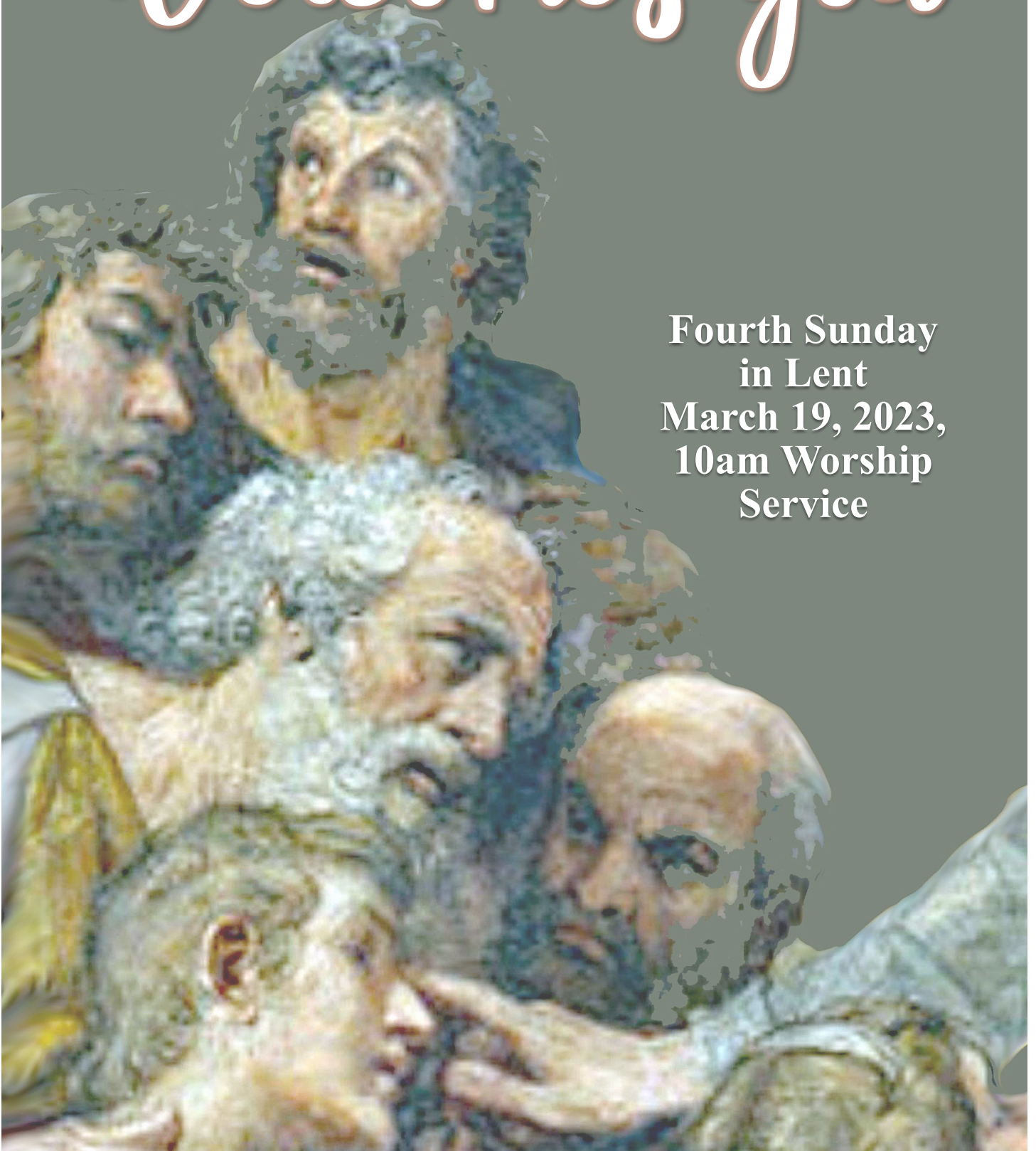


Welcomes you

The First Church in Albany

Fourth Sunday
in Lent
March 19, 2023,
10am Worship
Service



The First Church in Albany

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.

(Reformed Church in America)

Founded in 1642; Continuing in Ministry Today.

Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 19, 2023



LENT

Prelude Reflection *John Newton*

Amazing grace, How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost. But now I am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

Prelude

"I Call to Thee Lord Jesus Christ"
organ

J.S. Bach

Tolling of Bell: *bell tolled by children of First Church*

Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing *Ephesians 5:14*

...For everything that becomes visible is light. Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you.

