

FAMILY

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

September 2020

WORSHIP:

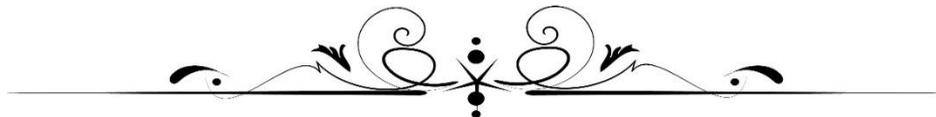
Musicians for Drive-In Worship Services September 2020

Note: The Drive-In Service will continue to be held at 10:00 A.M. through the end of September!

- 13 Peter Subers, baritone; Mary Bon, pianist
- 20 Rose Hunsberger, soprano; Mary Bon, pianist
- 27 Gordon Peters, bagpipes

October

- 4 IN-PERSON INDOOR WORSHIP BEGINS 10:30 A.M.!!!!!!**
Musician TBA



FROM PASTOR MASHONA

Worshippers, Leaders, and Friends,

Thank you for your hard work and faithful service during this season of viral and social pandemics. As I drove into the office this morning (with traffic) I realized slowly but surely downtown is experiencing an uptick. Restaurants are reopening and there is a low bustle in the streets. What a stark contrast to the way things were in March 2020.

On one the last Sunday morning of March, I drove into downtown Albany and there was a stillness that felt unsettling. There were no people! There were no friendly dog walkers. There were no guests in and out of the hotel next door to the church. As I pulled into the empty parking lot of First Church, I exhaled loudly. I thought, well it will probably be just a handful of us for our Drive-In worship. Well, I was wrong. I was very wrong. The parking lot filled up quickly. Ned our Church Master and Ray, our Trustee arrived and directed the cars on how to park. Andy, Erica, and Deb our faithful deacons arrived and asked how they could help. Stephen, our one-man stage manager immediately sprang into action setting up the outdoor pulpit. I watched in amazement at the spirit of cooperation and love, everyone showed. Each week things have been pretty much the same. The parking lot is full or well attended. There were even two occasions when there was not enough room for cars to enter and folks parked on the street. Let us not mention those that attend by sitting in Clee Park or stand around the fence.

In so many ways, you have blessed First Church and I want to thank you. Let us not forget the morning after the first protests and fire up the street from our church. I received a couple of calls in the morning asking if we were still going to have a worship service. Thanks to you, the answer was yes. Not only did we worship, but we were accompanied by a great cloud of witnesses (cars). As I looked out from the outdoor pulpit over at the boarded-up stores and businesses surrounding our congregation, I was moved to tears. While others protected property First Church stood as a beacon of hope to a hurting community. In my opinion, our edifice and our body of Christ continue to tell the people of Albany that we are here in good times and tough times. We may not always agree. However, we are working together to fulfill our mission of service and presence, to this wonderful and heavily burdened world.

Thank you for your continued prayers, presence, and service in these times.

Prayerfully,

Mashona Walston

Senior Minister

SCAM ALERT: FIRST CHURCH ONLY ACCEPTS MAIL-IN DONATIONS

A note from Pastor Mashona:

Please only send donations to First Church's official mailing address. Unfortunately, over the past couple years someone continuously sets up fake email accounts in the names of our clergy/ministers at First Church in Albany. Our ministers and staff do not solicit donations via email, text, or wire accounts. For your protection please do not give your personal information online, email, text, or phone. We ask that all donations to First Church be mailed directly to First Church in Albany (110 North Pearl Street) and to no single individual or alternate method at this time.

JOIN SERVICE VIA ZOOM

The Sunday morning service is now available through the internet!

If you can't come to the Drive-In service in your car, you can watch it on your computer, tablet, or smartphone through our Zoom Worship simulcast. It's being simulcast while the service is going on, or you can watch it later. You can also call via telephone and listen to the service if you don't have a computer or smartphone. Also, we are planning to continue this service through the end of the year or at least until pandemic restrictions are lifted. It doesn't matter where you are. The service will be available wherever there is internet service.

To access the worship service, just click on a link that you'll be sent in an e-mail, and you'll be able to get in. The link will be the same for each Sunday through the end of the year. You'll get a weekly reminder of the link to use.

For security reasons, no information of yours will be shared via the internet and the service will be restricted to those who have the link and passcode. If you are interested in joining this service, call the church office or send an email to FirstChurchinAlbany.zoom@gmail.com and you'll be added to the list of valid users. Once this is done the first time, you won't need to repeat it for the rest of this year.

For more information, call the church office, Ian Leet at 518-265-0550 or send an email to the above address, and someone will get back to you.

We're looking forward to seeing you online!

