

The First Church FAMILY

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

April 2018

WORSHIP:

1 Easter Sunday

10:30 am Festival Easter Communion Service
Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden, preaching
Post Service: Coffee and Conversation

8 Second Sunday of Easter

10:30 am Sanctuary Service
Rev. Peter J.B. Carman, preaching
Nat Phipps Jazz Trio
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Coffee and Conversation

15 Third Sunday of Easter

10:30 am Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Coffee and Conversation

22 Fourth Sunday of Easter

10:30 am Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: New Members Class - Parlor
Coffee and Conversation
First Church Readers

29 Fifth Sunday of Easter

10:30 am Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: New Members Class - Parlor
Coffee and Conversation

FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR

He is not here. He is risen!

With these words the season of Eastertide – a season of holy surprise and discovery – begins.

Recently I read an article written by church consultant David Brubaker with the surprising title: “Want less conflict? Look out the window!” I discovered, as I reflected on our lives within and beyond the church, why it can be challenging to see out our windows: we put pieces of furniture and other obstacles in front of them. We turn our attention inside, distracted by the tasks of maintaining our households, and by familiar activities. And truth be told, seeing through is made harder when we resist the challenge of applying soap and water to the glass! It’s a worthy metaphor in the life of any church.

About church life, Brubaker made these observations: “A healthy congregation celebrates marriages, dedicates babies, and commemorates the lives of the departed. Every congregation must also attend to the administrative realities of balancing a budget, maintaining a facility, and making payroll. However, a congregation focused only on the needs of its members and the demands of its building and employees is likely a congregation in decline. To paraphrase William Temple, ‘a congregation is the only association that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members.’”

This Easter, as the weather warms and the spring air beckons, let’s make the effort to “look out the window” to see where the risen Christ has moved beyond restrictive walls to invite us to join in new life. With whom might he be conversing at the Drive-in worship? Will he sit with Cleo-o in the park, and greet those who spend time there? Will he stroll through the neighborhood around the church, reaching out with a smile and a kind word? Are we willing to follow him?

In this Easter season, do we dare to be caught unawares? Where will we find God at work? Will we brave being led into wonder and unexpected encounters?

I hope so!

Lynn

At Home with the WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary www.rca.org/athome

April 1st – April 30th.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Easter Sunday | 16. Acts 4:5-12 |
| 2. Acts 4:32-35 | 17. Psalm 23:1-4 |
| 3. Psalm 133 | 18. Psalm 23:5-6 |
| 4. 1 John 1:1-4 | 19. 1 John 3:16-18 |
| 5. 1 John 1:5-2:2 | 20. 1 John 3:19-24 |
| 6. John 20:19-23 | 21. John 10:11-18 |
| 7. John 20:24-31 | 22. Fourth Sunday of Easter |
| 8. Second Sunday of Easter | 23. Acts 8:26-31 |
| 9. Acts 3:12-19 | 24. Acts 8:32-40 |
| 10. Psalms 4:1-3 | 25. Psalm 22:25-31 |
| 11. Psalms 4:4-8 | 26. 1 John 4:7-16 |
| 12. 1 John 3:1-3 | 27. 1 John 4:17-21 |
| 13. 1 John 3:4-7 | 28. John 15:1-8 |
| 14. Luke 24:36-48 | 29. Fifth Sunday of Easter |
| 15. Third Sunday of Easter | 30. Acts 10:44-48 |

Prayer for the Church

On Wednesdays at noon for a half hour, the sanctuary is open for a weekly time of unstructured prayer the life and future of First Church. You are welcome to stay as long or as little as you have time for. If you are unable to be present physically, then join us by praying for the church wherever you are.

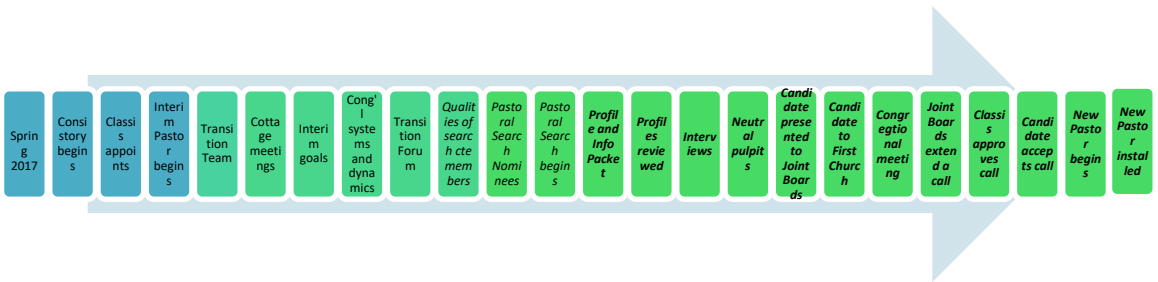
Liturgists

If you have ever wanted to help lead worship as a liturgist, please speak with Lynn Carman Bodden, Sue Vincent-Cox or a member of the Elders.

