

The First Church **FAMILY**

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

November 2016

WORSHIP:

- 6 **Sunday after All Saints** (Communion)
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. John Paarlberg preaching
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service:
First Church Readers
- 13 **Consecration Sunday**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. Kent Bushman preaching
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Congregational Luncheon
- 20 **Thanksgiving Sunday**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. John Paarlberg preaching
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Thanksgiving Food Basket Packing
- 27 **First Sunday of Advent**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. John Paarlberg preaching
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service:

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

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

Sunday, November 6, is the **Sunday after All Saints**, a day in which we remember and give thanks for the saints who have gone before us. We look both to the past and to the future, remembering with thanksgiving and rejoicing in hope. “Communion of saints” is one image for the church; another is “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). What can these two descriptions of the church teach us about who we are as God’s people in this time and place?

“Communion of saints” speaks mostly to our relationship with God and with each other. The phrase implies: “first, that believers, all and everyone, as members of Christ have communion with him and share in all his treasures and gifts. Second, that everyone is duty-bound to use his or her gifts readily and cheerfully for the benefit and well-being of the other members.” (*The Heidelberg Catechism*, Question & Answer #55)

“Royal priesthood” implies something about our vocation in the world. “You shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation” (Exodus 19: 5-6). What does it mean for us to be God’s “priests” to our neighbors, to the community in which we live, to “the whole earth”?

The following **Sunday, November 13**, is **Consecration Sunday**. On that Sunday each of us will be invited to make a financial commitment to the work and witness of First Church in the coming year. But more than that, our Consecration Sunday worship is a time for us to celebrate and give thanks for God’s gracious generosity and steadfast love toward us. The Rev. Kent Busman, Director of Camp Fowler, will be the guest preacher, the Nat Phipps Jazz Trio will offer their musical gifts, and after worship we will gather down stairs in Zimmerman Hall for a catered luncheon. If you have not yet made your reservations for the luncheon, please call or email the church office today.

Sunday, November 20, is **Thanksgiving Sunday**. You are encouraged to bring gifts from farm and field, garden and orchard and present them as part of our offering in worship. You may also bring canned goods, cake mixes and other gifts for the ministry of the First Church Food Pantry. After worship we’ll prepare Thanksgiving food baskets for distribution to food pantry. This year we expect to serve 65-70 families.

Celebrating our fellowship with Christ, sharing our gifts with one another, serving as priests to the world, expressing our thanks, helping people in need. This is what the church does. This is who we are.

Sincerely,

John D. Paarlberg

At Home with the WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary www.rca.org/athome
November 1st – November 30th

1. All Saints' Day; Ephesians 1:11-23
2. Job 19:23-27
3. Psalm 17:1-9
4. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17
5. Luke 20:27-38
6. Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
7. Isaiah 65:17-25
8. Isaiah 12
9. Malachi 4:1-2
10. Psalm 98
11. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13
12. Luke 21:5-19
13. Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
14. Jeremiah 23:1-6
15. Luke 1:68-79
16. Psalm 46
17. Colossians 1:11-20
18. Luke 23:33-38
19. Luke 23:39-43
20. Reign of Christ or Christ the King Sunday
21. Isaiah 2:1-5
22. Psalm 122:1-5
23. Psalm 122:6-9
24. Thanksgiving Day John 6:25-35
25. Romans 13:11-14
26. Matthew 24:36-44
27. First Sunday of Advent
28. Isaiah 11:1-10
29. Psalm 72:1-7
30. Psalm 72:18-19

Consistory Highlights

At the October 4 meeting the consistory:

- Approved a recommendation from the Worship Commission that we hold one Christmas Eve worship service this year. Rather than services at 8 p.m. and 11p.m there will be one service at 7p.m. followed by the Wassail Hour. The next morning (Sunday) Christmas Day worship will be at 10:30 a.m.
- Discussed ideas for renovating and reconfiguring James Chapel to make it available for multi-purpose use as well as to create a more flexible worship space. Some ideas that have been discussed include: removing the pews and replacing them with movable seating and re-orienting the worship space so that the community gathers around the table rather than facing forward in a lecture hall style. Such changes might provide a more welcoming space for food pantry guests, additional meeting space for small groups, and an alternative worship space for times when we have a smaller congregation, such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and during the summer months when drive-in worship is scheduled.
- Talked about a series post-service conversations about the future of the church in a changing culture as we move toward a process for discerning our vision and setting goals.

