

The First Church FAMILY

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

January 2018

WORSHIP:

- 7 **Baptism of Christ Sunday** (Communion)
10:30 AM Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
 Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Coffee and Conversation
- 14 **Second Sunday after the Epiphany**
10:30 AM Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
 Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Coffee and Conversation
Noon Cottage Meeting
- 21 **Second Sunday after the Epiphany**
10:30 AM Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
 Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Congregational Meeting and Pot-Luck Luncheon
- 28 **Second Sunday after the Epiphany**
10:30 AM Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
 Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Coffee and Conversation
 First Church Readers
Noon Changing the Conversation Revisited

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

*I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.
~ Isaiah 43.19*

Dear Members and Friends,

Happy New Year! Although you are receiving this greeting after January 1, the wishes that 2018 will be a year of blessing for First Church are no less heart-felt. They come with the hope of God shared in the words of Isaiah: that now will be a restorative and exciting time in church life.

Here are some of the NEW things we anticipate this year as the interim time continues:

You are invited to be a part of **prayer time**, each week, for the life and future of your church. On Wednesdays at noon for a half hour, the sanctuary will be open for you to come to share your petitions on behalf of First Church and to listen for God's response of comfort or challenge. You are welcome to join me and to stay as long or as little as you have time for. The prayer will be unstructured: no leaders, no set words or actions. This is simply time set aside to come into God's presence, and to pray for guidance. If you are unable to be present physically, then pray in place wherever you are. I have found that prayer time has a profound impact on churches during the interim time. I hope you will join us once, or weekly!

Next, I want you to know that Leadership, Consistory and the Joint Boards are working on **goals** for these days and months between settled pastors. While not yet finalized, the goals include a close examination of this church's mission, structure and program – in addition to the goal of engaging in and completing the search for the next pastoral leader. We will post the goals when they are agreed upon, and we will be enlisting your input and assistance in accomplishing them.

In other **transition work**, we will be completing the Cottage Meetings by the middle of this month. Many thanks to Shirley Bone, Tom Allison, Monica Marsh, Becky, Andy and Joline Mondore, Karen and Ray Van Epps and Jay Roehr for hosting these meetings. The Transition Team (Joeanna Brown, Ella Campbell, Monica Marsh and Jay Roehr) will be compiling what we have heard. And the *Changing the Conversations* group is looking forward to a reunion to follow-up on their work of articulating more clearly the church's vision/mission/purpose. We anticipate an all-church conversation to share all the learnings, and to begin a discussion of trends in the history of this church, current core values and hopes and realities about the future.

We'll probably try some new things with worship, and discover ways to deepen our relationships as a community. And we will make some plans on how to live into God's call for us in the surrounding neighborhood, and within our covenant as a FOCUS church.

It's an exciting time at First Church. God is with us creating new possibilities. I hope you'll be a part of it all!

Lynn

At Home with the WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary www.rca.org/athome
January 1st – January 31st

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Psalm 8 | 18. 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 |
| 2. Genesis 1:1-5 | 19. Mark 1:14-15 |
| 3. Psalm 29 | 20. Mark 1:16-20 |
| 4. Acts 19:1-7 | 21. Sunday Third Sunday after Epiphany |
| 5. Mark 1:4-11 | 22. Deuteronomy 18:15-20 |
| 6. Isaiah 60:1-6 | 23. Psalm 111:1-6 |
| 7. First Sunday after Epiphany | 24. Psalm 111:7-10 |
| 8. 1 Samuel 3:1-10 | 25. 1 Corinthians 8:1-6 |
| 9. 1 Samuel 3:11-20 | 26. 1 Corinthians 8:7-13 |
| 10. Psalm 139:1-6 | 27. Mark 1:21-28 |
| 11. Psalm 139:13-18 | 28. Sunday Fourth Sunday after Epiphany |
| 12. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 | 29. Isaiah 40:21-31 |
| 13. John 1:43-51 | 30. Psalm 147:1-6 |
| 14. Sunday Second Sunday after | 31. Psalm 147:7-11, 20 |
| 15. Jonah 3:1-5, 10 | |
| 16. Psalm 62:5-8 | |
| 17. Psalm 62:9-12 | |

Sign Up for Cottage Meetings with Pastor Lynn

YOU are invited to talk about your experience of your church, and to share your questions and hopes for the future. Please sign up!

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| • January 8 | 2 pm Van Epps' in Rensselaer |
| • January 14 | Noon Church Parlor |

Prayer for the Church

Beginning on Wednesday, January 3 at noon for a half hour, we will begin a weekly time of unstructured prayer the life and future of First Church. The sanctuary will be open, and 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.

