

First Things

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

February 2012

The Covenant of Our Congregation Adopted in 1962

We do hereby set forth the principles of the Christian faith as commonly held among us, believing that no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

It shall be our aim to bring joy to little children, instruction and high ideals to youth, inspiration to men and women in the midst of life, and comfort to those in life's later years; and to labor together for the betterment of humankind.

Our fellowship shall not be dependent upon identity of theological opinion, or of outward circumstance, or of denominational concern, but shall grow from a common loyalty to Jesus, a common commitment to serve the world we touch, and a common purpose to do justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.

Our ideal is a church of the open mind, the warm heart, the hopeful spirit, and the social vision which ever seeks to express, in all walks of life, the mind of Jesus.



February 5

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Covenant of our Congregation. The worship service on Sunday morning will feature many of its parts.

At the forum following the service we will hear from John F. Gearing, who is a Schenectady Genesis researcher and author. The community is invited to the Sunday's worship service, Forum hour, and evening Vespers as part of Schenectady's annual wintertime Colonial Festival. Tune in to other events sponsored by the Historical Society, especially the dinner on February 4.

Midnight Run

February 3

On Friday, February 3, a group from FRC will be delivering a hot meal, warm clothing, blankets, and hygiene items to homeless people in New York City. We will leave the church at 7pm and return around 3am.

Donations of dark-colored sweatshirts (especially in men's large sizes), blankets and sleeping bags, and travel-sized hygiene items can be dropped off in Stacey's office before noon on February 3. There are still a couple of places in the van as well, so if you would like to participate, please contact Stacey Midge ASAP.



Winter Party February 4

Again this year, Doug Todd has graciously offered his farmstead (Fox Hill Farm, 6003 Parkis Mills Rd., Galway) as the location for the annual winter outing for adults in our congregation. For the adventurous, cross country skiing, skating and snowshoeing will begin at 3pm. The food, beverage, fellowship and laughter indoors begins at 5:30pm with appetizers and drinks; a dinner of hearty soups, sides, salads, and desserts will follow. To offset the cost of this event, there will be a \$5 charge per person and please also bring some food: appetizer, side dish, salad, or dessert. A signup sheet is posted in Assembly Hall, or call the church office. We are also happy to announce that *Live From Geneva* will play for us in the evening. Childcare will be provided in Kinderwyck during the event for those who wish; please note this asap on the signup sheet. Carpooling is encouraged to ease our pollution of the planet and parking at the party. Hope to see you there!



**Scout
Sunday
February 12**

Scouts will be participating in the worship service and scouts of all types, Girl Scouts, Cubs, Explorers are invited to wear their uniforms.

**\$100
Covenant
Prize Established**



In honor of the 50th anniversary of the Covenant of our Congregation, a \$100 prize is established for anyone under the age of 21 who can recite the Covenant from memory by the end of February, 2012. Rules and information can be viewed at www.is.gd/covenant.

**Colonial Festival Dinner
Saturday, February 4**

This time last year artist Len Tantillo was with the Historical Society at the annual Schenectady Colonial Festival and dinner. This year they are going back in time to the late 1700s to join prominent 18th century citizens of the Schenectady area for *An Evening of Fine Fare and Merriment* at Jacob Mabee's Inn along the Mohawk River. The Inn was part of the Mabee's Farm in Rotterdam Junction and was frequented by military leaders, Native American traders, bateaumen and many others traveling the Mohawk River.

For further information: Schenectady County Historical Society's website - www.schenectadyhistory.net, (518) 374-0263 or 887-5073. Space is limited, so secure your tickets now. As an added attraction to the dinner's celebration of Schenectady's colonial spirit, *Light on New Netherland*, an exhibit produced and provided by the New Netherland Institute, will be on display. Dr. Charles Gehring, Executive Director of the Institute and renowned translator of New York's early Dutch records, will give an introduction to the exhibit explaining how it traces the history of New Netherland from Henry Hudson's 1609 exploration to Schenectady's place at the northernmost edge of the Colony. Help fill a table to represent FRC at this Colonial Festival Dinner. Contact Laura Lee Linder at 882-6866.

Groups

Group V

We will meet Monday, February 6 in the Dirck Romeyn Room at 11am. Program: Kitty Trimarco, Adult Education. Hostesses: Sandy Moynihan and Cindy Hamilton.

