

# The First Church FAMILY

---

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

**March 2018**

## **WORSHIP:**

- 4     **Third Sunday in Lent** (Communion)  
10:15 AM     Pre-Service Music  
10:30 AM     Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching  
                  Children & Worship (During Worship)  
Post Service:     Transition Team Meeting
- 11     **Fourth Sunday in Lent – Time Change**  
10:15 AM     Pre-Service Music  
10:30 AM     Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching  
                  Children & Worship (During Worship)  
Post Service:     Coffee and Conversation
- 18     **Fifth Sunday in Lent**  
10:15 AM     Pre-Service Music  
10:30 AM     Sanctuary Service Rev. Susan Vincent-Cox preaching  
                  Baptism – Crue Calderon  
                  Children & Worship (During Worship)  
Post Service:     Transition Forum  
                  First Church Readers
- 25     **Palm/Passion Sunday**  
10:15 AM     Pre-Service Music  
10:30 AM     Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden preaching  
                  Children & Worship (During Worship)  
Post Service:     Care Team Meeting

**Holy Week Services listed on p.3**

## FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR

*“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.... For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.”*

*1 Corinthians 1:18, 25*

This passage appointed for Sunday, March 4 captures the irony inherent in this year’s Lenten season beginning on Valentine’s Day and ending on April Fool’s Day. As Christian believers, we recognize the love of God made powerfully and painfully clear in Jesus’ death on the cross, even though the world around us may not see love present. We even refer to Jesus’ love and courage as the Passion, experiencing the most striking way Jesus makes love flesh. This Lent, I’m reflecting on some of the ways God’s passionate love for us is made known: in covenant care, in blessed families, in powerful words, in paradoxical action, in courageous confrontation.

We know from scripture that Christ’s choices, and those of his followers, appear foolish to the powerful people of his time. They appear foolish to many of our time. Why would one welcome foreigners, outcasts, the differently-abled, the mentally ill? Why would one eat with sinners, be they folks whose moral choices fall outside polite society or those who ignore God’s commands? Why would one choose a humble life over one of wealth and renown, or challenge the powerful in dramatic, public ways, or cherish a group of friends who so often miss the point and turn away when the going gets threatening? Why love over hate? Why non-violence over might? Why forgiveness over vengeance?

As we share the story of Jesus’ last days of earthly life, when this way – God’s way – seems to come crashing in: crowds desert, friends betray, enemies convict and execute, we pause. This looks like life as we also know it: the strong and smart and savvy survive while the vulnerable, the outsiders, the foolish struggle. We wonder if God is with us. Still we gather to remember, give thanks, and be inspired by all Jesus endured, hearts hungry for the fulfillment of the promise we have received and trust: light overcomes the darkness, love casts out fear, life rises from the grave! We rejoice to hear that God’s way is the strong, wise path, and we commit to follow that path.

I hope you will join us in worship this month, when in addition to the gift of pre-service musical offerings, we will share in the Lord’s Supper, participate in a baptism and wave palm branches. Together we can brave the falling shadows on Maundy Thursday and the cross on Good Friday. We journey in Lent not only, in grief but with hope.

Why? Because we know that on an April Fool’s Day Easter, it is death and darkness, greed and pride, might and mercilessness that are made the fool. Christ has died, and Christ will rise, and a life of justice, mercy and love will reign. Join us as we seek a growing mindfulness about God’s passionate foolishness and awesome grace!

## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE AND BEYOND

Palm/Passion Sunday	March 25 – Worship at 10:30 am
Maundy Thursday	March 29 – Worship at 7:30pm – Communion and Tenebrae
Good Friday	March 30 – Worship at noon – St Francis of Assisi Church, 391 Delaware Ave 12209 sponsored by the Capital Area Council of Churches
Easter Sunday	April 1 – Sunrise Service at 6:30am at West Capital Park steps Sponsored by FOCUS Churches, led by Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden Easter Breakfast at Emmanuel Baptist Church  10:30am – Festival Service in the sanctuary
April 8	PULPIT SWAP – The Rev. Peter JB Carman, Pastor of Emmanuel Friedens Church, spouse of Rev. Lynn, preaching

