

The First Church **FAMILY**

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

October 2017

WORSHIP:

- 1 **Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost** (Communion)
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. John Paarlberg preaching
Post Service: Reception for John and Marilyn Paarlberg

- 8 **Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Bodden preaching
Post Service:

- 15 **Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. Rev. Lynn Bodden preaching
Post Service:

- 22 **Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. Lynn Bodden preaching
Post Service: First Church Readers

- 29 **Reformation Sunday**
10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. Dr. Gregg Mast preaching
1:00 PM- 375 Anniversary Luncheon at Normanside Country Club

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

FAMILY is published eleven times a year by First Church in Albany, 110 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12207

From the Interim Pastor

Dear Members and Friends of First Church,

After several spirited conversations with members of your leadership and a lunch with two members of the Albany Classis Vocation Development Committee, I'm ready to answer the call to minister among you during your interim time! Although I have had the blessing of serving many congregations as they have journeyed similar paths to yours, I know that each interim has its individual joys and challenges. I also am familiar with the ways that the God we know in Jesus Christ opens the way in times of change to lead into an unfolding, exciting and holy future. Thank you for calling me to share this time with you.

I've had some time to get ready! In the weeks since my work at First Reformed Church of Scotia ended, I have tackled a number of projects calling for my attention: teaching three groups of clergy interested exploring the ins and outs of interim ministry for the Interim Ministry Network; working with colleagues in coaching relationships; painting my garage and subduing the forest of weeds along our driveway. I can now let go of these things! I have biked many miles along the Mohawk River, visited my parents in Ohio, and read a couple novels. It's been a restorative time.

One additional project I've put off for two years and finally found the time to assemble countless kits of Legos left behind in our house by our adult sons. This job suits my love of puzzles and my need to organize! In the reflective space that opened during this project, I have had the insight that building Lego sets is a superb metaphor for the work of interim ministry. Together, you and I will be sifting through aspects of the life and ministry of First Church, discovering how pieces fit together, searching out not only the framework of vision, relationships, programs and the management that makes them possible, but the details as well. Sometimes pieces will be missing – and we'll have to decide whether to move on without them, or to keep searching. Sometimes missing pieces will emerge where we overlooked them, or had them plugged in somewhere else.

The goal of the interim time is to enable a congregation like yours to be clear about identity, scope of ministry and God's call to you at this time in your church's life, so that you are able to call the very best next minister to lead you forward. Investing your time and attention to that discernment through prayer and a variety of conversations and activities (assembling the pieces!) will make that make it possible to author a great church profile and empower your pastoral search committee to do its work confidently and well.

As I begin and as the days and weeks unfold, I will be full of questions. I encourage yours as well! I look forward to getting to know you, to hearing your stories, to sharing in worship and serving in Christ's name in Albany and beyond.

Praying God's peace among and between us,
Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden

Worship Service and Holy Communion Reception for John and Marilyn Paarlberg

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1ST, 2017

Members and friends of First Church in Albany are invited to participate in our service of worship and Holy Communion starting at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, October 1st. We will bid farewell and godspeed to Rev. John Paarlberg and Marilyn Paarlberg at a reception in Zimmerman Hall starting at 12:00 noon.

Rev. John Paarlberg has served as our Senior Minister since 2003. He has faithfully preached the Gospel from our historic pulpit, and lived the Gospel in his commitment to helping those in need and pain, healing our environment, and witnessing for peace in the Holy Land. Marilyn has been active in the life of First Church, especially in the choir, Children & Worship and the Kibera project. She also has a leadership role in the RCA's Room For All organization.

