

The First Church **FAMILY**

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

September 2016

WORSHIP: THE SEASON OF CREATION SUNDAYS

- 4 **Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost** (Communion)
9:00 AM – Last Drive-In Worship
 Rev. John Paarlberg preaching
10:00 AM – FOCUS Combined Worship Service
 at Westminster Presbyterian Church
- 11 **Season of Creation: Ocean Sunday** (Communion)
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. John Paarlberg preaching
Post Service: Christian Practices- *Prayer: Oriented Toward God*
- 18 **Season of Creation: Storm Sunday**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. John Paarlberg preaching
Post Service: Christian Practices- *Food: Eating with Jesus*
- 25 **Season of Creation: Cosmos Sunday**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. Dr. Allan Janssen preaching
Children & Worship begins; Open House
Post Service: Congregational Pot-luck: Youth Mission Trip Presentation

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,

September will be a month of transition for First Church. As you are probably already aware, Denise Lobdell, who has served our congregation for more than three decades as church coordinator and receptionist, will be retiring. In her many years of service to the church Denise has been a model of hospitality and a voice of welcome for church members and visitors alike. On **Wednesday, September 28**, we will host a luncheon to express our thanks to Denise and wish her well in her retirement. If you have not already made reservations for the luncheon please do so soon, and no later than September 15.

Valerie Williams will be joining the First Church staff as the new parish administrator and receptionist. Valerie has had administrative and supervisory experience in several different roles. She has most recently been employed as a child care counselor at the LaSalle School and has also worked as a dorm supervisor at Job Corps, a loan administrator, and an executive assistant at a charter school. Valerie begins her work at First Church on September 12 and will be working alongside Denise for a few weeks. Please help us welcome her to the First Church community.

Also for at least a few days this month we have the opportunity to host a young woman from Palestine. Salam Qumsiyeh lives in Bethlehem, Palestine, and is a member of the Lutheran Church in the Holy Land. Salam has a background in journalism, has participated in this sort of cross-culture learning travel in European countries, and speaks excellent English.

Several Reformed Churches in the Capital District, the Hudson Valley and the New York City area are cooperating in providing opportunities for her to connect with Christian communities here in the United States and for her to help us better understand what life is like for Palestinian people living in the West Bank. Salam will be with us for some of the time between September 15-23 and we'll be arranging opportunities for you to get to meet her and hear her story. Stay tuned!

Sincerely,

John D. Paarlberg

Celebrating the Season of Creation

For the past few years for four weeks in the fall we have observed the Season of Creation in worship, celebrating God's gifts in creation and praying for their healing and restoration. The Season of Creation is an alternative lectionary and a way of recognizing that God speaks to us both through scripture and through the gifts of creation. The Belgic Confession, one of the historic confessional standards of the Reformed Church, speaks of God's two books, the book of scripture and the book of creation where "the universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God: God's eternal power and divinity ..."

This year the four themes are *Ocean, Storm, Cosmos* and *Animals*. What do these gifts tell us about God? How can we celebrate and give thanks for these gifts? How can we pray for them? How can we be faithful to God's command "to till and keep" this garden planet?

For centuries, Christian theology, ethics, and worship have been oriented largely in two dimensions: our relationship with God and our relationships with one another. Often neglected are God's relationship with the rest of creation and our relationship with creation (and with God through creation). A renewed focus on creation can serve as a reminder that God is deeply involved in all of creation, not just with the human creatures, and that God has given us "a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God."

At Home with the WORD

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

1. Psalm 1
2. Philemon 1:1-21
3. Luke 14:25-33
4. Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
5. Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28
6. Psalm 14
7. Exodus 32:7-14
8. Psalm 51:1-10
9. 1 Timothy 1:12-17
10. Luke 15:1-10
11. Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
12. Jeremiah 8:18–9:1
13. Psalm 79:1-9
14. Holy Cross; 1 Corinthians 1:18-24
15. Psalm 113
16. 1 Timothy 2:1-7
17. Luke 16:1-13
18. Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
19. Jeremiah 32:1-3, 6-15
20. Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16
21. Amos 6:1, 4-7
22. Psalm 146
23. 1 Timothy 6:6-19
24. Luke 16:19-31
25. Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
26. Lamentations 1:1-6
27. Lamentations 3:19-26
28. Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4
29. Psalm 37:1-9
30. 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Post-Service Presentations: *Practicing the Christian Faith*

The post-service programs in September and October will focus on Christian spiritual practices such as prayer, worship, service, stewardship, community. Each practice will introduced with a brief video presentation followed by discussion. Here is the tentative schedule

September 11 *Prayer: Oriented Towards God* (Brian McLaren)

How can we pray in ways that are meaningful, helpful and life-giving?