Youth Group at Equinox

Before Christmas the youth group helped equinox Prepare meals for 10,000 people who are lonely, homebound, or homeless neighbors.

They learned first hand how to put their faith into action. *He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.* Micah 6:8



Power Plant and Microgrid

As you may be aware, Governor Cuomo announced the development of a microgrid to power Empire Plaza and surrounds. The project is slated to begin this year at the Sheridan Avenue power plant, by repurposing it to burn natural gas, and to utilize the steam plant nearby to power the microgrid. The Sheridan Avenue plant has been closed since the late 1990's due to the pollution it generated from burning garbage. Neighbors in Sheridan Hollow and Arbor Hill, as well as members and attenders of churches in this part of the city, have expressed concern about possible pollution from a gas-burning plant, and the efficacy of green power sources. We need to learn more, as residents, worshippers and stewards of God's creation. We are aware there will be differing opinions on this project, and want to be well-informed as a congregation.

In the coming months, the New York Power Authority will do an environmental review and hold public hearings on this project. Your Leadership Team has agreed to approach the Power Authority to offer First Church as a location for a public hearing. We will keep you apprised if we are chosen as a site, and if not, where the hearing or hearings will be. If you are interested in learning more, please speak with Jim Folts or Mike Dudek.

Thank You

THANK YOU to all who helped make First Church's Christmas season faithful, beautiful and welcoming: to all who participated in hanging the greens inside and out; to those who participated in worship services as liturgists, readers, and candlelighters; to our musicians: Mary Bon, the Choir and all instrumentalists for hard work and shared gifts; to Jeanne for all the social media announcement, eNotes and publicity and Valerie for printing the countless bulletins and managing details; to Larry and Jeff for changing banners, prepping behind the scenes and making sure we were warm and sidewalks were safe; to Sue for lovely prayers and good ideas; to all who helped in the Food Pantry, offering food, distributing toys and gifts, providing hats and mittens, welcoming strangers, to all who came to worship, bringing friends and family; to all leaders and officers for paying the bills and keeping our ministry on track; and to all who gave gifts, flowers, support and good cheer. First Church is blessed, and it is good to be among you. Lynn

A Special Thank You !

Thank you choir and soloists for your beautiful music during the Advent and Christmas season! And thank-you to all our volunteers who sang or played instruments at the late service on Christmas Eve. We appreciate your hard work and enthusiasm. We are fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated group of people enriching our worship together.

Weathervanes – Bingo for January Meeting



Join the Weathervanes on Wednesday, January 17th, at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. John Bowen will be leading the January meeting with bingo. Much fun to be had together during these long winter days! Please contact Audrey Ming (518-456-5485) to let her know you are coming.

Pot-luck Luncheon and Congregational Meeting

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21

Bring a dish to share and enjoy a meal together as we give thanks for the year past and look forward to the year ahead. The annual church budget for 2018 will be presented for discussion and vote.

First Church 2018 Directory

The First Church 2018 Directory is now printed and ready for all to take home! Please come to the Congregational Meeting on January 21. We will have a table set-up for you to pick up your Directory and photo prints. If you cannot make it, please contact Valerie Williams at the church office 518-463-4449.

Prayer Shawl Ministry



Join us in the parlor for Prayer Shawl Ministry, 3rd Monday of each month.

This month we will meet Jan 22nd due to church office being closed the 3rd Monday (Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday).

First Church Readers Group



The First Church Readers's next meeting is January 28h after church when we will be discussing *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 slave, Cora, escaping on a real Underground Railroad.

February' book is *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)

Other books we are considering are:

- *After long silence: a memoir* by Helen Fremont. Brought up Roman Catholic Fremont was told that her grandparents and relatives died in a bomb. As she journeys into her family's past she discovers her parents actually were Holocaust survivors who survived by burying their past under a cloak of silence.
- *The Beauty of Impermanence: A Woman's Memoir* by Frances Barnhart. Amazon says "in this captivating memoir, Barnhart takes us on her eight-decade journey as an artist, spiritual explorer, community organizer, interfaith minister, self-styled revolutionary, mother and grandmother."

If you have ideas for books for the reading group pass them on to Mary Bon at maryebon@firstchurchinalbany.org or [518-463-4449](tel:518-463-4449).

Christmas Shoppe – Thank You



On December 19th, First Church volunteers distributed toys to 56 children from our pantry families: ages 6 months to 16. Special thanks to all who brought in toys, set up the room, knitted the hats and mittens. Thank you also to the Downtown Business Improvement District who came and promoted our event to all Albany neighbors!

