

The First Church **FAMILY**

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

November 2014

WORSHIP:

- 2 **Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost (Daylight Savings Ends)**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service
Post-service: "The Way" small group

- 9 **Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service
Post Service: "The Way" small group

- 16 **Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost / Consecration Sunday**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service
Post Service: Luncheon at the Hampton Suites

- 23 **Christ the King Sunday / Thanksgiving Sunday**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service
Post-service: Thanksgiving Basket Packing

- 30 **First Sunday of Advent**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service
Post-service: First Church Readers

**Our Sunday morning service may be found anytime at
www.firstchurchinalbany.org.**

FROM THE PASTOR

They call it “sticky faith.” Some research has shown that up to half of the kids who are part of a high school youth group fail to stick with their faith after they graduate. People at the Fuller Youth Institute wanted to find out what nurtures spiritual maturity and a faith that lasts. Their findings are published in *Sticky Faith: Practical Ideas to Nurture Long-Term Faith in Teenagers*, and summarized in a May ‘13 Christian Century article by Jen Bradbury.

Ministries that foster sticky faith, the report says, are centered on Christ. It wasn’t the style of music or glitzy programs or charismatic youth leaders that made the difference. What matters most are not entertaining programs but conversations about Jesus. Having a faith that lasts means developing and maintaining a relationship with the person of Jesus revealed in scripture. Mission trips are often an opportune time to do this, but conversations about Jesus can’t be limited to mission trips. Opening a Bible and wrestling with its message needs to be regular part of youth ministry.

Another important element is the experience grace-- not just talking about it, but the actual experience of being a part of a community where you are accepted, forgiven, loved.

Involvement in worship was also important. Churches that helped to foster a lasting faith worked at helping youth understand worship so they could more fully and meaningfully participate. They gave them opportunities to use their gifts as ushers, readers, and musicians, not in special ‘youth services’ but as a regular part of the worshipping community. Sticky faith forms when adults and teens worship *together*.

And finally, those who developed a faith that lasts were in churches where there was an intentional effort to connect people across generations. Parents and grandparents, empty-nesters and senior citizens were willing to spend time with teens, asking them questions, and express interest in their lives.

This year three young people from our congregation will be participating in a “Journeys of Faith” process -- Joshua Bliss, Imani Brewer and Lora-Lynn Greene. Each of them will be paired with a mentor (Andrew Mondore, Monica Marsh and Marilyn Paarlberg) who will walk along side them on the journey. They will be reading the Gospel of Luke together, talking about Jesus, participating in worship, and sharing in ministry. As part of the process of formulating their own statements of faith they will also be interviewing other members of the congregation about their faith journeys. Nurturing a ‘sticky faith’ is the shared ministry of the whole congregation.

So keep these young people and their mentors in prayer, take time to get to know them, listen to their stories and share your own. And don’t be afraid to talk about Jesus. Centered on Christ, engaging scripture, experiencing tangible expressions of grace, active in worship, and connecting with others--these are good practices, not just for teenagers, but for all of us.

Sincerely,
John D. Paarlberg

At Home with the WORD

**Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary
November 1st - November 26th**

Now available online at: www.rca.org/athome

1. Malachi 1:6–2:9
2. Revelation 7:9-17
3. 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20
4. Acts 13:1-12
5. Proverbs 16:21-33
6. Psalm 70
7. Amos 3:1-12
8. Matthew 24:1-14
9. Matthew 25:1-13
10. Psalm 63
11. Joel 1:1-14
12. Matthew 24:29-35
13. Psalm 90:1-12
14. Judges 2:16-23
15. Matthew 12:43-45
16. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
17. Zechariah 1:7-17
18. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18
19. Psalm 9:1-14
20. Psalm 100
21. Revelation 22:1-9
22. Isaiah 44:21-28
23. Matthew 25:31-46
24. Esther 2:1-18
25. Esther 8:3-17
26. John 5:19- 40

CONSECRATION SUNDAY WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION LUNCHEON

Consecration Sunday is November 16. During the worship service commitment cards will be distributed and we will be invited to complete them and then bring them forward as our offering to God. Please think carefully and prayerfully about the gifts you have to offer, and about how much you will give to the ministry of Christ's Church in the coming year. How is God calling you to respond to God's abundant goodness? What gifts has God given you? How will you say thanks? How will your giving demonstrate your trust that God will continue to provide for you?

