

# First Things



A Newsletter of the First Reformed Church, Schenectady, New York

April 1, 2008

## April's Adult Forum

**April 6 – Sunday Morning Schedule Planning Meeting.** When is the best time for Sunday school? How should we help families on Sunday mornings? Parents and those interested in Christian Education should come with both opinions and open hearts.

**April 13 – Room for All – Dr. Norman Kansfield,** past President of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, will present a program on the acceptance of Christians of differing sexual orientations.

**April 20 – Environmental speaker in honor of Earth Day.**

**April 27 – Stacey Midge** will talk about her learnings in her first three months with us.

## Leadership Planning Festival May 10

Last year the earth shook as we planned many things that took place over the year. This year we will continue to flesh out some of those ideas at this gathering. Any leader is invited to help us plan our 2008-09 program priorities and calendar.

## Covenant Fund Seek Proposals

The covenant fund is seeking nominations from members for the distribution of about \$100,000 in 2008 to three or four mission projects. Applications and criteria are available online at [www.covenantfund.org](http://www.covenantfund.org).

## WE @ FRC Resumes April 9

In the 50 days of Eastertide our mid-week program will have rich and/or new soups, breads, salads, and deserts at 6 p.m. every Wednesday evening in Assembly Hall. Following clean up a brief contemplative service of evening prayer commences in the candlelit sanctuary chapel at the sound of the 7 p.m. bell. Adult classes begin at 7:30: Bill continues his engaging Preacher's Preview; Daniel will lead a video based discussion titled *The Resurrection of Jesus: Then and Now*, featuring New Testament scholar, N.T. Wright. The Faith Bookshop carries his book on the same subject. Join us for any part of WE @ FRC that fits your interest and schedule.

## Membership Class April 27

Those interested in membership are invited to the Inquirer's Class at 5 pm on April 27. In one three-hour class we will have dinner, share our stories, and learn about the congregation. Please call 377-2201 and leave a message if you would like to be included. Those interested in joining will be received into the congregation on Pentecost, May 11.

## Suggestion Box

First Reformed Church is a place full of people with great ideas! The mail-boxes outside Assembly Hall now have a slot for these earthshaking proposals. Feel free to slip into the "Suggestion Box" any idea that you need to get rid of. Signed suggestions will get more attention.



## Worship Exchange

On Friday evening April 25 and Sunday morning April 27, our congregation and Congregation Gates of Heaven will share worship experiences including scripture and music. On Friday at 8 pm we will gather at Gates of Heaven at 852 Ashmore Avenue in Schenectady where the talents of our congregation will be shared with this Reform Jewish congregation. For the regular Sunday morning worship, Rabbi Matt Cutler and his team will deepen our understanding of the roots of our faith.

## New Wednesday Morning Kerygma Bible Study: Heraldng Heaven

This adult education and nurture offering will focus on the various witnesses to heaven found in our scriptures as well as considering contemporary testimonies. The class is suitable for all those who desire to increase their understanding, faith, and fellowship with other members and friends of the congregation. A Bible is required; there is not a resource book to purchase for this class, though Daniel will assign occasional homework. Sessions will be held 9:30-11 a.m. in the Polling Conference Room, April 16 to May 21.

## New Member Profiles



This month, we introduce to you **Claire Hughes**. Claire is married and has two children. She's friendly, has a great sense of humor, is a journalist, and has already signed up for teacher training. Claire is a delightful addition to our FRC church family.

## Stephen Ministry April 16

On the 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. all Stephen Ministers and Leaders will gather for continuing education and group supervision. The Stephen Ministry extends the ministry of Christ by providing personal, confidential care to members and friends of the congregation who are suffering.

## Ellis Workshop on Visitation

The Pastoral Care Department of Ellis Hospital is offering a one-day workshop on making effective visits to those who are hospitalized, homebound, or residing in a nursing home. The workshop will be held on Saturday, April 19, 2008, 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Ellis Hospital, and is open to all who have an interest in visitation ministry. There is no charge to attend. Please register for this workshop no later than Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> by calling the Pastoral Care Office at Ellis Hospital – 243-4158.

## Motorcycling Anyone?

A group of folks from the congregation are thinking of a few motorcycle outings. If you would like to be put on the list to be notified, please email the anonymous church leader who is getting this together at



## Fowler Spring Retreats

Come get away to the beauty of the Adirondacks and listen again for the "still, small voice" whispering in your life.

