

THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

(Reformed Church in America)

110 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12207 ~ (518) 463-4449

Email: info@firstchurchinalbany.org ~ Website: www.firstchurchinalbany.org ~ Sunday Worship: 10:30 am

Founded in 1642; Continuing in Ministry Today

In response to God's unconditional love for all people made known to us in Jesus Christ, we are called to be a welcoming and affirming community. The First Church in Albany includes young and old, families, couples and singles, rich and poor, persons of various races, ethnicities, backgrounds, sexual orientation and gender identities, differing physical and mental abilities, believers and seekers. We welcome into the full life of the church all those whom God sends us. Centered in Christ, we commit ourselves to breaking down dividing walls and building a community where all are loved.

Reign of Christ Sunday

November 26, 2017

THE APPROACH TO GOD

Prelude *Variations on the "Old Hundredth Psalm Tune" (Hymn 591)*
Johann Pachelbel; Johann Walther

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Amen.

Psalm 124:8

Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise with songs of praise!

For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

In God's hand are the depths of the earth and the heights of the mountains.

The sea is God's, who made it, and the dry land God's hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For the Lord is our God. We are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand.

from Psalm 95:1-7a

Prayer of Confession

**Loving God, too often we overlook the needs of people around us while we are proclaiming our devotion to you.
We could do so much more to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, and heal the sick.
We fail to see you behind the bars of a prison system that diminishes the humanity of all of us,
or as a patient in an underfunded, understaffed clinic,
or as a child of poverty with no coat,
or as an immigrant or refugee kept at a distance by legal obstacles.
Open our eyes to see your presence in every person.
Rouse us to respond to the needs of others so that we may be rightly called by your name. Amen.**

The prayer may continue in silence.

Assurance of Pardon

*The Peace

As God's forgiven people, let us lead lives worthy of the calling to which we have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (from Ephesians 4: 1-3)

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

*Response *(sung)* *Rejoice, the Lord Is King (Hymn 155, vss. 1 and 3)* DARWALL

**Rejoice, the Lord is King!
Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing, and
triumph evermore:
Lift up your heart, lift up your
voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!**

**Rejoice in glorious hope!
For Christ, the Judge, shall come
To glorify the saints for their eternal
home:
Lift up your heart, lift up your
voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!**

THE WORD OF GOD

The Prayer for Illumination

Eternal God, in the reading of the Scripture, may your word be heard; in the meditation of our hearts, may your word be known; and in the faithfulness of our lives, may your word be shown. Amen.

The Old Testament Lesson Ezekiel 34.11-16

The Word of the Lord.

Praise to you, O God

The Gospel Lesson Matthew 25: 31-46

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

A Word with Children

The Sermon “Thy Kingdom Come”

The Prayer for Blessing on the Word

THE RESPONSE TO GOD

*Hymn 152 *Earth's Scattered Isles and Contoured Hills*

MEADVILLE

Verse 1: Choir only; Verses 2-4: Choir and Congregation

Offering

Offertory Anthem *Christ Hath a Garden*

Gerald Near

*Christ hath a garden walled around, a paradise of fruitful ground,
Chosen by love and fenced by grace from out the world's wide wilderness.
Like trees of spice his servants stand, there planted by his mighty hand;
By Eden's gracious streams, that flow to feed their beauty where they grow.
Awake, O wind of heav'n and bear their sweetest perfume through the air:
Stir up, O south, the boughs that bloom, till the beloved Master come:
That he may come, and linger yet, among the trees that he hath set;
That he may evermore be seen to walk amid the springing green.*

*Doxology (Hymn 591)

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

The Joys and Concerns of the Church

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

*Hymn 144 *Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!*

HYFRYDOL

*Charge and Blessing

*Postlude *Voluntary on "Hyfrydol" (Hymn 148)*

Healey Willan

AΩ *Those who are able please stand.

WORSHIP LEADERS: Liturgists: Tom Allison, Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden; Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Allan Janssen; Minister of Music: Mary Bon; the Choir of First Church.

We welcome all who gather to worship God this morning, especially visitors and friends from near and far. Please sign our guest book or complete a visitor's card (found in the pew rack) and place it in the offering plate. There is an elevator in our building, which makes every floor accessible. Please join us for refreshments and conversation after worship in Zimmerman Hall.

Hearing assist devices are available for your use. Please ask an usher.

The flowers this morning are given by Doris Roberts in celebration of her 75th birthday.

Children and Worship: A Joyful Way to Worship God Children ages 4-12 are invited to go to the Children's Worship Center after the Children's Sermon.

