



February 2007

## REDEDICATION SUNDAY - February 4, 2007 Why We Celebrate This Day in February

*Fifteen families came with Arendt Van Curler in 1661 to settle land they had purchased along the Mohawk River. At a bend in the river, they built their homes in a village and for protection surrounded the village with a stockade. By 1670, they had formed a church congregation.*

**FEBRUARY 1679** - Records of the City of Albany state "... The court and consistory of Schaenectadi requests that Dominie Schaets may be sent four Sundays in one year to administer the Lord's Supper to said place and community, which request is granted in so far that Dominie Schaets is allowed to go four times in one year to administer the Holy Sacrament, but not on a Sunday, whereas it would be unjust to let that community (of Albany) be without preaching."

Domine Gideon Schaets of Albany's First Reformed, our mother church, helped organize the Dutch colonists' Schenectady church. Our earliest written records show elders and deacons in place by 1680. Alexander Lindsay Glen gave the village its first church building in 1682. The first parsonage was built in 1683, and Petrus Tessemacher was called to be Domine.

The first building was a small square wooden structure with a peaked four-sided roof. It was built on the public square of the Stockade.

**FEBRUARY 8, 1690** - The Schenectady Massacre. A French and Indian war party murdered sixty villagers and burned the colonial stockade village. Domine Tessemacher was brutally killed. Other villagers were kidnapped and taken as prisoners to Montreal.

**FEBRUARY 10, 1730** - The congregation began a subscription to raise money for a new bell for a new church building. In 1732 a 600 pound silver bell arrived from Amsterdam, Holland. It was hung in the belfry of our new third house of worship.

According to Dutch custom, men and women continued to sit separately in this church. Indians and slaves sat in the balcony.

**FEBRUARY 1794** - A church choir was begun in the congregation as the Consistory "...took into consideration the defective condition of the Dutch Psalmody" and "Resolved that Cornelius DeGrass, the chorister, shall use his endeavors, in each family of the village to obtain scholars in singing, on condition that each shall pay one shilling six pence a month."

**FEBRUARY 21, 1785** - The Reverend Doctor Dirck Romeyn and Consistory led Schenectady in establishing the

Schenectady Academy. Consistory resolved to construct a two-story brick building on the northwest corner of Niskayuna (now Union) and Ferry Streets, which housed the academy for the next ten years.

**FEBRUARY 25, 1795** - The charter of Union College was granted. Consistory presented the academy building to the new institution along with endowments of more than \$30,000.

**FEBRUARY 8, 1928** - The reverend William Elliot Griffis, our 16<sup>th</sup> minister, was buried at Vale Cemetery on the anniversary of the Schenectady Massacre. Of all the places he served and traveled, Griffis preferred Schenectady most. During his Schenectady pastorate, he administered the moving of the graves of Schenectady's founders, including victims of the massacre, from their burial sites in the stockade to Vale Cemetery and he wished to be buried near them. He was an avid writer and dedicated himself to recording the story of our city's ancestors.

THE GRIFFIS FAMILY PLOT AT VALE CEMETERY  
NEAR THE GRAVES MOVED TO VALE FROM THE  
STOCKADE.

GRIFFIS LED THE SCHENECTADY COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN MARKING  
SCHENECTADY'S HISTORIC SITES  
THROUGHOUT THE STOCKADE, AS WELL AS  
IN THE NETHERLANDS

**FEBRUARY 3, 1943** - The Reverend Clark V. Poling was one of four chaplains lost at sea on the World War II troop transport **Dorchester** when it sank in the icy north Atlantic after a torpedo attack. The chaplains acted in a heroic manner, helping soldiers escape the sinking ship. They even gave up their own lifejackets so young soldiers could survive.

**FEBRUARY 1, 1948** - On this sub-zero Sunday afternoon, the 1863 architectural landmark church designed by Edward Tuckerman Potter was devastated by fire. The fire raged into the night, leaving only three exterior stone walls. The church was rebuilt from these three walls. Photographs of Potter's church may be seen on the walls at either end of the church narthex.

