

THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

(Reformed Church in America)

110 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12207 ~ (518) 463-4449

Email: info@firstchurchinalbany.org ~ Website: www.firstchurchinalbany.org ~ Sunday Worship: 10:30 am

Founded in 1642; Continuing in Ministry Today

In response to God's unconditional love for all people made known to us in Jesus Christ, we are called to be a welcoming and affirming community. The First Church in Albany includes young and old, families, couples and singles, rich and poor, persons of various races, ethnicities, backgrounds, sexual orientation and gender identities, differing physical and mental abilities, believers and seekers. We welcome into the full life of the church all those whom God sends us. Centered in Christ, we commit ourselves to breaking down dividing walls and building a community where all are loved.

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Heritage Sunday

May 12, 2019

Prelude

Sonata in B-flat for bassoon

Willem de Fesch

Announcements

Call to Worship

We praise Creation's God:

Blessing and Honor; Glory and Power!

Let each single voice praise God:

Blessing and Honor; Glory and Power!

Let all voices together praise God:

Blessing and Honor; Glory and Power!

Let the great multitude of nations praise God:

Blessing and Honor; Glory and Power!

With all Creation we praise God:

Blessing and Honor; Glory and Power!

Rev. 7: 12

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 124:8

Amen.

*Hymn 457

I Greet Thee Who My Sure Redeemer Art

TOULON

Prayer of Confession

Lord, it was you who formed my inmost being,
You knit me together in my mother's womb.
Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my thoughts.
See if there be any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

Merciful God, our judge and redeemer, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed. We have not loved you with our whole hearts; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ prays for us.
Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation.
The past is finished and gone; everything has become fresh and new.
We believe the good news of the gospel.
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

The Law (insert) The Lord is God, The One and True God
The first verse will be "lined out" by a Voorzanger.
Verses two and three will be sung together.

*The Peace

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
And also with you.
Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

A Word with Children

Anthem *We shall walk through the valley* African-American Spiritual
We shall walk through the valley of the shadow of death.
We shall walk through the valley in peace.
Refrain: If Jesus Himself shall be our leader
We shall walk through the valley in peace.
There will be no sorrow there. Refrain
There will be no dying there. Refrain

THE WORD OF GOD

The Prayer for Illumination

Eternal God, in the reading of the Scripture, may your word be heard; in the meditation of our hearts, may your word be known; and in the faithfulness of our lives, may your word be shown. Amen.

The Lesson from Revelation Revelation 7:9-17
The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The Sermon Sheep and the Lamb

The Prayer for Blessing on the Word

THE RESPONSE TO GOD

*Hymn 464 *O God, We Bear the Imprint of Your Face* SONG 1

Offering

Offertory *King Jesus hath a garden* Dutch Carol arr. Charles Wood

King Jesus hath a garden, full of divers flowers,
Where I go culling posies gay, all times and hours.
Refrain: There naught is heard but Paradise bird, Harp, dulcimer, lute,
With cymbal, trump and tymbal, And the tender, soothing flute.
The Lily, white in blossom there, is Chastity:

*The Violet, with sweet perfume, Humility. Refrain
The Crown Imperial bloometh too in yonder place,
'Tis Charity, of stock divine, the flower of grace. Refrain
Ah! Jesu Lord, my heal and weal, my bliss complete,
Make thou my heart thy garden-plot, fair, trim and neat.
That I may hear this musick clear: harp, dulcimer, lute.....*

*Doxology (Tune 455: LASST UNS ERFREUEN)
**Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise, praise Creator, praise the Son,
Praise Holy Spirit, Three in One,
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Reception of New Member

The Joys and Concerns of the Church

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

*Hymn (insert) *At the Heart of Human History* PSALM 42

*Charge and Blessing *Shaker benediction* arranged by Burton Bumgarner

On the work of our hands and the praise of our hearts, May the light of thy countenance shine, In the least ever faithful, abiding and true, Our service of joy shall be thine. May the halo of pray'r, may the mantle of peace, As heav'n's benediction descend. Ordaining our lives in the mission of Christ, And love with our sacrifice blend. – The Canterbury Shakers, 1908

Postlude

AΩ

*Those who are able, please stand

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS: Liturgist: Peter Pagerey; Preacher: The Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden; Minister of Music: Mary Bon; David Bon-Keen, bassoon: Rose Hunsberger, Voorzanger.

We welcome all who gather to worship God this morning, especially visitors and friends from near and far. Please sign our guest book or complete a visitor's card (found in the pew rack) and place it in the offering plate. There is an elevator in our building, which makes every floor accessible. Please join us for refreshments and conversation after worship. This morning's coffee hour is hosted by the Deacons. Next week, the Elders host. If you would like to help, please call the office.

