



# First Church in Albany

Founded in 1642

## THE FAMILY

January 2021

*“I hope you will indulge me as I give my personal thanks to Rose. I had worked for many years, prior to coming to First Church, at a church in Troy. While some things are constant from church to church, each job is unique and training is imperative. I credit Rose with bringing me along and supporting me as I learned about all things First Church. I will be forever grateful.”*

~ Colleen Lais

### Rose Hunsberger For Such a Time as This

This is my first issue of The Family since I began in October as the office manager of First Church. At the helm of the publication for these months was Rose Hunsberger. Taking on the role of office assistant through the transition in the office, through this pandemic and closing of the building, through the changes to the Sheridan Lot management, through many challenges, Rose has served First Church well. She stepped up in many ways, using her gifts to keep the office running this year. Please join me in saying, “Thank You!” to Rose for her service.

~ Colleen Lais

### A Debt of Gratitude - Thoughts from a Member

With the passing of 2020 and arrival of 2021, I reflect on our congregation and I am filled with deep admiration. Our congregation continues to step forward and perform all manner of selfless contribution to First Church and the greater community.

Our Deacons, Elders and Trustees (and their various sub-committees)—continue in their calling to work on behalf of First Church and its greater community. Our Counters and Financial Secretary—perform with dedication and diligence to ensure church receipts are properly recorded and bank deposits are made. Our Choir—lend their voices to enhance our worship service. Our Children’s Worship—continue work to bring Christ to our children. Our Food Pantry Volunteers—perform a vital mission in support of providing food to our neighbors. Others labor tirelessly to get the “Word” out via drive-in and Zoom worships. Bible Study participation continues. Our Staff—go about their daily work with dedication and pride in keeping our doors open and the church operational. Our congregation and staff are what makes First Church—First Church. Our minister—who brings a vibrant energy serving God and our congregation.

If you think about the above items you cannot help but feel a debt of gratitude. Wishing God’s blessing on all for a safe and healthy New Year!

~ Anon

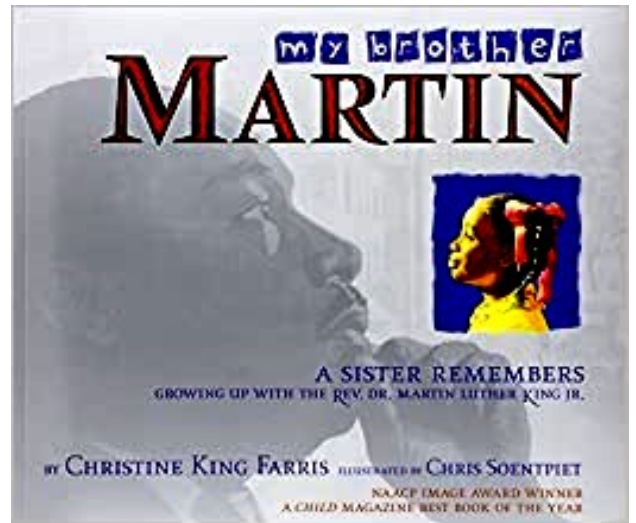
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## ***New StoryWalk® in January to honor MLK Day***

Monday, January 18th is Martin Luther King Jr. Day. To honor the holiday and the life that inspires it, we are presenting a StoryWalk® of the book **My Brother Martin: A Sister Remembers** by Christine King Farris (with illustrations by Chris Soentpiet). Martin Luther King Jr.'s older sister tells of the beginnings of her brother's journey, highlighting the importance of civil rights for all, as a young boy growing up in the segregated south.

Beginning Friday, January 15th, pages of the story will be laminated and spread out along the fence surrounding our church building for you to enjoy as a family. The StoryWalk® allows you to safely social distance, get some exercise and fresh air and learn about young Martin and how he changed the course of American Civil Rights.



*The StoryWalk® was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. StoryWalk® is a registered service mark owned by Ms. Ferguson.*



### **Congregational Meeting**

Our annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, January 24, 2021 via Zoom. The meeting will begin at 11:15am, immediately following the 10am Zoom Worship Service.

Included in topics for discussion will be the presentation of the approved 2021 Budget. All are encouraged to attend.

