

The First Church **FAMILY**

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

November 2019

WORSHIP:

- 3 **All Saints Sunday (Communion)**
10:30 am Sanctuary Service:
 The Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston, preaching
 Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Coffee and Conversation
11:45 am Deacon's Meeting – Powell Room
1:00 pm Mother's Group Meeting – Powell Room
- 10 **Consecration Sunday**
10:30 am Sanctuary Service:
 Nat Phipps Jazz Trio
 Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post-service: Catered Lunch – Old Daley Inn
- 17 **Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost**
10:30 am Sanctuary Service:
 The Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston, preaching
 Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post Service: Coffee and Conversation
12:00 pm Joint Boards Meeting
- 24 **Christ the King Sunday - Thanksgiving Sunday**
10:30 am Sanctuary Service:
 The Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston, preaching
 Children & Worship (During Worship)
Post-service: Coffee & Conversation
11:45 am Pack Thanksgiving Baskets
12:00 pm First Church Readers

First Church welcomes the Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston as Senior Minister!



The Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston is a pastor, chaplain, speaker, veterans advocate and neurotheologian. Most recently she served as pastor of the Reformed Church of Cortlandtown in Montrose, New York. For more than seventeen years she provided pastoral care and counseling for veterans at the New York State Veterans Home in Montrose. She has been called by the Joint Boards to serve as the Senior Minister of the First Church in Albany.

Dr. Walston received a Bachelor of Arts, cum laude from Adelphi University, and a Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degree from New Brunswick Theological Seminary. She has also earned five units of clinical pastoral education, including a chaplain residency at Westchester Medical Center (a Level I trauma center).

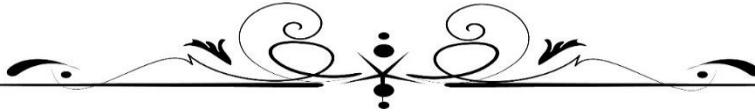
Dr. Walston served in the United States Army Reserves, completing basic training in Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and advanced training at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. She was a member of the chaplain candidacy corps.

The Rev. Dr. Walston has provided pastoral leadership in both the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Reformed Church in America, serving at Warwick, Bay Shore, Tarrytown, and Montrose, New York. She has implemented her philosophy of faith groups making a difference in their communities through local partnerships, outreach and volunteerism. In her recent 2019 mission trip to Ghana, Dr. Walston was able to share her research with, and offer preaching and support to the teachers and students at a local school. She received a citation from the pupils and staff of the Ho Bankow E.P. Primary School for her work.

A proponent of neuroscience and prayer as a means of fostering resilience, the Rev. Dr. Walston's doctoral research combined psychology, brain science, and theology. One example of her approach is in teaching individuals how to use centering prayer as a source of healing and refuge. Dr. Walston is a speaker, presenter and spiritual director for young women, addressing matters of career, education, dating, marriage, and motherhood. She also works ecumenically with men and women of all ages in dealing with their grief over the loss of a spouse through separation, divorce, or death. Dr. Walston feels called to work with individuals, faith groups, and community partners for stronger and more positive relationships on the local, national and global scenes.

In her free time, Dr. Walston enjoys music, reading, and participating in local theater. She lives with her son, Chance and their dog, Wonder.

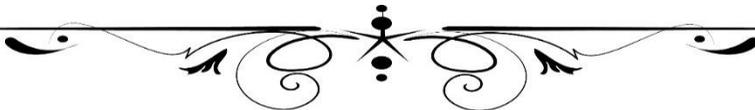
Biography supplied by the Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston and updated and edited for publication in the "First Church Family" newsletter.