**Socially Responsible Eating:** April 25 – 27 Participants will explore the value of local eating for global change.

**Couples Retreat:** April 25-27 – Chi Rho – Led by Rev. Jake Marvel, this allows couples to strengthen and enhance their relationships.

**Wilderness Leadership Course:** May 12-16 – Provides experience and training in backcountry camping as well as leadership skills.

**Youth Work Weekend:** May 17-18 – For middle-high school youth groups. Help open the camp for another season and enjoy the fellowship of being back together.

**Pilgrimage:** May 18-23 – For adults 18-30 – An engaging week exploring spiritual tools and community involvement for young adults.

You may register on-line at [www.campfowler.org](http://www.campfowler.org).

## Mentoring Opportunities with Boys and Girls Club

If you are interested in mentoring a child through the Boys and Girls Clubs of Schenectady, please contact Ms. Jerrine Wyman, Mentoring & Volunteer Services Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of Schenectady, 400 Craig Street, Schenectady, NY 12307. You may also call (374-8822); fax (374-4433); or email her at [jwbgcs@gmail.com](mailto:jwbgcs@gmail.com). For additional information check out their website at [www.bgcschenectady.org](http://www.bgcschenectady.org).

## Jazz Vespers



We will now be having Jazz Vespers 2 Sundays a month, on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays at 5:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. This month's line-up includes:

**April 6** – Nat Phipps, piano; Mike DelPrete, bass; Tom D'Andrea, drums.

**April 20** – Tim Olsen, piano; Eric Walentowicz, sax; Mike DelPrete, bass; Tom D'Andrea, drums.



## Two Vintage Choirs Join to Make Music

The Thursday Musical Club, directed by Julie Panke, will host the Heavenly Echoes Gospel Singers for their Spring concert on April 13 at 3:00 pm at the First Reformed Church of Scotia. The concert will feature Early American songs and Spirituals arranged by women. The two groups will sing one or two songs together.



## Church Hike to Vale Cemetery – April 20

Pack a picnic lunch, put on your walking shoes and some comfortable clothes so that after worship you can join the other happy wanderers of First Church for a short urban and park walk to our congregation's burial plot. This is an easy hike, suitable for those of all ages and abilities.

## Youth Meetings in April

The Junior High Youth Group will have a regular meeting on April 13 at 5 p.m., with pizza and activities. We will have our JHYG overnight on Friday, April 25 from 6 p.m. until Saturday, April 26th at noon. Feel free to invite friends - but please let Pastor Stacey Midge know by April 21 how many people are planning to attend!

The Senior High Youth Group will meet on Sundays in April at 7 p.m. Come join us for food and fun. Friends are welcome to attend. Call or email Stacey if you have any questions.

## Summer Intern Program

FRC is providing our high school seniors and college students with the opportunity to be employed in community service at Bethesda House or SICM this summer. Application forms have been sent to high school seniors; interested college students may request an application from Doug Brown (dbrbrown@nycap.rr.com). Applications are due May 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Make Summer Camp Plans

Camp Fowler is the beloved summer camp run by our denomination's regional organization called Albany Synod. Fowler offers dozens of summer camp opportunities for kids. Call the church office and we will mail you a brochure or look at the offerings at [www.campfowler.org](http://www.campfowler.org).

## Youth Leadership Sunday

Youth Leadership Sunday will be on June 8. The graduating seniors will share their reflections on their time at FRC and their hopes for the future, and other youth will help with the planning and leadership of this service. Please plan on attending and showing your support for our youth!

## Labor Day Weekend at Fowler

Bring summer to a wonderful close and start the fall out right by planning to attend our annual retreat to our Synod camp with members and friends of the congregation August 30-September 1. It will be a delightful long weekend of playing, relaxing, socializing (including the hospitality at the Levering's comfy campsite), feasting, and worshiping. Look for a tear out registration form in Sunday's printed announcements this April, or call the church office if you just can't wait to register.



## Easter's Special Offering Collection Extended

This year we supported two local programs, the Community Health Care Access Program (CHAP) at Bethesda House; and Better Neighborhood's Homeowner Education and Foreclosure Prevention Project.

If you have not yet contributed to this year's special offering and would like to do so, please submit your check by April 5.

If you are a GE employee or retiree, your gift of \$25 or more is eligible for matching funds when you make your check payable to Bethesda House or Better Neighborhoods, Inc. Others should make their check payable to First Reformed Church and indicate "Easter Offering" in the memo line.

## Building Planning Meeting

There will be a meeting on April 29 at 7:30 p.m. for building use planning.