### **Pastor Chat**

#### **With Pastor Mashona**

On the first Thursday of each month at 6:30pm on a Zoom meeting, Pastor Mashona will cover a topic that has been suggested and then she will open a discussion. Connect with your First Church in Albany Family! Ask those questions you have been wanting to ask. The next chat is Thursday January 7th.

Email Pastor Mashona at  
mwatson@firstchurchinalbany.org for details.

### **Groups**



#### **Weather vanes**

No January Meeting  
from Audrey Ming

Due to uncertainty about the COVID situation we have canceled the meeting which would have taken place on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Some time in the future Pastor Walston will present a program on a trip she took to Ghana, but at as of now no future dates have been scheduled. We will keep you posted.



#### **Centering Prayer**

Centering Prayer is held each Wednesday at noon via Conference Call.

Dial in number: 425-436-6200.

Access code: 586376

Centering prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.



## ***From Pastor Mashona...***

Greetings in Christ,

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us...Hebrew 12:1*

The other day I had a conversation with Ned Monthie at the food pantry. Many of you know Ned. His parents were married in the chapel at First Church and he and his wife Kathie support the church in many quiet ways. Well, as we and others spoke, Ned began to share his experience as a coach. I listened with awe and thought, "that is what I desire."

You see, I consider my role as pastor to really be a coach. Coach Ned had the fortune of recounting his career as a coach of champions for several sports. However, when he began to recall his career as a swim coach, Ned beamed even brighter. He shared how one of his athletes went on to make the U.S. Olympic team. As a coach the memories still fill his heart with deep meaning.

As a pastor/coach, I am called to support you in running your race. For 2021, I will continue to encourage you to run the race set before you. I want to think of you and your growth as a runner for Christ.

For you 2021 field work, I have two questions:

1. Where are you in your relationship with God?
2. Is there anything you would like to work toward in your faith journey in 2021?

There are so many practices to aid in our development. We have several avenues of prayer. We have Christian Education that includes study and fellowship. We have opportunities for mission and evangelism. I encourage your curiosity and willingness to try spiritual practices that we may have avoided in the past. However, this is your time.

Blessings,

Mashona

## ***Bible Readings for January 2021***

Christmas and Epiphany—Year B	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
Holy Name of Jesus—1/1/2021 New Year's Day— 1/1/2021	Numbers 6:22-27 Ecclesiastes 3:1-13	Psalm 8	Galatians 4:4-7 Revelation 21:1-6a	Luke 2:15-21 Matthew 25:31-46
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Christmas Day— 1/3/2021	Jeremiah 31:7-14	Psalm 147:12-20	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1:(1-9), 10-18
Epiphany of the Lord—1/6/2021	Isaiah 60:1-6	Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
Baptism of the Lord—1/10/2021 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	Genesis 1:1-5	Psalm 29	Acts 19:1-7	Mark 1:4-11
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany— 1/17/2021	1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)	Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18	1 Corinthians 6:12-20	John 1:43-51
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany— 1/24/2021	Jonah 3:1-5,10	Psalm 62:5-12	1 Corinthians 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-20
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany— 1/31/2021	Deuteronomy 18:15-20	Psalm 111	1 Corinthians 8:1-13	Mark 1:21-28
<i>These readings come from the Revised Common Lectionary. <a href="http://www.lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu">www.lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu</a></i>				



## Mission

### *First Church still seeking someone to organize meals provided for the Emergency Overflow Shelter this winter*

For eleven years Mary Bon organized and coordinated First Church Meals for the Emergency Overflow Homeless Shelter. Mary stepped down in April, and now with winter upon us, it's important that we find an individual to fill these shoes. The Shelter is still operating in spite of COVID and opened in mid-November. We are looking for someone to coordinate this ministry and additional people willing to provide a dish and help deliver the food.

Please prayerfully consider volunteering for this vital role. **Contact Pastor Mashona Walston at the church office 518-463-4449 if you are interested coordinating or helping with this ministry. Your gift will be providing an example of the love of Jesus to those who need it at a difficult time in their lives.**

*The Emergency Overflow Shelter at First Lutheran Church on Western Ave. in Albany, sponsored by the Capital Area Council of Churches, is a "shelter of last resort" when other shelters are full or for those not eligible for other shelters because of addictions or mental health issues. It is open during the winter months and turns nobody away.*

**From FOCUS Churches:** A favorite annual event has been postponed. The 2021 **Empty Bowls to Go** event, originally scheduled for Sunday, February 7, 2021 will not happen as planned. The FOCUS Churches website promises details to follow. The Family will keep you posted.