Christmas Offering

- **Mission in Romania**

Maggie (Busman) and Jason White are now Resident Care Youth Assistants at a residence youth home in Romania. Lydia House and Dorcas House are ministries working with abandoned and socially disadvantaged children. Lydia House houses approximately 16-20 youth aged 4-21 years old. Dorcas House houses 10 youth ages 4-22. Most youth are orphaned, abandoned, or from very troubled family situations. The focus for the staff is on providing a loving and guiding environment to help children learn life skills and become prepared for independent living. Faith and life discussions are very important.

- **Emergency Overflow Shelter**

The Emergency Overflow Shelter is in desperate need. This grassroots effort started 15 years ago by the Protestant Evangelical Church and First Lutheran Church in collaboration with the Capital Area Council of Churches. The Shelter needs your kindness and generosity more than ever.

This is truly a community resource- it could not operate without those who share their time and money so that the neediest among us has a place of hope. We are grateful for your past support. Last year your support enabled the shelter to:

- Stay open until late April
- Provide more than 3100 bed nights and hot meals
- Connect guests with permanent housing
- Assist guests in actively searching for employment.

Post-Service Hospitality

And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.” Acts 16:34

Please consider providing refreshments and hosting our post-service fellowship time by signing up for a couple of Sundays during the year. Coffee and tea will be set up ahead of time but we need people to bring some cookies or other treats and to help serve. Elders, deacons and trustees take care of the refreshments on first three Sundays of each month but we need volunteers to host on the 4th and 5th Sundays of each month. A sign-up sheet is in the lobby.

Come Sing in the Choir!

The choir is rehearsing Christmas music now and this is a great time to join us either for a short term commitment or for a longer stay. You don't have to read music, or have a beautiful voice - if you like to sing in the shower or around the house, you'll fit right in. Just join us any Thursday night at 7:00 pm in the choir room or talk to Mary Bon or any choir member for more information.

Update from Worship, Music and the Arts Commission

At their recent meeting, the commission recommended and approved some changes in our Worship Services.

- Since Christmas Eve this year falls on Saturday. We will have one family service at 7:00 pm.
- On Christmas Day we will have our usual Sunday worship service at 10:30.
- There will be no Advent pre-service music this year.
- We will be experimenting with replacing the postlude with a short organ voluntary in the service.

If you have thoughts or questions feel free to contact Ian Leet, the commission chairperson.

Church Library

I am in the process of trying to set up and organize a library for First Church. I do believe this would be a wonderful addition to our church. What I need right now are some volunteers who would be willing to give me an hour or so of your time to help me get the books organized and on the shelves.

If you feel called to serve in this project and help me, please call me at [518 – 463-2547](tel:518-463-2547) or email me at mew@nycap.rr.com or you may speak to me at church.

Your help will be very much appreciated.

Yours in Christ, Mary Weijola

Weathervanes – Cooking Our History



Join the Weathervanes for fellowship, lunch, and a program on Wednesday, November 16th, at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich. Coffee, tea, and dessert will be served. After lunch, Tom Allison, who has collected, studied, and cooked from some of the oldest cookbooks printed in America will be our speaker.

Please telephone Audrey Ming (456-5485) to let her know you plan to attend.

First Church Readers Meets November 6



Like to read? First Church Readers are people who love to read. We get together once a month in the post-service hour to discuss a book we have read in the past month. We will be meeting again on November 6 to discuss *The Nightingale* by Kristen Hannah

- **November:** *The Nightingale* by Kristen Hannah
How two sisters in World War II France find different ways to endure life in occupied France.

- **December:** No Meeting

- **January:** *Girl Waits with Gun* by Amy Stewart

A novel based on the true story of one of the country's first female deputy sheriffs

Do you have a book for the reader's group? Want more information? Contact maryebon@verizon.net

CD Ministry Update:

For the past six years, the CD ministry, through the teamwork of Mary Bon and Dennis Kernahan, supplied CDs of our services to our home-bound members. It has also enabled us to post services on our website, and provide podcasts reaching out to the wider community.

