Park. On Sunday, June 10 between noon and 5pm, the Capital Pride Parade and Festival will take place. Peter Subers has agreed to gather members of First Church to carry the First Church Room for All banner and to march in the parade. We'll make our way to the park after worship. Please join us!

FOWLER SUMMER CAMP:

Registration for Camp Fowler in Speculator, NY is now open online at <http://www.campfowler.org/online-registration>. Check out the Camp Fowler information in the lobby for details on the weeks available. Register early to secure your date!

Scholarships are available to First Church campers through the church and through the Albany Classis. If you would like to go to camp and need a scholarship, please speak with Pastor Lynn or Pastor Sue.

Volunteer Opportunities are available as well for those who would like to be a part of the Fowler family in a different way. Fowler needs you! Check out campfowler.org for details on how to get involved as a cabin counselor, kitchen helper and more.

HOT DOG THURSDAYS IN CLEE PARK IN JULY AND AUGUST

Can you help with this ministry?

Thanks to the imaginative dreams of our sextons, Larry Underdue and Jeff Curry and, with the approval of the consistory, we will be offering free Chili dogs or plain hotdogs each Thursday at lunchtime in Clee Park. All are welcome – street people, First Churchers, neighbors, downtown workers, food pantry guests.

We need your help. Would you like to help distribute hot dogs? Help with set up or clean up? Provide: chili, ketchup, relish, mustard, pickles, chips, napkins, cups, water? Watch for sign-up sheets in June or talk to Jeff, Larry, or any of the staff if you would like to participate in this ministry. We are calling this ministry Cleeo's Hotdog Thursdays!

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE FOOD PANTRY?

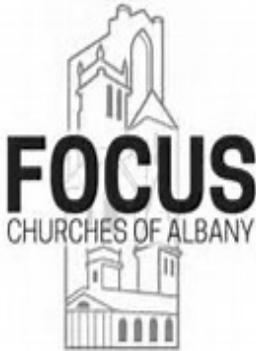
In March, the First Church Food Pantry provided 3184 total meals to 111 households, six of whom were new this month. This means that in the eight days our pantry was open in March, 178 people, including children, adults and seniors, received 18 meals each from our hardworking, friendly staff and volunteers.

At the annual meeting of the Food Pantries in April, attendees learned that in the Capital District 96,760 people – of whom 30,380 are children – are considered “food insecure.” This means that all these people live daily without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. Our Food Pantry is part of a dynamic coalition of well-stocked food pantries nourishing our hungry neighbors in the Capital District. In the coming year, working together to do what no food pantry can do alone, we will be a part of a project to map where the gaps in food need and availability are; identifying barriers to accessing needed food; ascertaining the needs and wants of patrons of food banks; and then coordinating efforts to improve our system.

Our toiletries' collection for the Food Pantry this month: **SANITARY NAPKINS**, will be on Sunday, May 13th. As you are aware, the items listed for the coming months cannot be purchased with food stamps, and yet they are necessary for any household on a regular basis for good health and hygiene. Upcoming collection items are listed below.

June 10 – Deoderant

Thank you to all who support the ministry of First Church through offerings, pledges and bequests that make our nearly 50 years of Food Pantry ministry possible.



Did you know you can support FOCUS Churches every time you make a purchase through AMAZON? Plus, you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Easy Breezy!

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support FOCUS Churches every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile, select FOCUS Churches as your charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. They will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation to FOCUS.

FOCUS Churches Breakfast Express opened on Tuesday, April 24, 2018

New volunteers are always welcome.

**FOCUS Special Spring Appeal &
Challenge Grant: Goal is \$10,000**

A FOCUS Champion has issued a Challenge Grant to match any gift you make of \$250 or more, up to \$2,500!

Every dollar counts, so even if you can't help with the Challenge Grant, we hope you consider a gift of any amount for this special extra appeal.

Go to: www.focuschurches.net and click on "Contribute"

Thank you for your extraordinary support!

THE LIBRARY CORNER

Missing – A new book, Alexander Hamilton by Ron Chernow, was purchased for the Library. It has disappeared and we ask that whoever took it, please let us know so it can be checked out properly and others can enjoy it, too.

The Library Committee

Mary Weijola, Cindy Gillespie, Carol LaBatte and Joanna Brown

JOINING FIRST CHURCH

Does it feel like First Church could be your church home? Might you consider membership? If so, please talk with Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden, or Rev. Sue Vincent-Cox, or one of the Elders to find out more. We'll be holding our next new member class in the fall – but you are welcome to start the conversation now. We'd love to welcome you officially!

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER UPDATE

We hope to move to an online newsletter beginning September 2018. If we do not have your email address, please send it to Valerie Williams at vwilliams@firstchurchinalbany.org. If you do not have an email address we will mail you a paper copy of the monthly newsletter.



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



THANK YOU

- Rev. Peggy and Bethany Reformed Church and for their donation of 6 bags of groceries to the Food Pantry.

MEMORIALS

- In memory of their son, Thomas W. Carroll, a gift was received from Arlene and William Carroll for the Clee Park Fund.
- In memory of Rev. Lynn Joosten, a gift was received from the Joosten family for the Lynn T. Joosten Scholarship Fund.
- In memory of Leona Murray, a gift was received from Patricia Joven and family for the General Fund.

2018 SANCTUARY SOUND SYSTEM SURVEY

First Church is investigating ways to improve the sanctuary sound system. Our goal is for everyone to hear their best during worship and other events. We know that sound systems are complex. We understand that hearing loss varies in type and severity. To keep your response anonymous, please mark through the address label on the reverse side of the survey. Leave your name, if you would like to be a part of follow-up conversations. Please **return responses by May 20** in the offering plate or to the office.

1. How well are you able to hear the worship service in the sanctuary?

Poorly (I cannot make out most of the spoken words.)

Fair (I miss some of the spoken words.)

Good (I hear most of the spoken words.)

Excellent (I can hear all of the spoken words.)

2. Where do you sit in the sanctuary? (E.g. Balcony, under the balcony, side aisle, middle aisle – and how near to the front?)

Which parts of the service do you hear best?

3. Do you use any personal assistive hearing technology? Yes No

a. If yes, what manufacturer and model do you use?

b. If yes, does it have a T-Coil feature? If your hearing aid supports T-Coil, does it have a T-Coil switch?

c. If yes, is it permanently implanted, e.g. Cochlear implant?

4. Do you use the assistive technology provided by the church? Yes No

a. If yes, how well does it work for you? Poorly, Fair, Good, Excellent

b. Do you use anything to augment the church device? Yes No

Other comments?

May we contact you? Name _____

Thank you for your time and your help!



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