## Christmas Eve Offering

Envelopes continue to arrive each day in the mail for the Christmas Eve Offering. We would like to thank you on behalf of Dr. Bob Paeglow of Koinonia Primary Care on Clinton Ave. in Albany.

The Mission of Koinonia Primary Care, according to their website, is to provide compassionate, high-quality, patient-centered healthcare, in a faith-based environment, to the underserved in New York's Capital Region.

[www.koinoniapc.org](http://www.koinoniapc.org)



## Albany Crop Hunger Walk 2021

The pandemic crisis of 2020 has really put the issue of food insecurity in the spotlight. All over the country, pantries and food banks have seen the demand for food assistance increase. One way to help is to consider joining our team for the 40<sup>th</sup> annual Albany CROP Walk 2021. This year's walk is being held on Sunday, May 2. Last year the CROP Walk benefited the FCIA Food Pantry directly with a donation of \$1000.00. The First Church is currently looking for a Team Coordinator and participants for the 2021 walk. The Albany Crop Hunger Walk website has lots of information and support for teams. Check it out at [www.crophungerwalk.org/2021/event/albanyny](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/2021/event/albanyny).

**UPDATE:** On Monday, January 4th, it was announced that due to the Covid 19 situation, the CROP Hunger Walk will again be a virtual event. Watch for more details in The Family, February edition.

Participation in the walk is one of the criteria used in determining awards. Represent FCIA and our FCIA Pantry this year! Please email Erica Bliss for more information at [ericazbliss@netscape.com](mailto:ericazbliss@netscape.com).

## Update from our Trustees

### Sheridan Ave. Parking Lot FCIA Parking, Inc.



The Sheridan Avenue parking lot was acquired by First Church in the 1970s when the property was auctioned by the City of Albany for unpaid taxes. (The Strand Theatre formerly stood on the site.) The lot became a reliable revenue generator for First Church and a convenient location for drive-in worship services and congregant parking. The revenue stream stopped in spring 2020 with the temporary collapse of the parking business. Maiden Lane Parking of Albany, Inc., ceased rental payments to the church and ended all its parking operations in the city on November 1. The First Church Board of Trustees authorized an attorney to file a claim in Supreme Court, Albany County, seeking payment of unpaid rent and interest. The defendant has not responded to the claim. The board will take additional steps as appropriate.

Since summer 2020, the Board of Trustees and its Parking Committee (David Bradley, Ned Monthie, and Wayne Sivaslian, with Treasurer Ray Van Epps and President Jim Folts, *ex officio*) have been actively exploring opportunities for resuming operation of the parking lot in order to generate needed revenue for the church. Three proposals have been received and their merits carefully considered by the committee and the board. Because the parking business in downtown Albany has not fully recovered, all of the proposals project revenue to the church that would initially be much less than the rental payments by Maiden Lane.

In order to contract for services relating to parking lot operation and to reduce tax liability, the Board of Trustees has voted to form a for-profit corporation, "FCIA Parking, Inc.," which has been registered with the New York Department of State. The corporation is solely owned by First Church. All profits, after operating expenses and federal and state taxes, will go to the church. Directors and officers of the corporation have been recruited from the church membership, to whom the Board of Trustees expresses its gratitude. (Thanks also to Colleen for designing the nice logo!)

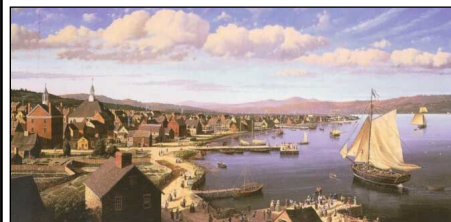
The Parking Lot Committee expects that the Sheridan Avenue parking lot will again be a for-pay lot by spring of this year. Payments will be electronic (credit or debit card at kiosks). First Church members and visitors will continue to park for free in designated areas. The lot will be fully open for drive-in worship services. The Board of Trustees thanks the congregation of First Church for its interest and patience while a plan for renewed operation of the parking lot is being developed and finalized. Questions and comments may be directed to any member of the Parking Lot Committee.

