

The First Church FAMILY

*The First Church in Albany · Founded in 1642
Reformed Church in America*
Summer 2017

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

“Tell me a Jesus story, Grampy.” So I begin, “Once there was a man who did such amazing things and told such wonderful stories. One day after teaching and healing people all day he was very tired so he and his friends got in a boat to go to the other side of the lake. Jesus was so tired he soon fell asleep. Then the wind began to blow, the waves started splashing in the boat. Jesus’ friends pulled hard on the oars but the storm was getting stronger and they were afraid....” My three year old granddaughter has heard the story before but never seems to tire of hearing it again.

Recently several of us who participated in an interfaith travel seminar to Israel and Palestine gave a presentation about the trip. Each of us shared an experience from the trip and offered reflections on what we had seen and heard. Raed, a Palestinian man, was in the audience. After we had finished our presentation he got up and spoke: “When people come to visit us in Palestine we tell them our stories. We tell them what life is like for us here, how hard it is to live under military occupation, and I often wonder: What happens to our stories? Where do they go? Now I know. You have told our story so beautifully. Thank you.”

He was not asking us to change the situation. He was not urging us to work to end the occupation or to make his life easier. He was simply grateful to know that his story had been heard and shared, to know that his story had gone somewhere and that he was not forgotten.

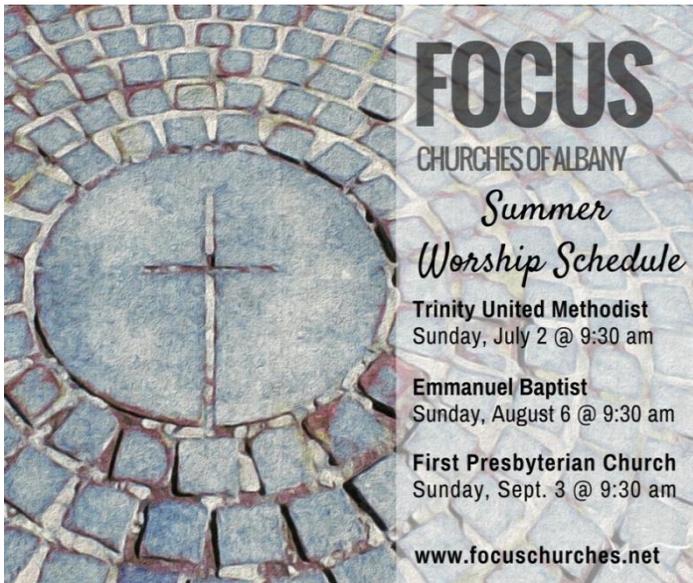
Our Sunday morning service may be found anytime at www.firstchurchinalbany.org.

Each of us has a story. Each of us has a story that needs to be told and heard and honored. We may not expect anyone to take away our pain or to fix what is broken, but we deserve to be heard. We deserve to know that our story is valued, that our life matters, and that we are not forgotten.

In the church we tell 'Jesus stories,' stories about a man who stilled the storm, fed the hungry, healed the sick, suffered and died and rose from the dead. We also need to tell our own stories and to hear and honor each other's stories. Your story is important; it deserves to be heard. In the process of sharing our stories we learn things about ourselves, and often discover connections between our own story and the Jesus story, the story of a man who did such amazing things.

I'm delighted when my granddaughter asks me to tell her the stories of Jesus. I'm also honored when some asks, "Tell me *your* story."

Sincerely,
John D. Paarlberg



FOCUS
CHURCHES OF ALBANY
Summer
Worship Schedule

Trinity United Methodist
Sunday, July 2 @ 9:30 am

Emmanuel Baptist
Sunday, August 6 @ 9:30 am

First Presbyterian Church
Sunday, Sept. 3 @ 9:30 am

www.focuschurches.net

Drive-In & FOCUS Worship Services

Drive-in worship services will be held each Sunday at 9:00 am through September 3 with the exception of the August 20th when we will have a combined worship at 10 am. Drive-In Worship services include special music and we depend on the generosity of guest musicians to supply music for our services. We gather in the Sheridan Avenue parking lot and in Clee Park for a half-hour worship service led from the outdoor pulpit.

The FOCUS congregations will worship together at 9:30 am the first Sunday of July (Trinity United Methodist), August (Emmanuel Baptist) and September (First Presbyterian Church). There will not be a worship service in the First Church sanctuary on those Sundays. Drive-in worship will be held each Sunday at 9 am through the summer.