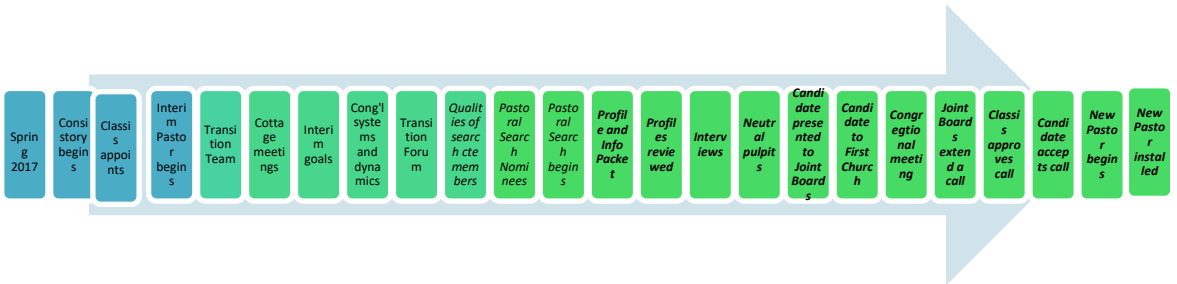
### At Home with the WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary [www.rca.org/athome](http://www.rca.org/athome)

March 1<sup>st</sup> – March 31<sup>st</sup>.

1. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
2. John 2:13-17
3. John 2:18-22
4. Third Sunday in Lent
5. Numbers 21:4-9
6. Psalm 107:1-3
7. Psalm 107:17-22
8. Ephesians 2:1-7
9. Ephesians 2:8-10
10. John 3:14-21
11. Fourth Sunday in Lent
12. Jeremiah 31:31-34
13. Psalm 51:1-12
14. Psalm 119: 9-16
15. Hebrews 5:5-10
16. John 12:20-26
17. John 12:27-33
18. Fifth Sunday in Lent
19. Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
20. Mark 11:1-11
21. Isaiah 50:4-9
22. Psalm 31:9-16
23. Philippians 2:5-11
24. Mark 15:1-39
25. Palm/Passion Sunday
26. Isaiah 42:1-9
27. Psalm 71:1-14
28. Hebrews 12:1-3
29. Maundy Thursday; John 13:1-17
30. Good Friday; Heb. 4:14-16; 5:7-9
31. John 19:38-42

# TRANSITION FORUM #1



On Sunday, February 25, nearly forty people gathered in Zimmerman Hall for a wonderful lunch of homemade soups and breads and to be a part of moving the congregation closer to the pastoral search. A poster of the timeline of our interim period, now hung in the lobby, shows the progress we have already made and the work we have yet to accomplish.

The Transition Team offered feedback from the cottage meetings. Lynn Carman Bodden shared details of the demographics, including a brief breakdown of participants' professional backgrounds and histories with First Church. Beginning with the five most frequently named responses in each category, Jay Reohr provided lists of the many ways John Paarlberg's ministry has been appreciated, and the gifts many hope the new Senior Minister will possess. Joanna Brown gave analysis of responses to the metaphorical question about the church as a car. Monica Marsh reviewed all the traditions people hope will be maintained, as well as those we might relinquish. Lastly Ella Campbell broke the many dreams floated at the cottage meetings into five categories: worship, spiritual life, community, witness and enrichment. To narrow our focus on how to live into some of these dreams, each person present was given four sticker dots to indicate her/his energy commitment to these projects. The Transition Team will spend time analyzing this data at its next meeting; the posters will then also be placed in the lobby.

An ongoing project begun at the forum offered the opportunity to share appreciation for all the kinds of ministries currently underway at First Church. On colorful sheets headed with the words, "We are blessed!" people named individuals and groups connected with First Church whose gifts they value and are grateful for. These will hang in the lobby, and you are welcome to add as many as you like to the "wall of blessing."

Lastly, we worked to articulate five core values of First Church at this time. Each person named five individually, then worked with a partner, and then in increasingly larger groupings until the whole room shared in the task together. There was striking overlap between groups. Seven values remain on a rough list, which will need further work.

We closed with a circle prayer. Energy was high. Ideas were flowing. Honest conversation in these transition times continues. Mark your calendars now for the next transition forum on March 18!

## **PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH**

On Wednesdays at noon for a half hour, the sanctuary is open for a weekly time of unstructured prayer for 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.

## **WEATHERVANES – AUTHOR BILL STAATS**



Join the Weathervanes on Wednesday, March 21st at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich. Dessert and beverages will be served. Bill Staats, who has written three books, will tell us about the process and challenges of writing a book.

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

## **FIRST CHURCH 2018 DIRECTORY**

The First Church 2018 Directory is now printed and ready for all to take home! If you have not yet received your Directory please contact Valerie Williams at the church office 518-463-4449.

## **THE MUSIC CORNER**

### **Pre-Service music in Lent**

Each Lenten Sunday at 10:15 am we will have pre-service music in the sanctuary. Come early to pray, meditate, refresh yourself, or just listen to some beautiful music as we follow the Lenten road to cross and resurrection.