September 18 *Food: Eating with Jesus* (Sara Miles)

Food can be holy when offered and shared in acts of love and fellowship

September 25 **Congregational pot-luck luncheon**

First Church 'mission trippers' will share photos and report on their experience at the work project in Pocahontas, West Virginia, this summer

October 2 *Worship: Seeking God's Presence* (Mike Slaughter)

Worship is more than "going to church." How can we worship both on our own and in community?

October 9 *Sacraments: A Tapestry of Traditions* (Phyllis Tickle)

Sacraments are "visible means of invisible grace." What happens when we participate in these ancient practices?

October 16 *Money: The Joy of Sharing* (Shane Claiborne)

What is your relationship to money? How is financial generosity a sign of God's kingdom?

October 23 *Service: The Needs Right in Front of You* (Enuma Okoro)

Love of God and love of neighbor go together. How is service to those around us a spiritual practice?

October 30 *Community: An Unexpected Family* (Doug Pagitt)

Living the Christian life is not a solo practice. God calls us to live in community. What gifts do we bring to our life together? What gifts do we receive?

First Church Members Raise \$1794.95 through the Albany Crop Walk

It was a rather rainy afternoon for the CROP Walk this year, but the Albany CROP Walk still raised \$85,888.75 to help hungry people here and around the world. First Church walkers and sponsors raised \$1794.95. Thank You!

Small Group Gatherings this Fall at First Church

- **Nonviolent Communication Practice Group** **Wed. Oct. 19th 6-8 pm**

Beginning in October we will again meet monthly on Wednesday evenings. This year we will welcome some new members from the community after they complete Basic NVC Workshops at either the Albany Unitarian Universalists, First Church, or the FOCUS Volunteer Training for the Breakfast Program (FC provides a presentation each year). Becky Hudak will help co-lead this practice group. She will be teaching us practices called “presencing” and “compassionate noticing”. These are both ways that helps us observe more closely, without judgment, what is happening around us or within us, as we interact with others. Nonjudgmental Observation is a first step in practicing NVC. If you are interested in learning more about NVC and want to attend one of our workshops, please contact Pastor Sue Cox at the church office.

- **Prayer Shawl** **Monday Sept 26th at 11:30 am**

We will meet monthly on the 3rd Monday of the month. Our meetings are for 1 ½ hrs. We have made and given over 40 shawls to those in need of comfort. When we meet together we enjoy fellowship, knitting, praying, sharing ideas and tips, and planning for our ministry. We are always open to new members joining us and welcome those who are “homebound” to join our ministry, too. If you can knit a shawl at home we can stay in touch together by phone or visit you for one of our meetings. Please join us!!

- **Pilgrim’s Walk**

Cheryl Gowie and Rev. Sue Cox will be giving an introductory presentation at Beverwyck Tuesday Aug 30th. They will plan to lead a group there this fall. Sandy Scudder, Cheryl and Sue have provided these groups at Beltrone, Sheehy Manor and Beverwyck over the past 3 years. This is a small supportive group that builds caring community and provides spiritual support and direction. We hope to offer more of these groups to the greater community this upcoming year.

- **Tuesday Bible Study** **begins September 29th at noon**

We will again resume our study on the RCA Church Doctrines. Sounds a bit dry and outdated, right? After all they are just doctrines and they have been around for 100s of years: the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort. The Belhar is a more contemporary doctrine we have recently adopted for our RCA compass. Let me tell you, we are finding there is nothing dry or outdated about them! Currently we are studying ***Body and Soul: Reclaiming the Heidelberg Catechism*** by M. Craig Barnes. This has been a study both highly thought provoking and rich in content. Join us if you can for this continued study. We would love to have you with us.

- **Children and Worship**

We will have our **Open House September 25th** and begin **weekly worship October 2nd**. We hope you will invite children you know whose parent or guardian might be a neighbor, a friend, or someone you know at work. We will offer both a worship time for children ages 4-7 and 8-12. We hope you will visit our worship centers soon!

Children and Worship Open House



Sunday September 25th

.....
During Worship (after the children's moment)

.....
Come hear a story and see the Worship Center

Meet some of our storytellers and greeters

We will begin weekly worship October 2nd

Ages 4-7 and Ages 8-12

Bring a friend☺

Join the Choir: First Rehearsal September 15th

Choir rehearsals start Thursday, September 15th at 7:00 pm. Like to sing? Come join us for fun, food, fellowship and song. Everyone's welcome. You don't need to read music or have any special talent; just a love of singing. It's refreshing, uplifting and a great way to worship God and deepen your faith.