Summer Worship Schedule

July 2

- 9:00 Drive-in Worship and Communion; Rev. John Paarlberg, preaching
- 9:30 FOCUS Worship and Communion @ Trinity United Methodist Church
Joe Paparone, preaching

July 9

- 9:00 Drive-in Worship; Rev. Susan Vincent-Cox, preaching
- 10:00 Worship and Communion; Rev. Susan Vincent-Cox, preaching

July 16

- 9:00 Drive-in Worship; Dr. Al Janssen, preaching
- 10:00 Worship; Dr. Al Janssen, preaching

July 23

- 9:00 Drive-in Worship; Rev. John Paarlberg, preaching
- 10:00 Worship; Rev. John Paarlberg, preaching

July 30

- 9:00 Drive-in Worship; Rev. John Paarlberg, preaching
- 10:00 Worship; Rev. John Paarlberg, preaching

August 6

- 9:00 Drive-in Worship and Communion;
Bob Pagelow from Koinonia Primary care, preaching
- 9:30 FOCUS Worship and Communion @ Emmanuel Baptist Church

August 13

- 9:00 Drive-in Worship; Rev. John Paarlberg, preaching
- 10:00 Worship and Communion; Rev. John Paarlberg, preaching

August 20

- 10:00 Anniversary Celebration Worship;
The Rev. Kenneth Bradsell preaching

August 27

- 9:00 Drive-in Worship; Rev. Susan Vincent-Cox, preaching
- 10:00 Worship; Rev. Susan Vincent-Cox, preaching

September 3

- 9:00 Drive-in Worship and Communion; Rev. John Paarlberg, preaching
- 9:30 FOCUS Worship and Communion @ First Presbyterian Church

At Home with the WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary

July 1st - July 31st Now available online at: www.rca.org/resources/home-word

1. Matthew 10:40-42
2. Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
3. Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67
4. Psalm 45:10-17
5. Zechariah 9:9-12
6. Psalm 145:8-14
7. Romans 7:15-25
8. Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
9. Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
10. Genesis 25:19-34
11. Psalm 119:105-112
12. Isaiah 55:10-13
13. Psalm 65:(1-8), 9-13
14. Romans 8:1-11
15. Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
16. Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
17. Genesis 28:10-19
18. Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24
19. Isaiah 44:6-8
20. Psalm 86:11-17
21. Romans 8:12-25
22. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
23. Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
24. Genesis 29:15-28
25. Psalm 128
26. 1 Kings 3:5-12
27. Psalm 119:129-136
28. Romans 8:26-39
29. Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52
30. Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
31. Genesis 32:22-31

At Home with the WORD

Daily Bible Readings from the Common Lectionary

August 1st - August 31st Now available online at: www.rca.org/resources/home-word

1. Psalm 17:1-7, 15
2. Isaiah 55:1-5
3. Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21
4. Romans 9:1-5
5. Matthew 14:13-21
6. Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
7. Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28
8. Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45
9. 1 Kings 19:9-18
10. Psalm 85:8-13
11. Romans 10:5-15
12. Matthew 14:22-33
13. Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
14. Genesis 45:1-15
15. Psalm 133
16. Isaiah 56:1, 6-8
17. Psalm 67
18. Romans 11:1-2, 29-32
19. Matthew 15:(10-20), 21-28
20. Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
21. Exodus 1:8-2:10
22. Psalm 124
23. Isaiah 51:1-6
24. Psalm 138
25. Romans 12:1-8
26. Matthew 16:13-20
27. Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
28. Exodus 3:1-15
29. Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45
30. Jeremiah 15:15-21
31. Psalm 26:1-8

Drive-In Offering

The special offerings received at the Drive-In Worship this summer will be designated for Koinonia Primary Care/Compassion in Action, a ministry providing access to quality primary and mental health services for the underserved in West Hill and surrounding neighborhoods in Albany. Koinonia Primary Care, under the leadership of Dr. Robert Paeglow, has been serving people in Albany since 2002.

I've come to the realization that life is not designed for our comfort, or pleasure, but for us to discover our gifts and contribute what we can to make life better for others. Dr. Robert Paeglow

Children & Worship Recap



Recently Marilyn Paarlberg told me about a conversation she had with Rev Nathan Busker, Senior Pastor of Ponds Reformed Church in Oakland, NJ. He shared with her that his congregation was returning to Children and Worship after setting this program aside for some time. They will be starting the C&W again soon because Nathan said “[we] have discovered that the children who went through C & W have a better biblical literacy than those students who do not experience it.”

As we know having a deeper understanding of scripture is the glue and the passion of Christian life. There is endless wisdom and

guidance that we can only grasp in small ways each time we encounter scripture. It is the sustenance of life and can guide us to full life. Biblical literacy is essential to living well.