Jim Folts, President  
Board of Trustees

## Congregation

### Gift of Art and History

Something to look forward to when we are able to gather again in our building will be a gift from member Steve Hoffman. Steve has generously donated a numbered print by a local artist, that will be hung in the lobby above the staircase as you enter through the Sheridan Lot entrance.



**The Return of the Experiment** by Len Tantilillo was painted in 1994. The original hangs a short walk away at 66 South Pearl Street in the lobby of the KeyBank Building. The painting is said to depict the city as the Experiment, only the second American ship to visit the Orient, returned to Albany in the summer of 1787.

Learn more about the Return of the Experiment at [www.exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/loc/experiment.html](http://www.exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/loc/experiment.html).

Read a recent Times Union article about the artist at [www.timesunion.com/news/article/Grondahl-Len-Tantilillo-a-prolific-painter-of-15803055.php](http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Grondahl-Len-Tantilillo-a-prolific-painter-of-15803055.php).

## Music News

### *A Message from Mary Bon, Minister of Music at First Church*

Dear First Church friends,

At the end of January 2021, I will be leaving my position as your Minister of Music at First Church in Albany after almost thirty-nine years.

It has been an honor and joy to work at First Church with a great choir, talented soloists, and a truly supportive congregation. It has been especially rewarding to work collaboratively with many gifted and creative pastors: to plan worship services together; to make worship services that are a unified whole far greater than the sum of the parts; and to work together to sustain, grow, and enrich the diverse ministries to which we are called.

I have also been privileged to work with the many talented and supportive staff who have rounded out our team. It has been a special joy to play the First Church organ both in Worship Services, and concerts; to lead the congregation in hymns and accompany the choir; and to work with many talented soloists and guest musicians.

Thank you for your constant love, encouragement and support as I served with you and for you to the glory of God. I pray that through my music ministry, you have been blessed with a deeper faith, a stronger sense of community, and a greater knowledge of the God we all love and serve.

I wish you all the best and look forward to following your progress. I will miss you greatly.

Mary



***“Thank you  
for your  
constant love,  
encouragement  
and support as I  
served with you  
and for you to  
the glory of  
God.”***

## Schedule of Worship

- Jan. 10, 2021 — 1st Sunday after Epiphany: Baptism of the Lord, 10am Zoom Worship
- Jan. 17, 2021 — 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, 10am Zoom Worship
- Jan. 24, 2021 — 3rd Sunday after Epiphany, 10am Zoom Worship
- Jan. 31, 2021 — 4th Sunday after Epiphany, 10am Zoom Worship

For other events at First Church in Albany, please check the calendar on our website.

Outdoor services will resume in the Spring of 2021!

## Zoom Worship

FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

Join us  
on Sunday,  
at 10am on Zoom

Please follow the Zoom link  
on the website or call the  
church office for more  
information. We will be  
happy to help!

For those who prefer listening via  
conference call, the number is  
(425) 436-6200, Access code:  
586376

[www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org)  
518-463-4449

## *A Message from the Financial Secretary*

### *A New Convenient Option For Submitting Your 2021 Pledge*

- Save Time ● Save Mailing & Envelope Expenses  
● Totally Safe and Confidential

Simply email me, First Church's Financial Secretary, with your 2021 Pledge at [wsivaslian@nycap.rr.com](mailto:wsivaslian@nycap.rr.com)

Please include your: Name & Address

Phone # & Email Address

Member # (if available)

Your 2021 Pledge Amount indicating Weekly, Monthly, or Annually

### **Thank You**

So far through  
January 4, 2021  
We received 34  
pledges totaling  
\$98,320.  
83% of our goal.

It is that easy! I will send you an acknowledgement of receipt for your records. Should you have questions about emailing your pledge or any other financial questions, please call me at 518-495-6353 or email me at [wsivaslian@nycap.rr.com](mailto:wsivaslian@nycap.rr.com).

Thank You.