AT HOME WITH THE WORD

**Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary - www.rca.org/athome
November 1st – November 30th.**

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Ephesians 1:11-23 | 16. Luke 21:5-19 |
| 2. Luke 19:1-10 | 17. Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost |
| 3. Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost | 18. Jeremiah 23:1-6 |
| 4. Haggai 1:15–2:9 | 19. Luke 1:68-79 |
| 5. Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21 | 20. Psalm 46 |
| 6. Job 19:23-27 | 21. Colossians 1:11-20 |
| 7. Psalm 17:1-9 | 22. Luke 23:33-38 |
| 8. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17 | 23. Luke 23:39-43 |
| 9. Luke 20:27-38 | 24. Christ the King Sunday |
| 10. Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost | 25. Isaiah 2:1-5 |
| 11. Isaiah 65:17-25 | 26. Psalm 122:1-5 |
| 12. Isaiah 12 | 27. Psalm 122:6-9 |
| 13. Malachi 4:1-2 | 28. Romans 13:11-14 |
| 14. Psalm 98 | 29. Matthew 24:36-39 |
| 15. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 | 30. Matthew 24:40-44 |



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 12:15pm and stay until you wish to leave. Each person pays for their own meal. Contact Donna E. Schultz at deschultz07@aol.com or (518) 429-1255.



DEACONS AT FIRST CHURCH

As defined by RCA Book of Church Order, Deacons play a key role in “moving their churches into missions of justice, mercy, and compassion.

- The Greek word in the Bible for deacon, *diakonos*, means servant. Jesus provided the ultimate role model for servanthood. Throughout his ministry he reminded his followers in word and deed that he was among them as one who serves.”
Deacons can serve in many areas especially in mission, hunger advocacy and relief efforts.

Our Deacons, Andy Mondore, Bill Kendall, Deb Anderson, Bob Dorn, and Erica Bliss met twice this fall and plan to meet again in November. At these meetings they discussed how they might serve those in need of shelter and food who walk through our doors Sunday mornings. They are currently working on developing a card with specific local shelters and services where people can get immediate help until they can get to more comprehensive services Monday morning. They will also be prepared to give a few food items and or a small food voucher for those who are hungry.

We are aware that it is often complex issues that lead people to homelessness. The Deacons see their role as being caring, nonjudgmental and a helping hand guiding those in need to the greater support of shelters which also provide mental health and substance abuse services, FOCUS breakfast programs and local food pantries.

This month the Deacons plan to take a tour of the Interfaith Program for the Homeless on Sheridan Ave. Deb Anderson is leading us on this project.

Faithfully Yours
Rev. Sue Cox

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP - A JOYFUL WAY TO WORSHIP GOD



The Children and Worship Team is looking forward to welcoming children ages 4 to 12 years back to the worship centers for our seventh year. This program year started with an “Open House” for children and parents on September 29, during worship. We will continue to meet each Sunday from October 6th through May during the 10:30 am worship service. Two groups are planned, one for 4 to 7- year-old children and another for those 8-12 years.

Children and Worship is a spiritual formation approach that presents a joyful way for children to worship God. Children are invited to experience the wonder and mystery of God through storytelling embedded in a liturgy of song, scripture, prayer and artistic expression. We hope that families will give prayerful consideration to their child’s participation in this worship experience.

As a team we have become concerned, however, about the program for 8-12-year old children. Last year, on numerous Sundays, worship leaders prepared stories and activities and one or no children attended. Worshipping alone is not a gratifying experience for children. Older children might be better served by the fellowship of regular worship rather than worshipping alone. *We plan to offer Children and Worship for the older children on a trial basis in October and November to assess whether we should continue.*

We invite your prayerful support for the Children and Worship program as we plan for the year ahead.

Like and follow us on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/ChildrenandWorshipatFC>.

Sara Bonam Welge

Co-leader of the C&W Team

FOOD PANTRY NEWS

In the months of September and October, the First Church Food Pantry was open a total of fifteen days and served 513 people in 313 households. Each person received twenty-one meals. That's what our super volunteers - First Church members and friends - and staff did in the past two months. Stop by some Monday or Wednesday morning to thank them for reaching out in Christ's name to feed our hungry neighbors on our behalf.