Following the worship service you are invited to a congregational celebration luncheon at the Hampton Inn & Suites (just across the street from the church parking lot). If you have not yet made your reservation for the luncheon, please call the church office at 463-4449 to let us know you are coming.

CD MINISTRY UPDATE

The digital recorder for our CD ministry has stopped working. We are looking into repairing or replacing the unit. In the meantime we will continue sending out bulletins to our homebound members but without CDs. The Worship Service on the website which reaches out to the wider community will also have to be temporarily suspended. We hope to resume this ministry to our homebound members as soon as possible.

COMPASSIONATE LIVING WORKSHOP

The Basics of Nonviolent Communication



Compassionate Living: The Basics of Nonviolent Communication

First Church in Albany, 110 N. Pearl St.
Wed. evenings November 5, 12, and 19

- 6 pm - 8:30 pm

*Be the change you are called to be
Be the peace you are called to know
Be the love you are called to share*

Facilitators: Susan Vincent-Cox, Steve Andersen, and Philomena Moriarty

"How do I live the value of love, understanding, peace or justice in my community, in my family, in my workplace, in my world? How do I put into practice loving my neighbor as myself? How can I find my way through disagreements in a way that feels true to who I am or who I want to be? Nonviolent communication is a language, a way of looking at the world differently, a way to increase compassion, and a set of highly useful communication skills.

Required resource for this workshop:

Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life by Marshal Rosenberg

You may purchase this resource at the workshop. Feel free to get a head start by purchasing the book ahead of time on Amazon or through a local bookstore.

To sign up call Denise at First Church in Albany 463-4449 or on our website:

<http://firstchurchinalbany.weebly.com/non-violent-communication.html>

Sign up online here: <http://goo.gl/forms/5BcYmTAqAI>

THE WORSHIP COMMISSION INVITES YOUR PARTICIPATION IN WORSHIP PLANNING

Last month the worship commission met for some lively discussion, debate and creative brainstorming as we began planning for Advent worship. We will continue the process this month. The meeting is open to anyone. Join us at 6 p.m. on Nov. 10 for a light supper and discussion: How do we shape our worship to help us hear what God is saying to us through the scripture texts for Advent? How does the shape of our worship—in music, words, symbols and actions help us respond to what God is saying? Contact Ian Leet, Mary Bon or John Paarlberg for more information.

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING

This thanksgiving season we will be providing the food for a Thanksgiving meal for many of the families served by our food pantry. On Sunday, November 24, many of us will stay for a few minutes after worship to help pack the food baskets that will be distributed to families in our area. Also on that Sunday you are invited to come to worship with gifts of food items. This year instead of providing a thanksgiving turkey to each family, we are providing gift cards enabling them to purchase their own.

Donations of other food items are needed including:

- pie filling
- pie crust
- stuffing
- canned fruit
- yams
- gravy
- carrots
- celery
- onions
- potatoes
- apples
- fresh items

COME SING IN THE CHOIR

The choir is starting to work on Christmas music now and this is a great time to join us either for a short term commitment or for a longer stay. You don't have to read music, or have a beautiful voice - if you like to sing in the shower or around the house, you'll fit right in! Just join us any Thursday night at 7:00 pm in the choir room or talk to Mary Bon or any choir member for more information.

ADVENT PRE-SERVICE MUSIC STARTS NOVEMBER 30 AT 10:15 AM

This year take some time during Advent to prepare again for the coming of Christ. Join us each Sunday in Advent at 10:15 am for a special musical offering. Sit in our beautiful sanctuary; meditate; pray; or just refresh yourself with the inspiring music of the Advent season.

FESTIVAL CHOIR November 23rd -Thanksgiving Sunday

Like to sing but can't find the time to join the choir? The Festival Choir may be for you. No mid-week rehearsals or long-term commitment required. And the music is fun. Just come at 9:30 am on Sunday, November 23rd, to rehearse and sing with the choir during worship. Talk to any choir member or contact Mary Bon at maryebon@verizon.net or 463-4449 for more information. If you decide to join us it is helpful if you let us know you're coming so we can be sure to have enough music.

