

The First Church

FAMILY

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

May 2019

WORSHIP:

- 5 **Third Sunday of Easter**
9:00 am Drive-In Worship (Communion)
10:30 am Sanctuary Service (Communion)
(During Worship: Children & Worship)
11:30 am Coffee & Conversation
12:00 pm Confirmation
1:00 pm Mother's Group
1:30 pm CROP Walk
- 12 **Fourth Sunday of Easter, (Mother's Day), Heritage Sunday**
9:00 am Drive-In Worship
10:30 am Sanctuary Service
(During Worship: Children & Worship)
Post-service: Coffee & Conversation
- 19 **Fifth Sunday of Easter**
9:00 am Drive-In Worship
10:30 am Sanctuary Service
(Last Children & Worship until Fall)
11:30 am Coffee & Conversation
11:45 am Care Callers
12:00 pm Confirmation
12:00 pm First Church Readers
- 26 **Sixth Sunday of Easter**
9:00 am Drive-In Worship
10:30 am Sanctuary Service
11:30 am Coffee & Conversation

FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR

Dear Members and Friends,

The Exodus story is a great metaphor for the journey of congregations in interim times. Just as the people of Israel leave Egypt and cross into the wilderness, unable to turn back after the Red Sea waters God has parted for them close back again, congregations also must move ahead from the days of their former pastors into an unknown future. Like the ancient Hebrew people, congregations follow behind a leader they don't know well, sometimes unsure the person knows where she is leading. Gradually the ways become clearer until one day the advance team, the search committee, announces: "We are entering the promised land! We have found the right leader to guide us into the next phase of our life and ministry." And there is great rejoicing!

The search committee is not quite yet at that stage of announcement, but they are working hard to get there. As the committee progresses through the stages of search, the rest of us support them by coming to worship, engaging in small groups and service opportunities, maintaining our offerings, and deepening our relationships with God and one another.

The writer of Exodus poignantly and pointedly observes that God's people

"... journeyed on in stages...."

Like them, we progress through stages that can include anxiety, confidence, anger, miracles, frustration, exhaustion, insight. Like them, we come to acquire new rules for living in community, have encounters with strangers, build new relationships, agree to share the burdens of leadership, discover gifts, engage in reconnaissance into new territory, shed old habits, clarify values and traditions. Sometimes we feel settled. Sometimes we are scared. Sometimes we get stuck. Always God is present and at work. God guides, instructs and gifts us with what we need. God opens the way, and new stages of our journey unfold.

As it was with the Hebrew people in ancient times and as it is with you, so it is with me.

As some of you have heard, at the end of August I will be leaving First Church to step out in faith on the Camino de Santiago, the Way of St. James, in northern Spain. I have felt called to a walking pilgrimage for some time, and now God has opened the way to begin. My husband, Peter, has received a Lilly Foundation Endowment Grant for Clergy Renewal to support his sabbatical which begins July 1. In his application, he shared plans to walk a portion of the Camino with me, because Lilly encourages family participation in clergy renewal.

This is a true gift to me from both Peter and Lilly, because as an interim minister, I will never receive a supported sabbatical. I intend to use my journey to discern the next stages of my ministry.

Our time together as Interim Pastor and church-in-transition is not yet done. God urges us forward, one step at a time, in the months we have left. Our calling is to foster fruitful ministry and structure to provide the best foundation possible for your next pastoral relationship.

May God bless each stage of this journey,

Lynn



AT HOME WITH THE WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary

May 1st - May 31st Now available online at: www.rca.org/resources/home-word

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Psalm 30 | 17. Revelation 21:5-6 |
| 2. Revelation 5:11-14 | 18. John 13:31-35 |
| 3. John 21:1-14 | 19. Fifth Sunday of Easter |
| 4. John 21:15-19 | 20. Acts 16:9-15 |
| 5. Third Sunday of Easter | 21. Psalm 67 |
| 6. Acts 9:36-38 | 22. Revelation 21:10, 22-27 |
| 7. Acts 9:39-43 | 23. Revelation 22:1-5 |
| 8. Psalm 23 | 24. John 14:23-29 |
| 9. Revelation 7:9-12 | 25. John 5:1-9 |
| 10. Revelation 7:13-17 | 26. Sixth Sunday of Easter |
| 11. John 10:22-30 | 27. Acts 16:16-24 |
| 12. Fourth Sunday of Easter | 28. Acts 16:25-34 |
| 13. Acts 11:1-10 | 29. Psalm 97 |
| 14. Acts 11:11-18 | 30. Ascension Day; Acts 1:1-11 |
| 15. Psalm 148 | 31. Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21 |
| 16. Revelations 21:1-4 | |

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.