If you would like to share a note, letter, or picture with John and Marilyn on this occasion, please send it to Valerie Williams, parish administrator. You may put the item in Valerie's mailbox, or send it by e-mail to vwilliams@firstchurchinalbany.org

Pete Pagerey, Senior Elder
Erica Zetterholm-Bliss, Senior Deacon
Jim Folts, President, Board of Trustees

At Home with the WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary www.rca.org/athome
October 1st – October 31st

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost | 16. Exodus 33:12-23 |
| 2. Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 | 17. Psalm 99 |
| 3. Psalm 19 | 18. Isaiah 45:1-7 |
| 4. Isaiah 5:1-7 | 19. Psalm 96:1-9, (10-13) |
| 5. Psalm 80:7-15 | 20. 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 |
| 6. Philippians 3:4-14 | 21. Matthew 22:15-22 |
| 7. Matthew 21:33-46 | 22. Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost |
| 8. Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost | 23. Deuteronomy 34:1-12 |
| 9. Exodus 32:1-14 | 24. Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17 |
| 10. Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23 | 25. Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 |
| 11. Isaiah 25:1-9 | 26. Psalm 1 |
| 12. Psalm 23 | 27. 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 |
| 13. Philippians 4:1-9 | 28. SMatthew 22:34-46 |
| 14. Matthew 22:1-14 | 29. Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost |
| 15. Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost | 30. Joshua 3:7-17 |
| | 31. Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37 |

Letter to Congregation from Pastor John Paarlberg

Dear Friends,

I will conclude my time as pastor of First Church after the worship service on Sunday, October 1, and on October 2 the Rev. Lynn Carman-Bodden will begin her service as interim minister. During the interim period the Rev. David Jones and Elder Nancy Landrigan will serve as the Classis supervisory team for First Church. David is the pastor of the Greenbush Reformed Church. Nancy is the stated clerk of Albany Classis, and a member of the Delmar Reformed Church. (She has also helped organize and lead the day camp at First Church for the past several years.) They will attend meetings of the consistory will work with the members of the joint boards and Rev. Bodden, in offering guidance and support during the interim process and the search for a new senior minister.

At the September meeting the consistory and I agreed to a “Covenant of Separation.” This is an agreement required by the Albany Classis whenever a pastor completes his or her time of service at a congregation. It makes clear that I will be relinquishing all pastoral and administrative duties and will no longer function as part of the pastoral ministry of the First Church in Albany. In order to be supportive of the future pastoral and congregational leadership of First Church I will not receive any negative comments or participate in any conversation or activity which might undermine any program or person.

My future contacts with you will be as friends and not in a pastor/parishioner relationship. That also means that I will not participate in weddings, funerals, or baptisms, nor engage in any hospital pastoral visitation, unless requested by the consistory, so that your relationship with the new pastor or interim may develop.

I know the language of this “Covenant of Separation” is a bit cold and formal but I think it’s important that together we recognize how our relationship will change and how we can help each other make space for new relationships to flourish.

But more meaningful than a formal covenant will be to acknowledge this transition within the context of worship which is what we will do on October 1. At that worship service we will remember and celebrate the past, give thanks for what has been good, forgive each other for mistakes made and expectations not met, and release each other from the promises we made to each other when I as installed as your pastor.

This is a bittersweet time for me, and I assume for you as well. It’s wonderful to be able to recall memories, to celebrate and give thanks for good things that have happened. It’s challenging, if not impossible, to put into words what we have meant to each other. And though it’s hard to say good-bye, I know that we can do that well and with grace so that we can look forward to a future that is shaped but not bound by the past, and confident that God is with us and leading us into new and fruitful days ahead.

Fondly,
John

Discipleship Growth Through Pilgrim's Walk



Throughout his tenure here, John has nudged this congregation toward a *culture of discipleship* in which a key role of the church is equipping people for ministry. It was just a year ago when we began post-service discussions of the future of the church in a post-Christian world. We've talked about being "the church in exile," "seeking the welfare of the city," "taking our love into the public square," and other --- frankly, scary---challenges. We worried about change; wondered where we might be led as spirit

and mission are brought together; worried about how we would be asked to change our lives.

It does not have to be intimidating. Here is one small example. You've heard us talk about Pilgrim's Walk, the 6 to 8 week discussion series Sue developed for people in the last third of life. After starting the group here, Sue and Sandy and Joeanna and I have taken the program to Sheehy Manor, Beltrone, and Beverwyck retirement communities. In the first year at Beverwyck, after Sue's initial involvement, I continued to meet with the group. In the second year, another participant, Julia, and I continued the group. Now we're entering year 3 and Julia and I are facilitating the discussions with input from 3 additional group members. We have a new name, "Continuing the Pilgrimage: An Interfaith Discussion Group for Men and Women" and we are using a new book. The focus remains on the spiritual aspects of aging.

