

The First Church **FAMILY**

The First Church in Albany · Founded in 1642
Reformed Church in America
January 2019

WORSHIP:

- 6 **The Epiphany of Our Lord (Communion)**
10:30 am Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
 Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Coffee and Conversation
- 13 **First Sunday after the Epiphany – Baptism of Our Lord**
10:30 am Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching
 Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Coffee and Conversation
- 20 **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
- 27 **Third 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

From the Pastor

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

~Matthew 2.10

The first interim congregation I served in New York found itself of a January exactly where this one is in the search process. The search committee had done its work, producing a profile to accurately described their church. As they readied to receive the paperwork of candidates, they knew they wanted something striking to help their profile stand out from other churches - so they designed a brochure. They had an epiphany in that season! Using a picture of three wise men and camels they printed their brochure with this catchy title:

THEY WERE SEARCHING. WE ARE SEARCHING, TOO!

God led them to the right person for that phase of the church's life, just as God had led the magi to a stable in Bethlehem and safely home.

In this Epiphany Season of 2019, your search committee embarks on the next phase of the journey of the pastoral search. They will read and pray, interview and pray, listen to sermons preached from other pulpits, pray more, and with God's guidance, select the right person to introduce to the Joint Boards, to you, and to the Albany Classis.

It is a delicate process to make the right match between any congregation and a new minister, and these nine people - your fellow First Church members, your friends and companions in faith - need your support and prayers.

Pray that the path will be clear. Pray that the light of God will shine in and between them and the candidates they encounter. Pray that all involved in the search process will listen carefully to their own hearts and to one another. Pray they will speak the truth in love to each other. Pray for stamina for the journey, and patience for all of us waiting to hear good news. Pray for the supervisors who guide, and for the ministries of the church that will continue, and for this city and this world in need of the love and hope this congregation has been given to share. Pray without ceasing as the search goes on....and know it will come to an end!

In this season of Epiphany, may you be blessed by a powerful sense of the living God in our midst, bearing light, revealing mysteries, offering new openings for us to seek and find the Christ, and to follow Christ's way.

Lynn

AT HOME WITH THE WORD

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

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 | 18. John 2:1-5 |
| 2. Psalm 72: 10-14 | 19. John 2:6-11 |
| 3. Ephesians 3:1-6 | 20. Second Sunday after Epiphany |
| 4. Ephesians 3:7-12 | 21. Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 |
| 5. Matthew 2:1-12 | 22. Psalm 19:1-6 |
| 6. Epiphany of the Lord | 23. Psalm 19:7-14 |
| 7. Isaiah 60:1-6 | 24. 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 |
| 8. Isaiah 43:1-7 | 25. 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 |
| 9. Psalm 29 | 26. Luke 4:14-21 |
| 10. Acts 8:14-17 | 27. Third Sunday after Epiphany |
| 11. Luke 3:15-17 | 28. Jeremiah 1:4-8 |
| 12. Luke 3:21-22 | 29. Jeremiah 1:9-10 |
| 13. First Sunday after Epiphany | 30. Psalm 71:1-6 |
| 14. Isaiah 62:1-5 | 31. 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 |
| 15. Psalm 35:5-10 | |
| 16. 1 Corinthians 12:1-3 | |
| 17. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 | |

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 Thursdays starting at 12:15 and stay until you wish to leave. We all pay for our own. Contact Donna E. Schultz at descultz07@aol.com or 518.429.1255.