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 Avenue in Albany. Anyone can join us starting at 12:15 pm and stay until you wish to leave. We all pay for our own. Contact Donna E. Schultz at deschultz07@aol.com.

DISPERSING KIBERA FUNDS

Many of you will remember the Kibera Project we started about 10 years ago. For 5-6 years we supported artisans in Kibera, a slum outside Nairobi, Kenya. By selling their hand-crafted jewelry and hand carved wooden items, we helped improve wages, build a new school, and supplement needed school supplies and food.

Communication between the coordinator in Kibera and the Kibera group at First Church broke down and we sadly discerned that we could no longer support this project. We always had funds kept in reserve to pay for future orders of hand-crafted items. Those funds have remained untouched since our last communication with the Kibera artisans.

The consistory of First Church has determined that it would be wise to disperse these funds to organizations who are making a difference in the lives of children and those in need in.

After some research and prayerful consideration, we are dividing the funds between two organizations. First, we will increase our contribution to FOCUS here in Albany. The second organization is Shining Hope for Communities, a non-profit in Kibera that provides education (especially for girls), as well as many other needed services. You can find out more about their work at www.shofco.org.

Becky Hudak



CHILD/YOUTH SAFETY POLICY AT FIRST CHURCH

Last year at this time, all staff and volunteers who care for and lead children and youth were required to complete child and safety training. This training focused on the areas of physical emotional and sexual abuse identification. Although it is our hope that these kinds of incidents never occur, we do need to be wise and aware in order to provide the best care and discipleship for our congregation.

You will see posted in the nursery and the two Children and Worship Centers our Child/Youth Safety Policies. There is a longer version on file that adds further steps for Leadership/Consistory if there is an allegation.

Please feel free to look at this policy when you are able. It is thorough and easy to access.

You will also see mention of our policies in our weekly bulletin and on our website. This is an important assurance for parents and caretakers who visit or join our church.

Safety and trust are vital to our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being and are concrete manifestations of God's love and mercy given through our care.

Pastor Sue Vincent Cox



In gratitude

Children and Worship Team

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP

We want to thank Jamie and April (Hunter) Mercale for their gift of a new banner for Children & Worship. You can see this banner on the fence at our N. Pearl Street entrance. Jamie Mercale is in the business of making signs/banners in the Capital District and as you can see, he does fine work.

We also want to thank Betsy Gorman for the fantastic design you see here. We are grateful too, for her exceptional skill and the time she invested in making this happen.

MOTHER'S GROUP

On April 7th eight of us met and went out to lunch. We had a wonderful time catching up with one another, chatting about parenting and learning more about each other. We thank Sally and Laura Lynne for providing childcare that allowed our group to go and enjoy a beautiful afternoon.

We plan to meet next on May 5th and join the Crop Walk with others from First Church. We will also meet next in early June and will announce the exact date soon. Please join us if you can!

MUSIC PROGRAM TASK FORCE

In April, a Music Program Task Force began meeting to initiate conversation about the future of the music program. Mary Bon is planning to retire sometime in 2020, after a new pastor is called, so it is wise to think ahead now about what comes next. What are the hopes of the congregation for the music program going forward? What do we need to know before searching for a new organist and choir director? What other questions do we need to be asking? The task force currently has six members: Joanna Brown, Cheryl Gowie, Rose Hunsberger, Kenny Jackson, Doug Persons and Peter Subers, and is currently staffed by Lynn Carman Bodden. After some initial brainstorming, the group plans to glean from Mary Bon's experience, and also to reach out to the congregation for collective hopes and concerns. Conversation with a new pastor will also be part of the process. If you have questions, please reach out to one of the MPTF members!