In other words, *Pilgrim's Walk has grown up and become independent*. In itself, that is a "joy" of the congregation.

And here is the reassuring part for those of us concerned that being led by the spirit might be too demanding, too challenging, too threatening: *God seems to run an effective placement service*. In some way, all 6 of us leading the Beverwyck group have been teachers. We were all given teaching---along with faith---as a gift of the spirit. Through First Church's Pilgrim's Walk outreach to serve the city and seek the welfare of the city, we are finding our welfare, well-being, and wholeness. As we strive to be open to spirit-led growth and change, may we also trust that *God "knows us by name,"* knows our gifts, and will place us in a great internship.

Cheryl Gowie, September 17, 2017

Children and Worship Open House



Sunday October 8th

During Worship (after the children's moment)

Come hear a story and see the Worship Center

Meet some of our storytellers and greeters

We will begin weekly worship October 15th

Ages 4-7 and Ages 8-12

Bring a friend ☺

Children and Worship We will have our **Open House on October 8th** (during adult worship) and begin **weekly worship on October 15th**. We hope you will invite children you know whose parent or guardian might be a neighbor, a friend, or someone you know at work. We will offer both a worship time for children ages 4-7 and 8-12. We hope you will visit our worship centers soon!

Hurricane Offering

For the month of October First Church is receiving a special offering for Church World Service for Hurricane Relief. Checks can be made payable to the First Church in Albany and designated "hurricane relief."

Like to Sing? Join the Choir!

We love to welcome new members to the choir. If you are looking for a community of friends that love singing, want to serve First Church and are looking for ways to better understand our faith, come join the choir! We resume rehearsals on Thursday, September 14 at 7:00 pm. You don't need to read music or have any special talent; just a love of singing. Choir rehearsals have started, but there is still time to join the choir. We meet Thursdays at 7:00 pm in the choir room on the second floor of the education building. Come join us for fun, food, fellowship and song.

Everyone's welcome. You don't need to read music or have any special talent; just a love of singing. Make a joyful noise, deepen your faith and spread the good news with your song.

Help First Church Provide Overflow Homeless Shelter Meals!

Since 2008 First Church has been providing meals for the Shelter each month from November to April.

The Shelter opens in November and to continue the ministry we need people willing to provide a dish and help deliver the food.

Sign-up on the Shelter sheet on the Hospitality Table or talk to Mary Bon at 518-463-4449 or marybon@firstchurchinalbany.org. 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 is open during the winter months and turns nobody away.

Weathervanes. First Church Architect Philip Hooker



Join the Weathervanes for fellowship, lunch, and a program on Wednesday, October 18th, at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. Bring a sandwich. Coffee, tea, and dessert will be served.

First Church was Albany’s first architect Philip Hooker’s first public commission. He is counted among our nation’s premier early architects. Tom Allison will tell us all about him at the October meeting.

Please telephone Audrey Ming (518- 456-5485) to let her know you plan to attend.

Library Open House- Thank You

Thank you to all who visited the newly decorated library at the Open House on Sunday, September 17th. Everyone is welcome to see the new sitting/reading area for children and adults. All the books have now been categorized into 23 categories ranging from a parenting section, children’s section, inspirational section to a church history section. The library is open weekdays during office hours and on Sundays. Come see Mary, Carol, Joeanna and Cindy and they’ll gladly show you around and answer any questions you may have! Book donations still accepted.

Special Heritage Service and Luncheon – October 29, 2017



As the final event in our year-long celebration of our Three Hundredth Seventy Fifth Anniversary, we will be having a grand service on Reformation Sunday, October 29, 2017.

Morning worship at 10:30 will be led by the Reverend Dr. Gregg Mast. To observe this landmark event, a special hymn written by Mary Louise Bringle has been commissioned and will be sung as part of the service.

We will gather again 1:00 p.m. at Normanside Country Club in Delmar for a celebratory dinner. Albany historian and retired Assembly Member the Honorable Jack McEneny will be guest speaker. It will also be an opportunity to meet our interim minister the Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden.

