

The First Church **FAMILY**

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

September 2014

WORSHIP: THE SEASON OF CREATION SUNDAYS

7 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Communion)

9:00 AM – Last Drive-In Worship

10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Susan Vincent-Cox preaching

Post Service: Inquirer's Luncheon

14 Forest Sunday

"The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:2)

10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service John Paarlberg preaching

Post Service: Congregational Pot-luck Luncheon

21 Land Sunday

"The dry land shall be glad." (Isaiah 35:1)

10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service Rev. Allan Janssen preaching

Post Service: Themes in a Christian theology of creation, Dr. Allan Janssen;
First Church Readers; Care Callers

28 Wilderness Sunday

"The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness." (Jeremiah 31:2)

10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service John Paarlberg preaching

Children & Worship begins; Open House

Post Service: Imam Djafer Sebkhauoui, Islam's understanding of creation

5 River Sunday

"Everything will live where the river goes." (Ezekiel 47:11)

10:30 AM- Sanctuary Service John Paarlberg preaching

Post-service: Rabbi Nomi Manon, Judaism's understanding of creation

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

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

Anthony, the father of Egyptian monasticism, was once asked how he thought he could live a devout life in the wilderness, far from access to holy books. Motioning to the desert around him, he simply answered, "My book is the nature of created things; whenever I want to read the Word of God, it is always there before me."

God speaks in creation and scripture. John Calvin referred to the natural world as "the theater of God's Glory." The Belgic Confession, one of the historic Reformed confessional standards, speaks of God's two books: "We know God by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, since that universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God: God's eternal power and divinity Second, God makes himself known to us more clearly by his holy and divine Word, as much as we need in this life, for God's glory and for our salvation" (*Belgic Confession*, Article 2).

Once again this fall we will be paying attention to both of "God's books." For four Sundays our worship planning and sermons will be guided by "The Season of Creation" lectionary, an optional season for part of the church year. This year the themes are Forest, Land, Wilderness and River. Each of these gifts of creation is a metaphor for the spiritual life. The wilderness, for example, is a place of testing as well as blessing. The book of Revelation speaks of the tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2). And Jesus referred to the Spirit who gives "rivers of living water" (John 7:38). We'll pay attention to these biblical metaphors but also to actual forests, lands, wilderness and rivers. The nature of these created things also reveals God's word to us.

We are also planning post-service programs including guest presentations by Imam Djafer Sebkhauoui and Rabbi Nomi Manon on how the Islamic and Jewish traditions understand creation.

And on Saturday morning, October 4, we'll celebrate a service of "Blessing of the Animals" in Clee Park. Bring your pets so that they can receive a blessing and join us in worship. "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!" (Psalm 150:6)

Sincerely,

John Paarlberg

At Home with the WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary

September 1st - September 30th

Now available online at: www.rca.org/athome

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. 2 Samuel 11:2-26 | 16. Romans 14:13–15:2 |
| 2. 2 Samuel 11:27–12:15 | 17. Psalm 133 |
| 3. Jeremiah 17:5-18 | 18. 2 Corinthians 13:1-4 |
| 4. 2 Corinthians 12:11-21 | 19. 2 Corinthians 13:5-10 |
| 5. Romans 10:15-21 | 20. Psalm 145:1-8 |
| 6. Matthew 23:29-36 | 21. Matthew 20:1-16 |
| 7. Romans 13:8-14 | 22. Genesis 27:1-29 |
| 8. Leviticus 4:27-31; 5:14-16 | 23. Genesis 28:10-17 |
| 9. Romans 13:1-7 | 24. Psalm 106:1-12 |
| 10. Matthew 21:18-22 | 25. James 4:11-16 |
| 11. 1 John 3:11-16 | 26. Acts 13:32-41 |
| 12. Psalm 103:1-13 | 27. Mark 11:27-33 |
| 13. Matthew 6:7-15 | 28. Philippians 2:1-13 |
| 14. Genesis 50:15-21 | 29. Philippians 1:3-14 |
| 15. Genesis 48:8-22 | 30. Philippians 1:15-21 |

THE SEASON OF CREATION SUNDAYS

“River Offerings” for Sunday, October 5

“River” Sunday is October 5. Between now and then you are invited to collect small samples of water from a river or stream near your home and on your travels over the course of the next few weeks. On Sunday, October 5, we will bring those “river offerings” to worship and present them in a symbolic gesture as we offer our thanksgivings for God’s gift of rivers and pray for their health and safe-keeping.