GUEST PREACHERS

On Sunday, May 5, we will welcome the Rev. Andrew Bossardet to the pulpit. Andy describes himself as “a pastor who currently service denominational staff in the area of leadership development. My passion is for churches and leaders to ‘let their light shine’ (Matt 5.16). I worship with pastors early in their ministry and coach pastors who are trying to lead change in their churches. I have created training for pastoral transition and ministry coaching. At this point the focus of my work is to celebrate and encourage small churches (at or below the national average of 75 in worship).” Andy is husband to Heather, father to Micah and Addison, an avid board gamer and bicyclist and a reluctant runner. He promises “no pitches or active recruitment for denomination programming, just greetings and the chance to worship together.”

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On Sunday, May 26, the Rev. Leah Ennis will lead worship. Leah was an active member of the First Church Youth Group while her father, Mark Ennis, served as Pastor of Third Reformed in Albany (1990-2006). Leah is a new mother, recently welcoming Zechariah Ennis Dunlap into the world.

CROP HUNGER WALK

Sunday May 5th

The 2019 Albany CROP Hunger Walk will be held on May 5, at the First Lutheran Church on Western Avenue in Albany. The CROP Hunger Walk is an annual community-wide event sponsored by Church Wide Service and organized by local volunteers to raise funds to help end hunger globally and locally.

The walk will begin at 1:30 pm, preceded by registration at 12:30 pm. Walkers can follow a 3-mile loop or a shorter one-mile loop. Last year First Church raised (\$1,075.00) with (10 walkers). Plan to walk yourself or sponsor another first church walker. Pick up a packet after worship in the lobby. Thank you to Patty Salsbury for being this year's coordinator.

DRIVE-IN OPENS MAY 5

Drive-In worship services begin Sunday, May 5, and will be held each Sunday at 9:00 am through September 1st with the exception of the last Sunday in June (June 30th) when we will worship at 10 am in Clee Park. We gather in the Sheridan Avenue parking lot and in Clee Park for a half-hour worship service led from the outdoor pulpit.

DRIVE-IN OFFERING

The special offerings received at the Drive-In Worship this summer will be designated for Koinonia Primary Care/Compassion in Action, a ministry providing access to quality primary and mental health services for the underserved in West Hill and surrounding neighborhoods in Albany. Koinonia Primary Care, under the leadership of Dr. Robert Paeglow, has been serving people in Albany since 2002.

I've come to the realization that life is not designed for our comfort, or pleasure, but for us to discover our gifts and contribute what we can to make life better for others. Dr. Robert Paeglow.



Can you help supply music for our Drive-in Worship Service?

We depend on the generosity of guest musicians who supply music for our services. Do you play an instrument? sing in the shower? have a musical group that might be willing to provide the music for the Drive-in Worship Service? Anything from a simple hymn or sacred song, to an instrumental solo to a praise band is appropriate. Contact Mary Bon if you are able to be part of this ministry at maryebon@verizon.net or 463-4449.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Immediately following worship on June 2, we will hold a brief meeting to elect new Elders, Deacons and Trustees. On June 9, we will have a time of celebration and fellowship after worship to look over the past year and to congratulate our confirmation class.

TULIP TIME CONCERTS - Saturday, May 11, 1:00 pm – 3:15 pm



15-minute Mini-Organ Concerts

at First Church and four other downtown churches within walking distance of the Tulip Festival in Washington Park.

Mary Bon – First Church, 110 N Pearl St, Albany

Neil Keen – St. Peter's Episcopal, 107 State St, Albany

William Douglas – Cathedral of All Saints, 62 S Swan St, Albany

Al Fedak – Westminster Presbyterian, 262 State St, Albany

Trevor Kahlbaugh – First Presbyterian, 362 State St, Albany

CHOIR

The choir always welcomes new members. How about joining the choir? After Easter is a good time to join. The pace of music is more relaxed. It's fun, inspiring – the company is great – and it's a great way to deepen and expand your faith.