The cost for the meal is \$20.00 for adults and \$10.00 for young people 10 and under. Please return your check and reservation by Friday, October 13. Extra copies of the invite and reservation envelopes are on the table in the church lobby.

If you wish get or give a ride from the church to the Normanside (150 Salisbury Road, Delmar, NY 12054) and back please speak to Tom Allison or Shirley Bone.

This will be a great tremendous time to celebrate First Church together!

New Hymn during October 29th Anniversary Celebration

On October 29 we will sing a new hymn text, "At the Heart of Human History," written specially for our Anniversary Service by noted hymn writer, Mel Bringle, Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies and chair of the Humanities Division at Brevard College, Brevard, NC. Ms. Bringle has won numerous international hymn writing competitions and been featured as an "emerging text writer" by The Hymn Society. GIA has published two single-author collections of her hymns (*Joy and Wonder, Love and Longing* in 2002, and *In Wind and Wonder* in 2007.) She is currently serving as President of The Hymn Society and was chair of the committee to create a new hymnal for the Presbyterian Church USA.

The hymn, sung to a familiar tune, 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."

First Church Readers Meets October 22



First Church Readers will meet on October 22 after the worship service to discuss *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* by J. D. Vance. Vance, a former marine and Yale Law School graduate offers a powerful account of growing up in a poor Rust Belt town, and gives a broader, probing look at the struggles of America's white working class.

The group is open to everyone. Come join us!

Upcoming books are:

November *For One More Day* Mitch Albom

From the author of *Tuesdays with Morie*, a novel about a grown child given the chance to have one more day with the mother he lost to the shifting loyalties and relationships of divorce.

No December Meeting

January *Underground Railroad*

Colson Whitehead's Pulitzer Prize winning novel interweaves fantasy and history, past and present, in a jarring, graphic retelling of the brutal history of slavery through the story of the escaping slave, Cora. The Underground Railroad here is not just a metaphor but has real engineers and conductors operating a secret network of tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil to help escaping slaves

February *Lily and the Octopus* by Steven Rowley

"An authentic, keenly insightful, hilarious and heartbreakingly poignant tribute to the purity of love between a pet dachshund and its human." Booklist (starred review)

Other books you might like to explore:

The Beauty of Impermanence: A Woman's Memoir by Frances Barnhart.

Amazon says "in this captivating memoir, Barnhart takes us on her eight-decade journey as an artist, spiritual explorer, community organizer, interfaith minister, self-styled evolutionary, mother and grandmother."

After long silence: a memoir Helen Fremont. Brought up Roman Catholic Fremont was told her grandparents and relatives died in a bomb. As she journeys into her family's past she discovers her parents actually were Holocaust survivors who survived by burying their past under a cloak of silence.

If you have ideas for books for the reading group pass them on to Mary Bon at marybon@firstchurchinalbany.org or 518-463-4449.

Volunteers Needed for the First Church Food Pantry

The First Church Food Pantry is in need of a few volunteers for Wednesdays in October and beyond. If you can help out one Wednesday a month or most Wednesdays from 8:45 to 11:30 please contact Lorraine at [518-443-0460](tel:518-443-0460) or via email at lorraine@focuschurches.net.

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 or 518.429.1255.

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The deadline for the October issue of *FAMILY* is October 13.

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Congratulations

Happy Birthday to Joline Mondore who celebrated her 90th birthday on September 22, 2017.

Welcome Child of God!

On Sunday, September 24, we celebrated the sacrament of baptism and welcomed Clay Orion-Paul into the body of Christ. Clay is the son of Adrienne, grandson of Peter & Ruth Pagerey and brother of Clover.

In Honor

In honor of Joline Mondore's 90th Birthday a gift was received from Joyce Recene for the Clee Park Fund.

In honor of Joline Mondore's 90th Birthday a gift was received from Denise Lobdell for the Clee Park Fund.

In honor of Joline Mondore's 90th Birthday a gift was received from Cindy Gillespie for the Clee Park Fund.

A First Church Farewell to Pastor John Paarlberg



Pastor Paarlberg,

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you.
May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

The members and friends of the First Church in Albany



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