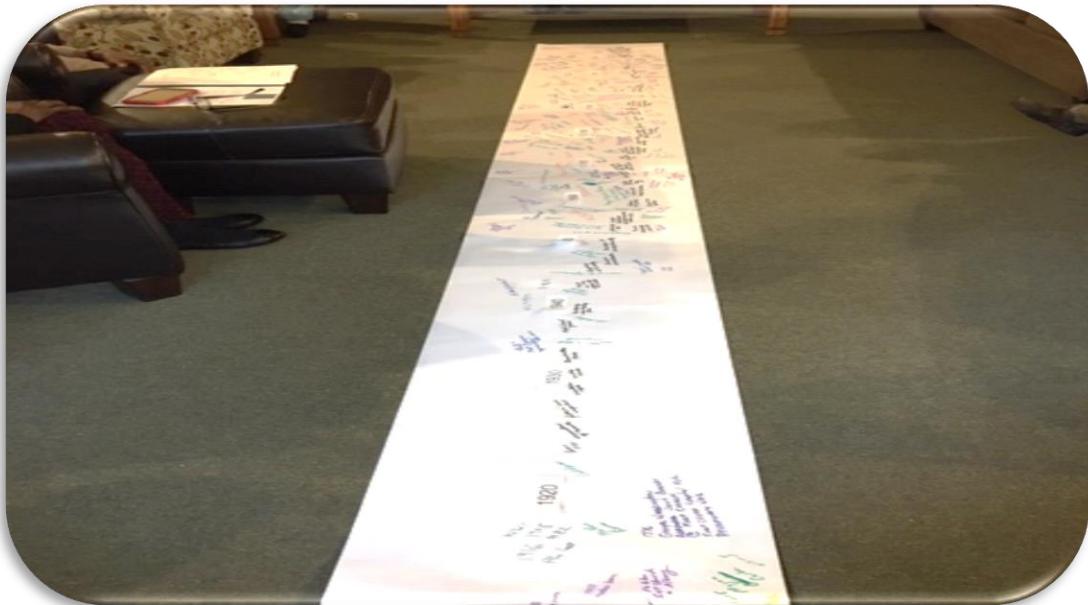
INTERGENERATIONAL RETREAT AT FOWLER

This past October, on the weekend of the 26-28th, more than 20 of our First Church members met up at Camp Fowler for a church retreat. The retreat started Friday evening and ended Sunday after worship at 11 am. Folks attending ranged from 1 to 89 years of age. We had a great time playing games, taking walks, laughing, working on a time line of our faith journeys, doing a craft project, watching the birds, sitting by the fire, and reflecting together on some of our lectionary bible texts for November. We even did a meditation where we acted like a bunch of geese. What was most enjoyable was communing with God in this beautiful place and getting to know one another much more. We hope to do this again next year and we hope you will join us!!

We want to thank those who planned and led this retreat: Becky Hudak, Jay Reohr, Ella Campbell, and Pastor Sue Cox.



The time line of our faith journey that now hangs in church lobby.



MOTHER'S GROUP AT FIRST CHURCH

In mid-November three mothers and I met to discuss the idea of a Mother's Group at First Church. This "great" idea came from one of the moms who attended. Mothers (and fathers) juggle a lot these days often working full-time. Some mothers are single-parenting, some are working more than one job and some have long commutes to work. Those who met felt it would be most helpful to meet once a month to support one another, share ideas, and have bible meditation/prayer together.

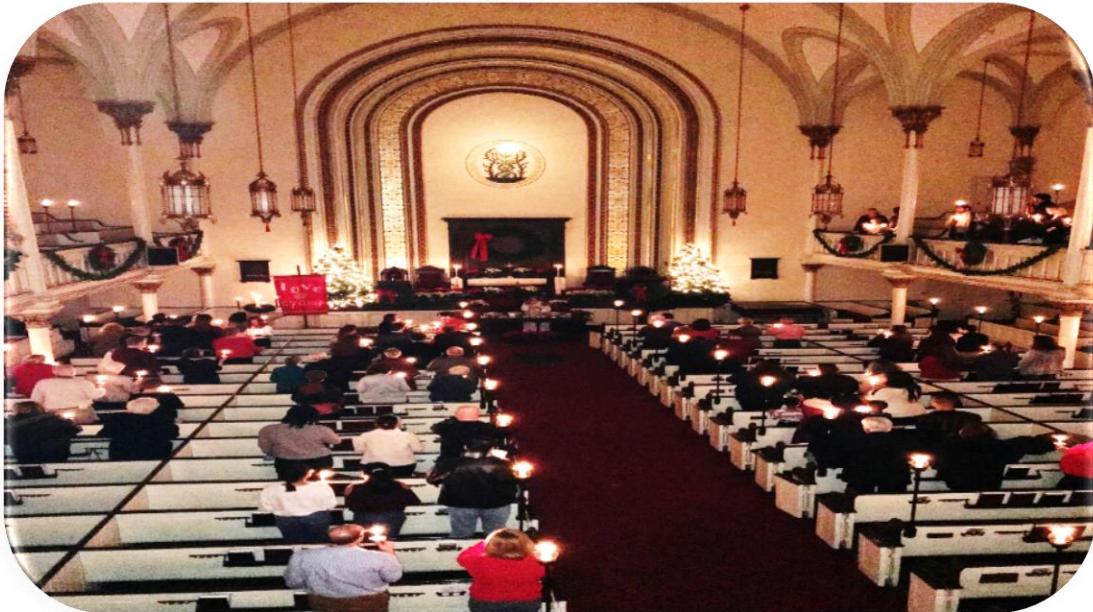
Still in the planning stages the next group will meet on Sunday Jan 6th at 1pm in the Parlor. Additional ideas include: inviting both those who attend church regularly and those who do not attend First Church, having lunch for moms and their children before group and having regular childcare.

This group would include moms who are actively parenting kids from infancy to late adolescents/early adulthood. Please join us

We will send out more information as this group forms.

