

The First Church in Albany

The Blessing of the Prayer Shawls
Sunday, September 21, 2025, 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

"Fairest Lord Jesus"

Hermann Schroeder

"Prélude Modale"

Jean Langlais

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 79

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

People: Amen.

Leader: Look, Lord! Just look at what has happened to your holy temple!

People: Gone is the glory of what it used to be; it is falling apart!

Leader: Have you abandoned your people to the worst that the world can do?

People: Shall we live in shame and be mocked for keeping the faith?

Leader: How long will this go on? Are you angry with us?

People: It is time to turn things around, Lord.

Leader: Time, now, to make your presence known and vindicate your beloved.

People: Whatever our ancestors may have done wrong, let the past be gone

Leader: And kindle your compassion toward us,

People: For our spirits are low.

Leader: Help us, Lord, not for our sake, but for your own glory.

People: Deliver us, and set us free; return your name to its rightful place.

Leader: Let us worship God.

***Opening Hymn** “Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty”

See p. 6

Prayer of Confession

**Lord God, Governor of the Earth,
who has given to the greatest and least of us,
choices for harm or healing;**

**we confess our acquiescence in selfishness
and the disregard of neighbors in Creation
in the conduct of public life.**

**We confess our refusal to encourage
and to support those who take risks
and put their careers and lives on the line
for the love of neighbor
and the protection of their habitats and homes.**

**Forgive us, even as the Earth cries out
in winds and wildfires, floods and famine
against our casual waste and knowing abuse.**

**Give grace to us, as forgiven people,
to find the love and the courage
to lead the way toward healing of the wounds of Your world.**

AMEN

Time of silence and reflection

Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law

Gloria Patri

The musical score for 'Gloria Patri' is written in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves: two for the vocal line and two for the piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics 'Glo-ry be to the Fa-ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Ghost; as it was in the be-' and continues with 'gin-ning, is now, and ev-er shall be, world with-out end. A - men, a - men.' The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

***Passing the Peace:**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us rise and greet one another with Christ's peace.



(Don't forget to wave to those worshipping from home!)

Children's Message & Blessing

Affirmation & Blessing of the Prayer Shawls

See Insert

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Reading Jeremiah 8:18-9:1

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Text Luke 16:1-13

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

On Earth as It Is in Heaven

Rev. Paul G. Janssen

A Prayer of Blessing on the Word

***Hymn of Response**

"Take My Life"

See p. 7

Profession of Faith (From the Accra Confession of the World Council of Reformed Churches, sections 22 and 23)

We believe that any economy of the household of life-given to us by God's covenant to sustain life-is accountable to God.

We believe that human economies exist to serve the dignity and wellbeing of people in community, within the bounds of the sustainability of creation.

We believe that human beings are called to choose God over Mammon and that confessing our faith is an act of obedience.

Therefore we reject

the unregulated accumulation of wealth and limitless growth that has already cost the lives of millions and keeps on destroying much of God's creation.

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

“Prelude on Two Dutch Psalms”

George Frederick McKay

***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.**

***Offertory Prayer**

Good God, may these gifts be used to spread your love, hope, and healing to a world in need. Thank you for your love that never fails us. **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** *“Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life”*

See p 8

***Charge & Blessing**

Postlude

“Toccatà in E Minor”

Johann Pachelbel

Note: Please join us downstairs in Zimmerman Hall for Coffee Hour!

Preacher: Rev. Paul G. Janssen
Liturgist(s): Audrey Ming
Organist(s): Alfred Fedak
Vocalist(s): Susan Fedak
Worship Tech(s): Joshua Bliss and
Stephen Reohr

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35 Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty

1 Praise ye the Lord, the Al - might - y, the King of cre -
 2 Praise ye the Lord, who o'er all things so won-drous - ly
 3 Praise ye the Lord! O let all that is in me a -

a - tion! O my soul, praise him, for he is thy
 reign - eth, shel - ters thee un - der his wings, yea, so
 dore him! All that hath life and breath, come now with

health and sal - va - tion! All ye who hear, now to his
 gen - tly sus - tain - eth! Hast thou not seen how thy de -
 prais - es be - fore him! Let the a - men sound from his

tem - ple draw near; join me in glad ad - o - ra - tion!
 sires e'er have been grant - ed in what he or - dain - eth?
 peo - ple a - gain; glad - ly for aye we a - dore him.

This very strong 17th-century German hymn employs many phrases from the psalms, especially Psalms 150 and 103:1-6. It did not receive an effective English translation until the mid-19th century, but has remained popular ever since, thanks in part to its stirring tune.

