

The First Church **FAMILY**

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

November 2017

WORSHIP:

- 5 **Sunday after all Saints** (Communion)
Daylight Saving Time Ends
10:30 AM Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Coffee and Conversation
- 12 **Consecration Sunday**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Coffee and Conversation
- 19 **Thanksgiving Sunday**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Thanksgiving Food Basket Packing
- 26 **Christ the King Sunday**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. Dr. Allan Janssen, guest preacher
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: First Church Readers

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 Interim Pastor

Dear Members and Friends of First Church,

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly into your midst. These first few weeks in a new job always put me on a sharp learning curve of names and personalities, places and schedules, old habits and new things. Undoubtedly you are going through some of these same changes with me. In the days ahead, I look forward to conversations about your experiences of the challenges and opportunities of this transition. Please contact me if I don't get to you first. I try to be in the office by 9:30 on Monday and Tuesday, by 10 am Thursday, and I check my email regularly during the day. My regular day off is Friday, and I thank you in advance for honoring my family time.

Those of you who were in worship on October 8, know that I put a bright yellow piece of paper into the bulletin and asked those present to answer two questions: "Why are you here this morning – and at this church in particular?" and "What is one thing going on in the world, or this city, or your neighborhood that really touches and concerns you as a person of faith?" **Thank you** to the 26 people, about half the worshipping congregation present during the sermon, who were bold enough to respond on the spot! I learned that you are devoted worshippers of the God you know in Christ. You appreciate the relationships you have in this community and are devoted to First Church, its history, diversity, and spiritual nurture. Some of you are here out of habit, and some because you are curious about the new interim pastor! And several of you come here to learn. These offer a wonderful foundation for your journey through interim times.

A host of issues from the news tug at your hearts: the threat of war and climate change, the contentious national dialogue, the suffering many are enduring as a result of natural disasters, gun violence and racism. You long for peace and civility. You want your neighbors to be cared for, body and soul. And you are curious and concerned about your church's future as well as your own. One of the most important tasks of this time will be to articulate why God has need of you in this place, and your current longings may lead to a clearer understanding of First Church's purpose and vision in the present and for the future. **Thank you** for beginning the work.

In November I will begin to lead a series of Cottage Meetings, small group gatherings in homes and here at church, intended to get to know you better and to gather information that will set the foundation for the Search Committee to do its work. **Thank you** in advance for being willing to participate in one of these structured conversations. Dates and times will be forthcoming.

Lastly, this month we look forward to receiving your financial pledges to support God's work in this community. Regular giving offers each of us one more opportunity to say **thank you** to God who gives us life, to the Christ who invites us to follow his Way, and to the Spirit who empowers us with love and gifts for service. Even amid the uncertainties of transition in the life of your church, I know you will give generously.

With gratitude for the 375 years of faithful ministry and hope for what God will yet unfold among and through you,

Lynn

At Home with the WORD

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

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Micah 3:5-12 | 15. Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18 |
| 2. Psalm 43 | 16. Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12 |
| 3. 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13 | 17. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 |
| 4. Matthew 23:1-12 | 18. Matthew 25:14-30 |
| 5. Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost | 19. Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost |
| 6. Joshua 24:1-3, 14-25 | 20. Ezekiel 34:11-16 |
| 7. Psalm 78:1-7 | 21. Ezekiel 34:20-24 |
| 8. Amos 5:18-24 | 22. Psalm 100 |
| 9. Psalm 70 | 23. Psalm 95:1-7 |
| 10. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 | 24. Ephesians 1:15-23 |
| 11. Matthew 25:1-13 | 25. Matthew 25:31-46 |
| 12. Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost | 26. Christ the King Sunday |
| 13. Judges 4:1-7 | 27. Isaiah 64:1-9 |
| 14. Psalm 123 | 28. Psalm 80:1-7 |
| | 29. Psalm 80:17-19 |
| | 30. 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 |

Consecration Sunday – November 12, 2017

So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith. ~ Galatians 6.10

On November 12, 2017, all members and friends of First Church have an OPPORTUNITY to participate in the good work of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have the opportunity to pledge our financial support to the church which pledges its life to embody God's loving support for us and for the world around us.