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 Avenue in Albany. Anyone can join us starting starting at 12:15 pm and stay until you wish to leave. We all pay for our own. Contact Donna E. Schultz at deschultz07@aol.com

TRANSITION UPDATE



Since our March “Family” article, the Transition Team has been diligently at work. We have taken the Core Values identified by the group which gathered on March 25 and posted them in the lobby. You might use these Core Values to lift prayers of thanksgiving to God for the ways the congregation is already living them out, and prayers for guidance on what the church yet may do.

- Community Outreach: Mission from this location
- Discipleship: What is God doing in our lives?
- Diversity: Welcome statement
- Fellowship: Congregational care and member relations
- History and Reformed Tradition: 1642-Present
- Worship: Form, preaching, music
- Youth

On March 18, we gathered in Zimmerman Hall to delve deeper into the congregation’s commitment to carry some of our dreams forward. Each of five table groups took one of the posters of dreams, where sticker dots designated individual passion for specific projects, and discussed together what they observed, and where the projects fit the core values. In different random groupings, they looked at what might be realistic based on current resources of members and attenders, and church assets. Lastly people “voted with their feet,” moving to the arena where they personally had the most passion to talk about next steps toward short- and long-term goals.

The Transition Team intends to invite young adults (20- and 30- somethings) to act as a focus group to take the ideas of Forum #2 and share/learn/dissect the information from their perspective. We hope they’ll then make some plans and investment in the church’s future!

The Transition Team has shared with Consistory their ideas about the composition of the Pastoral Search Committee. They did not identify individuals but listed desirable characteristics and skills necessary for a successful search, which Consistory approved of and added to. You are welcome to make your nominations for the search Committee now. (See insert) It is the hope that the Search Committee can be gathered and approved for presentation at the May congregational meeting.

STAFF CHANGES

God is at work helping to reshape the staff of First Church.

- This month, we welcome a new Social Media Communications Coordinator: Betsy Gorman. In past jobs, Betsy has helped develop website clarity and user friendliness, and found ways to coordinate various modes of social media so that information goes to the public in a timely, creative way. Currently working part-time for FOCUS Churches in a similar capacity, she is delighted to learn more about the history and ministry of First Church and to work with us to communicate needed information within the church and to reach out to a wider public. She will be working on contract for five hours a week, sometimes in our building and sometimes at home. Please welcome her when you meet her!
- Beginning on May 1, the Rev. Susan Vincent Cox will cut her hours back to half-time. Sue has been moved toward this change both by her sense of the needs of the church, now a smaller congregation, and by her personal sense of call to further develop her ministry as a counsellor, spiritual director and clearness committee leader. She will continue to be in worship twice a month and to preach four times a year, to lead bible study and other small groups, to offer pastoral care and counselling, and to work closely with staff and Leadership during the transition. One of Sue's goals is to resource and empower leaders within the congregation to guide small groups and new ministries.
- Soon the Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) will be named and begin its work. Please read the article about how the Interim Time is unfolding, and if you have ideas about people who would be strong members of the PSC, please speak with them to secure their willingness to serve, and then offer their names in nomination.

~ Lynn

The *NAT PHIPPS JAZZ TRIO* to play at April 8th Worship Service. Celebrate the Sunday after Easter

We welcome back the Nat Phipps Jazz trio on April 8th, the Sunday after Easter. Those who have heard the trio before in worship know we are in for a treat. The trio is well-known through-out the Capital District and joins us in worship several times each year.

The founder of the trio, jazz pianist, Nat Phipps, is originally from Newark, New Jersey, where he spent his early years playing in New York City and New Jersey. After moving to the Capital District, he became a respected educator and sought-after jazz pianist in this area. Joining him will be drummer, Pete Sweeney, performer, clinician, author of over twenty books on drumming, and drum teacher both privately and at many local schools and colleges. Completing the trio will be Chatham bassist, Pete Toigo, performer and teacher on bass and guitar, who also serves on the faculty of several local colleges and can be heard regularly performing with a wide variety of Jazz and Pop artist and groups. We are delighted that they can join us!