March 4	Couperin - Mass for the Convents
March 11	Lenten Hymns & Songs
March 18	Bassoonist, David-Bon-Keen
March 25	Cellist, Ericka Pickhardt

## **GOOD FRIDAY MUSIC AT ST. PETER'S CHURCH AT 1 PM**

Franz Josef Haydn's – *Seven Words of Christ on the Cross*

Sung by the Choir of St Peter's Episcopal Church, Albany, with orchestra

Good Friday, March 30th, at 1:00 pm following the Noon service at St. Peter's

There is no charge for admission.

This work, written originally for orchestra alone for use on Good Friday, is based on the seven last words that Christ spoke from the cross. Haydn adapted the oratorio version in 1795, with an English language version published shortly thereafter. Haydn considered it his finest oratorio.

## **FOCUS REPORT**

On Sunday, February 4, over one quarter of our worshiping congregation joined members of other FOCUS churches for combined worship at Delmar Reformed Church. The sanctuary was full, the worship energetic, the welcome warm, the fellowship meaningful. Many of us stayed after worship for Empty Bowls: a lovely luncheon of soup, bread and homemade desserts which raised funds for FOCUS and for HANNYS, the Hunger Action Network of New York State. If you weren't able to join us, we missed you and hope you'll be present next year!

The FOCUS Board will gather on March 10<sup>th</sup> at an all-day retreat, held at First Reformed Church of Scotia. The retreat will support the Board in its futuring by helping to Reflect on what has been, to Discover what new grounds and propels the ministry, to Plan next steps of program, funding and staffing and to Invest in a new future. Please pray for the Board, the staff, the volunteers, the funders and the guests of FOCUS ministries.

If you would be interested in helping with the Breakfast Program (T, W, Th) or the Food Pantry, please speak with one of the pastors. We'll be happy to help connect you!

## **FOOD PANTRY**

During the month of January, the First Church Food Pantry served 146 households. Of these 113 were new clients. Of 168 individuals receiving food, 21 were seniors and 40 were children. Each person received the equivalent of 18 meals per visit. The Food Pantry was open eight days.

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.

Our toiletries' collection for the Food Pantry this month: SHAMPOO, will be on Sunday, March 11. 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.

March 11 – Shampoo

April 8 – Razors

May 13 – Sanitary napkins

June 10 – Deoderant

## OVERFLOW SHELTER DINNER MARCH 9<sup>TH</sup>

We'll be providing and delivering food for the Overflow Shelter Dinner at First Lutheran Church on March 9th (Casseroles and Comfort Food). Can you supply a dish to serve 6-8 shelter guests or deliver the meal? Sign up at the hospitality table or email Mary Bon at [maryebon@verizon.net](mailto:maryebon@verizon.net)! Bring your dishes, labeled "Shelter," Sunday after church, weekdays between 9 am and 1:00 pm or Thursday night between 6:30 and 7:30.

Many of the shelter guests have dental problems so soft foods and foods that are easy to chew are a good idea. Also, some guests do not eat pork products so if you make a dish that contains pork please label it "**Contains Pork.**"

Sponsored by the Capital Area Council of Churches, the Overflow Shelter provides food and shelter each night to about 20 men: the working poor who can't afford regular housing, those with mental health or addiction issues that make them ineligible for other shelters, and some just down on their luck in hard times. It is "shelter of last resort" turning nobody away.

## FOWLER SUMMER CAMP

Registration for Camp Fowler in Speculator, NY is now open online at [campfowler.org](http://campfowler.org).

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](http://campfowler.org) for details on how to get involved as a cabin counselor, kitchen helper and more.

## 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 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](mailto:deschultz07@aol.com) or 518.429.1255.

## FIRST CHURCH READERS GROUP WILL MEET MARCH 18TH



The First Church Readers will meet March 18th after the worship service to discuss *Beartown: A Novel* by Fredrick Backman. It's a story of a small town, of hockey, of the hopes and secrets, and courage, a microcosm of the whole world.

Upcoming books are:

- April – *Less: A Novel* by Andrew Sean Greer
- May – *After Long Silence: A Memoir* by Helen Fremont

First Church Readers Group is a group of First Churchers 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](mailto:maryebon@verizon.net) or 463-4449 for more information or ideas for books.

## THE LIBRARY CORNER

Welcome to our new library. It is open all the time for you to enjoy. Please feel free to come and find a book.

We suggest the following books. Hillbilly Elegy by J.D. Vance has been on the best-seller list for a long time. A young boy grows up poor in the Rust Belt. He later joins the Marines and then goes to Yale Law School. This well-written, easy to read book shares a true story. Be aware: the author tends to use a few colorful words. The First Church Readers loved this book.

Another popular book is The Shack by William P. Young, from our Inspirational Category. In the Inspirational Category are three other excellent writers we recommend: Max Lucado, M. Scott Peck, and Henri Nouwen. One book by Nouwen is Here and Now.