In Christ's Peace
Rev. Sue Vincent Cox

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP SERVICE



HOMELESS SHELTER DINNERS FRIDAY JANUARY 11TH

Thank you to all who contributed food and time to our Dinners for the Overflow Homeless Shelter so far. Our next dinners are:

Friday, January 11th Meatloaf and Hamburger dishes
Friday, February 8th Chicken Dishes

CAN YOU contribute a main dish, side, bread or dessert for 6-8 people?

Sign-up at the Hospitality Table or drop Mary an email.

Bring your dishes to church any day from 8:30-1:00 pm, Thursday evening from 6:30 - 7:30 pm or Friday before noon. We'll deliver them to the shelter on Friday afternoon.
USE NON-RETURNABLE DISHES and clearly label all pork dishes. Thanks!

Questions or sign up? Contact Mary Bon 518-463-4449 (church,) 518-339-5460 (cell), or maryebon@verizon.net.

The Emergency Overflow Shelter at First Lutheran Church 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. First Church has been providing meals each month for the Shelter since 2008.

WEATHERVANES - HELPING IMMIGRANTS



Join the Weathervanes on Wednesday, January 16th at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich. Dessert and beverages will be served. Guest speaker Sharon Alley will present the topic "How is Albany Helping Immigrants?"

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

POT-LUCK LUNCHEON AND CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

On Sunday, January 20 after worship, please come to share a potluck meal and to receive the 2019 church budget. We will also have a chance to visit with Jeff Curry and to thank him for his work for First Church.

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



First Church Readers meets January 27th

Like to read? First Church Readers are a group of people who love to read. Each month we read a different book and get together on a Sunday to discuss it. We'll meet on January 27th to discuss *A Dictionary of Mutual Understanding: A Novel* by Jackie Copleton. It follows a Japanese family from prewar Japan through the utter horror of August 9, 1945 to the struggle to adapt to post war life. Explore themes of heartbreak, guilt and family secrets, and get a glimpse into Japanese culture and traditions before, during and after WW II.

February - *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman – A simultaneously hilarious and heartbreaking story of a young woman learning to find herself.

March - *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown, noted preacher, theologian and author explores darkness and light. Why is light associated with goodness and darkness with evil? “How to find our footing in times of uncertainty and giving us strength and hope to face all of life’s challenging moments.”

April - *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry* by Fredrik Backman –a tale of the touching relationship between a grandmother and the granddaughter for whom she cares - by turns heartwarming and heartrending.



FOOD PANTRY, TOYS FOR TOTS & CHRISTMAS SHOPPE



Our November statistics reveal that First Church's Food Pantry provided 4086 meals to 227 people in just seven days! We are awed by the commitment of our volunteers and staff, and grateful to your gifts and several supporting grants that allow us to offer this critical ministry in Christ's name.

The Food Pantry was busy in November and December! Not only was food provided to many of our neighbors, but also Thanksgiving dinner fixings, Christmas Toys, books, hats and mittens were given to 48 children from 17 families.

REMINDERS FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- Remember to complete your Offering Pledge for 2018 if not already fulfilled.
- All 2018 contributions must be received by Sunday, January 13, 2019.
- These contributions must be dated 2018.
- After January 13, 2019, all contributions will be posted to 2019 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



FOCUS

CHURCHES OF ALBANY

The ministries of the FOCUS Churches have received \$14,318.90 in grants from the following generous donors:

Bruderhof Community to the Regional Food Bank for Pantry

First United Methodist Church monthly donation to the Regional Food Bank for pantry

David Hannay to Regional Food Bank for Pantry

Capital Area Council of Churches/CROP Walk for the Breakfast and Pantry

FOCUS COMBINED WORSHIP SERVICE ON FEBRUARY 3, 2019.

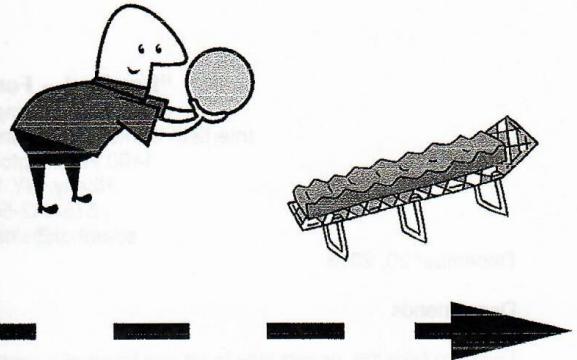
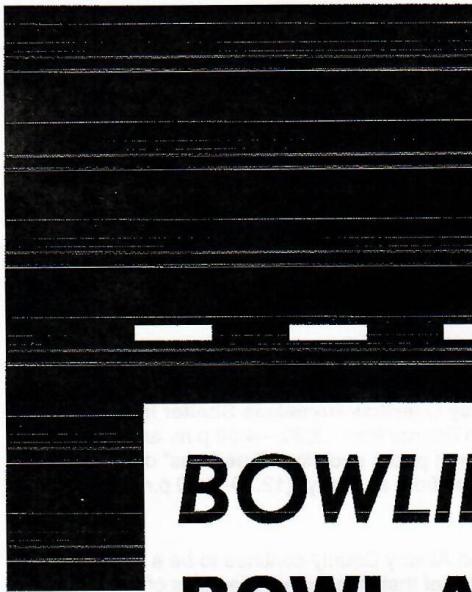
As one of the six-member churches of FOCUS we have made a commitment to worship together with the other covenant congregations several times each year. On Sunday, February 3rd, we will join the other FOCUS congregations in worship at Emmanuel Baptist Church – 275 State Street, Albany, NY 12210. Worship service starts at 10:00 am.