Whether you are a pledger or not, whether you have ample resources to share or few, whether you already give sacrificially or are still learning how to give, please join us in worship. Come to share what you have and who you are. Come to make your offering of love and hope to God.

Because of our recent anniversary feast, we will have a more modest celebration of our pledge in-gathering this year. Reservations are not necessary and all are welcome!

Consistory Highlights

Pete Pagerey, Sr. Elder

On Wednesday, October 4th, the Consistory of First Church held an informal gathering with our new Interim Pastor, Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden.

The first Wednesday of the month is the new meeting night for consistory so this should have been an evening for a consistory meeting but we decided that since Lynn had just begun her work at First Church we would do something different.

The gathering was an opportunity for those who had not met Lynn to introduce ourselves to her and to get to know her and, as it turns out, each other better. We spent time sharing about our faith journeys and our expectations for the interim time, and divulging our favorite flavor of ice cream.

Our next consistory meeting will be November 1st and will be a business meeting as usual though I suspect we will continue to get to know each other for quite some time. And what is Lynn's favorite flavor of ice cream? Feel free to introduce yourself to her during coffee hour and ask.

Christmas Worship Updates

This year Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday.

- We will have our usual Sanctuary Worship Service at 10:30 am. With Pre-service music beginning at 10:15 am.
- We will have one family Christmas Eve Service at 7:30 pm with a prelude of harp music beginning at 7:00 pm.

Readers Needed Christmas Eve Service

If you would like to be a reader at the Christmas Eve Service, please talk to Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden. Thank you!

Bible Study at First Church Tuesdays

In our bible study this fall we are just beginning a study on Galatians and the Book of James, a comparative study.

As we begin our study it is interesting to imagine what it must have been like for Paul to travel through Galatia (now Turkey). And what must it have been like for these Galatians, these gentile (non-Jewish) people to encounter him.

The people of Galatia came from a long tradition of worship in the Roman Pantheon. They had attended their temple, as their parents and their parent's parents attended temple. It was their family tradition, their community's foundation. As for many of us who went to our churches as children, learned our biblical stories, and were handed down our understanding of God and Jesus, these folks went to their temple and heard stories about their many gods and goddesses. They also practiced sacrifices, offering them to their gods. For them to hear Paul talk of monotheism, of one God, well, this was a totally outrageous concept. These folks had little to no knowledge of Christian faith or beliefs. They knew no family history or larger community that practiced Christianity. So to have Paul arrive on the scene and speak of one God, of Jesus crucified and resurrected, this was extremely different, likely very challenging.

Just to get an idea, maybe a very strange idea, of how challenging this might have been, let's imagine for a moment what it would be like for us to have someone arrive and speak of a faith with many gods and goddesses, a very bizarre concept! At this time, too, to become Christian was to put your life on the line, to lose friends, and to sometimes lose family. But as strange as it was to hear, the Christian faith stuck and eventually caught like fire around the world. What is it that we all desired and needed, not offered by other religions? What is it that caused people to abandon their traditions? What lights in our hearts to walk in Christ's footsteps?

Come join us Tuesdays at noon and find out. And don't let the hour stop you. We just had a new member join who works a few blocks away and comes on her lunch hour. So, if it can work at all for you, take her lead, zip in, study and wonder, and zip out again.

Peace to you, Rev. Sue Vincent Cox

"Be Still and Know" Small Group for Advent

Please join this group for a 4 week Advent experience. We will read and meditate on scripture (or other readings) and will take part in some meaningful contemplative practices as we prepare for Christmas. This group will be offered Monday or Wednesday evening for those who cannot get to small groups during the day. Specific dates and times will be announced soon.

Please sign up in the lobby or call Rev. Sue Vincent Cox at the church office or on her cell 518-796-8793.