As we have often reminded our own congregation and ourselves, this is not Sunday School but it is **Worship**. Here children hear the Word, as Rev. Nathan Busker’s understands, they sing, pray, express their understanding of the Word, and have a Feast once a month (learning about the practice of Communion).

This past year in our 3-7 year old Worship Program we had 5 children actively participate. In the 8-12 year old Worship Program we had an average of 3 regular participants. Our Storytellers are: Sara Bonam Welge, Kim Gattie, Adrienne Pagerey, Marilyn Paarlberg and Dorey Foster. Our greeters are Imani Brewer, Terry Gattie, Sue Hunter, Kaitlyn Bliss, and Norma McClement.

We have been truly blessed that these members guided our children each Sunday. We want to warmly thank them for their love for the children, and their understanding that they are serving a ministry, and participating in worship of our Almighty and Loving God. We thank them for stepping forward in many ways.

Marilyn Paarlberg will be leaving our team this fall. We want to express our joy and appreciation for her help in establishing C&W here at First Church. She has a deep love for children's worship and helped us to stay devoted to and on track, remembering that each Sunday we are called to participate in a sacred space and a sacred time. We also want to thank Imani Brewer who was very dedicated to C&W, being with us since the beginning. She was our youngest leader for several years and offered creative ideas at our meetings and was always dedicated and loving.

We pray God's continued blessing on both Marilyn and Imani as they leave for new horizons. Also, Adrienne Pagerey will not be with us this fall as she is expecting a new member in her family (in just a few weeks). Our prayers are with her and her family in this wonderful time.

So, as you can see from my words here, we are also in need of new storytellers and greeters. We are very excited Kathie Monthie will be joining us this fall. How about you? Special thanks to Sara Bonam Welge for helping co-lead with me. She is doing a wonderful job.

Blessing to you all and thanks for a great year!!
Rev. Susan Vincent Cox

375 Anniversary Hymn Commission

The 375th Anniversary Committee is commissioning a new hymn text as part of our 375th Anniversary Celebration. We would like to base the hymn on a passage of scripture or a concept from one of our creeds. The text will be set to a familiar tune and we plan to premiere it at the Anniversary Celebration on Reformation Sunday. We have chosen the noted hymn writer, Mel Bringle, Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies and Chair of the Humanities Division at Brevard College (Brevard, NC) as the hymn author.

We need your input! Do you have a passage of scripture or something from one of our Creeds that has been meaningful to you in your faith journey? Time is short! **Submit your ideas by July 8th**. Pass it on to any member of the 375th anniversary committee – Tom Allison, Shirley Bone, Jim Folts, Ian Leet, or Mary Bon or drop an email to ian.leet@outlook.com. You can also call Valerie in the church office (463-4449). If you like, add a comment on why the passage is important to you. The committee will consider at all your ideas and use them to give Ms. Bringle ideas to use in crafting the hymn.

Thank You Choir!



Our choir is taking a break for the summer. Much of the choir's service is hidden. They rehearse Thursday nights, come early Sunday morning, and enrich our worship through music. They bring their hard work, musical gifts, dedication and time to this ministry, and reap the rich rewards of fellowship, joy of singing, and a deepening relationship with, and service to God. We all enjoy the fruits of their labors each Sunday in the beautiful music which enriches our worship and deepens our faith. Thank you, 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.

First Church Readers Group



First Church Readers have finished meeting for the season. We are a group of First Churchers who like to read. We get together once a month after worship to discuss a book we've been reading during that month. We will resume meeting again in September. The group is open to everyone. Come join us!

Upcoming books are:

September *The Annotated Persuasion* Jane Austin Annotated by David M. Shapard
Austin's last book is a story of true love delayed with lots of notes, pictures, maps and details to help the reader understand the context.

November *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* 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 and working class.

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.

Growing Green

- How about a nice cold shower on a hot day? Save energy and be cool, too!
- Shop local farmer's markets and eat local produce. It supports local farmers and saves energy by lowering shipping costs.
- Eliminate or reduce your lawn by planting low-water ground covers or perennials. Go to <http://www.yardfairy.com/5-steps-to-a-low-water-yard.html> for more information on downsizing your lawn.

Special 375th Commemorative Service – August 20, 2017

Three hundred and seventy five years ago, on August 17, 1642, Rev. Johannes Megapolensis, preached his first sermon in what was then the Patroonship of Rensselaerswijck. We have traditionally marked this date as the founding date of the First Church in Albany.

