



Easter Week Schedule

Palm Sunday Festival - a joyous parade honoring the triumphal entry of Jesus. Children will sing! Familiar hymns will echo! The organ will trumpet!

Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service – 7 p.m., April 5 - This reflective service will include the Lord's Supper by intinction and the darkening of the Tenebrae service.

Good Friday - Noon, April 6 – This solemn service includes the reading of the Passion of our Lord according to John, interspersed with silence and song by the choir and congregation.

Easter Sunday Sunrise -6:30 a.m. - The hearty faithful will gather on the overlook at Ellie and Darwin Brudos' place at 1827 Putnam Road for a brief celebration and a light breakfast.

Easter Worship Celebration- 10 a.m. - Brass! Timpani! Excitement and pageantry will cap the season. All voices who have sung it before will be invited up to the chancel at the end of the service for a massed Alleluia Chorus.

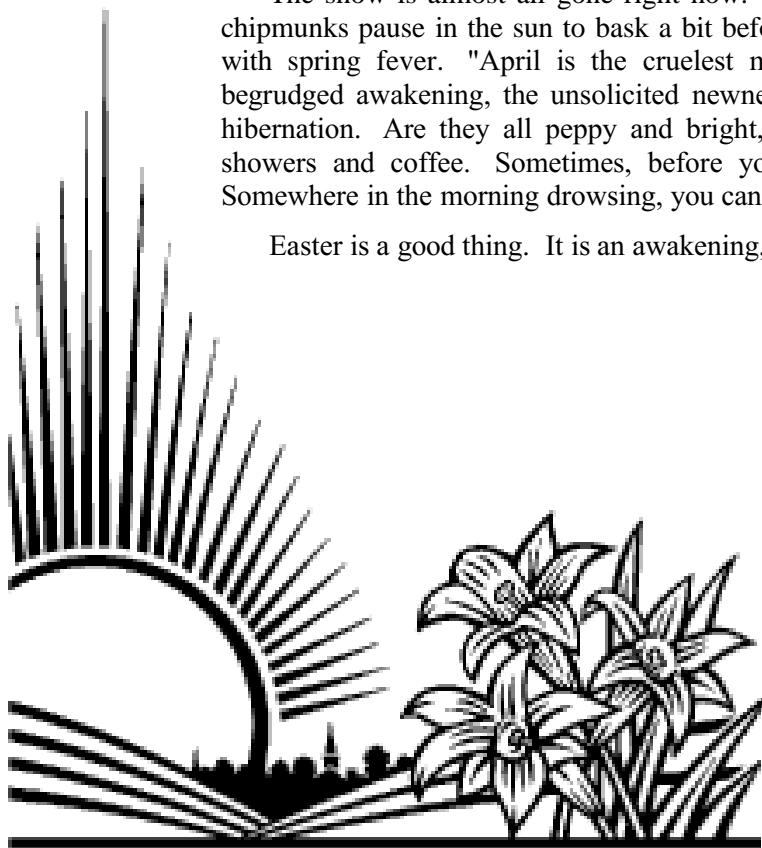
Notes from the Senior Pastor

The snow is almost all gone right now. The drifts have melted down to dirty piles. Skitterish chipmunks pause in the sun to bask a bit before moving on to spring tasks. Cabin fever is replaced with spring fever. "April is the cruelest month," perhaps because of the dramatic changes, the begrudged awakening, the unsolicited newness. I wonder how bears feel when they come out of hibernation. Are they all peppy and bright, or churlish and sluggish, waiting for bear rituals of showers and coffee. Sometimes, before you go to bed, you can decide how you will wake. Somewhere in the morning drowsing, you can decide that the dawning is not an imposition.

Easter is a good thing. It is an awakening, a resurrection of life, a newness. Let's try to enjoy it.

Invite a Friend for Easter

Easter is a joyous time and even folks who don't normally think of coming to church would welcome an invitation to our services. Even family.



Happy Birthday!