Group VII

There will not be any meeting in February. We will resume on Friday, March 16 at 10am in the Dirck Romeyn Room.

Prayer Shawl Knitting Group

We will be meeting at 9:30am on Thursday, February 23 at the home of Ronnie Bartholic. We welcome anyone interested in joining us. Please contact Ronnie (393-7679) with any questions.

Wednesday Dialog

On February 15 at noon in Assembly Hall, the Community Theater in Schenectady will feature an overview of both the Schenectady Light Opera Company (musicals) and the Schenectady Civic Players (mostly dramas,) presented by Joseph Fava. Their histories, seasons, and future building plans among other topics will be presented and discussed. Since Mr. Fava has directed and acted at both theaters and has been on both their Boards, he is particularly suited for this subject. Schenectady's community theaters are a strong and healthy contributor to the City as an entertainment center.

Tuesday Ladies

We will meet at Inge-Lise Pangburn's home on February 21 at 7:30pm. All ladies are welcome. Please call Inge-Lise (399-1027) if any questions.

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministers meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday, February 15, in Assembly Hall for refreshments, devotions, community building, and small group peer supervision. All Stephen Ministers in confidential one to one care-giving relationships should bring their updated contact record sheet(s) and monthly check-in form to the meeting.



Faith with a Twist February 16

This group, geared toward young adults in their 20s and 30s, meets on the fourth Thursday of the month at 7pm at the Van Dyck Restaurant for casual, open-minded conversation about faith, spirituality, God, and life. Participants need not be church members; we encourage people from a variety of backgrounds to attend and enliven our discussion! Please contact Stacey Midge if you have questions.

Faith Bookshop

Thank you again to everyone who participated in the Bookshop's Christmas ornament project. It raised \$107, all of which was given to the Sr. Minister's Discretionary Fund. February is a significant month historically for FRC and Schenectady. Literature relating to these events is available in the Bookshop. Browsers welcome! Remember, you can order any book in print at a 30% discount through the Bookshop.

Youth News

Kinderwyck (Childcare)

We are looking for folks to entertain toddlers and rock babies from 9:50am-noon on Sundays. Please call the church office if you are willing and able. Thank you.



Church School -Jamie Ipsen

Sometimes I teach. Sometimes I listen. One Sunday during Church School, I was in the kitchen getting napkins for the snack we were having later. In the next room, an enthusiastic middle school teacher was greeting her class, "Today we are learning about baptism!" I walked down the hallway only to hear a student reading Mark 1:4-11 out loud to his 3rd – 5th grade classmates. Then, I stopped to tack up some letters on a bulletin board and heard the Kindergarten – 2nd grade class getting ready to act out the story of John baptizing Jesus. I caught phrases amidst the happy chatter, "Here's the river.....How shall we make the clouds? You can be the dove....." It was all too wonderful. The whole church school - no - the whole church was mulling over the same lesson.

Did you know that while you are enjoying the sermon in the sanctuary, the children are also experiencing the same message on their own level in class? Be sure to ask them about it. Be sure to listen. They can be great teachers too.

Youth Group

Feb. 3 – Midnight Run

Feb. 5 - Junior High at 5pm, Senior High at 7pm.

Feb. 12 - Junior High at 5pm, Senior High at 7pm.

Feb. 19 - No meetings.

Feb. 20-26 - Senior High Mission Trip in the Dominican Republic.



Youth Mission Trip to the Dominican Republic

Please pray for our youth and adult chaperones who will be traveling to the Dominican Republic from February 20-26 on our annual mission trip. They will be staying at a ministry center in Santo Domingo and doing construction and improvements at the ministry center, a school, and homes of people in need.

This is an important opportunity for our youth that enables them to experience another culture, learn about the dynamics of poverty, and do valuable service in another community - which equips them to better see and address needs in their own communities. **You can support this trip by purchasing a mission share for \$25** from any member of the Senior High Youth Group, or from Stacey Midge. All mission shareholders are invited to attend a dinner on Sunday, March 25 to eat food inspired by the Dominican Republic, see pictures of our time there, and hear the youth tell stories about what they experienced and how they have been impacted.