HERITAGE SUNDAY MAY 12

During the liturgical season of Easter (April 21 – June 2), preachers in the First Church pulpit will be challenged to reflect on the lectionary selections from the book of Revelation. May 12, which is both Heritage Sunday and Mother's Day, falls in this season. How will the preacher weave all this together? Come to worship that morning and find out!

We will celebrate Heritage Sunday with a special focus on our diverse early history. We'll have some musical heritage from early Dutch composers to Early American music to music of our own time. We'll eat Dutch cookies in the coffee hour. We'll have tours of our sanctuary. And, as First Church in Albany has each Sunday for almost 400 years, we will worship together in the city of Albany.

WEATHERVANES – OLD FRIENDS LUNCHEON!



Join the Weathervanes on Wednesday, May 15th at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall for our annual Old Friends Luncheon. Come and enjoy a chicken a la king lunch, some entertainment and a chance to visit with friends old and new. There is no charge for this event.

To make your reservation please call Audrey Ming at 518-456-5485 by May 5th.

FESTIVAL CHOIR WILL SING ON MAY 19TH.

Like to sing? Can't find the time to join the choir? The **Festival Choir** is for you! No Mid-week rehearsals! No Long-term commitment! Fun easy music! Just come at 9:30 am on 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. (If you let us know you're coming we can be sure to have enough music.)

FIRST CHURCH READERS GROUP WILL MEET MAY 19TH



First Church Readers is a group of people who love to read. We meet once a month to discuss a book we have read that month. Everyone is welcome. Come join us.

Our next meeting is May 19th 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 - by turns heartwarming and heartrending.

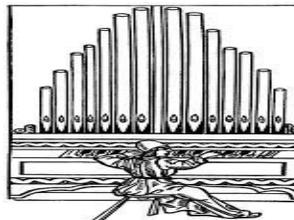
Questions? Contact Mary Bon at firstchurchmeb@gmail.com or 518-463-4449.

SPRING FLING CONCERTS COMING

Wednesdays In June at 12 Noon



Join us for a series of noon-time concerts in our sanctuary each Wednesday in June from 12 noon to 12:30 pm. We'll have special music from our soloists as well as guest instrumentalists.



PRIDE 2019

The weekend of **June 8th and 9th** will be the time of this year's Albany PRIDE celebrations. On Saturday, June 8th between noon and 5pm, In Our Own Voices – which serves the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender People of Color, and their friends and families – will sponsor a health and wellness expo in Washington Park.

On Sunday, June 9th between noon and 5pm, the Capital Pride Parade and Festival will take place. Peter Subers has agreed to gather members of First Church to carry the First Church Room for All banner and to march in the parade. We'll make our way to the park after worship. Peter can be reached at (518) 854-7816 or petersubers@gmail.com Please join us!

FOWLER SUMMER CAMP:

Registration for Camp Fowler in Speculator, NY is now open online at <http://www.campfowler.org/online-registration>. Check out the Camp Fowler information in the lobby for details on the weeks available. 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 for details on how to get involved as a cabin counselor, kitchen helper and more.

CLEEO'S HOT DOGS THURSDAYS IN CLEE PARK THIS SUMMER



We are kicking off Cleo's Hotdogs on Thursday, June 13th. Like last summer, we'll be in Clee Park from 11am until 1pm offering hotdogs to anyone who comes through. Here's how you can help!

We are unable to use hotdogs from the Food Pantry, because they have been bought or donated specifically for food pantry assistance and not for a feeding program.

- YOU could donate hotdogs – or money to buy them!
We would like to serve chili dogs to those who would enjoy them.
 - YOU could donate chili – or funds to purchase it!
We need condiments: ketchup, mustard and relish.
 - YOU could donate some, or the money to buy them!
We need hotdog rolls...and YOU could help.
- Last summer your donations of chips were a big hit.

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- We'd love to be able to offer them again this summer, and we can with YOUR help.

And of course, if you'd like to be a grill-master, or serve our neighbors, or come to take pictures or provide music or give some napkins or paper towels, we would be glad of these gifts.

The Food Pantry is able to provide bottled water. The staff is approaching local businesses for donations as well.

If you would like to help, please bring food or monetary donations to church and/or speak to a staff member.