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 4/2 Mary Carlson | 4/6 Ellen Hubbard | 4/15 Laura Hershey | 4/23 Timothy Merten |
| Martha Fleming | Elizabeth Nejman | 4/16 Cynthia Ball | Elaine Walthers |
| Anne Peterson | 4/8 Cynthia Hamilton | Gay Doolittle | 4/24 Jane Fisher |
| Allison Wood | Susan Hannon | 4/17 John Hubbard | 4/25 Walter Robb |
| 4/3 James Mitsche | 4/10 Mary Jane Dike | 4/18 Kent Molino | 4/26 Katie Kumta |
| Justin Smith | 4/11 Margaret Shultes | 4/19 Belle Kozak | Kathryn Pontius |
| Antoinette Tillma | 4/12 Roberta Blackmer | Leonard Vandenberg | 4/28 William Hamm |
| 4/4 Ned Landon | Barbara Forth | 4/21 David Hjelmar | Susan Moose |
| 4/5 Will Coad | Christopher Langdon | 4/22 Michael Mitsche | |

If your birthday is in March and we did not list your name, please call the office to let us know your date of birth.

New Web Site Open: www.1streformed.com

Thanks to the hard work of Dick Blackmer and Greg Matusic, we have a new style and address for our web presence. On the site you will find.

- a place to look up your favorite verse
- audio versions of recent sermons
- forums to ask questions
- a church directory
- a weather report
- a verse for the day
- church activity pictures
- a church calendar
- links to other interesting sites

Attention College Students

Applications are now being accepted for Rev. Albert A Smith Education Scholarship. Any church member attending a four-year academic college, a two-year vocational college or enrolled in courses, which help the individual progress toward his or her educational goals, are welcome to apply. Applications are available at the church office and are due May 30, 2007. Any questions, please contact Sara Erickson.

Sexton Changes

After working as the church Sexton for the past year, Matt Townes is moving on. We wish him luck in his future endeavors.

We welcome Tom Mahan as our new Sexton. Please take a moment to say hi and welcome him to our church.

Help Wanted:

We are looking for a volunteer to take over the monthly mailing duties of the *Tower Crier* newsletter. If you are interested please call Kate in the church office, 377-2201.

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Easter Offering to Benefit Sustainable Agriculture and Ministry

SICM Food Pantry and Roots for Wisdom. Two related, innovative and effective programs will share First Reformed's Easter Offering. The SICM (Schenectady Inner City Ministry) Emergency Food Pantry serves over 25,000 Schenectadians a year, 64 new families a month. Half the recipients are children. Families use the Pantry only in emergency situations when, due to financial crisis due to low wage jobs, other high cost items, medical care, utilities etc., they have problems buying food. SICM recently moved into larger space at 839 Albany Street, and our support will assist with renovation costs to continue to provide this essential service.

Roots and Wisdom, is a new youth agriculture and community service program that brings together urban, suburban, and rural youth to grow organic vegetables for donations to local food pantries and for sale at area farmers' markets. The program teaches its participants about sustainable agriculture, hunger, nutrition, and diversity. Roots and Wisdom participants, through hard

work and community service, create genuine change by helping county residents in need.

Roots and Wisdom is a self-funded project of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schenectady County and benefits from the experience and expertise of an established community organization. The program continues to create collaborative and important associations with area organizations including the Schenectady Inner City Ministry. SICM is a strong and committed partner of Roots and Wisdom and the lead recipient of its produce donations.

Your Mission and Benevolence Committee feels that supporting youth in Roots and Wisdom, and the direct need of the SICM Food Pantry is an appropriate expression of the Gospels' message at Easter. Please support this special offering through contributions. Volunteer opportunities are also available. Many thanks!

~Mission and Benevolence Committee

Collegial Standards

When a new minister arrives, it is common to set down certain understandings of how the professional staff relates to each other for all to see. This is what the ministers have come up with:

1. We will not, through action or inaction, encourage criticism of a colleague.
2. We will offer support when workloads are imbalanced.
3. We will route and report performance feedback directly to those involved.
4. We will care for our spiritual needs.

5. We will not withhold our own analysis of the potentially problematic actions of colleagues.
6. We will seek help if overburdened, overwhelmed, or in unmanageable conflict.
7. We will be gracious to congregants, neighbors, staff, and each other as a response to what God has done for us in Christ.
8. We will hold in confidence pastoral conversations unless we deem doing so may be hurtful.

Annual Meeting May 6 After Worship

For a variety of reasons, the annual meeting will be a little earlier this year. The Annual Report will be distributed at this meeting, so those of you who chair a committee or ministry should be turning in a report. Officers for the coming year will be elected and general business handled. If you have matters that you think should be on the agenda, please send Rev. Levering a note.