BRASS LEAVES FROM THE INTERIOR  
OF E. T. POTTER'S 1863 CHURCH,  
FOUND IN THE ASHES OF THE 1948 FIRE.  
From Richard B. Mckeeby

*Continued on page 2*

**REDEDICATION SUNDAY** *continued from front cover*

**FEBRUARY 5, 1950** - The sanctuary in which we worship today and the refurbished Poling House were rededicated.

**FEBRUARY 8, 1970** - Rebuilding of the spire was marked completing the restoration of the 1863 church.

**FEBRUARY 10, 1980** - Tercentenary Office of Thanksgiving and Rededication - began our congregation's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**FEBRUARY 4, 1990** - Schenectady 300: *Ours Is To Hope* Cantata

**FEBRUARY 3, 1991** - Walton House Expansion Dedication - The dedication of the completely restored Walton House and construction of a new connector building between Walton House and Assembly Hall, providing to the church new and enlarged first floor offices for the ministers and staff. (Ground breaking for the project was held on May 20, 1990, and the offices were opened for business in June, 1991.)

**FEBRUARY 5 & 6, 2000** - 320<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the First Reformed Church of Schenectady and Celebration of the New Millennium - Choral recital *Enter Into His Gates* by Dr. Jean Berger premiered.

Laura Linder, Church Historian

**Fowler Camp and Retreat Center Events**

1. Simpler Living, Compassionate Life Retreat #5 will be held at Chi Rho House on March 9 (6PM) and 10. Leaders are Nancy McNiven, Mary Carlson, Jenna and Jordan White, and Kent Busman. For more information, see the Fowler bulletin board in the hallway outside Assembly Hall or [www.campfowler.org](http://www.campfowler.org).
2. If you haven't received your Camp Fowler 2007 Summer brochure, please check the office or look for more copies in the information racks around the church. The Synod office, 374-4573, may also be called.
3. Want to have a wonderfully enriching week with youth? Have you ever considered volunteering at Camp Fowler? Check the Fowler bulletin board or information racks in the church or call the Synod office.
4. A Couples Retreat will be offered at Chi Rho House February 23-25. Check the Fowler bulletin board or web site.

Thanks to all of you who gave so generously to the Christmas Offering, which goes to Habitat for Humanity. We reached our \$10,000 goal! Now the real work continues. If you can help ready the house on Pearl Street, please call 395-3412, to find out times when workers will be there. Again, thank you so much for your support.

~Carol Troost, Mission and Benevolence Committee

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## Minister's Column - Tending the Transition

With Bill's arrival it is fitting to recognize all those who have labored together—and apart—as Justin and I tend this flock during the transition period.

I will begin with the Senior Minister Search Committee. Though they did not focus on guiding us during the interim between Senior Ministers, they have given us the great gift of attending to our future transition. It would be very difficult to overestimate the amount of work or the level of care and competence with which this was carried forward. (Del recently mentioned in passing that he had over 1,200 emails relating to the search process still in his computer!) Co-chairs Carolyn Assini and Del Pierce, together with the entire committee - Roberta Blackmer, Chris Daniels, Nancy Della Pia, Jennifer Evans, Cindy Gallagher, Dave Hjelmar, Peggy King, Marlene Risseeuw, Bill Rochelle, Harvey Schadler, John VanOort, Emile Walraven, Linda Ward, and Johnny Willis, deserve our commendation for a job well done!

The Senior Elders have played a large part in the leadership of this congregation since the inception of this unique office within an office. During this transition Peggy King, Kitty Trimarco, and Sara Erickson have each served in this capacity. Besides taking on the usual responsibilities specific to Senior Elders, they have readily met with Justin and myself on more than a few occasions to weigh pressing matters. Without exception their wise counsel and gracious presence was a blessing.