SERVICE STILL ON CONFERENCE CALL

Conference Call **Dial in number: (425) 436-6200**

Access code: 586376

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

Summer statistics for food pantry, provided by Lorraine Houk:

Households - 203

Child – 51

Adults - 178

Seniors - 42

Meals - 4,878

From June thru August we were open a total of 18 days.

Food Pantry Needs Volunteers: We are looking for a **few volunteers for the summer.** COVID-19 protocols are strictly followed. Due to online pre-ordering little to no contact with others. Mondays & Wednesdays 9 to 11:30pm. Please spread the word we have plenty of food. If you can eat, you can receive. We are **looking for new families and individuals to receive.** Call the church on Monday or Wednesday from 8am to 11am and place your order. We are happy to bring your package outside to you!

CENTERING PRAYER EACH WEDNESDAY

Centering Prayer each Wednesday at Noon in James Chapel and via Conference Call.

Dial in number: 425) 436-6200

Access code: 586376.



WEATHERVANES – FAMILY & CHURCH HISTORY

From Audrey Ming

Join the Weathervanes on **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH** at 12:30 p.m. in Zimmerman Hall. Joanne Farrell will tell us about a book she has written regarding the family history of her mother Shirley. She has discovered that some of her ancestors were important in the history of First Church.

Due to COVID-19 we have made some changes to our procedures:

Weathervanes will now meet on **TUESDAYS** instead of Wednesdays. Another group is now using Zimmerman Hall on Wednesdays.

Chairs will be set up six feet apart and social distancing will be enforced.

Masks will be required except when eating.

We will not serve dessert and beverages. You may bring them for yourself in addition to your sandwich if you wish.

Tables will be sanitized before and after the meeting. To make them easier to sanitize they will not be decorated.

For those of you who are not comfortable coming to the meeting we are working on making the program available on ZOOM.

Although we will not be serving dessert and beverages we would like to know how many people are coming so we can set up the right number of chairs. Please call Audrey Ming at 518-456-5485 to let her know whether you are coming.

REOPENING COMMITTEE PREVIEW...

from Jean Lamere

Sanctuary services to resume Sunday, October 4, 2020.

Masks will be mandatory at all times. Social distancing must be followed. Hand sanitizer will be available.

Members will need to call the church office Monday thru Friday and announce that they will be attending the service. On Sunday they will need to sign in on a cleanable clipboard. Visitors must leave an address or contact information. This is for contact tracing if it should become necessary.

There will be no bulletin until next year. Hopefully we will have an APP which will allow the service of worship to be available on a phone or tablet.

There will be instrumental music, but no singing.

The service will be 35 minutes and will include a Children's Moment. Zoom and conference call will be available for those who have underlying conditions or are not comfortable in a group.

There will be no coffee hour.

Thank you for your prayers. More details to come and some projections are subject to change and your safety is our priority.

MEMORIAL FLOWERS FOR CHANCEL

As we are moving into the sanctuary beginning on October 4, we will once again be able to present memorial flowers on the chancel. We will start taking orders now. Get yours in soon!

MUSIC CORNER



THANK YOU! THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!!

From Mary Bon

Have you been in the First Church building recently?

Have you ventured down to Zimmerman Hall?

Have you noticed 6 Speakers ranging in size from very large to various smaller sizes, including racks and assorted electronic accessories?

They will allow us to have a variety of amplified music (probably to a volume louder than any of us need to hear,) and allow us to add some additional different styles of music to our worship.

Thanks

- to Dan Schmidt for his generous donation of all the equipment,
- to Cheryl Gowie for facilitating and coordinating the donation,
- to Zak Morton who helped to evaluate the equipment and, with his friend (who provided the truck to move them and some of the muscle,) provided the determination and muscle to moved them to Zimmerman Hall,
- to The Rev. Dr. Walston whose vision gave the impetus for accepting this donation,
- and to Pete Pagerey and the Worship Music and the Arts Commission for approving the donation.

UPDATE ABOUT OUR CHOIR, SOLOISTS AND SINGING

In October we will be returning to indoor Sanctuary Worship.

Alas, we will not have singing by our choir, soloists, or congregation at least for the near term.

WHY?

Currently here is what we know about the transmission of COVID through singing and loud speaking.

1. **COVID-19 spreads from person to person** through large droplets, small droplets and microscopic aerosols (as small as 0.0002 inches in diameter droplets in the air.)
2. **Large droplets come from the lungs** of one person during coughing, sneezing and singing or energetic speaking.
3. **They are inhaled** into the nose or mouth of nearby people *and tend to sink to the ground within 6 feet (hence the 6 foot suggested for social distancing.)* *Masks can lessen the danger of spread.*
4. **Very small droplets in the air** - smaller than those expelled in a cough or sneeze also happen when singing or speaking energetically and are forcefully released in singing.
5. **These small droplets can travel for 15-25 feet** in the initial act of singing. Even when using a mask they can escape around the edges.
6. **They can become aerosolized and remain floating in the air** for several hours, spreading throughout the room.