Planning Festival May 12

Church leaders of all types will gather on May 12 in Assembly Hall to plan direction, organization, schedules, and goals for the next program year. Outgoing consistory members, newly elected ones, staff, task and organization leaders are all hereby invited to share the vision and the details of life here next year. We will begin promptly at 9 a.m. and finish after lunch at 1 p.m.

Fresh Faith Worship

Sundays at 8 a.m. in the
Poling Chapel

April Preaching Schedule

| | |
|----------|----------------------|
| April 1 | Rev. Bill Levering |
| April 8 | Rev. Bill Levering |
| April 15 | Rev. Bill Levering |
| April 22 | Rev. Bill Levering |
| April 29 | Rabbi Matthew Cutler |

Reflections from the District . . .

During the February break twelve high school students and four adults traveled to Washington D.C. to engage in ministry serving the poor and homeless living in our nation's capitol. The group recently gathered to share photos, stories, learnings, impressions and a sense of how the trip will likely stay with them and perhaps change them for years to come.

Everyone was asked to share their fondest memory related to the services we provided:

- Ms. Jones – we made a difference in her life – I could see it in her face. She liked that we were there.
- Serving food on the last day at the YSOP soup kitchen. The homeless people enjoyed eating the food and I got to talk to them. The people I talked to had an education and some were homeless because of a family situation – like a divorce.
- I thought the speaker from the newspaper Street Sense was really great – he had a successful life and then lost everything in a divorce. He was then homeless, got depressed and really fell apart. But then he pulled it all back together, probably because he had family (his mother) to go home to. Now he helps homeless people and doesn't care about "being successful" in the corporate world. He wants to be successful in more important ways.
- I liked that we got to talk with so many people and hear their stories instead of just hearing about the homeless from other people.
- I was impressed by the positive outlook of so many people that you would think had no reason for hope.
- I was surprised by people's backgrounds – a lot of people had jobs but were homeless. Some were very educated – one guy was a mathematician and another was a martial arts expert.
- At the last dinner we served Thursday night I finally emotionally realized that these folks were human; I developed a deeper sense of empathy as I spent time with people. I realized I could become homeless.
- SOME – I liked helping at this organization (So Others May Eat) because it was a giant organization so it was interesting to see how they operated on such a large scale but still managed to be personal in serving their clients.
- On Friday night, our free day, when we were walking home after having dinner in Chinatown, we met a guy on the street. He seemed lonely; he

said no one had talked to him all day. He thanked the adults for not being afraid to let the kids talk to him.

- I agree – talking with this gentleman on the street Friday night was like an exclamation point to the whole week.
- I loved Ms. Jones and I was so upset that she had no family to help her. It was unacceptable the way no one helped her clean her apartment – I would never let my mother or grandmother have to live like that. The social worker said "it was good enough" – I didn't think so! We cleaned her apartment like she was a member of our family!
- We met so many people at the Hostel too – a Boy Scout group, people from many countries – Australia, England, Chile, Canada, and Finland. It was a cultural education!
- Everyone worked so hard and put their hearts into everything they did.
- I was asked at the Thursday night soup kitchen: "Do all these kids have parents?" So many of the guests at the soup kitchen grew up in foster care and didn't have a family they could count on.
- A lot of the homeless people I met were very well traveled (one guy had even been to Schenectady!). It seems that people traveled to follow jobs – construction, set up and take down of carnivals/circuses and that kind of work.

On Friday, our free day, we went to the Holocaust Museum:

- It was depressing.
- I drew a lot of pictures and I'm still looking at them. It has stayed with me and informed my worldview deeply. It keeps coming up on essays I'm writing for school lately – about human nature.
- I learned so much but what I don't get is that there is so much information about the Holocaust – everyone knows about it and how horrible it was but the same kind of stuff is still happening in parts of the world. Why would people do that?

Thank you for supporting us in our ministry to help our neighbors. We hope you will attend our Adult Forum presentation and let us share some more of our thoughts and feelings about this trip with you.