Come Sing in the Choir

The choir is starting to work on 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.

Advent Pre-Service Music Starts November 27th

Each Sunday during in Advent we have special musical preludes starting at 10:15 am. This year take some time during Advent to prepare again for the coming of Christ. Join us each Sunday in Advent at 10:15 am for a special musical offering. Sit in our beautiful sanctuary; meditate; pray; or just refresh yourself with the inspiring music of the Advent season.

- November 26 Schubler Chorales of J. S. Bach

Weathervanes. First Church . Meet Our Interim



Join the Weathervanes for fellowship, lunch, and a program on Wednesday, November 15th, at 12:30 pm in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich. Coffee, tea, and dessert will be served.

The Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden will be this month's guest. This will be a chance to learn more about the interim process and our interim pastor.

Please telephone Audrey Ming (518-456-5485) to let her know you plan to attend.

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 19, 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. On Tuesday, November 21 we will be distributing the Thanksgiving Baskets from 9:00 to 11:30 am.

The food item we are in the most in need of donation are cake mixes.

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

Our first dinners are November 17th (Chili) and December 15th (Italian).

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. First Church has been providing meals for the Shelter since 2008.

Can you:

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

Sign-up Sheets are available at the Hospitality Table.

Bring your dishes to church any weekday between 8:30 and 1:00 pm or Thursday evening from 6:30 -7:30 pm. We'll deliver them to the shelter on Friday afternoon. Questions? Contact Mary Bon (518-463-4449) or marybon@firstchurchinalbany.org

Non-returnable Dishes are available at the Hospitality Table. Please clearly label all dishes which include pork.
Thanks!

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 12 from 9 to 11:30 am.

Volunteers Needed for the First Church Food Pantry

The First Church Food Pantry is in need of a few volunteers for Wednesdays. If you can help out one Wednesday a month or most Wednesdays from 8:45 to 11:30 please contact Lorraine at [518-443-0460](tel:518-443-0460) or via email at lorraineh@focuschurches.net.

New Hymn during October 29th Anniversary Celebration

On October 29 we sang a new hymn text, "At the Heart of Human History," written specially for our Anniversary Service by noted hymn writer, Mary Louise Bringle. The hymn, sung to a familiar tune, uses many images and scriptures reflecting First Church: "at the heart of the city," "a lily among the thorns" (the text on the seal at the front of the sanctuary); and "here the hurting and the broken find God's welcome fully spoken."

At the heart of human history
stands a single, empty cross,
emblem of the world's redemption,
drawing life from grief and loss.

For the suffering, Christ was born,
as a lily 'mid the thorn,
joy resplendent and surprising
in his dying and arising.

Song of Solomon 2:2

At the heart of every person
stirs a thirsty, restless soul,
keen to drink from living water,
find new hope and be made whole.

Faith and courage are restored
by the promise of the Lord:
"In my arms, I will enfold you;
comfort, strengthen, and uphold you."

John 4:14

Isaiah 41:10

At the heart of every city
dwells a world in need of care:
those who long for food and shelter,
those who seek a house of prayer—
one that beckons, "Come, be fed
with a feast of living bread.
Here the hurting and the broken
find God's welcome fully spoken."

*"A church at the heart of the city, with
the city at its heart"

Isaiah 56:7; Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17

John 6:52

"God's servant people in a broken and
hurting world" (The Focus Churches)
Room for All

At the heart of all creation,
God's embodied Spirit sings.
Ways break open in the desert;
driest valleys gush with springs.

With all creatures, we rejoice,
giving thanks in mortal voice,
till we join in heaven's chorus
with the saints gone on before us.

Isaiah 43:19

Psalms 104:24, 33

Isaiah 42:10-12

Revelation 14:3

Mary Louise Bringle, 2017
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First Church Readers Meets November 26



Like to read? First Church Readers 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 on November 26 to discuss *For One More Day* by Mitch Albom, a novel about a grown child given the chance to have one more day with the mother he lost to the shifting loyalties and relationships of divorce.