## Jamie Ipsen to Head Up Church School

Tani Breitenbach has been doing a great job of leading our church school program but has decided to pass the torch to Jamie Ipsen starting this summer. Jamie will be recruiting teachers and arranging the program as well as leading youth music. Be prepared to say yes when Jamie asks for help next year.

## First Reformed Gear

Check the Faith Bookshop for First Reformed lapel pins and other accoutrements for the well-dressed churchgoer.



I want to express my heartfelt thanks to my whole church family for all your prayers, words of comfort, sympathy cards, and much more during this most difficult time for our family. Your kindness is very much appreciated. Thank you.

Karen Norton and Family

We thank you for your gifts of delicious food, flowers, cards, all your support, and prayers during our sudden loss of Dan. You are all so wonderful and we feel abundantly blessed to be among such a caring and loving congregation.

Gratefully yours,  
Vernetta, Elaine, Glenda and Debra

Many thanks to all those who worked on the flowers, banners, flags, and chancel vestments that made this Easter season so spectacular.

## April Birthdays

2 Mary Carlson  
2 Martha Fleming  
2 Brendan Magruder  
2 Anne Peterson  
2 Allison Wood  
3 James Mitsche  
3 Justin Smith  
3 Antonette Tillma  
4 Ned Landon  
5 Robert Coad  
6 Ellen Hubbard  
6 Elizabeth Nejman  
8 Cynthia Hamilton  
8 Susan Hannon  
11 Margaret Shultes  
12 Roberta Blackmer  
12 Barbara Forth  
12 Christopher Langdon  
15 Laura Hershey  
16 Cynthia Ball  
16 Gay Doolittle  
16 Morgan Valachovic  
17 John Hubbard  
18 Kent Molino  
19 Belle Kozak  
19 Leonard Vandenberg  
21 David Hjelmar  
23 Timothy Merten  
23 Elaine Walthers  
24 Jane Fisher  
24 Robert White  
25 Walter Robb  
26 Katie Kumta  
26 Susan Muse  
28 Katie Anderton  
28 William Hamm  
28 Susan Moose

## Senior Moments

First, the commercial: Folks at Habitat for Humanity talked me into a *bowling for dollars* thing. On April 6 from 1-3 p.m. at Sportsman's Bowl myself, the mayor, and other notables will join families who want a bowling outing for Habitat. If you want to sponsor me, go to [www.firstgving.com/levering](http://www.firstgving.com/levering) and help me with my modest goal. I'm not sure it's related to how well I do. Good thing.

Now, back to our program. Every year about this time I start talking to people about what they would like to see next fall. We have had much enthusiasm in the last year and reached out to many folks. What can we be doing better? We will be talking about this on May 10 as we discern God's will for us this coming year. A part of this is the set of folks who will be helping this vision. I hope all of you will consider a role in the committees or boards this year. We need folks on committees to help in a big way and still need more names for the nominating committee to deal with. Turn in your own name for consideration!

Our Easter service was a true highlight of our worship year. I hope all of you will be able to maintain the joy and enthusiasm of that great experience as we move into the warmth of spring. God's blessings are for us all year long.

## Calendar

### Every Sunday

Youth Orchestra - 8:30 am  
Bible Study, Church School and Parents Group - 9 am  
Choir - 9:15 am  
Worship - 10 am  
Adult Forum & Kirk Singers - 11 am  
Sr. High Fellowship - 7 pm

### Weekly

**Mon.:** Men's News Group - 9 am  
Klokken Ringers - 7 pm  
**Tues.:** Tuesday Morning Mom's Group - 9 am  
**Wed.:** Kerygma - 9:30 am  
Wednesday Dialogue - 12 pm  
Lenten Dinner & Classes:  
6 pm - Dinner  
7 pm - Evening Prayer  
7:30 pm - Classes  
**Thurs.:** Chancel Choir - 7:30 pm

### April

5 Interfaith Committee - 6 pm  
6 Jazz Vespers - 5 pm  
7 Membership Comm. - 7:30 pm  
8 Standing Comm. - 7 pm  
8 Consistory - 8 pm  
13 Spring Concert - 3 pm  
14 Cancer Support Group - 11 am  
15 Pastoral Care - 11 am  
20 Church Hike - 11 am  
20 Jazz Vespers - 5 pm  
27 Inquirer's Class - 5 pm  
28 Cancer Support Group - 11 am  
29 Building Planning - 7:30 pm

First Reformed Church

#### Organization

8 North Church Street  
Schenectady, NY 12305  
(518) 377-2201  
email: [1streformed@gmail.com](mailto:1streformed@gmail.com)

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