

The First Church in Albany

Blessing of the Thanksgiving Bags

Sunday, November 17, 2024, 10am

The First Church in Albany (Reformed Church in America)

Founded in 1642;
Continuing in Ministry
Today.

In response to God's unconditional love for all people made known to us in Jesus Christ, we are called to be a welcoming and affirming community.

The First Church in Albany includes young and old, families, couples and singles, rich and poor, persons of various races, ethnicities, backgrounds, sexual orientation and gender identities, differing physical and mental abilities, believers and seekers. We welcome into the full life of the church all those whom God sends us. Centered in Christ, we commit ourselves to breaking down dividing walls and building a community where we are loved.

Prelude Reflection *haiku* for today's worship

In the autumn light,
we see bounty, love, and care—
God's hand in it all.

Prelude

"Trumpet Tune"

M. McCabe

Joshua Bliss, Bari-Saxophone

"Trumpet Dialogue"

A. Fedak

Tolling of Bell

Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing II Corinthians 13:14

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." **Amen.**

Call to Worship *Based on Psalm 16*

Votum: Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. **Amen.**

Leader: Come, let us find refuge in the Lord, for God is our strength and security.

People: We declare, "You are our Lord; apart from you, we have no good thing."

Leader: The Lord shows us the path of life and fills us with joy in His presence.

People: We rejoice, for God is our portion and our inheritance; our future is secure.

Leader: Together, let us bless the Lord, who counsels us and guides our hearts.

People: With glad hearts, we worship, for God is our everlasting hope!

***Opening Hymn** *“Here In This Place, Gather Us In “* (see p.4)

Prayer of Confession *Based on a prayer from the Rev. Dr. Tom Cheatham, PC(USA)*

O God, still creating, we hear your promises of a new day of joy and peace, and we are skeptical. We expect things to go from bad to worse. The past keeps us guilty; the future makes us afraid; and the present burdens us with too little time and too much to do. Forgive us for not making room for your faithfulness. Do a new thing in our hearts, and let us be glad and rejoice that you are still creating; through Christ we pray. Amen.

Time of silence

Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law

The God who still creates and makes all things new speaks peace to our hearts: In Christ, we are forgiven, a new creation. By God’s grace, we are freed to live anew. So, forgiven and free, let us live differently. Live today with a renewed spirit, making space for God's faithfulness to create something new and transform our lives and world.

***Passing the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us rise if able and spend a few moments greeting one another with Christ’s peace.



Bio for Rev. Kent Busman: Rev. Kent Busman is more commonly known as “Uncle Kent” as he has been the Executive Director of Camp Fowler for the last 38 years. The camp serves over 600 children each summer with 1,000s of year round guests and has become a place of community, simplicity, and caring for creation. Kent lives with his wife, Jill, and dog, Obadiah. When he is not out among the trees you may find him woodworking, canoeing, basketweaving or storytelling.

Prayer for Illumination *Please sing, pg 322 in pew hymnal*

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me. Mold me. Fill me. Use me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me!

First Lesson Isaiah 65:17-25, p. 607 in pew bible

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Second Lesson Philippians 2:1-11, p. 954 in pew bible

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks Be to God

Sermon *"When your reach exceeds your grasp"*

A Prayer of Blessing on the Word

***Hymn of Response** *"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"* (see p.5)

Blessing of Thanksgiving Bags (see p. 8 & 9)

Tithes & Offerings *If you would like to connect more with the life and mission of First Church, please fill out a Welcome Card found in your pew and place it in the offering as it goes by.*

Offertory

***Doxology #592** in pew hymnal

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we	forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.
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Sending Hymn *"O For A World"* (see p. 7)

***Charge & Blessing**

Postlude *"Now Thank We All Our God"* S. Karg-Elert

Notes: Please join us in Zimmerman Hall to hear from Rev. Kent Busman, Executive Director of Camp Fowler. After hearing from Kent, we will pack our Thanksgiving Bags for our pantry guests