No December Meeting

January *Underground Railroad*

Colson Whitehead's Pulitzer Prize winning novel interweaves fantasy and history, past and present, in a jarring, graphic retelling of the brutal history of slavery through the story of the escaping slave, Cora. The Underground Railroad here is not just a metaphor but has real engineers and conductors operating a secret network of tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil to help escaping slaves

February *Lily and the Octopus* by Steven Rowley

"An authentic, keenly insightful, hilarious and heartbreakingly poignant tribute to the purity of love between a pet dachshund and its human." Booklist (starred review)

If you have ideas for books for the reading group pass them on to Mary Bon at marybon@firstchurchinalbany.org or 518-463-4449.

Thank You 375 Anniversary Committee!

Thank you to the 375 Anniversary Committee who have diligently worked this year to bring you: 375 Anniversary Calendar; four Anniversary Worship Services on February 26th, May 14th, August 20th and October 29th; several scheduled tours of our beautiful church and a very special Anniversary Dinner at the Normanside Countryclub with guest speaker Jack McEneny. All these events have brought many new people into our sanctuary and church house! Our gratitude and thanks go out to: Tom Allison, Jeanne Bianchine, Mary Bon, Shirley Bone, Janet Conti, Jim Folts, Cheryl Gowie, Ian Leet, Joyce Recene and Denise Wright.

Growing Green - Caring for Creation

- Use reusable fabric or mesh bags when you shop. If just 25% of American families used 10 fewer plastic bags a month, it would save over 2.5 billion bags a year.
- Eat low on the food chain. 18 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions come from meat and dairy production. Try eating at least one meat-free meal a day or start with one meat free meal a week.
- Choose a cause you care about and volunteer, advocate and write letters to your representatives.

Do you have ideas on what we can do to “grow greener” at First Church? How we can become better stewards of God’s creation in our homes, our church and our community?

Send your ideas to: Caring For Creation, First Church in Albany 110 North Pearl Street or Jeanne@firstchurchinalbany.org We'll include your suggestions in the “growing green” section of the Family.

Christmas Poinsettia Memorials

Please send a note or call the church office (518.463.4449) by Monday, December 8th 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.

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.

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The deadline for the December issue of *FAMILY* is November 13.

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Consider This...

As you consider your gifts to First Church for 2018, these thoughts of Martin Copenhaver, President of Andover Newton Theological Seminary: "A contribution and an offering are different: We make a contribution because the church needs money. We make an offering because we need to give. Only some are able to give a large contribution. Anyone is able to make a great offering."

Take the opportunity to give from your heart!

Thank You!

Dear First Church in Albany,

We are deeply grateful to each of you for your contribution of \$3,000 to the Annual Seminary Fund.

Your support ensures we can continue to provide the next generation of Church leaders with the excellent training that is synonymous with a New Brunswick Theological Seminary education. Your gifts impacts more than the lives of our students - it flows beyond our campus, and through our Seminarians, enriches every community, company and congregation they faithfully serve.

Thank you once again, and on behalf of all those blessed and uplifted by your support, we send our profound appreciation.

In God's Service.

Micah McCreary, M.Div., PhD
President of the Seminary

In Memorial

In celebration of the life of Harriet Sinclair, a gift has been received from The Rev. LeRoy Suess and Judith Utley-Suess for the Lynn Joosten Scholarship Fund.

In Sympathy

Our prayers and sympathy go out to Dolly and Larry Underdue, family and friends on the passing of Dolly's aunt, Delia Ann Graham.

Our prayers and sympathy go out to Bonnie and Daniel Tefoe, family and friends on the passing of her mother, Flora Whan.

Our prayers and sympathy go out to Joeanna Brown and Deborah Anderson, family and friends on the passing of their grandchild and niece, Mai'Everi Moses.



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110 North Pearl Street
Albany, NY 12207-2231
518.463.4449

www.firstchurchinalbany.org

email: info@firstchurchinalbany.org

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