Lenten Introit & Draping of the Cross (Taizé) X3

Wait for the Lord

Lento (♩ = 48)

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Prayer in the spirit of the Taizé Community is a meditative form of common prayer. Gathered in the presence of Christ we sing uncomplicated, repetitive songs, uncluttered by too many words, allowing the mystery of God to become tangible through the beauty of simplicity. A few words sung over and over again reinforce the meditative quality of prayer. They express a basic reality of faith that can quickly be grasped by the intellect and that gradually penetrates the whole being. Silence is observed by all prior to the service for prayer and reflection.

Call to Worship Psalm 23

Leader: The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his names sake.

People: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Leader: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

ALL: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

*Opening Hymn

We Cannot Measure How You Heal

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is primarily in the Soprano and Alto parts, with the Tenor and Bass parts providing harmonic support. The lyrics are arranged in three systems, each with four lines of text corresponding to the four parts of the choir. The first system contains three lines of text, and the second and third systems each contain two lines of text. The lyrics are as follows:

1 We can - not mea - sure how you heal or
2 The pain that will not go a - way, the
3 So some have come who need your help and

an - swer ev - ery suf - ferer's prayer, yet
guilt that clings from things long past, the
some have come to make a - mends, as

we be - lieve your grace re - sponds where
fear of what the fu - ture holds, are
hands which shaped and saved the world are

faith and doubt u - nite to care. Your
pres - ent as if meant to last. But
pres - ent in the touch of friends. Lord,

hands, though blood - ied on the cross, sur -
pres - ent too is love which tends the
let your Spir - it meet us here to

vive to hold and heal and warn, to
hurt we nev - er hoped to find, the
mend the bod - y, mind, and soul, to

car - ry all through death to life and
pri - vate ag - o - nies in - side, the
dis - en - tan - gle peace from pain, and

cra - dle chil - dren yet un - born.
mem - o - ries that haunt the mind.
make your bro - ken peo - ple whole.

TEXT: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1989
MUSIC: Scottish melody; arr. John L. Bell, 1989
Text and Music © 1989 WGRG, Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

YE BANKS AND BRAES
LMD

Prayer of Confession

Lord, we confess that we prefer the way of comfort. Too often you call us into spaces that are hard and we turn away. We know that conflict can cultivate positive change. Help us to be willing to walk in the paths of righteousness for your name sake. When the road is rough, the going is tough, and the hills are hard to climb, may you be our choice.

Time of silence

Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law Ephesian 5:8-9

Hear the assurance of our Lord, “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth).”

*Passing the Peace



Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with a hand-sign of peace.

Children’s Message & Blessing *Standing in the Need of Prayer*

Choir Anthem

“When Lazarus Lay within the Tomb”

D.A. White

*When Lazarus lay within the tomb,
held fast in bonds of death,
the voice of Jesus brought him forth,
restored to life and breath.*

*Yet through out anger, fear, and grief
our Lord stands always near,
shares all our anguish, helps us lift
the load of pain we bear.*

*Still Jesus calls, “Come forth and live!”
For freedom we were born,
throw off the graveclothes of despair
this resurrection morn!*

Prayer for Illumination *for the season of Lent*

As these ancient words are read, as these stories reach our ears, prepare our hearts for change; confirm, disrupt, disturb. Surprise us!

(John Thornburg, Itke Prins)

Sermon Text John 9:1-25 (please read until verse 41 at home)

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

When Winning Looks Like Losing

A Prayer of Blessing on the Word

*Hymn of Response Healer of Our Every Ill

Refrain at beginning and end

Refrain

Heal - er of our ev - ery ill, light of each to - mor - row,
give us peace be - yond our fear, and hope be - yond our sor - row.

1 You who know our fears and sad - ness, grace us with your peace and
2 In the pain and joy be - hold - ing how your grace is still un -
3 Give us strength to love each oth - er, ev - ery sis - ter, ev - ery
4 You who know each thought and feel - ing, teach us all your way of

glad - ness; Spir - it of all com - fort, fill our hearts.
fold - ing, give us all your vi - sion, God of love.
broth - er; Spir - it of all kind - ness, be our guide.
heal - ing; Spir - it of com - pas - sion, fill each heart.

Profession of Faith I Corinthians 1:21-29, *God's Logic*

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, **God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe.** For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, **but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.** For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.**

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

*“Jesu, I Will Ponder”
Joshua Bliss, baritone sax*

M. Vulpus

***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.**

Prayers of the People

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.**

*Sending Hymn Faith Begins by Letting Go

1 Faith be - gins by let - ting go, giv - ing up what
 2 Faith en - dures by hold - ing on, keep - ing mem - ory's
 3 Faith ma - tures by reach - ing out, stretch - ing minds, en -

had seemed sure, tak - ing risks and press - ing on,
 roots a - live so that hope may bear its fruit;
 larg - ing hearts, shar - ing strug - gles, liv - ing prayer,

though the way feels less se - cure: pil - grim - age both
 prom - ise - fed, our souls will thrive, not through mer - it
 bind - ing up the bro - ken parts; till we find the

right and odd, trust - ing all our life to God.
 we pos - sess but by God's great faith - ful - ness.
 com - mon - place ripe with wit - ness to God's grace.

