

First Things

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

October 2008

Vespers Every Week



October 5 – Jazz

Nat Phipps, piano; Pete Toigo, bass; Tom D'Andrea, drums. Special appearance by Poet Jordan Smith, Professor of English at Union College.

October 12 – Chamber

Nat Fossner, woodwinds; Margret Hickey, violin; Harriet Thomas, viola; June Partch, bassoon.

October 19 – Jazz

Al Haugen, accordion; Don Egry, piano; Bill Delaney, bass; Tom D'Andrea, drums.

October 26 – Celtic

Lawson – Hilary Schrauf and Eric Everson perform as a duo of fiddle and Irish bouzouki. Check them out online at www.lawsontrad.com.

Second Sunday Pot Luck Lunches Begins Oct 12

The first of our 2nd Sunday Pot Luck lunches will commence at 12 noon on October 12th in Assembly Hall. This month we will try to eat locally produced ingredients, that is, those grown from within a 100 mile radius. Anything is welcome but try to purchase goods from farm stands along our roads, farmers markets in our towns, or even pick from vegetable plots in your own backyards. Fresh apple cider from Charlton's Smith's Orchards will be provided. No reservation required. Call Gay Doolittle (399-0499) with questions and suggestions.

Outdoor Frolics

Giant Frolic October 4

Saturday, October 4th will bring an *advanced* frolic to the summit of one of the most spectacular mountains in the Adirondacks. We will conclude our day of hiking with a dip in Chapel Pond and dinner at the Noonmark Diner in Keene Valley. Please be aware that this is an *advanced* hike. We will leave the church parking lot together at 6:30 am. For more information, contact Bill Brooks (399-3717) or Daniel Carlson at the church.

A Mild Mile Meander October 12

We have a beautiful river right in our backyard. Following our 2nd Sunday Pot Luck Lunch of October 12, we will walk along the flat banks of the Mohawk. Combine a healthy meal with some outdoor exercise and good conversation. We'll meet at the Poling House entrance. All are welcome (around 1 pm) even if you've dined elsewhere beforehand.

Thatcher October 26

The final frolic of the month of the finest foliage will be to Thatcher State Park on October 26. The view from the escarpment of the Helderberg mountains is among the most far-reaching and magnificent in the capital district. The look-out is accessible to all; from there a mile-long intermediate hike takes one down the historic Indian Ladder Trail. We'll leave after worship and refreshments. Pack a lunch to enjoy at the overlook, hike about, and be back in plenty of time for Celtic Vespers!



Blessing of the Pets Saturday, October 4

As the chill of autumn arrives, you may notice an odd sight. A procession of animals (everything from dogs and cats to hamsters and perhaps even horses...) is led to the church for a special ceremony called the *Blessing of the Pets*. This service is conducted in remembrance of St. Francis of Assisi, who is known for his love for all creatures.

At 4 pm on October 4, the feast day of St. Francis, we will honor the bond we have with our pets with a blessing ceremony. Each animal will be welcomed and blessed with a special prayer. Please join us - and bring your furry, feathered, or finned friend - as we celebrate the love given to and received from our pets, which draws us more deeply into the wonder of our relationship with our Creator.

Wednesday Dialogue Begins Oct 15 with Pastoral Mission Report

Bill Levering will kick-off a new season of Wednesday Dialog on October 15 with a talk on conditions and mission to the Gypsy populations of Eastern Europe. This group meets at noon each Wednesday in Assembly Hall where a light lunch is served followed by some great discussion. All are invited to share this fine time with us.

Schenectady Inner City Ministry News

For the past several years, SICM has organized sites, provided volunteer servers, and delivered food, which is paid for by a Federal grant, to 14 locations in the City of Schenectady. This provides lunches to needy children during the summer when the school lunch program is closed down. The program has grown year by year as the need has grown. In the summer of 2008, SICM served just over THIRTY THOUSAND lunches in Schenectady. First Reformed received thanks and a Citation for its service to the program. Take a look at the Citation and pictures on the Refrigerator Door. Thanks to the church members who volunteered their time to this program.

SICM also runs the Food Pantry which moved "up on The Hill" from First Methodist Church last year. As the economy has declined recently, the Food Pantry calls have increased sharply. Volunteers are seeing empty shelves and a sharply decreased bank balance in response to this increased need for basic food.