~Katie Anderton, Eric Burgoyne, Nathaniel Carlson, Tim Merten, Jack Anderton, Kayla Herrington, Samantha Brooks, Rachel Cox, Megan Maloney, Luke Carlson, Emilio Yourno, Helen McCarty

Keeping our Kids Safe

Church should always be a safe place for our kids and youth to grow spiritually, mentally, and physically. Our job as a church is to do our best to ensure that our church remains a safe place for all our children. To this end the Youth Education and Nurture Committee has endeavored to create a Child Abuse Prevention Policy for our church that sets in place policies that will help protect our youth and children while participating in church events and while on church property. It is unfortunate that churches need to think about issues such as child abuse, but it is a reality of our world today, that in order to be responsible with the little lives that God's has given us to nurture, that we have certain safe guards in place.

A full copy of the policy will be given to all people who work with the youth of our church and to anyone else who would like to know the policies that the Consistory has approved to help protect our children. Some highlights of the policy are:

1. No adult is to be alone with a youth (someone under 18) at anytime on church property or at a church sponsored event.

2. Doors are to remain unlocked, and open if possible, when an adult is in a room with children, i.e. Church School Rooms.

3. Related or married adults cannot be alone with children without a non-related adult with them.

4. All staff and volunteers that work with youth and children will have had a national criminal and sex offender background check preformed.

This last highlight, the background checks, will begin in the next month or so, and Bill, Daniel, and I will be the first to be checked. We will be using a service through GROUP, a national leader in youth ministry curriculum and training. The results of the background checks will be available only to the ministers, and senior elders if need arises, so that the personal information in a background check can be treated with all sensitivity.

This is a big step for our church, but one that the Youth Education Committee and Consistory feel is prudent as we continue to minister to our youngest members. It is our hope that we will never have an incident of Child Abuse within our church, but we will continue to keep working to keep our church a safe place for all our members, younger and older.

If you have any questions or would like a full copy of the policy please contact me at jmeyers@frschdy.org.

Peace,

Justin

2007 Schenectady/Nijkerk Youth Exchange

The Nijkerk-Schenectady Foundation, Nijkerk the Netherlands, has run advertisements in Nijkerk's local papers asking for teenagers wishing to come to Schenectady this summer. The group should arrive July 13 or 14 for this year's youth exchange between our communities, and visit until July 27 or 28. Host families, drivers, and day guides are needed as well as financial and other support.

Time aboard the replica of Henry Hudson's 1609 Dutch exploration ship, the Half Moon, is planned once again, but the cost of this Hudson River sailing opportunity has risen to \$15,000. The Schenectady/Nijkerk Council has already received a \$7,500 challenge match, so just the second \$7,500 needs to be raised/sponsored.

During March, the captain of the Half Moon traveled to Nijkerk with the challenge grant's donor. While there they met with former exchange youth who sailed on the

Half Moon and kids thinking about this summer's exchange to prepare and excite them for this July's sailing experience. Children of host families, along with a few adult chaperons, sail with our Dutch visitors.

Interested in this youth exchange? Contact George Trimarco, 355-7464, chairman of this visit. The Schenectady/Nijkerk Council meets regularly, usually at FRC and welcomes new members. 2007 is the twenty-third year of exchanges between Nijkerk, the birthplace of Arendt van Curler, and Schenectady, the city Van Curler founded. For 2008, the Nijkerk-Schenectady Foundation invites a delegation of Schenectady adults to visit their community. The dates for this exchange are yet to be determined. If interested in going on this trip, please contact Ellen McNett at ellen-mcnett@webtv.net or 372-1270.

~Laura Linder

Adult Forum Schedule

| | |
|----------|---|
| April 1 | <i>Roots and Wisdom</i> , Leslie Wiedmann-Herd |
| April 8 | Coffee and Connections |
| April 15 | New Member Reception |
| April 22 | <i>Mysteries in Stone, the Architecture of Edward Tuckerman Potter</i> (see article) |
| April 29 | <i>Current Issues in Interfaith Relations</i> , Interfaith Dialogue with Rabbi Matthew Cutler |

Mysteries in Stone: The Architecture of Edward Tuckerman Potter

This is the title of the Sunday, April 22 Adult Forum illustrated presentation to be given by Carl J. George on the Victorian Gothic architecture of ETP, Edward Tuckerman Potter. Related exhibits will be installed in the FRC narthex display cases by the Archives and Historical Concerns and Church Exhibit Committees.

One window will show the contents of the time capsule from Potter's architectural landmark, FRC's fifth house of worship, along with his booklet describing the design of the building and the photographic portrait taken of the church by Schenectady's White Studio. Postcards, other images of the 1863 building, and pictures of additional examples of ETP's architecture will be in the second window, demonstrating characteristics of his stonework and other architectural features.