Wayne Sivaslian, Financial Secretary

### *Offering Envelopes*

Offering envelopes were mailed, to those who have historically used them, the last week in December. If you have not received your envelopes by the end of this week, please contact the office at [fciaofficemanager@gmail.com](mailto:fciaofficemanager@gmail.com) or call your office manager Colleen Lais at 518-463-4449. Her hours are Monday through Friday 8:30am-4:30pm. Anyone who would like to inquire about getting envelopes for the first time is encouraged to contact our financial secretary Wayne Sivaslian at [wsivaslian@nycap.rr.com](mailto:wsivaslian@nycap.rr.com) or call him at 518-495-6353.

### *Why Our Pantry Statistics Are Important*

Each year, pantry administrators are asked to report statistics for the year prior. These numbers are used to determine assistance afforded each pantry through the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP). HPNAP provides state and federal funds to pantries like ours at First Church so that we can better provide healthy food to those in need. They look at various things like how many seniors or children we serve, as well as the overall total of households. See below the FCIA Pantry 2020 Statistics.

	2020												Total	Mthly Ave
Total Individuals Served	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC		
Infants (0 - 3)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Children (4-17)	38	39	31	17	3	9	22	20	24	14	27	28	272	23
Adults (18-64)	147	155	133	94	60	58	52	68	93	67	82	96	1105	92
Elderly (65+)	14	16	17	16	15	15	11	16	16	12	14	16	178	15
Households	142	133	125	85	61	63	72	68	84	65	81	87	1066	89

If statistics are your thing, let us know. Email [fciaofficemanager@gmail.com](mailto:fciaofficemanager@gmail.com) or call the office at 518-463-4449, and we will email you the FCIA Food Pantry statistics from 2016 through the present. If you are a contributor to our pantry efforts, either financially or through food donations, these are the people your generosity is directly affecting and we are grateful for your support. If you are a pantry volunteer, we are always grateful for your efforts, but in a year like no other, the sacrifice of your time is doubly appreciated. May God continue to bless this ministry with the faithfulness of the First Church Congregation!



## Pantry Stats For December 2020

Food Pantry  
Coordinator Lorraine  
Houk wishes a Happy  
New Year to all. She  
reports the following  
numbers for December:

Households— 87  
Children—28  
Adults—96  
Senior—16

We were open 9 days in  
December and served  
2,520 meals.

Thanks to our faithful  
volunteers and to all  
who donated in  
December and  
throughout the year!

## January FCIA Pantry Requests

As always, but  
especially in these  
times, our food pantry  
plays a vital role for so  
many. You may help  
this January by  
providing the following:

- Prayers for safety  
for guests and  
volunteers
- 1lb. Bags of white  
rice
- Canned fruits,  
regular and low  
sugar options are  
both welcome.

Donations may be  
brought to the church  
office entrance M-F,  
8:30am-4:30pm.

## January Birthdays



*Happy Birthday, to all!*

- 1 Virginia Giguere
- 5 Angelika Harrington
- 6 Joelson McClement
- 11 Philip LaBatte
- 12 Chip Welge
- 13 Charles Parmalee
- 14 Gertrude Dorn
- 18 Harriet Stockhoff
- 21 Katherine Monthie
- 23 Rev. Carl Hiemstra
- 24 Frances Carr-Morton
- 29 Barbara Stamas

## To Keep In Your Prayers

Linda and Bill

Jane Ward & Family

Joline Mondore & Family

Judith Suess & Le Roy

Amy Carr (Gillespie Family)

Kathy Stallmer (Monthie Family)

Brown Family

Pagery Family



Prayer Concerns? If you would like your church family to join you in prayer, please share your concerns and joys with us. Call the office at 518-463-4449 or email [fciaofficemanager@gmail.com](mailto:fciaofficemanager@gmail.com). We will put them in a future edition of the Family.

**Note of thanks:** The Staff and Leadership would like to thank our First Church family for all of the heartfelt Christmas greetings we received throughout the Advent and Christmas Season. We would love to share your sentiments but there were just so many. Know that we felt your love and encouragement and return that to you tenfold!

**Deadline for the Family:** Please submit information for the Family by January 20<sup>th</sup> for our February issue. We ask that you keep your submissions concise so that we can include each request. Thank you!



FOUNDED IN 1642  
"OLDEST PULPIT IN AMERICA"

## First Church in Albany

110 North Pearl St., Albany NY 12207  
518-463-4449

[www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org)