Preacher: Rev. Kent Busman
Liturgists: Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston
and Rev. Trey Tirpak
Organist: Iteke Prins
Vocalist and/or specialist: Joshua Bliss, bari-Saxophone
Audio/Visual: Joshua Bliss and Stephen Reohr

Here in This Place

Gather Us In

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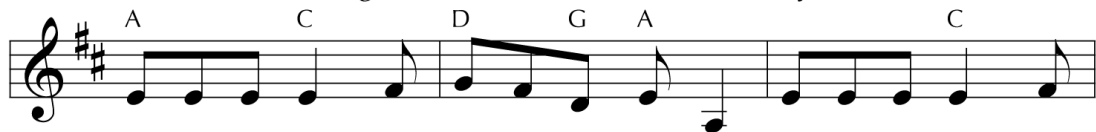
1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing; now is the dark-ness
 2 We are the young, our lives are a mys-tery. We are the old who
 3 Here we will take the wine and the wa-ter; here we will take the
 4 Not in the dark of build-ings con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,



van-ished a-way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings
 yearn for your face. We have been sung through-out all of his-tory,
 bread of new birth. Here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,
 light years a-way: here in this place the new light is shin-ing;



brought here to you in the light of this day.
 called to be light to the whole hu-man race.
 call us a-new to be salt for the earth.
 now is the king-dom, and now is the day.



Gath-er us in, the lost and for-sak-en; gath-er us in, the
 Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty; gath-er us in, the
 Give us to drink the wine of com-pas-sion; give us to eat the
 Gath-er us in and hold us for-ev-er; gath-er us in and



blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a-wak-en;
 proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low-ly;
 bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash-ion
 make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to-geth-er,



we shall a-rise at the sound of our name.
 give us the cour-age to en-ter the song.
 lives that are ho-ly and hearts that are true.
 fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

The "you/your" mentioned in every stanza is never identified, but this 1979 hymn is clearly a corporate prayer to God on behalf of the diverse congregation who have assembled for worship, longing to be transformed and used as God's witnesses and for God's purposes.

39 Great Is Thy Faithfulness

1 *Great is thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther;
 2 Sum - mer and win - ter, and spring - time and har - vest,
 3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth,

there is no shad - ow of turn - ing with thee.
 sun, moon, and stars in their cours - es a - bove
 thine own dear pres - ence to cheer and to guide,

Thou chang - est not; thy com - pas - sions they fail not.
 join with all na - ture in man - i - fold wit - ness
 strength for to - day and bright hope for to - mor - row:

As thou hast been thou for - ev - er wilt be.
 to thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.
 bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

**Or "Great is thy faithfulness, O God, Creator."*

Written as a meditation on Lamentations 3:22–23, this text is one of the few hymns among the 1200 poems by this Methodist writer and pastor that has gained much currency. The tune that appears here was composed especially for these words, and the pairing has proved enduring.

Refrain

Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Great is thy faith - ful - ness!
 오 신 실 하 신 주 오 신 실 하 신 주

Morn - ing by morn - ing, new mer - cies I see.
 날 마 다 자 비 를 베푸 시 며

All I have need - ed thy hand hath pro - vid - ed.
 일 용 할 모 든 것 내 려 주 시 니

Great is thy faith - ful - ness, Lord un - to me!
 오 신 실 하 신 주 나 의 구 주

O for a World

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1 O for a world where ev - ery - one re - spects each oth - er's ways,
2 O for a world where goods are shared and mis - er - y re - lieved,
3 We wel - come one world fam - i - ly and strug - gle with each choice
4 The poor are rich; the weak are strong; the fool - ish ones are wise.
5 O for a world pre - par - ing for God's glo - rious reign of peace,

where love is lived and all is done with jus - tice and with praise.
where truth is spo - ken, chil - dren spared, e - qual - i - ty a - chieved.
that o - pens us to u - ni - ty and gives our vi - sion voice.
Tell all who mourn: out - casts be - long, who per - ish - es will rise.
where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

Everything longed for in this text is a reminder of how far our present world is from what God wants. Yet this is not just wishful thinking; it is a call to action, a summons to participate in the fulfillment of God's desire for all earth's people to live in radical *shalom*.