On August 20, 2017, the Sunday nearest the Three Hundred Seventy Fifth Anniversary of that event, First Church is planning a special service to commemorate that founding. We are honored to invite back to the pulpit for that special day, Rev. Kenneth Bradsell, co-pastor here from 1981 – 1984. Ken has enthusiastically agreed to come back and preach. Music will be provided by the Nat Phipps Jazz Trio. The service will be a combined service at 10 am, and there will be no Drive-in that day. This will be followed by an all church picnic in Clee Park and the parking lot just outside the office doors. In case of bad weather, we'll just do it all inside. Mark the date on your calendar and plan to join us.

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 28, 2107. The Rev. Dr. Gregg Mast will be returning to the pulpit for this celebratory service, and several surprises are being planned. This is also the Five Hundredth Anniversary of the founding of the Reformation, so this worship promises to be a special event indeed. Put the date on your calendar now. The service will be followed by an Anniversary Luncheon at the Normanside Country Club in Delmar. Speaker at the luncheon, the Honorable Jack McEneny, historian, former Assemblyman and a longtime favorite of First church, will present remarks.

For all those concerned about transportation, transportation can be provided. We need your presence! Invitations will be going out in the mail later this summer.

Camp Fowler

Is your child or grandchild registered for summer camp at Camp Fowler? Some children (in grades 3-8) from the church went to "Mini Una Tierra," June 25-29 (Sunday to Thursday). Pastor John Paarlberg was one of the cabin counselors that week. Other weeks (both in-camp and out-camp) for other ages groups are also available. Or consider going with the whole family to Family Camp, August 21-25. For more information and to register go to the Camp Fowler website.

<http://www.campfowler.org/online-registration>

First Church will cover up to half the registration cost and additional aid is available. Please contact Pastor Paarlberg or the church office.

Room for All National Conference

Room for All National Conference: The theme for RfA's 2017 conference, "A Kaleidoscope of Intersections," focuses on the multiple identities that LGBTQ people embody and which shape their experiences; specifically, the intersections of LGBTQ identity and race, faith expression, and life journey. Full details are at <https://roomforall.com/events/national-conferences>, including a link to online registration. If you need help with registration, please call [201-364-4538](tel:201-364-4538) or see Marilyn Paarlberg. Early-bird discount registration deadline: July 28. Final deadline: August 25.

The Next Church Directory. Summer Update



Plans are coming together for a new directory for First Church. This summer and into September we will be taking individual photos. All photos will be taken by staff and our talented member photophiles in the Powell Room. All of the photos will include the option for everyone to print their own.

Sign-up online at:

www.SignUpGenius.com/go/20F0F44A5A82FA4F85-directory, on a sign-up sheet in the lobby or

by calling Valerie at the church office: 463-4449. Fifteen minute time slots have been allocated for the following dates:

Friday, July 14: 10 am - 2 pm

Sunday July 16: 11:00 - 2 pm

Friday August 4: 10:00 am - Noon

Friday September 8: 10 am – 2 pm

Sunday September 10: 11:30 am - 2:00 pm

Friday September 15: 10 am - 2 pm

and Sunday September 17: 11:30 am - 2:00 pm

Clee Park Goes to the Dogs



This summer Clee Park will be the home of a very special dog we have named, “Cleeo the Clee Park Dog”. Cleeo will be part of the Downtown Albany Business Improvement District (BID) 2017 outdoor public Placemaking exhibit, *Downtown is Pawsome*.

We are hoping that the presence of Cleeo at the entrance of Clee Park will help raise awareness of the First Church Food Pantry and the people we serve. A sign alongside the dog, reminiscent of a food label is there to give further information about the First Church Food Pantry.

Thanks go out to those who collected the many food labels, Joanna Brown, Audrey Ming, Becca and Ian Leet, Emily Bianchine and staff for their amazing collage work!

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. Each person pays for their own meal. Contact Donna E. Schultz at deschultz07@aol.com or 518.429.1255.

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The deadline for the September issue of *FAMILY* is August 15.

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Thank you

Donna Schultz would like to thank everyone for the prayers and a special shout out to Rev. John Paarlberg for visiting me in the hospital.

In Sympathy

Prayers and sympathy for Jay and Kim Reohr and family as they mourn the death of Jay's father, Joseph Harry Reohr, Jr., who recently passed away.

Congratulations:

Congratulations to Imani Brewer who graduated from Shaker High School. Imani will be attending Utica College in the fall.





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FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

110 North Pearl Street
Albany, NY 12207-2231
518.463.4449

www.firstchurchinalbany.org

email: info@firstchurchinalbany.org

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