Choir Night Out: September 22nd

The choir is having dinner together on Thursday September 22nd at 5:30. Everyone is welcome - family, friends, spouses, partners, potential choir members! You don't need to be a choir member to come! Meet the choir members in an informal setting. Stop by just for a drink or to join us for a meal! Contact Mary Bon at maryebon@verizon.net or 463-4449 for more information.

Farewell Luncheon for Denise Lobdell



In lieu of our regular September Weathervanes meeting we are joining together with everyone for a **Farewell Luncheon for Denise**.

Come to Zimmerman Hall on Wednesday, September the 28th at 12:30 p.m. If you have not already made reservations for the luncheon please do so soon, and no later than September 15.

Youth Mission Trip to West Virginia

The First Church Youth had a fantastic time in July working in West Virginia Mission Workcamp.



Summer Baptism



In July we celebrated the sacrament of baptism and welcome **Grant Michael**, the son of Sarah and Michael Kaiser, into the body of Christ.

Recent First Church Graduates

Meredith Parmalee: Meredith graduated from Northeastern University, magna cum laude, with a bachelor's in International Business and a minor in Spanish. Meredith has just started a job with Rue LaLa in Boston as an Innovation Analyst.



Lark Parmalee: Lark graduated from Shaker High School and will be attending Northeastern University in Boston, majoring in Marine Biology.

Stuart Allan graduated Magna cum Laude from SUNY New Paltz.

Saniyah Angel Bell graduated from Kipp Tech Charter School and is going to Shaker High School.

Mackenzie Raiin Brewer graduated from Menands Middle School and is now going to Shaker High School.

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.

First Church Readers Meets September 18



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 resume meeting again on September 18 when we will be discussing

- **September:** *The Good Earth* by Pearl Buck
The Pulitzer Prize winning story of a family in 1920s China under the last emperor.
- **October:** *The Nightingale* by Kristen Hannah
How two sisters in World War II France find different ways to endure life in occupied France.
- **November:** *Girl Waits with Gun* by Amy Stewart
A novel based on the true story of one of the country's first female deputy sheriffs.

Got a book you think would be an interesting read? Contact maryebon@verizon.net

School Supply

The First Church Food Pantry supplied 55 children with brand new backpacks and back to school essentials for the coming year. Many thank- you's to the congregation for their generous donations. Special thanks to: Jean LaMere, Gertrude Dorn, Joeanna Brown, Becky Hudak, Joshua Bliss, Jane Ward and of course Noel Concepcion.





The deadline for the October issue of *FAMILY* is September 15.



Congratulations

Congratulations to Starlene and John Haviland, Sr. on the birth of their great-grandson, Adrion Haviland born June 24th.

Congratulations to Adam and Jillian Leibach on the birth of their daughter, Evelyn Drew Leibach, born July 13th.

Congratulations to Wil Ivins who celebrated his 95th birthday on July 27th.

Congratulations to Henry Fox who celebrated his 95th birthday on August 26th.

Congratulations to Wim and Mia Westman who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on July 24, 2016.

THANK YOU

Thank you to **Jane Ward** for volunteering in the office with the monthly mailing for the First Church Family newsletter. Jane was glad she could be part of this ministry. We appreciate her service and will miss her and her enthusiasm. Thank you, Jane.

Many thanks to our 1st Church family and friends for all the prayers, calls, cards, and the prayer shawl which has given us strength through the worst time of our lives. The sudden death of our son, Fred was devastating to all. I want to especially thank Rev. John Paarlberg for the wonderful service he did. It all was very much appreciated from all. May God grant you all many blessings and peace, always. Starlene and John Haviland and Family. P.S. Fred loved his church.

I would like to thank the staff and the congregation for their prayers and thoughts, the card, and the visitations. It has truly lifted my spirits. Jay Reohr.

Thank you to the Kate Allard Group for donating money to pay for the pre-maintenance of the Grandfather clock.

In Honor

A donation in honor of Shirley Bone's birthday on September 9th a gift has been received from Helen Goldenberg and Stephen Barr for the Clee Park Fund.

In Sympathy

Sympathy is extended to Arthur and Donna Schultz, family and friends in the recent death of his step-mother, Linda Schultz.

Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Eileen Simas who passed away on July 1, 2016.

Sympathy is extended to Thomas and Christopher Warner, family and friends in the death of wife /mother, Marilyn Warner on July 8, 2016.

Memorials

In celebration of the life of **Mildred C. Leet** a gift has been received from Wilma Sheffer for the **Food Pantry**.

In celebration of the life of **Natalie Parry** a gift has been received from Robert and Carolyn Akland for the **Building Fund**.

In celebration of the life of **Olga Parente** gifts have been received from Shirley Bone, Richard and Julianne Bone, and Eric Bone for the **Clee Park Memorial Fund**.



Denise, may God continue to bless you the way you have been a blessing to all of us!



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