2019
EMPTY BOWLS
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 3RD
Delmar Reformed Church
386 Delaware Ave, Delmar, NY
12:30-2:30

HUNGER ACTION NETWORK OF NEW YORK STATE
& FOCUS CHURCHES OF ALBANY
WORKING TOGETHER TO END HUNGER

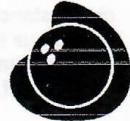
All are welcome!
\$25 for a beautiful handmade bowl, homemade soups & desserts.
Reservations Requested: hungeractionnys.org

SAVE THE DATE!



BOWLING FOR BEDS

BOWL A THON



TO BENEFIT

EMERGENCY HOMELESS SHELTER

All Ages Welcome—Children, Youth, Adults

SATURDAY—FEBRUARY 9, 2019

12:30—4:30 P.M.



Del Lanes

4 Bethlehem Court in Delmar

If you would like to receive a registration packet for your group, please contact Rev. Sandy Damhof, Protestant Campus Ministry, Interfaith Center at University at Albany—CC#346, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222. You may also call or email your request to Email: sdamhof@albany.edu Phone: 518-442-4491. We need to hear from you NO LATER THAN JANUARY 2 TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE - ROOM IS LIMITED SO ACT NOW!!!!

THE COLLECTIVE BRASS IS COMING!

Concert, March 10th at First Church

A high energy Brass Quintet, The Collective Brass performs a broad range of exciting and virtuosic brass music. Its members come from the finest professional performing ensembles including the West Point Band.



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. THANK YOU

Thank you, choir and soloists, for your beautiful music during the Advent and Christmas season! We appreciate your hard work and enthusiasm. We are fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated group of people enriching our worship together.

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 candle lighters; to our musicians: Mary, the Choir and all instrumentalists for hard work and shared gifts; to Betsy for all the social media announcement and publicity, and Valerie for the preparation and printing the countless bulletins and managing details; to Larry 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 Kenny and 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.



2018
Hanging
of the
Greens
Team

THANK YOU!

- The First Church staff would like to thank the church Trustees for the Price Chopper Christmas gift cards.
- To Ray, Kim, Wayne, Audrey, Cindy, Joyce and David for working to make the financial affairs of the church to run smoothly.
- To the staff and volunteers in Children and Worship and Crib & Crawl for nurturing our children's spiritual life.

MEMORIALS

- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Kathleen Walsh for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Jane Gerwin for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Darlene Wurtemberger for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Gerald & Mary Ann Marmillo for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Margaret M. Velie for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Anne P. Story for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Michael & Christine Antonio for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Betty Pierce for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Dennis & Geri Wysocki for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Rosemary T. Koveleski for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Chip & Sara Welge for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Cindy Page for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Williams L. Staats**, a gift has been received from Kathleen Walsh for the Music Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Lynne Hiemstra**, a gift has been received from Denise Lobdell for the Lynne T. Joosten Scholarship Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Leigh Walker**, a gift has been received from Wilma Sheffer for the Clee Park Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Leigh Walker**, a gift has been received from Denise Lobdell for the Clee Park Fund

- In celebration of the life of **Leigh Walker**, a gift has been received from The Rev. LeRoy & Judith Suess for the Clee Park Fund
- In celebration of the life of **Leigh Walker**, a gift has been received from Wanda Raymond for the Clee Park Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Thora Paton**, a gift has been received from Michael & Deborah Paris for the Youth Program.
- In celebration of the life of **Thora Paton**, a gift has been received from Denise Lobdell for the Communities Ministries Fund.
- In celebration of the life of **Thora Paton**, a gift has been received from Chip & Sara Welge for the Communities Ministries Fund.

**THE DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY'S ISSUE OF THE *FAMILY* IS
JANUARY 15.**

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER UPDATE

The monthly newsletter is now online. If we do not have your email address, please send it to Valerie Williams at vwilliams@firstchurchinalbany.org. If you wish to receive a hard copy in the mail, please contact the church office to request the newsletter by mail.



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FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

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RETURN SERVICE REQUIRED