***Charge & Blessing**

Postlude

“Lobe Den Herren”

E. Gesangbuch

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston

Liturgist: Rev. Trey Tirpak

Organist: Ikeke Prins, organist & choir master

Specialist: Joshua Bliss, baritone saxophone

Vocalists: Choir (Norma Jean Ballou, Jean Lamere, Becky Hudak, Erica Bliss, and David Allen).

Audio/Visual: Joshua Bliss and Stephen Reohr

CCLI License #463379; One License #A-700689

Note: You are invited to coffee and refreshments down in Zimmerman Hall. Today will be the first of the **All Members Series** starting at 11:20. “Grab some joe and get in the know!” This Lent, we’re encouraging all those who are a part of First Church in any way to participate in our All Members series, which will serve as a “refresher” course on being part of a church and a new member’s class for those who would like to formally join First. Come learn about belonging!

Artwork on Cover: Healing the Man Born Blind by Annibale Carracci

Prayers, Joys & Concerns

- Ian Leet
- Imani Brewer, for the passing of her grandfather
- Eula, friend of Joeanna Brown
- Patty Salisbury, for the passing of her niece Kimberly
- Marilyn Bonam, Sara's mother
- Sharnelle Jones
- For Mia and Wim Westman
- Ken Lucas, friend of Philip Labatte
- Kokese Ballou
- Janie Unright, friend of the Andrews family
- Carol LaBatte
- Norma McClement
- For Jennifer Recene Gallagher
- David Bradley
- For Jason Shahid
- Ruth and Josue Torres
- For Jim, Rose Hunsberger's father
- The Reohr Family
- Deborah Paris, daughter of Betty Pierce
- Alexis Parry, niece of Cheryl Gowie
- Gail Santimaw, friend of Judith Utley-Suess
- John Utley, brother of Judith Utley-Suess
- Judith Utley-Suess, for strength
- Ronald Stockhoff
- For Barbara W., dear friend of Barb & Dave Andrews and Donna Jones
- Harold Bushnel
- Alex Bliss
- Mary Weijola
- Cheryl Gowie
- Ralph McNeil, brother of Norma Jean Ballou
- Mary Ann Selmer
- Anthony, of the Brown Family
- Donna Schultz
- Olivia Gaydushek
- Clergy, staff and leaders of the First Church in Albany
- For the survivors and rescue workers in Turkey and Syria after the recent earthquake. For all who lost loved ones.
- Prayers for this burden of gun violence and its aftermath
- An end to the war in Ukraine

Prayer Concerns? If you would like your church family to join you in prayer, please share your concerns and joys with us. Call the office at 518-463-4449 or email office@firstchurchinalbany.org.

A recruitment poster for the First Church Choir. The background is a light beige color with faint, overlapping musical staves and notes. The title "FIRST CHURCH CHOIR" is written in large, bold, orange capital letters. Below the title, the text "We would love to welcome you into the First Church Choir." is written in black. Further down, "Rehearsals are at 6pm on the Thursday prior to a Choir Sunday." is written in black. At the bottom, "If you are interested or have any questions, please contact the office at office@firstchurchinalbany.org" is written in black. Several large, stylized orange musical notes are scattered around the text.

**FIRST
CHURCH
CHOIR**

**We would love to welcome you into the
First Church Choir.**

**Rehearsals are at 6pm on the Thursday
prior to a Choir Sunday.**

**If you are interested or have any questions,
please contact the office at
office@firstchurchinalbany.org**

Lent Special Services

**FCIA
2023**

ASH WEDNESDAY 2.22.23

- Service in Chapel at noon
- Ashes-to-Go 4:30pm-6pm in parking lot
Drive-up and be blessed!

A SPECIAL NIGHT OF WORSHIP THURS. 3.2.23

- Potluck at 6p; worship at 7pm in the Chapel
Come and get creative with your Lenten Journey!

PALM SUNDAY 4.2.23

- Youth process with palm fronds; gather at back of Sanctuary before service.