7. **They can attach themselves to dust particles** potentially hanging in the air for a longer time.

Currently, there is no safe way to sing with others indoors.

Therefore, in an abundance of caution, to protect both our congregation and our singers we will not be having singing in the sanctuary worship services once we move indoors. We will be having various other types of instrumental music such as piano, and guest instrumentalists.

We hope as new research and information become available, the recommendations by our best researchers will allow us to “*Sing to the Lord*” again soon.

Mary

OIN A HAND CHIME CHOIR AT FIRST CHURCH

REHEARSALS: Sundays September 13, 20, and 27 at 11:15 – 11:45 am
after our Sunday Drive-In Service.

Rain dates Thursday, September 10, 17, 24 from 6:00 – 6:30 pm

Rehearsals will be outdoors (weather-permitting) in our parking lot or Clee Park.

Masks and ample social distancing will be observed.

The music will be fun and easy – popular, familiar hymns.

Some music reading ability is helpful but not essential.

Our hope is to make music in one of our October Indoor Sanctuary Services.

We will spread out across the balcony to play.

Masks and ample social distancing will again be observed.

SPACES ARE LIMITED! Call the church office today or drop Mary Bon a line at firstchurchmeb@gmail.com to reserve a space or for more information.

WE CAN'T SING, BUT WE CAN STILL

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE TO THE LORD TOGETHER!

Our Handchimes are a gift of the McClement Family in memory of their husband and father, Robert McClement.

THE FIRST CHURCH GARDEN



Thank you to Keith Curry, our sexton, and volunteers Shirley Bone, Joanne Farrell, Jim Folts and Ruth Pagery for making the flowerbeds so beautiful. Says Jim Folts: “The gardens are looking very nice after a slow start because of the dry weather earlier this summer.”

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL HOT DOG THURSDAYS

Hot dog Thursdays ran from July 2 through August 27 in Clee Park. About half the number from last year were served but everyone was thankful and appreciated the hotdogs, chips and water. Some of the people had come in years past and a number were homeless. According to Pete Pagery, people appreciated being able to spend some time relaxing in Clee park while they ate their hotdogs.

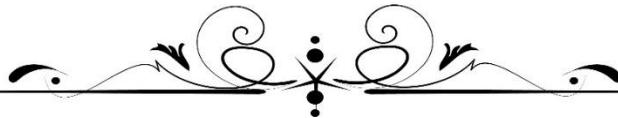
Thanks to volunteers Pete and Ruth Pagery, Ray Van Epps, Mary Bon, Doug Persons, Deb Anderson, Andy Mondore, and staff Jeff Curry and Keith Curry.



NEWS FROM FOCUS

FOCUS Churches of Albany is happy to announce the selection of our next Executive Director. We are pleased to welcome Fred Boehrer who will begin his service with FOCUS on September 3. He and his family reside in Albany at Emmaus House, an Albany Catholic Worker Community, where they serve low-income families, immigrants, and their South End neighborhood. Their ministry there includes a small food pantry and converting vacant lots into thriving community gardens. Fred is also a lay leader and member of the Shrine Church of Our Lady of the Americas (Iglesia Santuario de Nuestra Senora De las Americas), a bi-lingual community in Albany. He truly lives a life of faith in the midst of those in need. Fred comes to us with a wide range

of administrative and ministerial experiences in church, college, and community settings. Most recently he was Director of Service Learning at the College of St. Rose, responsible for campus ministry, teaching, and community engagement. Fred has a quiet, comfortable sense of humor and a welcoming demeanor. He has experience with staff hiring and supervision and working with a volunteer force. When asked about working with and developing staff and volunteers in a supportive way, Fred presented a caring foundation and an approach to taking time to build trust and confidence through a “ministry of presence”. He exudes a sense of inner strength that will bend rather than break. Fred holds a PhD in Philosophy of Religion, a MA in Religion, and a BA in Philosophy and Religious Studies. Welcome, Fred.



Please remember in your prayers:



Gertrude Dorn; Jeff Bianchine (husband of Jeanne Bianchine); Heidi Schroder (friend of Gayle Wlodkowski, living in a group home with little outside contact due to COVID-19) Lawrence Brewer (husband of Theresa Brewer); The family of Adrienne Pagery.

In Loving Memory

John W. Riles, (First Church member and former employee); Anthony Brown (son of Joanna Brown and brother of Deb Anderson); Adrienne Pagery (daughter of Peter and Ruth Pagery)

From Joeanna Brown:

“The family of Anthony Brown sends sincere thanks for the many words of comfort and condolence received from our First Church family.”

The deadline for the October issue of the Family is September 15.