The members of the Consistory have also served commendably throughout the interim. They have remained steady from the first, when Bob announced his departure more than a year ago. Their full conscientious, hard work at the annual retreat this past fall has already produced fruit, as did

their multiple meetings in November. During this past year they also began, through the labors of the Executive Committee, to lay a good foundation towards envisioning our future as a congregation.

The Schenectady Classis - appointed Supervisors, Elder Kay Grosch and the Rev. Jan Hoffman, need to be mentioned with respect to their discerning, prayerful leadership in both the Consistory and the Search Committee. Their contributions to the process brought to light the importance of being both supported by, and accountable to, a larger church body. The winsome wisdom and realism of the Rev. Dr. Gregg Mast also should be noted with respect to his work as consultant to the formative and substantive work of the Search Committee.

Looking towards the future, I am delighted we now have in place a Transition Team of Susie Zeltmann, Bill Rochelle, Dan Ipsen, and Jennifer Brown, who have agreed to assist Bill—and Abbey—as they find their way into this congregation and community. If you have ideas for what might be helpful for this next part of the transition, I trust this team will be glad to listen.

It's been humbling and inspiring to tend this transition with so many gifted and committed leaders. I've also been encouraged and uplifted by the interest, compassion and prayers of others within and beyond the congregation. May the Good Shepherd, who has sustained us in the transition, now strengthen us with a season of stability, as we seek to follow our Savior.

Shalom,

Daniel

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## Notes from the Senior Pastor

This month I begin the daunting task of being interesting on a regular basis. Being interesting in a religious setting is difficult because the scope is limited and already known. In some way, a preacher is always just reminding folks of what they already know. We're 'preaching to the choir' by definition. The difference is application or emphasis.

There are limits of all types to being interesting. I can't be too interesting, or folks will be ruffled or confused. Like a good worship service, we need to be comforted that God loves and challenges us to a richer life all at once. Walking the tightrope that stretches between boredom and over-stimulation is the task of those of us who stand up front. On the other hand, that balance is one we all seek in our lives as well. Interesting, but not too interesting.

What's of interest this month? Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras, Ash Wednesday, my family's trip to Malta, President's Day vacation, sports parties, and Lenten studies. It's a full month for being so short. Holidays are, of course, holy days. As you take a deep breath and launch into February, may I suggest taking a moment to consider how to make just one of those holy days a bit more interesting, or even a bit more holy. God works with us to make our lives like a good soup, a bit tastier and a bit thicker. But not too thick.

God's blessings on the balance of your life.

Your Pastor,

Bill

Our family thanks you for all of the notes and prayers of care and sympathy after the deaths of son Steve and his father Ted. Having old friends who support and love us has helped us get through this. God bless you.

Duane Plummer, Mike and Chip

**Fresh Faith Worship**

Sundays at 8 a.m. in the  
Poling Chapel

**February Preaching Schedule**

February 4	Rev. Bill Levering
February 11	Rev. Bill Levering
February 18	Rev. Daniel Carlson
February 25	Rev. Bill Levering

# Albany River Rats

## Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm

### First Reformed Church Night

### Come with friends and family



**Tickets Only**  
**\$12 Adult**  
**\$8 Child**



**ALBANY RIVER RATS...**  
**HOCKEY WITH A NEW BITE!**

Please return your completed order form with payment to:  
The Church Office By February 23rd

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Tickets: Adult: \_\_\_\_ x \$12 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Child\*: \_\_\_\_ x \$8 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\* Child is 12 and under

check one: \_\_\_Cash \_\_\_Check\* \_\_\_MC \_\_\_Visa \_\_\_AmEx

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Make Checks payable to the Albany River Rats**

**For Information Contact Bryan Best at (518) 487-2209 or visit [www.AlbanyRiverRats.com](http://www.AlbanyRiverRats.com)**



## Youth Group Events

**SHYG February 11<sup>th</sup> 7:00 p.m.** We will meet at church for a night of Fellowship, Learning and Fun

**SHYG February 18<sup>th</sup>** We will worship together at the 10:00 a.m. service and then leave for Washington D.C. We will return Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**JHYG February 11<sup>th</sup> 5:00 p.m.** We will meet at church for a night of Fellowship, Learning and Fun.