DAY LIGHT SAVINGS TIME END SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3rd.

It's the first weekend in November. You know what that means: It's time to "fall back." Or more specifically, time for us to move our clocks back as [daylight saving time](#) comes to an end.

It happens at 2 a.m. Sunday, in essence allowing most Americans to relive the 1 a.m. hour all over again. So, people will get an extra hour to sleep or maybe go over that sample ballot before voting on November 5th.



FOCUS CHURCHES OF ALBANY

FOCUS
CHURCHES OF ALBANY

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED!**

**WINTER BREAKFAST
STARTS ON NOV. 5TH:**

PREP COOK - TUESDAYS @ 6AM

**BREAKFAST VOLUNTEERS -
WEDNESDAYS @ 6:30AM**

**PLEASE CALL BELINDA:
518-443-0461**

THANK YOU!



**TOGETHER WE CREATE A
BETTER WORLD BY
SERVING PEOPLE IN NEED.**



***EACH MONTH WE'RE CELEBRATING AN IMPORTANT
AFRICAN AMERICAN COMPOSER***

November's composer is Thomas Andrew Dorsey

(July 1, 1899 – January 23, 1993)



- Called “Father of Gospel Music.”
- Born to pianist mother and minister father.
- By the age of 12 was supporting his family playing blues piano in brothels.
- Inheritor of Charles Tindley’s gospel music legacy (See *October FAMILY*).
- Conflict between his strict religious upbringing and love of bawdy, bluesy tunes led him to create what he called “gospel music,” “*the foot-stomping, soul-slapping sound that still fills black churches.*” (Obituary in *Variety*)
- First African American elected to the [Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame](#) and first in the [Gospel Music Association's](#) Living Hall of Fame.
- Formed the first gospel choir in 1932 at Chicago’s *Pilgrim Baptist Church*, and remained director there until the late '70s.
- Wrote *Precious Lord*, Martin Luther King’s favorite song, after his first wife
- died during childbirth with his infant son dying a day later.

Writing about the song in In his own words

“I sat down at the piano and my hands began to browse over the keys. Then something happened. I felt as though I could reach out and touch God. I found myself playing a melody, one I'd never heard or played before, and words came into my head - they just seemed to fall into place: Precious Lord Take my Hand.”

Finding a Voice

celebrating women composers

Each Month we'll celebrate a different women composer.

November's composer is

Eleanor Daley (1955 -)



- Born in Ontario, Canada.
- Studied in both piano and organ in both Canada and England.
- Holds degrees and diplomas in both piano and organ
- Commissioned composer throughout North America and Europe with over one hundred published works and numerous unpublished works.
- A highly respected choral clinician.
- A remarkable gift for melody and sensitive interweaving of text and music using contemporary poets.
- Director of Music at Fairlawn Avenue United Church, Toronto, Ontario since 1982 (*Incidentally, the same year Mary Bon started at First Church.*)
- The First Church choir has sung several of her works including *The Hidden Stream*, *Make of our church one joyful choir*, and *Angels visit when we sing*.

In her own words

“The music comes from the words I am setting. It’s like word painting,.... I try in every piece I write to write something that feels rewarding and touches one’s heart....”



CELEBRATING COMPOSER ANNIVERSARIES



HAPPY 150th ANNIVERSARY Sir Henry Walford Davies

KCVO OBE (6 September 1869 – 11 March 1941)

- Born in England near the Welsh border, seventh of nine children.
- Composed a wide variety of organ, choral and instrumental music.
- Prominent organist, conductor and educator.
- Father, an accountant, played the organ and directed a local choir.
- Boy chorister at St Georges Chapel, Windsor
- Exponent of Welsh music and musicians.
- During WW I commissioned a Major and director of music for the Royal Air Force.
- Awarded many honors including a knighthood and Master of the King's Music (Like our poet laureate).