THE WEATHERVANES AND STEAMBOATS ON THE HUDSON



Join the Weathervanes for fellowship, lunch, and program on Wednesday, November 19th, at 12:30 pm in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich. Coffee, tea, and dessert will be served. After lunch, become better acquainted with one of our newest Elders, Tom Allison, a local historian and author of *Hudson River Steamboat Catastrophes: Contests and Collisions*. Published in October 2013, the first book in fifty years about this forgotten chapter in our history relives the era of great white wooden ships that carried passengers and freight between Albany and New York from the early 1800s into the twentieth century. His presentation is accompanied with many pictures provided by the Albany Institute of History and Art. Using old newspapers for eyewitness accounts has given his talk interesting details long forgotten. Please telephone Audrey Ming (456-3485) to let her know that you plan to attend.

SAVE THE DATE: Wednesday, December 3rd – Weathervanes’ Christmas Party.



FIRST CHURCH READERS WILL MEET ON NOVEMBER 30TH

The First Church Readers is a group of First Churchers who like to read, and get together once a month after worship to discuss a book they have been reading during that month. We meet again on November 30 to discuss *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe. A seminal book in the abolitionist movement, it was the second best selling book of the century after the bible. It was such an important book in fueling the anti-slavery movement that there is a story that President Lincoln when he met Stowe said, “So this is the little lady who started this great war.” Unfortunately the book’s long-term impact included the fostering of many negative stereotypes of African-Americans. This book is available through the Upper Hudson Library System and as a free download for Kindles through Amazon.

December NO BOOK GROUP

January *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb

FIRST CHURCH OVERFLOW HOMELESS SHELTER MEALS NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Since 2008 First Church has been providing dinner for the Shelter two Fridays a month. **To continue the ministry we need people to deliver the food to the shelter.** Deliveries are made on Fridays during the day at the First Lutheran Church offices or at 6 pm at the Shelter door at First Lutheran Church, Albany. Talk to Mary Bon at 463-4449 or maryebon@verizon.net. The Shelter opens on November 17th and we need to have deliverers on hand before that date. **Please help!**

Our first dinners will be November 28th and December 5th. Watch for a signup sheet at the Hospitality Table.

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

COMMUNITY SHOPPING DAY TO BENEFIT THE EMERGENCY OVERFLOW SHELTER

The Ten Thousand Villages store located in Stuyvesant Plaza will host a “Community Shopping Day” on Sunday, November 23, from Noon - 5pm to benefit the Capital Area Council of Churches Emergency Overflow Shelter. 15% of all purchases made during those hours (excluding gift cards) will benefit the Shelter. Tell your friends and plan to stop by to do some of your holiday shopping. The mission of Ten Thousand Villages is to benefit farmers, craftspeople, and artisans in developing countries. So, any purchases made will not only benefit the person in another country who made the item, but will also help the homeless people in Albany who use our Shelter.

PLEASE SPEAK UP! I CAN'T HEAR YOU!

There are many people in our congregation who are hard of hearing. It is my impression that we do not pay attention to making sure that others can hear us when we speak. In the Sanctuary and in Zimmerman Hall we have sound systems. However, in other rooms where meetings and group gatherings are held I often hear several people say, “Please speak up! I can't hear you!”

Some suggestions:

- When speaking, hold your head up. Do not look down.
- Project your voice and speak loudly, slowly and clearly.
- Keep your voice at a “steady loud”. Don't let it drop during certain phrases.
- When using the microphone, hold it close to your mouth and speak slowly and clearly.

Whatever you say is worthless if people can't hear you so...Please Speak Up!
Thank you! Audrey Ming

PURCHASE FAIR TRADE EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL AND SOAP

Support the farmers of Palestine in the struggle for their livelihood and land.



“Zatoun” is the Arabic word for olive, a crop vitally important to the people of Palestine. Through Palestine Peace Awareness Inc., a registered non-profit organization, we can purchase olive oil and olive oil soaps. Proceeds directly benefit Palestinian farmers and children living in occupied Palestine and help create awareness for peace in Palestine.

Farmers are paid free trade prices through the Palestine Fair Trade Association. Also, one dollar of each bottle sold will go to help support *Project Hope* an arts and education program for young people in Palestine. An additional amount goes to replant olive trees inside Palestine which have been destroyed by the occupation. Prices are \$20 per one 750 ml bottle of olive oil and \$4 per bar of olive oil soap. Consider purchasing some for yourself or as Christmas gifts. Contact John Paarlberg or Mary Bon for more information or to place an order.

GROWING GREEN

We are called to be good stewards of God's creation. What does that look like ?



Four years ago my sister, Susan Bon, died after a long and valiant fight with a debilitating illness. She was a passionate believer in and supporter of causes - Caring for cats; Caring for animals; Caring about justice; Caring for creation. Last fall we decided to use the bulk of an inheritance from my sister for a cause she would have loved - installing solar panels on the roof of our house.