EMPTY Bowls

\$25

Reservation

HUNGER ACTION NETWORK OF NEW YORK STATE
& FOCUS CHURCHES OF ALBANY

WORKING TOGETHER TO END HUNGER

Sunday, February 4, 2018
from 12:30 to 2:30 pm



Reservations Requested:

Call FOCUS 518-443-0460 or HANNYS 518-434-7371

Location: Delmar Reformed Church 386 Delaware Ave. Delmar



FOCUS
CHURCHES OF ALBANY



**Hunger
Action
Network**
of New York State

*Getting to the
Root of the
Problem*

Thank You

A special thank you to all who helped in so many ways to make the Wassail Hour such a wonderful experience on Christmas Eve.

Food Pantry Collections

This month, January, we will be collecting **toilet paper**. Please bring your offering for our Food Pantry guests to church on Sunday, January 14 and lay it near the communion table. Toilet paper, and the items listed for the coming months cannot be purchased with food stamps, and yet they are necessary for any household on a daily basis for good health and hygiene. We will dedicate this offering during our time of prayer. Thank you for reaching out to help your neighbors in need.

- January 14 – Toilet paper
- February 11 – Soap
- March 11 – Razors
- April 8 – Shampoo
- May 13 – Sanitary pads

Our next Homeless Shelter Dinner is January 19th

The theme is “Chicken” and there’s a sign-up sheet is on the hospitality table. Bring your dishes (in disposable containers) to the church on Sunday or any day between 9 and 1. If your dish contains pork or pork products please note that on the container.

Questions? Call or email Mary Bon (518-463-4449) or maryebon@verizon.net. – and THANK-YOU!

Growing Green

This is part of an ongoing series on how we can “grow green.” Each month we’ll share a few tips on simple practices that we can do to increase our stewardship of God’s good earth.

- After Christmas stick your (real) tree into the snow a few feet from your feeder to provide a perch for birds waiting their turn. In the spring use the branches for mulch.
- When it is sunny open curtains or blinds on south facing windows in the morning and close them at night.
- Save your ashes from a wood-burning stove or fireplace to spread on your garden or outdoor plants. Ashes have many nutrients needed by plants including potassium, and they also help repel slugs.

Reminders from the Financial Secretary

- Remember to complete your Offering Pledge for 2017 if not already fulfilled.
- All 2017 contributions must be received by Sunday, January 7th, 2018.
- These contributions must be dated 2017.
- After January 8th, 2018, all contributions will be posted to 2018 regardless of the date on your check.

If you have any questions regarding this note or for any matters concerning your donations, please contact me at wsivaslian@nycap.rr.com or 518-495-6353.

Thank you.

Wayne Sivaslian, Financial Secretary

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 on December 7th 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.

FOCUS Churches of Albany

In December, the FOCUS Board informed the six FOCUS churches of the resignation of Executive Director Rev. James Ketcham. Richard Becker has agreed to serve as temporary Interim Director while the Board sorts out whether to seek a longer-term interim or a new Executive Director. All programs, ministries and volunteer opportunities are continuing, the budget has stabilized, and staff and leadership are optimistic about the future of FOCUS. Please keep all involved, including the Rev. Susan Vincent Cox, our one First Church representative, in your prayers during this time of transition.

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The deadline for the February issue of *FAMILY* is January 15.

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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.

Memorials

- In celebration of the life of Alberta Fox, a gift has been received from Denise Lobdell for the Lynn Joosten Scholarship & Clee Park Fund.
- In memory of Alberta & Henry Fox, a gift has been received from Shirley Bone for the Clee Park Fund.
- In memory of Alberta Fox, a gift has been received from Roger & Wanda Rogers for the Clee Park Fund.
- In celebration of the life of Alberta Fox, a gift has been received from Shirley Joosten for the Lynn Joosten Scholarship Fund.
- In memory of Alberta Fox, a gift has been received from The Rev. LeRoy Suess & Judith Utley-Suess for the Clee Park Fund.
- In memory of Alberta Fox, a gift has been received from Gary & Nancy Fox for the Clee Park Fund.
- In memory of Alberta & Henry Fox, a gift has been received from Edward & Katherine Monthie Fox for the Food Pantry.
- In memory of Alberta & Henry Fox, a gift has been received from Barbara & Edward King for the Clee Park Fund.

Thank You!

- The First Church staff would like to thank the church for the Price Chopper Christmas gift cards.

In Sympathy

Our prayers and sympathy go out Barbara Murray, Gary Fox & their families on the passing of their mother Alberta Fox on November 21, 2017.



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