Hearing assist devices are available for your use. Please ask an usher.

First Church is an accessible building. We have an elevator so you can reach every floor.



AED An Automated External Defibrillator “**AED**” is located in the lobby attached to the wall outside of the **workroom**.

After A Word with Children, children age 4 and under are welcome in the Nursery. Children 4-12 are invited to be a part of Children and Worship.

The flowers this morning are given in gratitude by Cheryl Gowie.

For the month of May, we will be collecting “Toothpaste” for the First Church Food Pantry. Please bring your offering for our Food Pantry guests to church and lay it in the box near the communion table. Toothpaste cannot be purchased with food stamps, and yet it is necessary for good health and hygiene. Thank you for reaching out to help your neighbors in need.

Festival choir will sing on May 19th. Like to sing? Can't find the time to join the choir? Just come at 9:30 am next Sunday, May 19th 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 May 19th.

FIRST CHURCH READERS meet next Sunday following worship when we will discuss- *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. Everyone is welcome. Questions? Contact Mary Bon.

Drive-in Worship Service began at 9 a.m. on May 5th and will continue each Sunday through the first Sunday in September. Worshippers gather in the Sheridan Avenue parking lot and in Clee Park for a half hour worship service led from the outdoor pulpit. If you arrive before 9:30 a.m. for the Sanctuary Service, please park in the Orange Street Lot or in the large lot against the wall that borders North Pearl Street.

Pocket Prayer Shawls are available at today's Worship. Please ask one of our greeters and they can provide a basket of pocket prayer shawls to choose from. Pocket Prayer Shawls are made and filled with prayers and can be given to someone in need of comfort, healing, or a reminder of the closeness of God.

NOMINATIONS:

We are still seeking nominations for the office of Deacon. Nomination forms can be placed in the Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden's mailbox.

CONSISTORY FOR 2018-2019

Board of Deacons

Theresa Brewer	2019	Robert Dorn	2020*
Bill Kendall	2019	Richard Gardner	2020
		Andy Mondore	2020

Board of Elders

Norma Jean Ballou	2019	Joeanna Brown	2020
Becky Hudak	2019*	Chip Welge	2020
Rebecca Mondore	2019		
Peter Pagerey	2019*		

Board of Trustees

Ned Monthie	2019	Shirley Bone	2020
Joyce Recene	2019	David Bradley	2020
Ray Van Epps	2019	Andy Mondore	2020
Ross Westhuis	2020	James Folts	2021
Wayne Sivaslian	2021		





Heritage Sunday The First Church in Albany



Founded in 1642, First Church is the oldest church in upstate New York. It is a Reformed church (RCA) with Dutch Calvinist roots. The current church building, designed by Philip Hooker, is its fourth building and the oldest church in Albany. Shortly after the building was dedicated it hosted the funeral of Alexander Hamilton.

A welcoming congregation, it draws its current congregation from a wide variety of traditions and is involved in a diversity of ministries. Our music, too, is drawn from diverse geographical and musical roots. From ancient hymns to African-American Spirituals, from Dutch and early American music to modern day compositions, our rich and diverse heritage is a melding of tradition and history with innovation, and our music, too, samples this diversity.

Until the early 1800s singing at First Church consisted almost exclusively of unaccompanied psalms - no instruments allowed. The importance of Congregational song in Reformed worship was emphasized by the 16th century pastor and theologian, John Calvin, called 'the Father of the Reformed Faith.' Calvin said *"We shall not find better songs nor more fitting for the purpose, than the Psalms.... When we sing them, we are certain that God puts in our mouths these, as if he himself were singing in us to exalt his glory....There is no other book in which we are more perfectly taught the right manner of praising God."*

The prelude, by one of the most influential 18th century baroque Dutch composers, Willem de Fesch. Fesch, was lead violinist at Antwerp Cathedral in Holland, but, although he was a virtuoso musician and violinist, he often fought with church authorities and was eventually fired for not being able to get along with people. He moved England where he became concertmaster for Handel's orchestra. In 1814, in response to Second Reformed Church having hired a string trio, the First Church consistory authorized the use of a string quartet for singing the psalms.



Because hymnbooks with tunes were rare and most people could not read, hymns were ‘lined out’ by a Voorzanger, - ‘a singer before.’ The leader sings a phrase and the congregation repeats that phrase. A longer ‘gathering note’ at the beginning of each phrase helps the congregation find and gather on the pitch before singing the phrase.

The Law (The Ten Commandments) was sung each Sunday. We will line out the first verse of the Law, *The Lord is God, There is No Other*.