We'll be doing your choral and organ music this month
Including his most famous choral work, *God be in my Head*.



CONSECRATION SUNDAY

Come Join Us for LUNCH and join in Fellowship with each other

Consecration Sunday, Nov. 10, 2019

Enjoy the Nat Phipps Trio

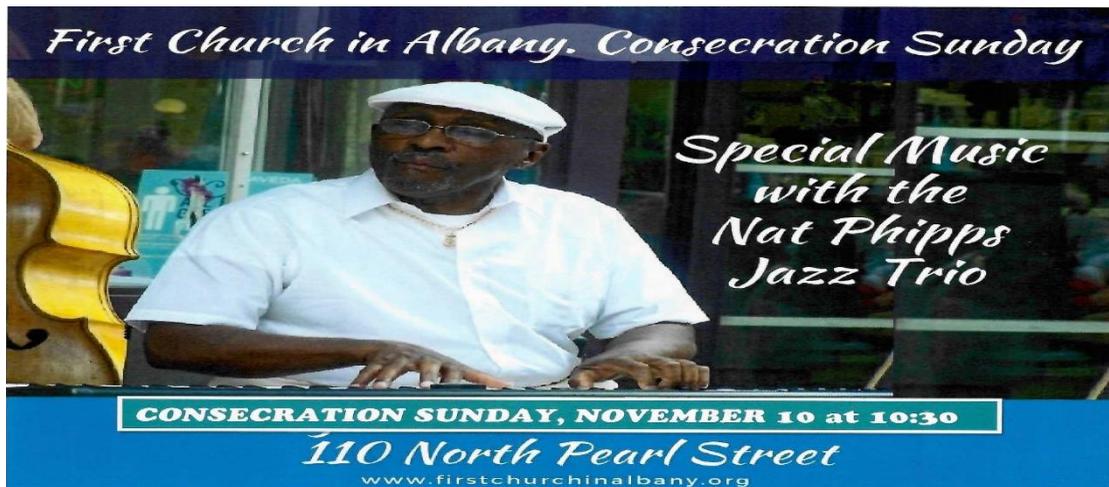
LUNCH is catered by Old Daley Inn to thank everyone for their dedication, love and fellowship throughout the year!!!

PLEASE RSVP by November 4, 2019

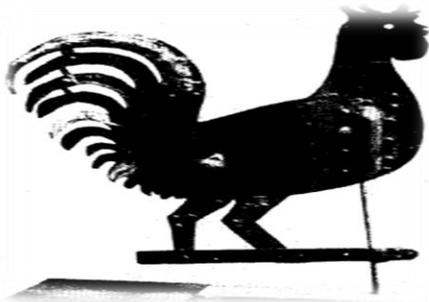
Email: [wwilliams@firstchurchinalbany.org](mailto:williams@firstchurchinalbany.org) or

Text: Becky Mondore (518) 961-2027

This year the Nat Phipps Jazz Trio will offer their musical gifts in worship on November 10th. Nat Phipps is a jazz pianist originally from Newark, New Jersey, where he spent most of his early professional years playing in New York City and New Jersey. Joining him will be drummer, Pete Sweeney and Pete Toigo on bass. The trio has played at the jazz vesper services at the First Reformed Church in Schenectady and we are delighted that they can join us in worship at First Albany.



WEATHERVANES – LEET’S TRAVEL

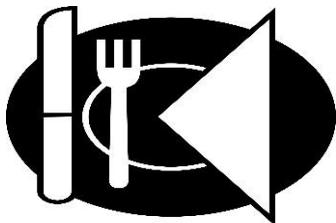


Join the Weathervanes on Wednesday, November 20th at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich. Dessert and beverages will be served. Ian and Edi Leet recently went on an extensive road trip through various parts of the country and will tell us about their adventures.

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



FIRST OVERFLOW HOMELESS SHELTER MEAL SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 22



For more than ten years First Church has been providing meals for the **Overflow Homeless Shelter** from November to April.