To help, the ministry will be holding a fundraiser to supplement its food pantry, called **"Harvest for the Pantry," on Nov. 9 from 4:00-7:00pm**. A buffet dinner will be served, with food from a variety of fine area restaurants, and there will also be an opportunity to bid in a silent auction. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased from the SICM office or through Stacey. Donations for the silent auction are also still being accepted; if you have an item or service you think would be appropriate, please talk to Stacey.

Alerts

- **Home Furnishings Program Needs Beds**
- **New Member Class Forming**
- **Stephen Ministry to Meet Oct 20th**
- **Stewardship Theme: "Love in Action"**
- **Consistory Retreat Nov. 14**
- **Tuesday Morning Moms Discussing "Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World"**
- **"Pain in the Back" exercise class continues M-W at 9**

Church School Buzz

Here is what the kids are talking about in class:

- K-1: Noah, Naaman, Rahab
- 2-3: Creation, Noah, Abraham & Sarah
- 4-5: Creation, Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, The Tower of Babel
- 6-8: Tough Choices

The third graders have a busy fall. They have received their Bibles and are now learning about Communion.

As a whole group, we are trying to get to know each other a little better. Ask your child about the balloon game, the shoe game, and others we have played. We are also collecting cans of HUNTS tomato sauce (15-oz) for a special Easter project. It must be this variety – no substitutes! Kids will continue to bring in a can or two each week until we have 238.

The Christmas musical rehearsals have begun. Children in grades 2 and up are invited to join us every Sunday from 11:30 – 12:30. (This time will lengthen as we get closer to Christmas.) We meet in Friendship Hall on the stage.

For children who do not want to participate in the musical, there will be a story reader in the library from 11:30 to noon.

Youth Activities

Junior High Youth Group

JHYG begins this month and meets the first Sunday of each month. All students in grades 6-8 are welcome to join us for fun activities and food. Our retreat this year at Fowler will be November 7-9.

Senior High Youth Group

SHYG will meet on the first and third Sundays of the month at 7 pm, in the mezzanine unless otherwise indicated! All youth in grades 9-12 are invited to join us, and friends are welcome. Coming on Oct. 24-26 is our retreat at Camp Fowler

Group News

Group V

Members of Group V will hold their first meeting on Monday, October 6th at the home of Cindy Phillippe, 1054 Bellridge Road, Niskayuna. Coffee will be served at 9:30, we will have a program, and the meeting will follow. Group V would like to invite others to join our fun and caring group.

Group VII

The October meeting of Group VII will be held at St. George's Episcopal Church, 30 North Ferry Street in the Schenectady Stockade. The program, a tour of this historic church, is scheduled to be held on October 17th at 12:30 pm.

Fall Potluck Dinner Nov 1

The congregation and friends are invited to an evening of dinner and games on Saturday, November 1 in Assembly Hall. Games and fellowship will begin at 5:00, and dinner will be served around 6:00. Please contact Eric Evans at 372-1888 if you need transportation or additional information. If you like to cook, please bring a dish to share. The main course and beverages will be provided.



Just a Smidge

It seemed like it would be an uneventful evening. I had met a couple of friends at the bistro, and we were sitting around, chatting about inconsequential things. A young woman I had never seen before joined us - nothing out of the ordinary - and we began to cover the standard surface, get-to-know-you territory. She seemed lively and cheerful. However, somewhere in the conversation something shifted, and suddenly the real story spilled out: an abusive boyfriend, unstable living conditions, concern for her young child, and uncertainty about where to turn.

My friends often tell me that I have one of the weirdest jobs ever. It's certainly true that my job description brings me to tasks, locations, and people that most ministers seldom have the opportunity to encounter. One of the most peculiar things about my job is that one of my responsibilities is to "hang out." Okay, it doesn't phrase it quite that way in my contract, but a segment of what I am charged to do is have a presence in some places where the Church rarely appears. I am to be known by and available to young adults and other people who are not typically involved in churches, and who may not have much in terms of a spiritual outlet in their lives.

So, I spend quite a bit of time just being in places where these people go. Hanging out. It is an odd job. It's almost impossible to measure the results. The people I talk to may never join the church, or even walk through the doors. There are times when it seems like nothing is actually happening - when the conversations are inconsequential, when the

evenings remain uneventful. But then there are those other times, when someone happens to sit down who really needs a listening ear, a referral to a good counselor, a place to sleep that night, a meal, a support group for abused women, or maybe just someone to care about them - to take the time for them - for just a little while. They don't always follow up with me; sometimes I never hear from them again. I do, however, get phone calls from that young woman, every week or two, letting me know how she's doing in her new place. And I rejoice in those moments that I'm fortunate enough to work in a church that allows me to meet and come to know people like her - even though the way that begins to happen often looks like I'm just hanging out.