First Forum

Feb. 5 - Colonial Festival/Heritage Sunday: Introducing John F. Gearing- the researcher and author working for the Colonial Schenectady Project to complete Volume 2 *Schenectady Genesis: How a Dutch Colonial Village Became an American City, Ca. 1661-1800*. John will share anecdotes and results of his research on early Schenectady and speak about the Themes and Highlights from the period 1771-1800.

Feb. 12 - Budget Roundtable

Feb. 19 - Coffee & Conversation

Feb. 26 - Justice Action Council Topic –Challenges of Public Education Reform, Mary Alice Jewett & Cathy Lewis

Any ideas or recommendations for Speakers please contact Joe Doolittle at aldenjoe@nycap.rr.com

Justice Action Council

The Justice Action Council will present 30-minute post-service forums in Poling Chapel on the fourth Sunday of the month, on issues of social, economic and environmental fairness. After each forum, we will offer further opportunities for discussion and action on the topic presented. Tentative topics for upcoming forums are:

Feb. 26 - Justice in Education

March 25 - Hydrofracking

April 22 - LGBT inclusion/ Room For All

May 27 - Income Inequality

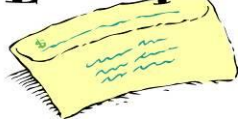
June 24 - Health Insurance/ Health Reform

Please join us for what are sure to be lively conversations. And let us know if you have other ideas you'd like us to address, or perhaps even a justice issue on which you'd like to make a presentation. Contact Claire Hughes at eclair@nycap.rr.com or 381-9241.

Netherlands Exchanges

There is a group of folks who are interested in a closer relationship between two towns: one in the Netherlands and one being Schenectady. This council is sponsoring an trip of youth to this town, Nijkerk, in the Netherlands in July and a group of adults from Nijkerk is coming here in September. There are many ways to participate in these exchanges. For further information contact Connie Colangelo, crcnmc@aol.com / 374-7355, or Laura Lee Linder, 882-6866.

Offering Envelopes



If you didn't sign up for envelopes and would like a box, please come

to the church office or contact Heather Scribner at 377-2201 or 1streformed@gmail.com.



WiFi Now in Dirck Romeyn

WiFi is now available in the Dirck Romeyn room and places close to it. The connection name is FRC2. This addition means that most of the first floor of our campus is now covered. There is no encryption, so feel free to use it.



The Church & Its Money- with Rev. Dr. Norman Tellier, St. George's Episcopal Church, March 3, 9am-3pm, For every-one who handles money in the church.

Worship Conference, with Rev. Ron Rienstra & Panel of Local Presenters; Brunswick Presbyterian Church, March 22-23, 9am-4pm. Find new enthusiasm and inspiration for the work of creating engaging worship, using music, senses, technology and more.

Unprotected Texts: Misconceptions About Sexuality & the Bible, with Dr. Jennifer Knust, May 10 & 11, 9am-4pm. This author and B.U. professor provides a compassionate and liberating model for navigating what the Bible does or does not say about human sexuality.

Shane Claiborne: A Call to the Simple Way of Radical Christianity, June 22 & 23. See website for details. Consider how you can join ranks with Shane to equalize the carbon footprint he will leave during his visit! Groups forming now!

Register online at www.capitalrtc.org or by phone at 518-462-2470. Watch our website for information on these and many other courses. Scholarships and group discounts available for most classes; please contact us for an application.



Concert Handbell Ringers

The Concert Handbell Ringers of the Wheeler School of Providence, Rhode Island will be performing in our Sanctuary on Sunday, March 11 at 7pm. Performers from the Wheeler School, an independent day school for boys and girls from nursery through the twelfth grade, last performed at our church in 2007.

The Concert Ringers are directed by Daniel K. Moore, who for thirty-four years has been a member of the Performing Arts Faculty at the Wheeler School in Providence, Rhode Island, including twenty-four years as department chair. Annual tours take the ensemble throughout the United States and Canada, and most recently to Bermuda in March 2011. The ringers generally perform 15-20 concerts annually on six octaves of Malmark handbells and five octaves of Malmark Choirchimes.