THEOLOGY ON TAP - A THEOLOGY ROUND TABLE

Join Dr. Allan Janssen, First Church’s theologian-in-residence, for a weekly discussion of theological issues at an open gathering every Tuesday afternoon at 5:00 p.m. at McGeary’s (just north of the church). We will discuss current events, current theological issues, matters of concern within the church, and topics that participants bring to the table. The round table will begin on Tuesday, September 2. For further information, you can contact Dr. Janssen at (201) 960.4828.

WHY SHOULD I GO TO CHURCH?

So goes the title of an intriguing book by the twentieth century Dutch theologian A. A. van Ruler. A five week-study group led by First Church's theologian-in-residence, Dr. Allan Janssen, will study selected chapters from this book. The group will meet on Wednesday evenings, at 7:00 p.m. beginning on September 10. The group will meet in the parlor.

The book offers twenty (!) answers to the question, each of which probes beneath what appear to be simple responses to disclose an entire theology of God's way with the human. However you respond to van Ruler, you will never view church-going quite the same.

Since the book is not available in English, translated chapters will be made available on the literature table outside the entrance to the sanctuary.

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP



We are happy to announce that soon we will begin our 3rd year of Children and Worship at First Church.

On Sunday September 28th **during our sanctuary worship service, following the Children's Moment**, we will invite all children ages 4-8 and their parents or guardians to come visit our Children's Worship Center. We will hear a story and learn more about the order of worship, songs, prayers, and responding to God's story with "wondering".

Our team leaders will also share more about the biblical stories we tell through the church year, how our team works together in pairs that include one storyteller and one greeter, and our child safety policies. We will be able to answer any questions parents or children might have for us. The Children's Worship Center is located near our staff offices and is easy to get to if you take the elevator and exit at the 2nd floor, turning right. Go through the double doors and the Worship Center is on the left.

Our team is excited to lead our children this year in this very special time of worship.

Children and Worship Team: Deb Anderson, Sara Bonam Welge, Lauren Casullo, Sue Hunter, Marilyn Paarlberg, Imani Ballou and Rev. Susan Vincent-Cox

TO MY CHURCH FAMILY

Thank you very much for the lovely farewell and coffee hour at my leaving the country.

It is a bittersweet moment. As much as I look forward to be living very close to my siblings, I will also miss this congregation very much. You have nurtured my spiritual growth in many different ways over the past 24 years.

You will always be in my heart. Please contact me whenever you are in the Netherlands so that I may show off this lovely country! henniek64@gmail.com

Blessing,
Hennie Kohut

Join the Choir

First Rehearsal September 11th

Choir rehearsals start Thursday, September 11th at 7:00 pm. Like to sing? 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. It's refreshing, uplifting and a great way to worship God and deepen your faith.

Choir Night Out September 18th

The choir is having dinner together on Thursday September 18th at McGeary's at 5:30. Everyone is welcome - family, friends, spouses, partners, potential choir members! You don't need to be a choir member to come! It's a chance to meet the choir members in an informal setting. Stop by just for a drink or to join us for a meal! Contact Mary Bon if you have any questions at maryebon@verizon.net or 463-4449.



WEATHERVANES September is Game Month!