Faith Forming Weekend with Dr. Larry Rasmussen

Retreat with Rasmussen, Friday 7 p.m. - Saturday, 3 p.m., November 21, 22: a mixture of presentations by Larry at Fowler's Chi Rho House, and conversations on the theme "The Power to Change: Green Discipleship." Registration may be made with the church office. \$100 includes all meals and amenities; financial assistance is available.

Public Lecture and Workshops, Saturday 7 p.m., November 22: "Global Consumerism and a Simpler Life" is the title of Larry's presentation, which will be widely publicized, promoted, and, we anticipate, attended. It will be followed by workshops enabling participants to delve deeper into earth-honoring living.

Worship and First Forum, Sunday, 10 a.m. November 23 Larry will preach on Sunday and speak at First Forum, giving particular attention given to addressing questions from his seminal book, Earth Community, Earth Ethics that is available in the bookshop.

Volunteers Needed for Classis Meeting Here October 28

Our congregation will be hosting area Reformed churches on the evening of October 28. We need help serving dinner, greeting, and parking cars. If you can help, please fill out a little white card or leave your name at the office.

First Forum Schedule

The First Forum meets in the Poling Chapel following the fellowship time on Sunday mornings. It is over at noon.



Oct 5 Native American speaker David Cornelius on "Iroquois Ethical Perspective"

Oct 12 Efraim Oppelt and Karen Hamm will speak participation in mission work in South Africa. Our Mission and Benevolence Committee is providing funds this year to Tapologo Hospice, a South African Partner of the Schenectady Community Hospice, to help support a Children's Shelter in the squatter camp area of South Africa.

Oct 19 "Is There Room for All?" Marilyn Paarlberg will discuss the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in the life and ministry of RCA congregations.

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October Birthdays

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 – Matthew Moore | 12 – Grant Smith |
| 1 – Allen Wood | 13 – Bill Brooks |
| 3 – Jayne Mc Cann | 17 – Caroline Brooks |
| 4 – Daniel Ertel | 20 – Melissa Hewitt |
| 4 – Bill Ward | 23 – Mary Frances Case |
| 5 – Peter Atherton | 24 – Marvin Humphrey |
| 5 – Matthew Merten | 24 – Mark Mc Dermott |
| 6 – Peter Ten Eyck | 26 – John Della Pia |
| 7 – Nelson Drimalas | 28 – Samantha Brooks |
| 7 – Virginia Mills | 23 – Deven Martin |
| 8 – Lauren Hewitt | 29 – Ilah De Paoli |
| 9 – Anne Robb | 30 – Jackson Brown |
| 10 – Barbara Draffen | 31 – Joan Lindsay |
| 11 – Amanda Kiesow | 31 – Susan Staffa |

October 2008

Calendar

Every Sunday

- Youth Orchestra – 8:30
- Choir – 9:15 am
- Worship – 10 am
- Church School – 10:20 am
- Coffee Hour – 11 am
- First Forum or Sermon
- Feedback – 11:20 am
- Vespers – 5 pm
- Sr. High Fellowship – 7 pm

Weekly

Monday:

- Back Rx – 9 am
- Men's News Group – 9 am
- Klokken Ringers – 7 pm

Tuesday:

- Morning Mom's 9 am
- Back Rx – 9 am
- Morning Prayer – 10 am

Wednesday:

- Back Rx 9 am
- Kerygma – 9:30 am
- Wednesday Dialogue 12 pm
- WE @ FRC – 6, 7, 8 pm

Thursday:

- Chancel Choir – 7:30 pm

Events

October 2008						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

- 4 – Blessing of Pets – 4 pm
- 6 – Concerned for Hungry – 7:30 pm
- 8 – Choir Festival Mtg. – 7 pm
- 9 – Sch'dy. Art Society – 7 pm
- 9 – Concerned for Hungry – 7:30 pm
- 12 – Mission Festival and Pot Luck Lunch
- 14 – Committee Mtgs. – 7 pm
- 14 – Consistory – 8 pm
- 20 – Stephen Ministry – 7 pm
- 21 – Support & Care – 11 am
- 25 – Fall Festival
- 25 – Story Teller – 10 am
- 28 – Classis Meeting – 6 pm