TEXT: Miriam Therese Winter, 1987
MUSIC: Carl Gottlieb Gläser, 1828; arr. Lowell Mason, 1839
Text © 1990 Medical Mission Sisters

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Blessing of the Thanksgiving Bags given to our pantry families

PRESENTATION

Here at First Church, we believe in radical generosity—that is, extravagantly sharing from the abundance God has given us. Through these Thanksgiving Bags, we offer not only food but also a gesture of love and care. This offering is a way to show that Thanksgiving can be a reminder of God’s generosity and care. So, as we bless these bags, we pray that each one brings Christ’s hope, warmth, and joy to our pantry guests this holiday.

THANKSGIVING FOR VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

Our food pantry ministry would not be possible without our wonderful and dedicated volunteers and staff. If you are part of our pantry ministry, please rise so we can recognize you.

LITANY TO BLESS OUR THANKSGIVING BAGS

Leader: God of abundance, we thank you for the gift of food which nourishes our bodies and souls.

People: Bless these bags, that they may be signs of your love and provision.

Leader: May each item bring comfort, warmth, and hope to those who receive it.

People: Bless our guests with Christ’s peace and fullness this season.

Leader: Let these gifts be a reminder of your care through us, your people.

People: And, may your love be known in every home, every meal, and every heart. Amen.

We're excited to share some important updates about our Food Pantry!

This year, we shifted our hours of operation. We are now open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9-11:30 AM. This change allows us to better schedule deliveries and ensure our pantry is well-stocked for our guests.

To give you an idea of all that we give, for an average month we usually get over 12,000 pounds of goods delivered—everything from food goods, fresh produce, frozen meats, hygiene products, etc. We not only meet the legal requirements for distribution, but we generously exceed them. On average, 36-40 households visit the pantry at each opening. Take a look at October's numbers to get a sense of how many people we typically serve:

<u>October 2024</u>		
Households:	293	14% increase from 2023
Children:	233	14% increase from 2023
Adults:	360	10% increase from 2023
Seniors:	130	14% increase from 2023
Total Individuals:	723	

We're also proud to announce that we have reached Gold Status, the highest quality level for our region! This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our volunteers and staff, especially our Pantry Coordinator, Lynne Fuierer. We've also been fortunate to receive three different grants, which help support and expand our ability to serve our neighbors. Additionally, we are now participating in Nourish New York through FOCUS Churches of Albany, which provides us with fresh produce from New York farmers.

Looking to the end of our year, we're again excited to stage our Christmas Boutique, which will give brand-new Christmas presents to pantry guests and their families. Thank you for your continued support as we strive to be radically generous!

P.S. Our Thanksgiving Bags are intentionally filled with special items to make the holiday that extra something. Rest assured, those receiving these bags will also receive full orders of pantry supplies this month.