How would you like to have a monthly electric bill of only \$1.58? That was the total amount we owed on our last electric bill. In addition to helping reduce our carbon footprint, we have the added benefit of saving money on our electric bill. Mary Bon

Got questions about the process? the cost? the benefits? Watch for more information in upcoming Family issues or talk to Mary Bon.

KIBERA MISSION NEWS

November 2014

We have placed an order for more Kibera crafts and **The Kibera Committee** and the **Artisans of the Kibera Workshop** are preparing for two sales in November:

The November 15 -16 at St. Kateri in Schenectady and the **BLACK FRIDAY FAIR TRADE MARKET** at Delmar Reformed Church the weekend of Thanksgiving. This sale is the biggest fundraiser of the year for the Kibera Committee. We have just ordered almost \$2500 worth of hand-crafted articles which should arrive in time for the Sale.

We need volunteers to staff the Kibera Booth at both sales for both Friday and Saturday. Can you Help? We also are always looking for additional sales opportunities. Contact one of the Kibera Committee members: Mary Bon, Becky Hudak, Marilyn Paarlberg, Diane Wuerstlin, or Steve Andersen.

Thank you for your prayers and support. Our sisters and brothers in Kibera benefit from every sale!

BLACK FRIDAY FAIR TRADE MARKET Delmar Reformed Church Nov. 28th and 29th

Kibera goods will be available at the Delmar Reformed Church Black Friday Sale on November 28th and 29th

Want to shop Black Friday but hate crowded malls? Do your holiday shopping at the [Fair Trade Market](#) at the Delmar Reformed Church November 28th and 29th.

Held from 9 am to 3 pm Friday, and 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, the sale features a wide range of vendors showcasing handcrafted gifts, housewares and accessories, as well as specialty foods and coffees.

There will be jewelry and crafts from **the Kibera Artisan's Cooperative** which First Church supports; African bags, cloth grocery and shoulder bags made in rural villages of Malawi using foot-powered sewing machines; Eden jewelry, Freeset t-shirts and Sak Saum handbags created by survivors of sex trafficking in China, India and Cambodia; and intricate Mayan Hands woven goods produced by women in Guatemala.

All proceeds from the sale not only directly support the artisans and their families, but are also reinvested back into the local communities to support various education, health care, nutrition and microloan initiatives.

Delmar Reformed Church is located at 386 Delaware Ave. in Delmar. Free, ample parking is available. Call 439-1609.

CAMP FOWLER FALL WEEKEND RETREAT

In September several members and friends of the church enjoyed a fall retreat at Camp Fowler near Speculator, New York. We played, hiked, talked and worshipped together and enjoyed the beauty of the Adirondacks and the facilities of the newly remodeled Chi Rho House.

We are already making plans for another weekend retreat next year. The Chi Rho House has been reserved for the weekend of March 13-15 (Friday evening though Sunday noon.) The cost, which includes lodging and meals, is \$100 per person double occupancy. Children ages 6-16 are half price and children under 6 are free. To reserve a place please send a deposit of \$50 per person with checks made payable to First Church in Albany. Come and join us for a winter hike, try on a pair of snow shoes, or just sit by the fire and relax.



ORANGE STREET PARKING LOT

Be Careful How You Park Vehicles

We need to make sure our vehicles are not over extended onto the sidewalk facing Orange Street. People with disabilities need sidewalk space to walk or use their wheelchair without difficulties.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA

Please send a note or call the church office by Friday, December 12th to order your Christmas Poinsettia. A minimum donation of \$10 per plant is requested. Make check payable to: First Church in Albany (marked:Poinsettias). After Christmas, the plants are shared with our homebound members.



The deadline for the December issue of *FAMILY* is November 14.



Memorials

In celebration of the life of **Patricia Merritt** a gift has been received from Harriet Sinclair for the **Music Fund**.

In celebration of the life of **Barent Staats** a gift has been received from an anonymous donor for the **Capital Campaign**.

In Sympathy

Our sympathy is extended to William Staats and family and friends on the death of his brother, Barent Staats on October 4, 2014.

Thank you

"I would like to thank my family at First Church for their kind words, thoughts and prayers during the time of my bereavement after the death of my great-granddaughter, A 'Myah. God Bless you all."

Deborah Anderson



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RETURN SERVICE REQUIRED