Join the Weathervanes on Wednesday, September 17th, as we begin our 29th season. The Weathervanes is a social group for seniors, which meets once a month (usually on Wednesday) for lunch, fellowship, and an enticing program. Over the years some of the programs have included presentations from artists, historians, and musicians. We have shared our hobbies and enjoyed being 'armchair travelers'. Come to Zimmerman Hall on the 17th at 12:30 p.m. and bring a sandwich. Coffee, tea, and dessert will be provided. Then enjoy Bingo with our Chaplain John Bowen. A warm welcome awaits YOU! Please phone Audrey Ming (456-5485) to let her know you plan to attend.

FIRST CHURCH READERS MEETS SEPTEMBER 21



Like to read? First Church Readers are people who love to read. We get together once a month in the post-service hour to discuss a book we have read in the past month. We will resume meeting again on September 21 when we will be discussing *Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck.

Upcoming books are:

October	<i>The Art of Racing in the Rain</i>	Garth Stein
November	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>	Harriet Beecher Stowe
December	NO BOOK GROUP	

These books are all available through the Upper Hudson Library System in either hard copy or ebook format.

Future books we are considering include:

<i>I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban</i>	Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb
<i>I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings</i>	Maya Angelou
<i>The Book Thief</i>	Markus Zusak
<i>Unbroken</i>	Lauren Hillenbrand
<i>An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith</i>	Barbara Brown Taylor
<i>Help, Thanks, Wow</i>	Anne Lamott
<i>The Good Earth</i>	Pearl S. Buck

Do you have an idea for a book for the reader's group? Want more information? Contact Mary Bon at maryebon@verizon.net or 463-4449.

GROWING GREEN



- 'Tis the season for great deals at local farmer's markets and market stands - it saves fuel and supports local farmers. Shop local farmer's markets and eat local produce.
- Eliminate or reduce your lawn by planting low-water ground covers or perennials. Go to <http://yardfairly.com/5-step-plan-for-a-low-water-yard.html> for more information on downsizing your lawn.
- Compost your leaves (Mary Bon is always looking for leaves for her compost pile if you don't have a compost pile of your own.)

CD MINISTRY UPDATE

Our CD ministry supplies CDs and bulletins of our Sunday worship services each week to many of our home-bound members and friends. During the summer we had a break from mailing CDs, but Dennis Kernaham continued to mail out bulletins to our shut-ins. (Thank you, Dennis!) We will resume mailing CDs in the middle of September. If you would like to receive a CD or know of someone who would like CDs of our Worship Services, contact the office at 463-4449.

CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING PROGRAM

First Church will offer a child protection training program for staff, childcare workers, and adult volunteers on September 24 from 6-8:30 p.m. *Stewards of Children* is a training program offered through the YMCA and is designed to help organizations provide a safe and caring environment for children. The training program will help us implement effective prevention policies, and equip staff and volunteers to recognize the signs of sexual abuse in children, and react responsibly if abuse occurs. Parents and others are welcome to participate. Please contact Pastor Susan Vincent Cox for more information.

LATEST NEWS FROM KIBERA

The next Kibera sale will be at the Saratoga Peace Fair on Sunday, September 21. Looking ahead there are two sales schedule thus far this fall: November 15-16 at St. Kateri in Schenectady and the Black Friday Fair Trade sale in Delmar November 28-29.

As Raphael and the Kibera Artisans continue to look for a solution to moving the Sosep School, which will be demolished due to a train track expansion project, we ask you to keep the Kibera community in your prayers. The Kibera Committee is staying in communication with Raphael to offer whatever help that we can.

PARKING LOT: IMPORTANT INFORMATION

ANYONE PARKING IN FIRST CHURCH PARKING LOTS WITHOUT A DISPLAYED PERMIT MAY BE TOWED.

Maiden Lane no longer has an attendant full time. A towing company polices the Sheridan Avenue lot, and if there is no ticket or permit visible in the visor or dashboard you may be towed. There is a ticket booth in the lot right next to the attendant house for purchasing tickets. The charge will be \$140.00 per vehicle or higher if you are towed. Parking permits are ONLY available through Denise, phone 463.4449. When using the Orange Street parking lot, you need to have and display a permit. In addition, if you have an event at church you MUST contact Denise.