APRIL 8TH PULPIT SWAP

During each interim period I serve, my husband, the Rev. Peter JB Carman, and I like to swap pulpits. It's a way the churches I serve can meet him, and the ones he serves can spend a little time with me. Peter's a fine preacher, credited with helping two friends (one was me!) win preaching awards during divinity school. He continues to hone his craft and mine. Peter has served as Pastor at Emmanuel Friedens Church (American Baptist and United Church of Christ) in Schenectady since 2014. You are in for a treat you won't want to miss! ~ Lynn.

Weathervanes – STAY TUNED!



Join the Weathervanes on Wednesday, April 18th at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich. Dessert and beverages will be served. The program is to be announced. When information becomes available it will be in the Sunday bulletins.

Please contact Audrey Ming ([518-456-5485](tel:518-456-5485)) to let her know you are coming.

Festival choir will sing on April 22nd

Like to sing? Can't find the time to join the choir? Join the **Festival Choir!** No mid-week rehearsals! No Long-term commitment! Fun music! **Just come at 9:30AM on Sunday, April 22nd** to rehearse; then sing with the choir during worship. It's easy and it's fun! Talk to any choir member or Mary Bon for more information, or just join us on April 22nd. (If you let us know you're coming we can be sure to have enough music.)

FOOD PANTRY

In February, the First Church Food Pantry served 106 households, of whom six were new to us. On the seven days the pantry was open, one infant, 29 children, 89 adults under the age of 64, and 12 seniors received food. The Food Pantry is able to provide twice the number of meals required under Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) guidelines. In New York, 12% of the population is food insecure, or does not have enough money to meet basic nutritional needs.

HPNAP fills the gap for families living at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, recognizing costs of living in New York are often higher than in other states in the US.

We are grateful for our Food Pantry volunteers and for all whose gifts to First Church allow us to help our neighbors in need. If you would like to volunteer on Mondays or Wednesdays, please be in touch with the church office or with Lorraine Houk, our Food Pantry Coordinator, at the FOCUS Churches office 518-443-0460.

Our toiletries' collection for the Food Pantry this month: RAZORS, will be on Sunday, April 8th. As you are aware, the items listed for the coming months cannot be purchased with food stamps, and yet they are necessary for any household on a regular basis for good health and hygiene. Upcoming collection items are listed below. Thank you for reaching out to help your neighbors in need.

May 13 – Sanitary napkins

June 10 – Deoderant

Thank you to our volunteers and to all who support the work of the pantry with prayer and resources. And thank you for praying for the clients of the food pantry as well.

Overflow Shelter Dinners - THANK YOU!

A great big THANK YOU to all who contributed food or helped deliver the meals for our Overflow Shelter Dinners. From November through March we provided dinner for 20-25 men. If you were a part of this ministry heartfelt thanks! We couldn't have done it without you. If you would like to be part of this ministry for the next season, contact Mary Bon at 463-4449 or maryebon@verizon.net.

Fowler Summer Camp:

Registration for Camp Fowler in Speculator, NY is now open online at campfowler.org. Check out the Camp Fowler information in the lobby for details on the weeks available. Register early to secure your date!

Scholarships are available to First Church campers through the church and through the Albany Classis. If you would like to go to camp and need a scholarship, please speak with Pastor Lynn or Pastor Sue.

Volunteer Opportunities are available as well for those who would like to be a part of the Fowler family in a different way. Fowler needs you! Check out campfowler.org for details on how to get involved as a cabin counselor, kitchen helper and more.

First Church Readers Group will meet April 22nd.



The First Church Readers will meet April 22nd after the worship service to discuss *After Long Silence: A Memoir* by Helen Fremont

Upcoming books are:

- May – *Best to Laugh: A Novel* by Helen Fremont

First Church Readers Group is a group of First Churcher's who like to read and get together once a month to discuss a book they have been reading. Everyone is welcome to join us. Contact Mary Bon at maryebon@verizon.net or 463-4449 for more information or ideas for books.

Got a book you think would be an interesting read? We welcome your suggestions. Pass them on to Mary or one of our other book group members: Cindy Gillespie, Joeanna Brown, Jean Lamere, Caroline Wirth or Joyce Recene.