As a child if you have never read Ferdinand, The Bull by Munro Leaf, try it. It's a true classic for young readers, and now an animated film in theaters. Our Interim minister, Lynn Carman Bodden, recommends Winnie The Pooh by A.A Milne or Black Beauty by Anna Sewell for our young readers. And for those younger readers looking for inspiration, check out Tapestries: Stories of Women in the Bible by Ruth Sanderson.

After service on Sunday please free to bring your tea or coffee to First Church's newly organized library. Just push M on the elevator from Zimmerman Hall.

Reading is healthy!

The Library Committee: Joanna Brown, Cindy Gillespie, Carol LaBatte and Mary Weijola.



## **CHILD SAFETY AT FIRST CHURCH**

Every 1-2 years at our church we provide required training, update background checks, and update our policies and procedures for our volunteers and employees who work with children or youth. Doing all of this keeps us a Safe Sanctuary for children, youth and their families. Our church family, too, can be assured that we take the welfare of all our members seriously. We must be well and safe in body, mind, and spirit for we are the body of Christ.

In January and February we updated background checks and training for all Children and Worship team members, youth leaders, and nursery staff. We also are in the process of updating background checks on the rest of our church employees. This includes your ministers.

Protect My Ministry is the on-line program that we are working with and they came highly recommended by other churches in our area, our Albany Synod and our church insurance carrier. Take a look at their website and see what they offer: [Protectmyministry.com](http://Protectmyministry.com).

We also require a training on child sexual abuse because statistics are so high. Currently 1 in every 4 girls and 1 in every 8 boys is sexually abused before the age of 18. Our volunteers and staff will take a 45-minute training course that informs of safe practices and the realities of abuse. This training is essential. As we know from the news, sexual abuse can occur in churches so we need to assure utmost safety to our children.

At First Church we have also recently updated our policies and procedures for safety that include open doors in all classrooms/worship centers, two adults always present in each room, and ways to assure children safety when using bathrooms. Also, we will have a Safety Team whose members will include at minimum a Safety Coordinator, our Director of Children & Worship, and at least one of our ministers. The Safety Coordinator's role is to assure we remain up-to-date on policies, education and background checks. This Team will assure that we follow our policies diligently.

First Church will be a safe and loving place for all people of all ages.

If you have any further questions please feel free to ask your ministers, or Sara Bonam Welge, the director of Children & Worship. We will let you know the other members of the team when this is fully established.

In Christ's Peace,  
Rev. Sue Vincent-Cox

## **BOWLING FOR BEDS BOWL-A-THON**

Saturday, February 3



The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Bowling for Beds Bowl-A-Thon to raise money for the Emergency Overflow Shelter. First Church joined other youth groups and churches from the area who helped raise \$5,000 for the shelter. Joshua Bliss & Stephen Reohr participated.

## **APRIL PULPIT SWAP**

Mark your calendars now for the INTERIM PASTOR and SPOUSE Pulpit Swap, Sunday April 8! 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

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

## THANK YOU

- Thank you to all who supported me during the illness and death of my brother Harold MacMurray. The prayers and phone calls from the pastors and congregation were meaningful and appreciated. **Ruth Pagerey**
- Prayer is the uplifting of the heart to God. Thank you everyone for prayers and cards, your words uplifting and encouraging me on my life's journey. **Norma McClement**
- To Rev. Peggy and the Bethany Reformed Church for their donation of 11 bags of groceries to the Food Pantry.

## MEMORIALS

- In celebration of the life of Margaret Dickert a gift has been received from a friend for the Clee Park Memorial Fund.
- In celebration of the life of Paul Miller a gift has been received from Denise Lobdell for the Lynn T. Joosten Fund
- In memory of Paul Miller, a gift has been received from Steven Hoffman for the Drive-in Fund
- In memory of Leona Murray, a gift has been received from Steven Hoffman for the Drive-in Fund
- In memory of Leona Murray, a gift has been received from Susan J. Thayer for the Drive-in Fund
- In celebration of the life of Leona Murry a gift has been received from Denise Lobdell for the Clee Park Fund

## IN SYMPATHY

Our sympathy and prayers are with the family and friends of Leona Murray who died February 19, 2018. A service celebrating her life will be held Saturday, April 28, 2018.

Our sympathy and prayers are with the family and friends of Paul Miller who died February 19, 2018.



**The deadline for the April issue of *FAMILY* is March 16.**





Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 67  
Albany, NY

## **FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY**

110 North Pearl Street  
Albany, NY 12207-2231  
518.463.4449

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

email:[info@firstchurchinalbany.org](mailto:info@firstchurchinalbany.org)

RETURN SERVICE REQUIRED