Take My Life

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1 Take my life and let it be con - se - crat - ed, Lord, to thee;
 2 Take my hands and let them move at the im - pulse of thy love;
 3 Take my voice and let me sing al - ways, on - ly, for my King;
 4 Take my sil - ver and my gold; not a mite would I with - hold;

take my mo - ments and my days; let them flow in
 take my feet and let them be swift and beau - ti -
 take my lips and let them be filled with mes - sa -
 take my in - tel - lect and use ev - ery power as

cease - less praise; let them flow in cease - less praise.
 ful for thee, swift and beau - ti - ful for thee.
 ges from thee, filled with mes - sa - ges from thee.
 thou shalt choose, ev - ery power as thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it thine;
 it shall be no longer mine.
 Take my heart, it is thine own;
 it shall be thy royal throne,
 it shall be thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour
 at thy feet its treasure store;
 take myself and I will be
 ever, only, all for thee,
 ever, only, all for thee.

This hymn of consecration radiates from the repeated word "take," resulting in a remarkably full survey of a person's attributes and possessions and giving weight to the "all" at the end. The composer of the tune was influential in the renewal of Reformed hymnody in French.

Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life 343

1 Where cross the crowd - ed ways of life, where sound the
 2 In haunts of wretch - ed - ness and need, on shad - owed
 3 From ten - der child - hood's help - less - ness, from hu - man
 4 The cup of wa - ter given for you still holds the

cries of race and clan, a - bove the noise of
 thresh - olds fraught with fears, from paths where hide the
 grief and bur - dened toil, from fam - ished souls, from
 fresh - ness of your grace; yet long these mul - ti -

self - ish strife, we hear your voice, O Son of Man.
 lures of greed, we catch the vi - sion of your tears.
 sor - row's stress, your heart has nev - er known re - coil.
 tudes to view the sweet com - pas - sion of your face.

5 O Master, from the mountainside,
 make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
 among these restless throngs abide;
 O tread the city's streets again;

6 Till all the world shall learn your love,
 and follow where your feet have trod;
 till glorious from your heaven above
 shall come the city of our God.

Because dense populations always result in concentrated hardships, this vivid yet timeless evocation of urban need connects to our own day as well as to Jesus' lament over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37/Luke 13:34). This tune was the first used with this text and is now customary.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

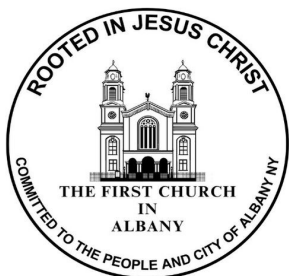
THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY



- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| TUE
23 | PANTRY  | 9AM |
| WED
24 | CENTERING PRAYER
IN THE POWELL RM
AA MEETING IN THE PARLOR | NOON
NOON |
| THU
25 | CACC CHURCH LEADERSHIP
BREAKFAST | 8AM |
| | PANTRY  | 9AM |
| SUN
28 | WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY
COFFEE HOUR IN ZIMMERMAN HALL | 10AM
10:45AM |



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WWW.FIRSTCHURCHINALBANY.ORG



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Affirmation & Blessing of the Prayer Shawls

Leader 1: God of love and comfort, we know that you are always present in our lives and that your love transcends all tragedy, illness, and pain. We know that you are in all things, with us in our joys and our sorrows. We ask you, O God, to bless these shawls, those who will be wrapped in them, and the hands that make them.

Leader 2: In the words of Psalm 90:17 “Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us and confirm for us the work of our hands.”

People: God, we ask for your blessing upon these shawls. May they be a touchstone to a safe haven, a sacred place of security, a place of well-being, a place where your Presence is known.

Leader 2: These shawls were made to bring assurance to those who feel afraid, sad, alone, or uncertain.

Leader 1: May all who receive these know the intricate love and care interwoven in these shawls, a love that mirrors the care that God gives to all people.

Leader 2: These shawls were made to remind the recipient that they are part of this community.

People: May those who receive these shawls feel touched by our love, moved by our guidance, and held up by our support.

Leader 2: These shawls were made to bring peace to those in need of prayer.

Leader 1: May they feel the warm embrace of the Holy Spirit as they wrap themselves within these shawls.

People: O Holy Spirit may all who wear and hold these shawls be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace, and wrapped in love. Thank you for your blessing. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Today's Preacher...Rev. Paul G. Janssen



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After growing up in Iowa and graduating from Central College, Rev. Paul Janssen headed east to New Brunswick and completed his M.Div. at New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1985. He and his wife Annette moved to Hackensack and served Third Reformed Church, adopted a son, and from there moved on to Pascack Reformed Church in Park Ridge, New Jersey, where they adopted a daughter and served the congregation for 22 years, picking up a rescue pup along the way. Paul and Annette then moved to Somerville, New Jersey, where Paul served as Pastor of United Reformed Church for another 11 years. By December 2024 both had retired from full-time work, and Paul, Annette, and Tucker moved to Selkirk. Selkirk, because his brother - Rev. Dr. Allan Janssen, well known to First Church - had served First Reformed Church of Bethlehem for over 20 years, and the Capitol Region had become something like a second home.