Organs were important both in Dutch churches and culture. Most Dutch churches had large, beautiful pipe organs, and organists were hired by the city rather than the church. Although no instrumental music was allowed during worship, the organist was expected to play before and after services and to perform organ concerts twice a day. The wide variety of colors available on First Church’s large and magnificent Austin pipe organ, built in 1948 as a tribute to First Churchers who fought in WW II, displays many of the colors that Dutch organ would have had.

The Heidelberg Catechism, first published in 1563, is a foundational document in our Reformed faith. This collection of one hundred twenty-nine questions and answers, illuminates the major teachings of the scripture. As opposed to many traditional catechisms, the tone is warm and comforting, offering a concise yet profound guide to the scriptures and our faith.

The first question says: Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death? A. *That I am not my own, but belong body and soul, in life and in death to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.*

The opening hymn 457, I Greet Thee, is from one of the earliest hymnbooks, *The French Psalter of 1545*. Calvin helped develop metrical psalmody so that ordinary people could sing the psalms. The *Genevan psalter* was published under his leadership. The text of the hymn resembles some of the phrases and concepts in the Heidelberg catechism. The tune “Toulon” is adapted from the tune used for Psalm 124 in the Genevan Psalter. The tune feels so familiar now that we scarcely notice how dance-like and uneven it is. Many successful hymn tunes were stolen dance tune. Luther is once quoted as saying, “Why let the devil have all the good tunes.”

The Spiritual, *We Shall Walk Through the Valley*, is based on part of Psalm 23. It reminds us that in spite of the dark valleys which were (and are) a part of everyday life for both slave and free we can walk in peace comforted by the knowledge that Christ is our comfort and our guide. Booker T. Washington wrote spirituals, “*breathe the glow of hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom.*”

The middle hymn, *O God We Bear the Imprint of Your Face*, is by contemporary New Zealand hymnodist, Shirley Erena Murray. Murray writes almost exclusively in a ‘prophetic voice’ tackling difficult topics, like racism and inequality. She seeks to nurture and affirm that we all are equals in the body of Christ. This hymn was born out of the struggle against South African Apartheid. The tune is by the 16th century English composer, Orlando Gibbons.

The offertory anthem, *King Jesus hath a garden*, is a Dutch “worship carol” popular in the 15th and 16th century. Flowers, particularly tulips, are part of the Dutch heritage and this song reflects the integration of flowers and faith in Dutch life of that period. It uses flowers to represent the various virtues like chastity and humility and refers to us as “Christ’s garden plot.”

For our 375th Anniversary, First Church commissioned a new hymn, “*At the Heart of Human History*,” by hymn writer, Mary Louise Bringle, Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies and chair of the Humanities Division at Brevard College, Brevard, NC. The hymn uses many images and scriptures reflecting First Church: “*at the heart of the city;*” “*a lily among the thorns*” (the text on the seal at the front of the sanctuary;) and “*here the hurting and the broken find God’s welcome fully spoken*’ (our food pantry, welcoming statement and worship.) The tune is from the Genevan Psalter of 1551 and was originally used to sing Psalm 42 – hence the tune name PSALM 42. Its lively jagged rhythms probably indicated origins as dance tune.

The Shaker community was very active in this part of New York. The benediction response is a Shaker song set by the American Composer Burton Bumgarner.



THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

Sunday	5/12	Fourth Sunday of Easter – Heritage Sunday
	9:00 am	Drive-In Worship
	10:30 am	Sanctuary Service The Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden, preaching Children & Worship (during worship)
	11:30 am	Coffee and Conversation.
Monday	5/13	9:00 am – 11:30 am – Food Pantry Open
Tuesday	5/14	12:00 noon Bible Study
Wednesday	5/15	9:00 am – 11:30 am – Food Pantry Open
	12:00 pm	AA Meeting
	12:00 pm	Prayer for the Church – Sanctuary
	12:30 pm	Weathervanes – Old Friends Luncheon
Thursday	5/16	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
Sunday	5/19	Fifth Sunday of Easter
	9:00 am	Drive-In Worship
	10:30 am	Sanctuary Service The Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden, preaching (Last Children & Worship until Fall)
	11:30 am	Coffee and Conversation
	11:45 am	Care Callers Meeting
	12:00 pm	Confirmation
	12:00 pm	First Church Readers



*Happy Mother's Day
from the
First Church in Albany*



We are a community rooted in Jesus with a long history in Albany and a continuing commitment to ministry in the city. You are invited to join us in worship on Sunday or to participate in ongoing opportunities for spiritual growth and mission.