Our first dinners are: Friday, November 22 – Italian Dishes
Friday, December 6 - Chili

Can you help provide a dish (main dish, side dish, dessert,) once month? This year many of our regular contributors are no long able to help and we need your help to continue this ministry.

There's are Sign-up sheets on the Hospitality Table or talk to Mary Bon at 518- 339- 5460 or maryebon@verizon.net. It is an easy and rewarding way to serve!

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 be eligible for other shelters because of addictions or mental health issues. It turns nobody away.

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 24th, 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. On Tuesday, November 26th we will be distributing the Thanksgiving Baskets from 9:00 to 11:30 am.

Donations of other food items are needed including:

- stuffing
- cranberry sauce
- sweet potatoes gravy
- celery
- potatoes
- fresh items
- canned fruit
- yams
- carrots
- onions
- apples
- cake mix

FIRST CHURCH READERS MEETS NOVEMBER 24th



First Church Readers will meet November 24th after worship to discuss *Before We Were Yours* by Lisa Wingate.

Everyone is welcome.

Books we are considering for future months:

Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer

In the Hurricane's Eye: The Genius of George Washington and the Victory at Yorktown by Nathaniel Philbrick

The Hamilton Affair by Elizabeth Cobbs

POINSETTIA MEMORIALS

If you would like to order a poinsettia as a memorial to be shared with a homebound member or friend, or to take after Christmas to decorate your home, orders need to be placed by **Monday, December 2, 2019**. Please send a note or call the Church office (518) 463-4449 to order the flowers, to designate your memorial, and to indicate if you would like to share or take the plant. A minimum donation of \$10.00 per plant is required.

Checks should be payable to **First Church in Albany** (Note: Christmas Decorations/Poinsettias).

HANGING OF THE GREENS – 2019



Save the date – Saturday, December 7, 2019 will be our annual hanging of the greens work party. Come for a hot breakfast at (or after) 8:30 a.m., prepared by Ian Leet, and stay for the actual decoration itself, starting at 9:30 am.

There's going to be a new exciting look to the church spaces this year. Thanks to a generous gift from the estate of long-time member Thora Paton, we are buying high quality artificial greens that we will be hanging for the first time.

Replacing the traditional live greens means that we can decorate earlier in Advent and will reduce potential hazards and mess caused by them drying out and shedding.

The whole building will be done at the same time, allowing us to present our beautiful decorated church earlier in December than we have ever been able to do it before. Experience, a design and decoration firm from Schenectady, will be providing the greens and helping us mount them for the first time. Come, eat, and decorate!



PRE-SERVICE MUSIC AT 10:15 AM EACH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Beginning December 1st and each Sunday during Advent we have special music at 10:15 am in the sanctuary. Come to worship early to relax, refresh yourself, and prepare again for the coming of Christ.

HANDEL'S MESSIAH AT ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

On Sunday, December 8th at 3:00 pm, G. F. Handel's *Messiah* will be performed at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 107 State Street, Albany, with St. Peter's Choir (Neil Keen, conductor), soloists, chamber orchestra and organ (Mary Bon, organist). Come hear the prophecies and Christmas story through the ageless music of Handel. The concert is free, but there will be a free will offering.

MUSIC TASK FORCE



SPEAKING OF MUSIC...

WHO? you and the Music Task Force

WHAT? a conversation about the role of music at First Church

WHEN? 12 noon on 11/17/19 during the post-service coffee hour

WHERE? Zimmerman Hall

WHY?

- *We praise God through our music.*
- *Music binds us in community.*
- *Music challenges us to deepen our faith.*
- *Music touches our hearts.*
- *Music teaches us about cultures and neighbors.*
- *Music supports our understanding of God's Word.*

POSTPONED

**WATCH FOR
NEW DATE
IN JANUARY**



Life Isn't Always Easy

by Norma McClement

Life isn't always easy,
But there are always
The joyful times in between
Throughout the journey,
The pathway of "hope."