Beginning last fall we suspended this ministry to our shut-ins. Since then we have had requests from both our shut-ins and those who used to listen to our services on the web for us to resume recording and distributing our Worship Services.

Mary is willing to continue to recording the services, and Dennis Kernahan has again offered to make copies of the CDs and mail them each week to many of our home-bound members and friends as he has done in the past.

But we need someone to help assume the transfer and editing of the service.

Can you help continue this important ministry? It is straightforward and we'll provide on-the-job training! Contact Ian Leet, Worship Commission Chair, or the Church Office at 463-4449.

It's Overflow Shelter Dinner time again- Can you help?

Our first dinners are November 18th (Italian) and December 9th (Chili).

CAN YOU:

- contribute a main dish, side dish or dessert for 6-8 people
- deliver the meal to the shelter on Friday afternoon or evening

SIGN-UP SHEETS ARE AT THE HOSPITALITY TABLE.

Bring your dishes to church any day from 8:30-1:00 pm or Thursday evening from 6:30 - 7:30 pm. (Call ahead to make sure someone is at church to take your delivery.) We'll deliver them to the shelter on Friday afternoon. Questions? Contact Mary Bon (463-4449 or maryebon@verizon.net). USE NON RETURNABLE DISHES and clearly label all pork dishes. Thanks!

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 be eligible for other shelters because of addictions or mental health issues. It is open during the winter months and turns nobody away. Since 2008 First Church has been providing two meals a month for the Shelter.

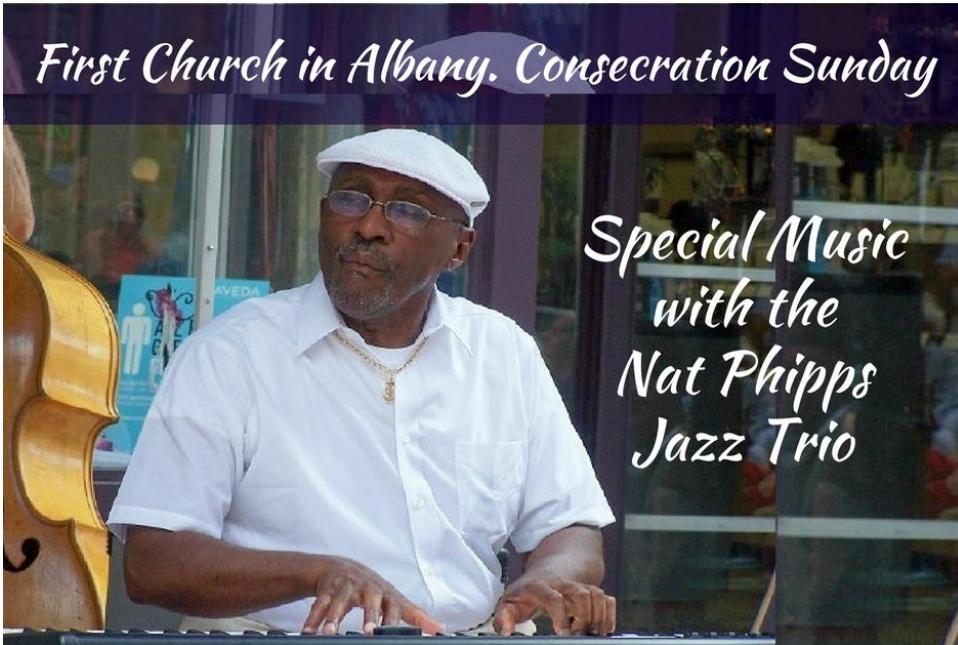
Helping Our Neighbors Celebrate Thanksgiving

This thanksgiving season we will be providing the food for a thanksgiving meal for many of the families served by our food pantry. On **Sunday, November 20**, many of us will stay for a few minutes after worship to help pack the food baskets that will be distributed to families in our area. Also on that Sunday you are invited to come to worship with gifts of food items. This year instead of providing a thanksgiving turkey to each family, we are providing gift cards enabling them to purchase their own. On **Tuesday, November 22** we will be distributing the Thanksgiving Baskets from 9:00 to 11:30 am.