This ministry, the brainchild of former assistant sexton Jeffrey Curry, was a big hit last summer. Help us make it a witness to welcome and community again this year!

FOOD PANTRY

In March, the First Church Food Pantry served six new households in addition to 116 returning and 13 are seniors. The Food Pantry was open eight days in March, and each person received eighteen meals per visit. We continue to be able to provide meat and fresh produce to our guests.

DO YOU FEEL CALLED TO HELP? Volunteers are welcome on Mondays and Wednesdays. And we would still appreciate someone who could pick up produce on Tuesday mornings, so we don't have to pay for deliveries. Volunteers not only work, they meet new people, and they enjoy each other! Please reach out to Lorraine Houk at lorraineh@focuschurches.net if you are willing and able to join in!



Lorraine Houk and her sister Valerie were recognized for their contributions as volunteers with The Food Pantries of the Capital District at the 40th Anniversary celebration on April 16th.



OVERFLOW SHELTER DINNERS THANK YOU

We are grateful to all the people in our First Church Family who have been providing food for the Overflow Shelter Dinners at First Lutheran Church. A special thank-you to our deliverer teams, Rev. Leroy and Judith Utley Suess, and Ruth Pagerey and Sarah Welge. Watch for our fall start-up information in the October *FAMILY*.

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 for more than 10 years.

MUSICAL THANK YOU

The roar of the organ, the beautiful music of the choir and instrumentalists and the excitement of the *Hallelujah Chorus* are over, but the joy of the Easter season is still with us. The choir, soloists and instrumentalists are still hard at work and, again, we thank them for their faithful witness illuminating our worship together with their beautiful music.

JOINING FIRST CHURCH

Does it feel like First Church could be your church home? Might you consider membership? If so, please talk with Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden, or Rev. Sue Vincent-Cox, or one of the Elders to find out more. We'll be holding our next new member class in the fall – but you are welcome to start the conversation now. We'd love to welcome you officially!



THANK YOU NOTES



Kind people,
 I came to your service and enjoyed the message, and thank you coffee hour.
 I came to seek financial help during the most stressful and urgent time for me financially.
 I count you among the kind people I have encountered here. Thank you for answering my need that day.
 The \$20 was put to good use sustaining me during this time.
 Much thanks,
 Sharon Hoskins



Elizabeth Pierce

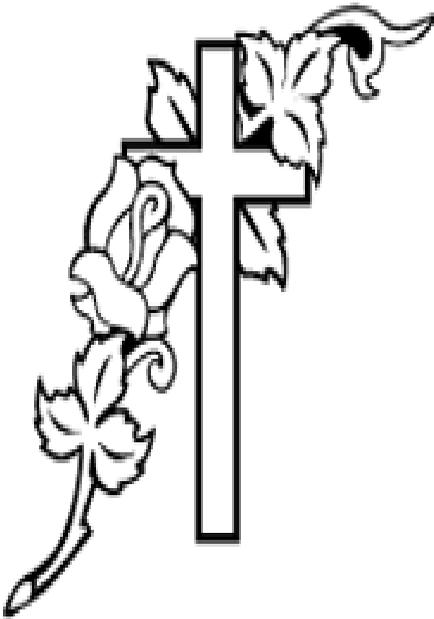
De Valence - 4/10/19

Thanks to everyone for their kind notes and caring thoughts. I do miss being at the church on Sunday mornings but am grateful for all the years I could be part of the congregation.
 Betty Pierce

Dear Friends of First Church in Albany Reformed,
 Thank you for your recent gift of \$500 to CWS!

Your support of our programs is greatly appreciated. Your support is helping Kids&e Kids in Serbia by providing care and social/emotional inclusion for vulnerable children. Your gift also allows CWS to help build safe, stable houses in Haiti. Thank you!

In peace,
 Eric Luckanille



MEMORIALS

- In memory of Lynn T. Joosten a gift was received from the Joosten family for the Lynn T. Joosten Scholarship Fund.
- In memory of Ivan Lawson a gift was received from the Joosten family for the Lynn T. Joosten Scholarship Fund.



The Deadline for the June issue of *FAMILY* is May 15th.





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