**JHYG Upcoming events.** In March we will go to the Welch's house to have a bonfire and help collect Maple syrup from the Maple trees.

~Rev. Justin J. Meyers



**Celebrating the close of Christmas and entrance of Epiphany on a retreat at Camp Fowler  
January 5 - 7**

## Game Night!

**Guaranteed fun for ALL ages!**

**Saturday, February 10  
from 5 - 8 p.m.  
in Assembly Hall**



- **Pizza will be served**
- **Please bring your favorite snack or beverage**

**Bring along your favorite board game and a friend or two for a fun-filled evening!**

Sponsored by the Youth Education and Nurture Committee



### **Adult Forum Schedule**

- Feb 4 George Wise, PhD. “Seeing the Stars Move: How the Capital Region’s Dudley Observatory Helped Create the Modern Picture of the Milky Way” (see article on page 8)
- Feb 11 Laura Linder and Kathy Delain: Vale Cemetery and First Reformed Church (see article on page 8)
- Feb 18 Coffee and Connections, Get to Know your Church Family
- Feb 25 Stacy Lacombe “Teacups and Dragons, Cabbages and Kings” Schenectady Children’s Theater Troupe and participant in Schenectady’s Public Access Channel 16 first annual film festival called “Why Schenectady?”

## Outreach Ministry

First Reformed Church has a long history of providing financial support to organizations locally, nationally and globally. The Mission and Benevolence Committee directs the financial resources of our congregation to help feed the hungry, house the homeless and lift up those in need in God's love.

In 2006, Mission and Benevolence had a budget of \$97,000, which was distributed to local community ministries, the RCA mission program, the RCA Synod of Albany and the education of seminary students.

Local Community - \$35,950 was directed toward local community programs.

ARISE - \$500  
Bethesda House - \$4,000  
City Mission - \$800  
Community Crisis Network - \$3,500  
Damien Center - \$2,000  
Ellis Hospital Weekend Chaplaincy - \$800  
Habitat for Humanity - \$2,000  
Haven - \$1,000  
Home Furnishings - \$1,100  
Hunger Action Network - \$150  
Interfaith Community of Schenectady - \$500  
Roots and Wisdom - \$500  
Salvation Army Soup Kitchen - \$200  
Samaritan Counseling Center - \$5,000  
Schenectady Inner City Mission (SICM) - \$13,900

National and Overseas Missions - \$28,277 was directed to national and overseas missions.

Mission Shares

Dick and Carolyn Otterness (Hungary) - \$5,400  
Carl Swart (South Africa) - \$10,000  
Betty Voskuil (Hunger Programs) - \$5,400  
Bread for the World - \$950  
Interfaith Impact - \$500  
National Council of Churches - \$500  
NY State Community of Churches - \$100  
Reformed Church World Service - \$4,750  
South African Diaconal Partnership - \$177  
World Council of Churches - \$500

Reformed Church Support - \$17,600 was directed toward Albany Synod Programs (\$12,750), the Classis assessment (\$850) and ministers' discretionary funds (\$4,000).

Education - \$15,161 was directed to support educational efforts at New Brunswick Theological Seminary (\$6,500), Union College Campus Protestant Ministry (\$5,500) and the SICM Summer Intern Program (\$3,161).

Special Offerings - M&B determines the recipients of four special offerings.