Donations of other food items are needed including:

- cake mix
- hot cocoa mix
- stuffing
- canned fruit
- yams
- sweet potatoes gravy
- carrots
- celery
- onions
- potatoes
- apples
- fresh items

Consecration Sunday is November 13th



First Church in Albany. Consecration Sunday

*Special Music
with the
Nat Phipps
Jazz Trio*

*Sunday, November 13 at 10:30 am
110 North Pearl Street*

www.firstchurchinalbany.org

Guest preacher: The Rev. Kent Busman
Guest musicians: The Nat Phipps Jazz Trio

A buffet luncheon will be served immediately following the 10:30 worship service.
Come and enjoy delicious food along with fellowship.

If you have not signed up yet, please call the church office or fill out the form online:
www.firstchurchinalbany.org

Purchase Fair Trade Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Soap

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



Olive oil is 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 an end to the illegal Israeli occupation and military rule.

Farmers are paid fair 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.

Please call the church office or contact John Paarlberg if you would like to purchase some for yourself or as gifts for others.

Advent Activity Suggestion: Reverse Advent Calendar

Does your family do an Advent Calendar every year? Are you looking for a new way to do that? Try doing a Reverse Advent Calendar this year. Instead of *getting* something everyday to make the waiting sweeter, how about *giving* something everyday to make someone's new year sweeter?

Here's how it works:

Start on December 1 with an empty laundry basket. Over the course of the month, add a household item to that basket each day. At the end of the month, donate the basket(s) to the First Church Food Pantry.

One example of how you could do this:

- December 1-7: Deodorant, Shampoo
- December 8-14: Canned Fruit, Soup
- December 15-21: Toilet paper, Soap
- December 22-31: Feminine Products, Razors

Mitten Box for Christmas Shoppe

The Giving Box: Located in the Lounge

Mittens, gloves, hats and scarves (children & adult sizes)

Needed for the Christmas Shoppe on Thursday, December 15 from 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Prayers for the Healing of Our Nation.

At a time when many of us are suffering from “election distress syndrome” and the social and moral fabric of our society is under stress, you are invited to join in a time of prayer for our nation. All are welcome.

Lament, Healing and Hope:

A Service of Music, Readings, Silence and Prayers for the Healing of the Nation.

Wednesday, November 9, 12:10-12:40 p.m.

The First Church in Albany
110 North Pearl Street

Thank you from Room for All

Dear RfA rostered churches, with gratitude to all of you, including those who sent us your short film clip for use in our new documentary film, RfA is thrilled to share the finished product with you! <https://vimeo.com/roomforallrca/a-welcoming-space>

It is our prayer that the film will speak positively into the conversations happening throughout the RCA in these days, and that it will help you, as a welcoming church, to tell our story. I hope you'll find ways to share this... on your church website, your Facebook page, or at a "live" congregational event.

Grace and peace,
Marilyn Paarlberg

How to Get in Touch with Valerie Williams

Valerie began her work at First Church in September working alongside Denise. She has now quite handily taken on her responsibilities at First Church. Please continue to welcome her to the First Church community.

You may reach Valerie at the Church office at 463-4449
or via email: vwilliams@firstchurchinalbany.org

Her hours are Monday through Friday: 8 am to 3 pm

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.

Christmas Poinsettia Memorials

Please send a note or call the church office (463.4449) by Monday, December 5th to place your order for Christmas Poinsettia memorials. A minimum donation of \$10 per plant is requested. Make your check payable to First Church in Albany (marked: Poinsettias). After Christmas, the plants are shared with our homebound members and friends.



The deadline for the December issue of *FAMILY* is November 15.



Thank you

Martha Ivins expresses her gratitude to all of you, who with your cards and notes, have assured her of your thoughts and prayers during the days following Wil's death. She has felt the support of your love and sympathy.

Thank you, Donna Schultz, for typing the new Master Key List for the church. This will be a working file and updated as needed. Donna we appreciate you and the time you put into completing this huge task.

Memorial

In celebration of the life of **Rev. Wil Ivins** an anonymous gift has been received for the Clee Park Fund.

Congratulations

Congratulation to Nicole Marsh-Sivaslian and Adam Hall who were married on October 7, 2016 at the Century House in Latham, NY.



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