PRAYERS, CONCERNS & JOYS

- For Rebecca Keller, Zaquan West, family and friends of Andy Mondore as they mourn his passing.
- For the congregation of Elijah Missionary Church of Albany after a devastating fire.
- For the family and friends of The Rev. Dr. Robert A. White. Rev. White was a very active minister and educator with the RCA, who also served locally.
- The Rev. Leroy Koopman, minister, author, lifelong learner via HASP, active in music and theater in Holland MI.
- The Rev. Carlton Bruce Wierks, active in the RCA in many varied roles.
- For the Johnson family, mother of three who passed. Prayers for children and grandchildren.
- For Mark, the cousin of a pantry guest, and his family
- For Baby Stella and her family, as she continues to grow stronger and they look forward to her coming home (daughter of Kaitlyn Bliss and Victor)
- For the Lloyd family for the passing of Donald
- Stephen Giguere, Virginia's husband, diagnosed with cancer
- Shawn Giguere, Virginia's son, with a health diagnosis
- David Allen, recovering from emergency surgery
- Donna Linen's health concerns, friend of the Dorn's
- Teresa Wheeler's grandmother Cindy, with health concerns
- Donna Jones
- Michelle Williams
- Mia Westman
- Becky Gardner
- Carol LaBatte
- For Jennifer Recene Gallagher
- Ken Lucas, friend of Philip Labatte
- Harold Bushnel
- Alex Bliss
- Mary Weijola
- Cheryl Gowie
- Anthony, of the Brown Family
- Olivia Gaydushek
- Ministers, staff, and leaders of First Church as they move forward into our everchanging world.
- Those dealing with natural disasters exasperated by climate change.
- Prayers for Ukraine, Israel and Palestine and all areas of conflict across the globe. May we all remember to lead with love.
- For an end to gun violence here in Albany, in the U.S., and around the world.
- For government officials at all levels as we move forward into the new year.

If you have a concern or joy you would like to share with our church family, email office@firstchurchinalbany.org or call the office at 518-463-4449



SOUP & SANDWICHES
Cleeⁱⁿ Park
Wednesday, 11:30am

Join us in the park for lunch. Fresh homemade soup and sandwiches. Free to all. Caring for our neighbors.

If you would like to volunteer to serve on a Wednesday, please contact office@firstchurchinalbany.org

#firstchurchinmotion





December



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>1</p> <p>Worship 10am</p> <p>Communion Sunday</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p> <p>2nd HOUR</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p> <p>New Day Prayer Shawl Mtg. 11:30am</p> <p>BIBLE Zoom Study 1:00pm</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Soup & Sandwiches 11:30am</p> <p>Centering Prayer 12pm</p> <p>12pm</p> <p>Weather vanes 12:30pm</p> <p>BIBLE Zoom Study 7:30pm</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Downtown Hot Chocolate Stroll 11am-3pm</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Worship 10am</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p> <p>Deadline for Toys for Tots Joint Boards Mtg</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p> <p>BIBLE Zoom Study 1:00pm</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Boutique at 1st 9am</p> <p>Soup & Sandwiches 11:30am</p> <p>Centering Prayer 12pm</p> <p>12pm</p> <p>Blue Christmas 7pm</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Worship 10am</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p> <p>2nd HOUR</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Boutique at 1st 9am</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p> <p>BIBLE Zoom Study 1:00pm</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Soup & Sandwiches 11:30am</p> <p>Centering Prayer 12pm</p> <p>12pm</p> <p>BIBLE Zoom Study 7:30pm</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Worship 10am</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p> <p>2nd HOUR</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Pantry Closed</p> <p>Brass Quartet 6:30 pm</p> <p>Christmas Eve 7pm</p>	<p>25</p> <p>MERRY CHRISTMAS</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Worship 10am</p> <p>Coffee Hour</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Pantry 9am</p> <p>New Year's Eve</p>	<p>January 1</p> <p>HAPPY NEW YEAR!</p> <p>Office Closed</p>			

Key:



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY



NOVEMBER 2024

MON

18

THANKGIVING DISTRIBUTION DAY

9 AM

TUE

19

PANTRY ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

9 AM

1 PM

WED

20



SOUP & SANDWICHES CENTERING PRAYER

11:30PM

12 PM

AA MEETING

12 PM

WEATHERVANES

12:30 PM

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

7:30PM

THU

21

PANTRY CHOIR REHEARSAL

9 AM

6:30 PM

SUN

24

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY WORSHIP

10 AM

FIRSTKIDS (FORMERLY 9UP)

POTLUCK & HANGING OF THE GREENS

FOCUS THANKS & GIVING AT WESTMINSTER 12PM

FOR MORE INFO VISIT US AT
WWW.FIRSTCHURCHINALBANY.ORG



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