The concert will feature dance music written for handbells including *Lord of the Dance*, *Gypsy Dance*, *Sarabandes* by Bach and Debussy, *The Tennessee Waltz*, and *A Time to Dance*, by Hart Morris. A free will offering will be accepted at the concert. For further information call 518-370-5434.





Handbells Times Two

Tower Ringers,
FRC's handbell
choir, and Thursday

Belles, a community handbell choir rehearsing at FRC, make music times 2! Each week FRC becomes the most 'happening' place around for handbells! The result is that there were 9 holiday concerts performed that reached literally hundreds of audience members.

The sharing between the two choirs is amazing; a ringer moves from one group to another to help fill a vacancy, a ringer from the community choir repairs the church's equipment, the music libraries of both groups are shared in the spirit of stewardship, and equipment from one choir is freely lent to the other. So we greet this New Year with 'Our Halls are alive with the joyful sounds of Music!'



Musicians of Ma'alwyck Concert Here February 3

Musicians of Ma'alwyck will present American Classics, a concert of music popular from the early 1900s through the 1950s in America. The repertory includes works of Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Rudolf Friml, Victor Herbert and more. The concert will take place on Friday, February 3 at 7pm in our sanctuary. Featured performers include soprano Gene Marie Callahan, baritone Charles Frederick Schwartz, violinist Ann-Marie Barker Schwartz, cellist Petia Kassarova and pianist Tom Savoy. A few tickets are available for free to members of our congregation. Musicians of Ma'alwyck has performed on National Public Radio and in 2008 and 2009 was named the best Chamber Music Ensemble of the Capital Region by Metroland.



Conversations

The RCA is holding a denomination-wide event in Orlando on February 10-12, called *Conversations*. The goal of this gathering is to discern future directions and goals for the RCA through a focused discussion group process. Stacey Midge, Abby Norton Levering, and Brad Lewis will be attending this event, and look forward to giving an update on the discussion at a future Adult Forum.



A Few Words About Finance

The financial numbers for the year 2012 are not yet final but we have quite reliable preliminary results. Somewhat to the Treasurer's surprise, we ended the year slightly in the black. Total revenues appear to be about \$958,000; expenditures are \$952,000, leaving a surplus of \$6,000. Giving was less than we expected since contributions in the year 2010 were \$417,400 and in 2011 only \$390,200. Other income covered part of this lower giving and some fortunate and controlled budget expenses resulted in the small surplus.

The Consistory has approved the 2012 budget which includes total contributions of \$418,500 based upon an increase in pledges resulting from the one on one visits this fall. The budget includes a small across the board raises for all employees for the first time in three years. More budget information next month.

- Art Casey



Israel: A Biblical Journey

Travel to the Holy Land on an inspirational journey that visits some of the most ancient sites in the world. From Oct. 17-25, we will visit Tel Aviv, Nazareth, Cana, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, the site of the Transfiguration at Mount Tabor, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and more. The cost of the trip if booked before April 17 is \$3,299 per person (double occupancy,) which includes round trip airfare from Albany, air taxes and fees, hotel transfers, 9-day tour, 9 dinners, 1 lunch, and 11 breakfasts. An optional 5-day/4-night post-tour extension to Jordan is also available for \$1,299.00 per person. Contact Stacey Midge for a tour brochure or other information about this opportunity.

Leverings' New Phone

Please note that the home phone number for Dr. Levering has changed from 630-6151 to 723-0004.
Bill Levering Cell: 694-6232
Abby Norton Levering Cell: 694-6234
Bill and Abby Home: 723-0004

Lent

The season of lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22.



Dinner

A simple soup, bread and salad supper at 6pm, in Assembly Hall will be available prior to our Ash Wednesday Service, February 22. We will preview each of the Lenten Classes and provided an opportunity to sign up for assisting with any of the following Wednesday Lenten Dinners. Please call the church office to inform us of your intention to attend the Ash Wednesday Dinner.

Service

Join us in marking the start of this Lenten season with an evening service of readings, music, reflection, and the traditional imposition of ashes. Our worship will be held at 7:15pm in Poling Chapel.

Childcare Wednesdays in Lent

Childcare will be provided in Kinderwyck for the Ash Wednesday service and all Wednesday Lenten classes and worship.