Drive-In Worship Services

Drive-In worship services begin Sunday, May 6, and will be held each Sunday at 9:00 am through September 4 with the exception of the last Sunday in June (June 24) when we will worship at 10 am in Clee Park. We gather in the Sheridan Avenue parking lot and in Clee Park for a half-hour worship service led from the outdoor pulpit.

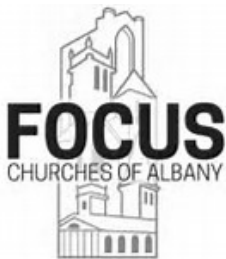
We thank the Drive-In Committee, its chair Marilyn Bradley, and the hard-working Drive-In volunteers who set up each Sunday morning and greet our Drive-In Worshipers with a cheerful hello - rain or shine. Drive-In Worship services also include special music and we depend on the generosity of guest musicians to supply music for our services.

CROP Hunger Walk

Sunday May 6

The 2018 Albany CROP Hunger Walk will be held on May 6, at the First Lutheran Church on Western Avenue in Albany. The CROP Hunger Walk is an annual community-wide event sponsored by Church Wide Service and organized by local volunteers to raise funds to help end hunger globally and locally.

The walk will begin at 1:30 pm, preceded by registration at 12:30 pm. Walkers can follow a 3-mile loop or a shorter one-mile loop. Last year First Church raised (\$1,075.00) with (10 walkers). Plan to walk yourself or sponsor another first church walker. Pick up a packet after worship in the lobby. Thank you to Patty Salsbury for being this year's coordinator.



Did you know you can support FOCUS Churches every time you make a purchase through AMAZON? Plus, you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Easy Breezy!

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support FOCUS Churches every time you shop, at no cost to you.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile, select FOCUS Churches as your charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. They will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation to FOCUS.

FOCUS Churches is sponsoring a Pancake Breakfast to benefit the FOCUS Interfaith Food Pantry on **Saturday, April 14th 8:00am – 11:00am**, at Delmar Reform Church located at 386 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY. Cost is: \$7.00 per person & Kids under 5 FREE. Please contact Lorraine @ FOCUS Food Pantry if you know a local business (or you yourself) might like to sponsor this event. We have a range of affordable sponsorship levels. lorraine@focuschurches.net 518- 443-0460

FOCUS has received \$2,500 from the Stewart's Holiday Match Program to use toward our work to feed the hungry. Thank you to all who contribute to this program

JOINING FIRST CHURCH

Have you been thinking about making your relationship with the First Church in Albany official? Come to explore what membership means to us, and to share what church membership means to you. All who are interested are invited to meet with Lynn Carman Bodden, Sue Vincent Cox and members of the Board of Elders to talk about how First Church works, what it means to be a part of the Reformed Church in America, and the significance and benefits of active church membership. Questions? Needs? Please speak with Lynn, Sue or one of the Elders. We hope to see you there!

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER UPDATE

We hope to move to an online newsletter beginning September 2018. If we do not have your email address, please send it to Valerie Williams at vwilliams@firstchurchinalbany.org. If you do not have an email address we will mail you a paper copy of the monthly newsletter.

Thank You

- To the Rev. Bodden and members of the First Church for your kind words and thoughtfulness during this difficult time. Virginia Giguere
- Rev. Peggy and Bethany Reformed Church and for their donation of 7 bags of groceries to the Food Pantry.

Memorials

- In celebration of the life of Harold MacMurry a gift has been received from a friend for the Lynn T. Joosten Fund
- In celebration of the life of Frankie L. Reid a gift has been received from Denise Lobdell for the Lynn T. Joosten Fund
- In memory of Frankie L. Reid a gift has been received from Steven E. Hoffman for the Drive-in Fund
- In memory of Frankie L. Reid a gift has been received from Wilma Sheffer for the Music Fund
- In memory of Frankie L. Reid a gift has been received from The Rev. LeRoy & Judith Suess for the General Fund
- In memory of Leona Murray a gift has been received from F. Sutler for the Drive-in Fund
- In memory of Leona Murray a gift has been received from The Rev. LeRoy Suess for the General Fund
- In memory of Leona Murray a gift has been received from Judith Utley-Suess for the General Fund

IN SYMPATHY: Please keep in prayer Frances Morton-Carr and her family. Frances's mother, Bessie Mae Carr, died on March 18, 2018.



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