Pocket Prayer Shawls are available at today's **Worship**. Please ask one of our greeters and they can provide a basket of pocket prayer shawls to choose from. Pocket Prayer Shawls are made and filled with prayers and can be given to someone in need of comfort, healing, or a reminder of the closeness of God.

We welcome to our pulpit today The Rev. Dr. Allan Janssen, Affiliate Professor of Theological Studies at New Brunswick Theological Seminary and Theologian in Residence at the First Church.

The next Overflow Homeless Shelter dinner is Friday, December 15th with the theme of *Italian Night*. If you can contribute a main dish, side dish or dessert for 6-8 people, or can help deliver at 5:45 pm on Friday night, sign up at the Hospitality Table. Bring your dishes to the church any day during office hours. Questions? Call or email Mary Bon (518-463-4449) or maryebon@verizon.net. USE NON RETURNABLE DISHES – and THANK-YOU!

Flower donations: Please note that effective January 1, 2018, the Enchanted Florist prices will increase from \$25.00 to \$32.50 per flower pot and \$65.00 for both.

Beginning next week there will be Pre-Service music each Advent Sunday at 10:15 AM in the sanctuary. Come early to meditate, pray, and listen to some beautiful music as we journey through Advent. December 3 – Schubler chorales of J. S. Bach.

First Church Readers meets today in the Parlor. We will be discussing *For One More Day* by Mitch Albom. Everyone is welcome to join us.

Hanging of the Greens will occur on two dates: December 9 at 10 am for outside work and December 15th at 5:30 pm following pizza, for inside work. Sign up sheets are in the lobby.

We are looking for someone to donate one or two Christmas trees to put on the portico outside where they'd be visible from Pearl Street. Please contact the church office 518-463-4449.

If you would like to be a reader at the Christmas Eve 7:30 pm Service, please talk to Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden. Thank you!

Pledges as of last Sunday, total \$110,729.00 from 36 commitment cards, representing our gifts for the work and witness of First Church in the coming year. Thank you! If you have not yet returned a commitment card you may place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church, Attn: Wayne Sivaslian. Additional cards are on the table in the lobby.

Rev. Sue Cox will be leading “Be Still and Know” Advent Small Group. There is a choice of two meeting times for each of the three sessions: Sundays beginning Dec. 3 right after worship, or Advent Mondays beginning Dec 4 at 6:30 pm. We will meet in the Powell Room or Parlor. For more information please contact Rev. Sue Vincent-Cox.

COTTAGE MEETINGS WITH INTERIM MINISTER

YOU are invited to talk about your experience of your church, and to share your questions and hopes for the future. Each gathering has the same format: light refreshments followed by conversation around the five easy questions. These meeting will help Lynn get to know the congregation, and us to know each other. They also till the ground for the creation of First Church’s profile for the pastoral search. Each meeting lasts no more than two hours. Space is limited to encourage good conversation in a small group. Your input is extremely valuable. Please sign up!

December 3	Noon	Church Parlor
December 8	6pm	Youth and Young Adults - Church Parlor
January 6	2 pm	Mondore’s in Loudonville
January 8	2 pm	Van Epps’ in Rensselaer
January 14	Noon	Church Parlor

Please come and explore our newly renovated First Church Library and check out a good book. Interesting categories from our 400 book inventory include Aging, books by First Church Authors, a large collection of Guidepost Books, and a good Bible Research/ Study Section. There is also an extensive Inspirational and Daily Reading Section.

Children will receive a big balloon if they check out a book from our extensive children and young adult section and read it. Open every Sunday and during week by appointment. Reading is healthy! Five ways to help raise your grades in school are READ, READ, READ, READ, and READ.

The Library Committee

Christmas Poinsettia Memorials

Please send a note or call the church office (518.463.4449) by Friday, 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.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

Sunday	11/26	Christ the King Sunday
	10:30 AM	Sanctuary Worship Service Children & Worship (during service)
	11:45 AM	Coffee & Conversation
Monday	11/27	9:00 AM - 11:30 AM - Food Pantry Open
	10:30 AM	Staff Meeting
Tuesday	11/28	NOON Bible Study
Wednesday	11/29	9:00 AM - 11:30 AM - Food Pantry Open
	12:00 NOON	AA Meeting
	6:30 PM	NVC Practice Group
Thursday	11/30	7:00 PM No Choir Rehearsal
Sunday	12/3	First Sunday of Advent
	10:15 AM	Pre- Service Music
	10:30 AM	Sanctuary Worship Service Children & Worship (during service)
	11:45 AM	Coffee & Conversation Cottage Meeting- Parlor Advent Group “Be still and Know”