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE OF SHADOWS 4.6.23

- First Church Sanctuary 6pm

HOLY THURSDAY SERVICE LAST SEVEN WORDS OF CHRIST

- Sweet Pilgrim Baptist Church 7pm (after service at First)

ECOLOGICAL GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE WITH REV. MARK CHAFFIN 4.7.23

- Details TBD

CAPITAL AREA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ECUMENICAL SERVICE 4.7.23

- Details TBD

HOLY SATURDAY LITURGY & EUCHARIST 4.8.23

- Cathedral of All Saints, Albany 9am

THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER 4.8.23

- Cathedral of All Saints, Albany 7pm

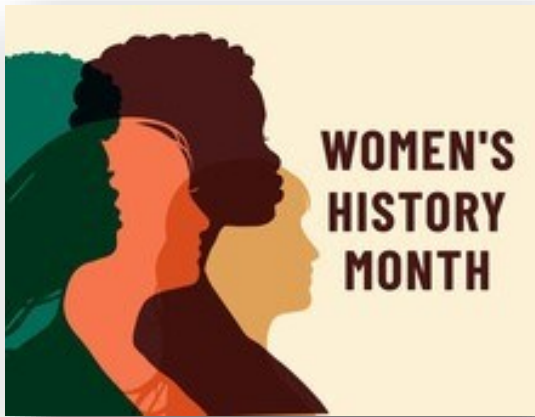
FOCUS SUNRISE SERVICE 4.9.23

- West Capital Park Time TBD

EASTER SUNDAY 4.9.23

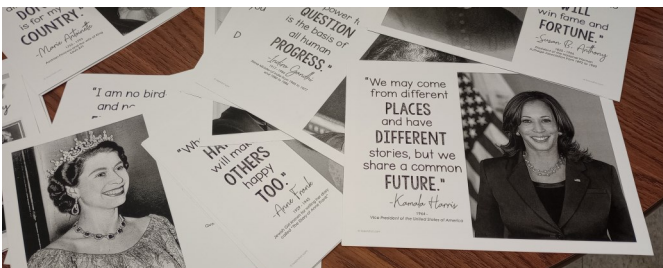
- New members join First Church during the Easter Worship service

Check each week for updates to the schedule.



This week, in honor of Women's History Month, in March. We will be putting up a display on the North Pearl Street fence that provides amazing examples of women who have impacted our world. In the vein of our StoryWalks, please bring your friends and family and enjoy being outdoors and learning about these important contributions.

#firstchurchinmotion



POSTING VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Volunteer Christian Education Coordinator

This person would oversee and help coordinate the different aspects of Christian education at First Church. This includes seniors, adults, youth, children and nursery activities.

The ideal person would have a love for learning and sharing the gospel. The ideal volunteer would respect and encourage others to use their gifts in service for the growth of all.



We need your help!

We are collecting Plastic Easter Eggs and Candy in preparation for this year's **Easter Egg Hunt**. If you can contribute, please bring the items to the Workroom and leave them on the table. Candy that is individually wrapped preferred, but we will welcome Jelly Beans as well.

Important: Please, no candy with nuts. Thank you!

The First Church in Albany

MARCH 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 AA	2 A Night of Worship	3	4
5 AW 	6 Prayer Shawl Mtg. 11am	Zoom Study noon Consistory Mtg. 6pm	8 AA	9 	10	11
12 AW 	13	Zoom Study noon Consistory Mtg. 6pm	15 AA	16 	17	18
					St. Patrick's Day 	
19 AW	20	Zoom Study noon	22 AA	23 	24	25
26 AW	27	Zoom Study noon	29 AA	30 	31	
<div> </div>						

Key:

Pantry 9am	Centering Prayer 12pm	Worship 10am	Communion Sunday	Coffee Hour	Soup & Sandwiches the Park 11:30am	Weather vanes 12:30pm	Choir Rehearsal	After Worship



This Week at the First Church in Albany

- | | | | |
|-------------|------|------------|---|
| • Sunday | 3.19 | 10am
AW | Indoor Worship at FCIA, also on Zoom
All Members' Class —
Zimmerman |
| • Monday | 3.20 | 9am | Food Pantry |
| • Tuesday | 3.21 | noon | Zoom Book Study |
| • Wednesday | 3.22 | 9am | Food Pantry |
| | | noon | AA Meeting |
| | | noon | Centering Prayer in the Chapel |
| • Thursday | 3.23 | 11:30am | Soup & Sandwiches in Clee Park |

AW = After Worship

Upcoming Events

- Palm Sunday April 2
- Easter Sunday April 9
- Congregational Meeting (Election Office Bearers), Sunday, May 14 AW

*Meeting Schedules are subject to change. Watch your email for updates if you are a part of these gatherings.



First Church in Albany

110 North Pearl St.,
Albany NY 12207
518-463-4449

www.firstchurchinalbany.org