David Bradley
Chair, Board of Trustees Parking Committee

FOWLER URBAN DAY CAMP AT FIRST CHURCH



YOUTH MISSION TRIP

Our Youth Group (Imani Brewer, Joshua Bliss, Charnelle Jones and Janelle Robinson along with their advisors Andy Mondore, Stephen Reohr & Monica Marsh traveled to Scranton, PA, 7/27-8/3, to help with home repairs.



FOOD PANTRY and SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

Thank you to all who helped with their time and supplies with this summer's school supply drive.



At First Church Food Pantry:

First Row: Hannah Dorn, Pantry Manager Lorraine Houk

Second Row: Gertrude Dorn, Jane Ward, Joyce Recine, Joanna Brown, Emily Bianchine

Third Row: First Church Staff, Noel Concepcion.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Do you knit or crochet? Would you be interested in offering your gifts in a ministry to others?

In a prayer shawl ministry, the shawl maker begins with prayers and blessings for the recipient.

The intentions are continued throughout the creation of the shawl. Upon completion, a final blessing is offered before the shawl is sent on its way. Some recipients have continued the kindness by making a shawl and passing it onto someone in need. Shawls can be used during an illness and recovery, as a comfort after a loss or in times of stress; during prayer or meditation; to recognize commitment or marriage ceremonies; birthing, nursing a baby; bridal shower or wedding gift; graduation, birthday, anniversary, ordination, holiday gifts, or other occasions. Sometimes a blessing or prayer may be offered when the gift is presented. If you are interested in helping with this ministry please contact one of the pastors.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

September 7 Sanctuary Flowers are available for the dedication of sanctuary flower arrangements. The cost is \$45.00 for two vases.

Please call the Church Office (463.4449) if you are interested.

Congratulations

Shirley Farrell will be celebrating her 90th birthday on September 24th. Happy Birthday from the Congregation, Staff and Friends of First Church.

Memorials

In celebration of the life of **Edward Mondore** gifts have been received from Harriet Sinclair and Charles V. Weber for the **Capital Campaign Fund**, from the Rev. William Cameron for the **Endowment Fund**.

In celebration of the life of Richard Herrmann a gift has been received from Shirley Bone, Richard and Roger Bone for the **Send a Kid to Camp**.

In celebration of the life of **John H. Bonam** a gift has been received from Ella Campbell for the **Music Fund**.

In celebration of the life of **the Rev. Lynn T. Joosten**, a gift has been received from the Joosten Family for the **Lynn T. Joosten Scholarship Fund**.

In Sympathy

Sympathy is extended to Sandra Scudder, family and friends on the death of her sister, Patricia Merritt on August 23, 2014.

Sympathy is extended to Sara Bonam Welge and family on the death of her father, John H. Bonam on June 30, 2014

Sympathy is extended to Dan Schmidt and Cheryl Gowie on the death of his mother, Mary Schmidt on June 25, 2014.

Sympathy is extended to family and friends of Timothy Whitbeck who passed away on June 20, 2014.

Sympathy is extended to Theresa Brewer and family on the death of her brother, Kenneth Emory on July 24, 2014.

Sympathy is extended to Dolly and Larry Underdue & Family on the death of Dolly's uncle, George Venable on August 13, 2014.

In Honor

A donation in honor of **Shirley Bone** has been received for the Capital Campaign Fund from her devoted friends, Helen Goldenberg and Stephen Barr.

Thank you

Sincere thanks to my friends at First Church for your prayers, cards, phone calls and personal visits over many months. It's greatly appreciated.

Thanks also to Pastor Paarlberg and Pastor Cox for your visits and communion. This also means so much to me.

May our loving God bless you all and keep you ever with him.

Kay McCann



The deadline for the October issue of *FAMILY* is September 12.





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