Today, a heavy gray-like coverlet
Fully fills the heaven above—
A gloomy reminder of the "low times,"
When raindrops persist
Like teardrops falling down the cheeks.

Yet, there is always "hope,"
The hope when the persistent rain ends
Likewise, the teardrops also.
Both stop at sunbeams' golden glowing
warmth.

There's a sudden feel of gladness,
The comfort of knowing "God's" peace.

Yes, those tender times the sunbeams bring
When the teardrops stop
After the rain.

In the Spring, from the ground
The seedlings grow into beautiful blooms,
Scent the air with their sweet perfume.

The plants' harvest feeds the hungry
For the poor and rich alike.

The sparrows sing their "Thanksgiving" tweets
From their cozy, warm home their mother
made for them
In the greenery of the treetop.

All is well in the world
For a time.
Yes, life isn't always easy,
But there is always "hope."

*May your Thanksgiving holiday be filled with all that's good.
May the Advent season, the celebration of the Christ Child's birth,
remind you that there is always hope for the world.*

FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY – OFFICERS



Deacons (5)

Andy Mondore (Sr)

Bob Dorn (Asst. Sr)

Deborah Anderson

Bill Kendal

Erica Bliss

Elders (6)

Norma Jean Ballou (Sr.)

Rebecca Mondore (Asst. Sr)

Tom Allison

Chip Welge

Joeanna Brown

Trustees (9)

Jim Folts (Pres)

Ross Weshuis (VP)

Andy Mondore (Secr)

Ray Van Epps

David Bradley

Joyce Recene

Ned Monthie

Wayne Sivaslian

Shirley Bone

THANK YOU's



Sandy Scudder wants everyone to know that she is overwhelmed by the number of cards she has received since her move to Wisconsin. She appreciates these well wishes more than words can say. She misses us all but is slowly adjusting to her new life.



Congratulations!



CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- Catherine Dufkin and William Dufkin married in the sanctuary on October 5, 2019.
- Amber Smith and Kyle Smith, married in the sanctuary on October 19, 2019.

FIRST CHURCH FACILITIES ARE USED AND AVAILABLE FOR USE

First Church has a large facility with various spaces that are convenient for groups of various sizes, with ample parking and a convenient location in downtown Albany. Each year several groups receive permission to use our facility. Such requests are approved by the Building Use Committee, composed of members of Leadership and the Treasurer. First Church charges fees to cover out-of-pocket expenses, though the fees are waived for an RCA or FOCUS-related event. A higher fee schedule applies to for-profit organizations. In addition, tours are offered to groups that are interested in First Church's history and architecture. And many individual visitors from places near and far come to First Church unscheduled and are welcome to take a self-guided tour of our historic sanctuary.

Here is a list of significant building use during the year 2019 so far:

1. Whitney M. Young, Jr. Health Center – Staff Meeting & Training – April 9, 2019.
2. Albany County Board of Elections - polling place – June 25, 2019 and November 5, 2019.
3. Dutch Settlers Society Board Meeting – October 16, 2019 (Society has met at First Church since its founding in 1924).
4. Taste of Troy Food Tours, LLC. - most Fridays 1:30 pm-1:50 pm - May thru October 2019.
5. Alcoholics Anonymous - Wednesdays at noon.
6. Black Heritage Tours – historical tour – October 23, 2019

If you know of a group that would like to use our facility, please refer them to Valerie Williams, Parish Administrator, for further information. Making our facilities available for varied uses and groups is part of good stewardship and our outreach to the community and city of Albany.

CALENDARS – NOTES – CARDS?

Do you get calendars or note cards that you do not use? Donate them to First Church. Leave them on the workroom table. We will distribute them to Food Pantry clients, other First Church members or use them to send greetings to shut-ins.



The deadline for the December issue of *FAMILY* is the November 15th.