Easter Offering - Girls, Inc: \$3,496 plus \$1,265 eligible for GE matching  
One Great Hour of Sharing: \$1,734  
Thanksgiving Offering - Concerned for the Hungry: \$1,494 plus \$580 eligible for GE matching  
Christmas Offering - Habitat for Humanity: \$3,454 plus \$2,450 eligible for GE matching

~Doug Brown, Mission and Benevolence Committee

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## Adult Forum Creating Connections

Last year when Adult Education and Nurture asked for feedback about Adult Forum and post service we learned most of you enjoyed getting a chance to chat and catch up with others in the congregation. You also liked learning something about your community and world. The Adult Forum planning committee continues to work to bring you both. See the following article about Rededication Sunday, and the Refrigerator Door for the calendar of events.

One thing we've noticed is there are many new faces having coffee and we want to make sure we all get to know and greet each other. Beginning in February we will schedule Coffee and Connections once each month so that everyone, new and old and young and old get to know each other better. This will be our time to chat about the kids and grandkids, ask questions of church leaders or offer topics for other church programming. You may want to talk more about the day's sermon or a book you are reading or respond to our latest call for volunteers. This is what families and friends do. We hope you'll join us.

~Carol DeLaMarter, Adult Education and Nurture

On Rededication Sunday, February 4, the 10:00 a.m. service with our new Senior Minister, the Rev. Dr. Bill Levering, and the Adult Forum with George Wise, PhD, Senior Research Associate of Dudley Observatory will be just two of the community events which are part of the 2007 Schenectady Colonial Festival. Wise will speak on *Seeing the Stars Move: How the Capital Region's Dudley Observatory Helped Create the Modern Picture of the Milky Way*. His latest book, **Civic Astronomy** (2004), will be referred to as he shares Dudley Observatory's celebration of its 150-year history making it the oldest independent organization in the United States supporting education and research in astronomy and the history of astronomy. Come learn about the heavens!

For information on other Colonial Festival events see the brochures in the church information racks or contact Maureen Gebert, Schenectady Heritage Area, 382-5147, or mgeb09@yahoo.com.

At the February 11 Adult Forum, Katherine Delain will join Laura Lee Linder, church historian, for a presentation on the historical connections between Schenectady's Vale Cemetery and FRC.

## Lenten Series

The Lenten Season begins with Ash Wednesday on February 21. The Ash Wednesday Lentil Soup dinner will be provided by the Adult Education and Nurture Committee. An Ash Wednesday service will follow the dinner. The Hospitality Coordinators, Gay Doolittle and Jennifer Evans, will arrange the following five Lenten dinners.

The Adult Education and Nurture Committee is pleased to offer three courses for the five week Lenten Series this year.

Bill Levering will lead a class in "The Cutting Edge of Theology in the Last Fifty Years"

Justin Meyers will lead a class called "The Gospel According to Harry Potter." The course will use Connie Neal's book "The Gospel According to Harry Potter." The class will discuss how Christianity and culture meet and what Gospel messages might be found in the Harry Potter series.

Daniel will lead a group using a contemporary classic devotional book, "A Season for the Spirit," by Martin L.

Smith, a monk within the Episcopal Church, currently living in Washington D.C. Participants will be expected to set aside at least twenty minutes a day to read, meditate, and pray. Inexpensive, previously owned copies of the book will be available for purchase at the Faith Book Shop on Sunday, February 18th, and at the church dinner preceding the Ash Wednesday service. An optional Lenten retreat at Fowler's Chi Rho House on Thursday and Friday, March 29th and 30th, will be offered as an additional opportunity to draw closer to God.

The committee hopes that everyone will sign up for one of these interesting classes. Please look for more information in future Sunday bulletins.

Volunteers for Wednesday dinners, food preparation and cleanup during Lent are needed. Please contact Gay Doolittle, Jennifer Evans, or Katherine Trimarco to volunteer to help.

~Kitty Trimarco, Adult Education and Nurture

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## January Consistory Notes

**Correspondence:** A letter of thanks was received from New Brunswick Theological Seminary/Gregg Mast for our gift of \$150,000 from the Covenant Fund.

