

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.

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 17, 2017

THE APPROACH TO GOD

Prelude *Pastorale*

Johann Sebastian Bach

Announcements

Silence

Call to Worship

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

Amen.

Psalm 124:8

Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

If you, O God, should mark our guilt
who could stand?

**But there is forgiveness with you,
so that you may be revered.**

I trust in you, O God, and in your word I hope;
my soul waits for you, O God,

**more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.**

May your people hope in you, O God!
**For with you there is unfailing love and great power to redeem.
You will redeem your people from all their iniquities.**

from Psalm 130

*Hymn 298 *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

IN BABILON

Prayer of Confession

**God of unending mercy,
we know that your love is stronger than anything
that would separate us from you.
Your forgiveness frees us from the constraints of the past
and sets us free for new life.
Yet at times we feel imprisoned by regret and fear,
and our hope for the future grows dim.
We despair because of what we see in the world,
because of what we suffer from one another,
and because of what we find in our own hearts.
Forgive us for clinging to resentment and remorse.
Send your Spirit to cleanse and renew our hearts.
Help us to trust you to make us instruments of your love,
that we may know the joy of life abundant given in our risen Lord.**

(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.

*Response

Tune: ST. ANNE

**Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found;
Brought here together by Christ's love, by love we thus are bound.
Let strife among us be unknown, let all contention cease;
Be Christ the glory that we seek, be ours Christ's holy peace.**

Text: *Ubi Caritas*, 8th century hymn translated by Omer Westendorf
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THE WORD OF GOD

The Prayer for Illumination

The Epistle Lesson Colossians 3: 12-17

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

A Word with Children

Anthem *I Will Bow*

Shaker song arr. Frederick Chadwick

*I will bow and be simple, I will bow and be free,
I will bow and be humble, yea, bow like the willow tree.
I will bow, this is the token, I will wear the easy yoke,
I will bow and be broken, yea, I'll fall upon the rock.*

The Gospel Lesson Matthew 18: 21-35

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon “Love that Forgives”

The Prayer for Blessing on the Word

THE RESPONSE TO GOD

*Hymn

God, How Can We Forgive

LEONI

1 God, how can we for - give when bonds of love are torn?
2 When we have missed the mark, and tears of an-guish flow,
3 Who dares to throw the stone to damn an - oth - er's sin,

How can we rise and start a - new, our trust re - born?
how can you still re - lease our guilt, the debt we owe?
when you, while know-ing all our past, for - give a - gain?

When hu - man lov - ing fails and ev - ery hope is gone,
The o - cean depth of grace sur - pass-es all our needs.
No more we play the judge, for by your grace we live.

your love gives strength be - yond our own to face the dawn.
A priest who shares our hu - man pain, Christ in - ter - cedes.
As you, O God, for - give our sin, may we for - give.

"God, How Can We Forgive" Text Ruth Duck ©1994. Music: Jewish melody, 17th cent.; adapt. Meyer Lyon and Thomas Olivers, 1770. Text © 1996 The Pilgrim Press Used by permission of Onelicense #A-700689

Offering

Offertory *If I Have Been the Source of Pain, O God*

Pablo Sosa

*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 436 *We Are Your People*

WHITFIELD

*Charge and Blessing

*Postlude *Dialogue on the Trumpet*

Louis Clerambault

AΩ *Those who are able please stand.

WORSHIP LEADERS: The Rev. Susan Vincent Cox, liturgist; The Rev. John Paarlberg, preacher; Mary Bon Minister of Music and Choir Director. WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS: The entire congregation.

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.

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

The flowers this morning are given by Gertrude Dorn and family in memory of Robert J. Dorn, husband, father, and grandfather.

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.

Today we will receive a special offering for Church World Service for Hurricane Relief
Checks can be made payable to the First Church in Albany and designated "hurricane relief."

The First Church 2017 Directory is under way. We are now in the final phases of taking individual photos for the directory. All photos will be taken in-house in the Powell Room. Sign-up online via sign up genius.com at: <http://bit.ly/2spbqog>, or on the sign-up sheet in the lobby or by calling Valerie at the church office: (518) 463-4449.

Fifteen minute time slots have been allocated for the following dates:

- Today, September 17, Sunday: 11:30 am - 2:00 pm
- We've added one more Sunday and some time this coming week. Please call for an appointment during this coming week for a time between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm or for your last chance on Sunday, September 24, Sunday between 11:30 am - 2:00 pm.

First Church Readers will meet on September 24 after the worship service to discuss *The Annotated Persuasion* by Jane Austin. Annotated by David M. Shapard. The group is open to everyone. Come join us!

The fifth annual North Star Interfaith Peace Walk, will be held on Sunday, September 24, 2017 from 2:00-4:00 PM. The walk is an approximately 1.5 mile loop and will begin and end at the Moses statue in Washington Park in Albany. Various religious and community leaders will be invited to offer prayers/poems during the course of the walk.

Library Open House- Today, September 17th

Have you seen the newly decorated library? There is a special Open House after the worship service today for anyone who wants to visit. The library is open weekdays during office hours and on Sundays. Book donations still accepted.

Music note: "The Offertory, "If I Have Been the Source of Pain," is a prayer for forgiveness. It began as an English hymn written by C. Maude Battersby and edited by Charles H. Gabriel around 1911. The text was translated into Spanish by Sara M. de Hall,

then Janet W. May translated the Spanish back into English. This gave a fresh understanding of the original poem. The tune, Camacua, was written by Pablo Sosa of Chivilcoy, Argentina, the son of a Methodist minister. He studied theology and music and is an internationally known composer, author and the translator of many hymns. An avid promoter of Latin American religious folk songs, he is an authority of Hispanic music and worship.” www.thefreelibrary.com

*If I have been the source of pain, O God, if to the weak I have refused my strength,
If in rebellion I have strayed away, forgive me, God. If I have spoken words of cruelty, if I
have left some suffering unrelieved, Condemn not my insensitivity, forgive me, God. If I've
insisted on a peaceful life, far from the struggles that the gospel brings, When you prefer to
guide me to the strife, forgive me, God. Receive, O God, this ardent word of prayer, and free
me from temptation's subtle snare; With tender patience, lead me to your care. Amen*



Weathervanes. Recap of Spring Trip to Palestine

Join the Weathervanes for fellowship, lunch, and a program on Wednesday, September 20th, at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich. Coffee, tea, and dessert will be served. After lunch, Rev. John Paarlberg and members of the Palestine Trip, will recount with us about their trip and events and update us with current meetings. Please telephone Audrey Ming (518- 456-5485) to let her know you plan to attend.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

Sunday	9/17	Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost	
		10:30 AM	Sanctuary Worship Service
		11:45 AM	Coffee and Conversation Library Open House Directory Photos in Powell Room
Monday	9/18	9:00 AM - 11:30 AM	- Food Pantry Open
		11:30 AM	Prayer Shawl Ministry
Tuesday	9/19	NOON	Bible Study
		6:30 PM	Consistory Meeting
Wednesday	9/20	9:00 AM - 11:30 AM	- Food Pantry Open
		12:00 NOON	AA Meeting
		12:30 PM	Weathervanes
Thursday	9/21	7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal
Friday	9/22	10 AM- 2 PM	Directory Photos
Sunday	9/24	Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost	
		10:30 AM	Sanctuary Worship Service
		11:45 AM	Coffee and Conversation First Church Readers Directory Photos in Powell Room