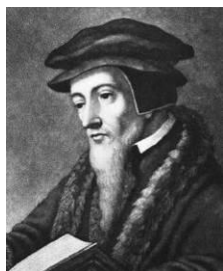
Wednesday Lenten Classes

All classes meet from 7-8pm, Feb. 29, March 7, 13, 21, 28, in locations to be announced.



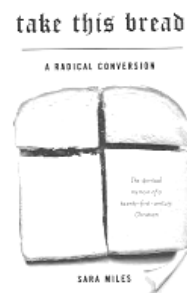
King of the Hill: Television and the Gospel

a class led by Dr. Bill Levering, will explore just one television show, *King of the Hill*, and it's view of faith. We will watch an episode each week and discuss it. Join Hank and Peggy as they cope with the changes that arrive in Arlen, Texas. People of all ages are invited.



A Sampling of Protestant Thought

a class facilitated by Kitty Trimarco, will enable participants to understand the differences and similarities among five distinct yet related protestant communions—including our own. Each week a different minister will be on hand to speak about a particular denomination, including Rev. Stacey Midge (Reformed); Father James McDonald (Episcopal); Rev. Dr. Alan Rhodes (Methodist); and Rev. Larry Phillips (Baptist).



Take this Bread: A Radical Conversion

a discussion of Sara Miles' book *Take This Bread*, led by Cheryl and David Olsen with Mary and Daniel

Carlson. Well known author Anne Lamott, described this spiritual memoir of a (unlikely) twenty-first-century Christian as "The most amazing book." Discounted copies of the book for this class will be available from our own Faith Bookshop.



More than Jellybeans: Lent for Kids

Jamie Ipsen will be leading a

class during the regular class time full of art projects and music and stories for children K - 8.

Wednesday Lenten Dinners

Come share a tasty, modest meal with others at 6pm any or all the Wednesday evening of Lent. A sign-up sheet is posted in Assembly Hall to assist with the set up, preparation, and clean up.

Lenten Communion

Following every Wednesday class will be an opportunity to conclude the evening with a serene service of song, silence, communion, and prayer. This brief, quiet worship order suited for this holy season again, held in the Sanctuary, beginning at 8:15pm.

The Lenten Schedule

Ash Wednesday - Feb 22

6 dinner
7:15 service

Wednesdays in Lent thru March

6 dinner
7 class
8:15 communion

Holy Week

Wednesday, April 4

6 Seder

Maundy Thursday, April 5

7:30 Tenebrae Service

Good Friday, April 6

12 Service

Easter Sunday, April 8

6:15 Sunrise Service
7 Easter Breakfast
10 Easter Worship
5 Vespers

Holy Week Services

We will be celebrating Holy Week with a variety of opportunities. Wednesday will feature a Christian Seder, complete with a shared meal. Thursday will bring our traditional Tenebrae Service with the moving darkening of the sanctuary. Noon on Good Friday the choir will be a part of the reflective service. On Easter Sunday, we will gather with other Christians at 6:15 AM to greet the dawning of new life and then have a fellowship meal. Of course, join us for the grand celebration of Easter Joy on Easter including the Hallelujah Chorus.



Senior Moments

I suppose it is a part of human life that we disappoint ourselves. There are things that we should be doing that we aren't and there are things that we do that we shouldn't. These may or may not be external judgments, but God knows we are hard enough on ourselves. It would be nice if we could show a little progress, if we could pick up just one good habit or let just one little bad one go.

So here we are at lent again. A time when we have an excuse to do what needs to be done. We don't have to tell anyone, don't have to make a big deal about it, but how about if we try to be better people for a few weeks in some tiny way. Some years I might suggest how to do that. Not this year. You know what needs to be done. Take a tiny step this year. Take a step on the journey towards the full humanity God wishes for us and that Jesus shows us.

Apparently we need excuses to make our lives better. Abby and I are still in a battle to see who will eat sweets first. We have had a contest since Halloween and it has been our excuse not to indulge in empty calories. We aren't even sure what losing will mean, but we know we need an excuse to change. Lent can be your excuse this year.

Before we launch into our next holiday season, I'd like to thank the congregational workers and staff who made the holidays so successful here and all the work done by folks to get ready for the new year.

Now for February. As you may have noticed, there are many fabulous activities here in the very beginning of February. Which means you need to jump on these.