### Ministers' Reports:

**Daniel Carlson** has begun a new Kerygma class (Wednesday a.m.), studying *Revelation*. He has been working on the Lenten Studies program; meeting monthly with the Hospitality Coordinators, who are doing a wonderful job; looking forward to the Winter Outing at Todd's on February 3; reorganizing after a Retreat Weekend at Fowler; and attending to his pastoral care duties.

**Justin Meyers** applauded the attendance and participation at the Living Nativity with a special thanks to Tom and Eric Burgoyne for setting it up. The 5 p.m. Christmas Eve service went well, and the children did a wonderful job. There are 12 youths and 4 adults going on the February mission trip to Washington, D. C. The Chili Cook off and Auction are January 20. He and Daniel will be attending "Beginnings and Beyond" in February, he as a facilitator and Daniel as a participant. Dr. Jaco Hamman will be leading the retreat and a seminar at Fort Plain Reformed Church the next day. He encouraged us to attend. Finally, the Junior High Youth Group is doing well under the fine leadership of Carrie Welch and David Hjelmar.

### Treasurer's Report (Fred Daniels):

We finished the year with an \$11.63 net surplus, allowing us to settle last year's debt.

### Finance Committee (Cathy Lewis, Fred Daniels, and Art Casey):

- A. Several committee chairs reported on the input they have received from their committees per the brainstorming consistory did last month. (The ideas can be found in the detailed consistory minutes in the library).
- B. Art Casey noted that there is a substantial amount on money in the Tercentenary Fund for new programs. Each committee was encouraged to activate one or more of their ideas by the April meeting.
- C. They presented the proposed 2007 budget with changes based on projected income. M/S/P, one abstention.

### Committee Reports:

**Congregational Care (Carol Welch):** The committee is planning activities surrounding the arrival of Bill Levering. Sarah Howes is facilitating a *Gazette* interview. Greg Matusic is developing a special ad. Gay and Jennifer are preparing a reception for January 21. Showing the DVD on Channel 16 is being investigated. Group 8 bought gifts for one of the Faith in Schenectady families for Christmas.

**Youth Education (Justin Meyers):** The Child Abuse Prevention Sub-Policy for Background Checks was discussed and passed.

**Adult Education (Carol DeLaMarter):** There will be a Consistory Ministry Fair on January 28 for any and all church committees and programs.

Submitted by Carol Troost, Clerk

The *Tower Crier* is published monthly (except July and August) by the First Reformed Church, 8 N. Church St., Schenectady, NY 12305. Contributions should be submitted to the church office by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. The church is grateful to its editor Linda Witkowski, and its editorial staff: Ronnie Bartholic, Richard Blackmer, Daniel Carlson, Dee Gravink, and Kate Ryan for all their work and to Jean Brown and Lauralee Moore for their work in mailing the newsletter to members' homes each month. Comments, as well as letters to the editor, may be directed to the church office.

**THE CHURCH OFFICE MAY BE CONTACTED BY:**

Phone at (518) 377-2201, Fax at (518) 374-4098, E-mail at [info@frcschdy.org](mailto:info@frcschdy.org), or view our Website at [www.frcschdy.org](http://www.frcschdy.org).

**Pastoral Care Committee**

To provide support and meet the needs of our church members the following services are available:

Medical Transportation: Call Ruthellen and Dick Phillips: 346-1791

Transportation to Church: Call Mark Wemple: 377-6511

Prayer Chain: Call Rachel Hewitt: 456-8716

Meal Assistance: Call Kim Burgoyne: 399-1337

Stephen Ministry: Ann Gotwals: 372-5089

The Pastoral Care Committee is always readily available for volunteers to assist with Sunday flower delivery, transportation and making an occasional meal. To help in any way, please call one of the above, or Chairperson, Sue Zeltmann: 383-1969