Stay tuned for the location of the Easter Sunrise and Seder services since we are trying to work with some other congregations in the area and we may have these off-site.

It's a bit strange planning for Easter in the dead of winter, but that is often the life we lead, hoping for the best, coping with the rest.

May the God who waits for you find you.

- Bill Levering

Entered Eternal Rest

Don Middleton
January 16, 2012

Ned Landon
December 28, 2011

Marguerite Carr
December 12, 2011

New Members



Ann Bish
2280 Cayuga Rd.
Niskayuna, NY
12309
374-8154



Ann Hicks
2280 Cayuga Rd.
Niskayuna, NY
12309
374-8154



Patricia Mett
208 Krutz Rd.
Amsterdam, NY
12010
842-0406

First Reformed Church
 8 North Church Street
 Schenectady, NY 12305
 (518) 377-2201
 1streformed@gmail.com
 www.1stReformed.com

Non-Profit Organization
 U.S. Postage Paid
 Albany, NY
 Permit No. 736

Address Service Requested

| Feb. | Preacher | Reader | Vespers at 5 |
|------|---------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5 | Bill Levering | Nancy Wainwright | Nat Phipps, Pete Toigo, Tom D'Andrea |
| 12 | Bill Levering | Therese McCarty | 'Azzaam Hameed |
| 19 | Stacey Midge | Mary Jewett | Delaney's & Tom D'Andrea |
| 26 | Bill Levering | Leah Kidwell-Fernandes | TBA |

February Birthday's

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Patricia Mett | 16 Courtney Conover |
| 2 Laura Smith | 18 Jessica Allen |
| Erika Zampella | 19 Genevieve Emken |
| 5 Elsa Hjelmar | 20 Donald Kleiber |
| 7 Shannon Kerwin | 22 Nicole Breitenbach |
| 8 Ryan Conover | John Hewitt |
| Sarah Howes | Lisa Range |
| 9 James Herrington | 23 Courtney Van Oort |
| 10 Beverly Mc Lane | Jordaan Van Oort |
| Linda Senn | Nicole Van Oort |
| 12 Heather Chestnut | 26 Richard Gatta |
| Tricia Shaw | Alida Rice |
| 13 Bruno De Paoli | 27 George Trimarco |
| 14 Lorraine Aumic | 28 Alexander Bzdell |
| | Rheinhardt Brandenburg |

February 2012

Every Sunday

Musical/HS Choir, 9:15am
 Worship, 10am
 Church School, 10:20am
 Fellowship, 11am
 Class and Forum, 11:15am
 Kirk Ringers, 11:30am
 Youth Orchestra, 3pm
 Vespers, 5pm
 JHYG, 5pm
 SHYG, 7pm

Weekly

Monday:

Men's News Group, 9am
 Tower Ringers, 7:15pm

Tuesday:

Morning Prayer, 10am

Wednesday:

Kerygma, 9:30am
 Thursday Belles, 1pm

Thursday:

Breakfast Bible, 7:30am
 Prayer Shawl Knitting, 9:30am
 Stitch Group, 10am
 Purls of Wisdom, 6pm
 Boy Scouts, 7pm
 Chancel Choir, 7:30pm

Monthly Meetings

Concern for Hungry, 1st Mon.
 Group V, 1st Mon., 11am
 Committees, 2nd Tues., 6:30pm
 Consistory, 2nd Tues., 7:30pm
 Creation Care Com., 3rd Sun.
 Support & Care, 3rd Tues.
 Tues. Ladies, 3rd Tue.
 Archiving, 2nd Wed., 1pm
 Stephen Ministry, 3rd Wed.
 Wednesday Dialog, 3rd Wed.
 Faith with a Twist, 4th Thur.
 Group VII, 3rd Fri., 10am
 Justice Action, 1st Sun.

Upcoming Events

3 - Midnight Run
 4 - Adult Winterfest, Doug Todd's Home
 4 - Colonial Festival Dinner
 5 - Colonial Festival/Heritage Sunday
 6 - Group V, Dirck Romeyn Room
 15 - Dialog, Assembly Hall
 20-26 - SHYG Mission Trip
 21 - Tuesday Ladies
 23 - Prayer Shawl Knitting Group