Carl George, a longtime Union College professor, was recently recognized for his holistic, collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach to teaching biology. A former student honored George with a bequest to the college creating the Carl J. George Endowed Professorship in Bioinformatics.

In sharing his studies of ETP's architecture, George will speak of the architect's incorporation of religious and scientific symbolism, hexalphas, floral patterns, inscriptions, and geometric designs expressed through purposeful use of many types of stone and other materials.

~Laura Linder

SICM Celebrates 40 Years of Ministry and Service



As part of the celebration of SICM's 40th Anniversary, please join us for a worship service 4 p.m. Sunday, April 29, 2007 at Emmanuel Friedens Church, 218 Nott Terrace in Schenectady. The guest preacher will be the Rev. James Miller and musical selections by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Choir. A reception will follow.

Congregations with banners are invited to come early and have a representative process into the sanctuary.

Rev. James Miller is an American Baptist Minister, who recently retired from the First Baptist Church in America in Providence, R.I. Rev. Miller served at Emmanuel Baptist in the 1960's and was very instrumental in the founding and development of SICM. He has served congregations in New York and Massachusetts, as well as the Executive Minister to the Rhode Island State Council of Churches.

SICM seeks volunteers who can help with the reception and as ushers. Please call the SICM office at 374-2683 if you can help or for more information.

Dessert and Conversation on the Belhar Confession May 6, 2007 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Poling Conference Room

The Belhar Confession was born out of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Since being adopted as one of three standards of unity by the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa 1986, it has served as a reference for unity and reconciliation in South Africa and Namibia. In doing so, has grown to have implications beyond its original context for these issues, as well as for understanding what God desires of social justice in the world. The Belhar Confession has been called "a powerful paraphrase of gospel texts" and many maintain that it was the last blow to the ideology of apartheid.

URCSA has invited other reformed denominations to recognize the Belhar, and review and study is underway by General Synod of the RCA. As part of this process, a Coffee and Conversation will be held as noted above to explore the Belhar. Led by Brad Lewis

and I, the evening will provide an overview and determine interest in a longer study-group in the fall. If adopted by a future General Synod, the Belhar would be the first addition to the standards since the seventeenth century. Previous Synods have suggested that RCA members use the confession as a means of deepening the denomination's commitment to combat racism and strengthen its ecumenical ties.

Copies of the Belhar Confession and Discussion Outline for the evening and Study Guide are available in the Library. For more information, please contact Brad Lewis or Joe Doolittle. This event is sponsored by the Mission and Benevolence Committee and the South African Working Group.

~Joe Doolittle

Poetry Corner

What draws me to the poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," by Robert Frost, is the beauty of nature, the sense of the divine, and the recognition of the continuing journey. I am touched by Frost's simplicity and depth and know that in my own life there are promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep.

~Justin Meyers

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Thursday Musical Club Teams up with Jazz Ensemble for Spring Concert

The Thursday Musical Club, directed by Julie Panke and accompanied by Elinore Farnum will present its spring concert on Sunday, April 22 at 3:00 pm at the First Reformed Church of Scotia. The chorus is pleased to host the Empire State Youth Orchestra Jazz Ensemble, directed by Paul Evoskevich, as guest artists. Music of Handel, Mozart, Schütz and Bach will be included. Abigail Norton-Levering will accompany an Edward Elgar piece on violin. The group will also perform a medley from Cole Porter's "Anything Goes," "All that Jazz," "Lullaby of Broadway," and "Corcovado" by Antonio Jobim with keyboard, percussion and bass. The Jazz Ensemble will present a 15-minute set. Ticket prices for the concert are \$10 general admission and \$8 for seniors and students.

~Julie Panke

Our Annual Labor Day Weekend Camp

Once again, we're heading to Fowler, our camp in the Adirondacks. Members of Delmar Reformed Church will be with us again. Plans are in to works for more shared activities during the time together. (It would be great to have more FRCS folks present so as to balance their large turn-out...) Accommodations will vary, from the rustic to the resplendent. Most manner of mountain, meadow, and lakeside recreation, rest and rejuvenation will be available. So, save the dates now - and sign up in May - to go camping with your congregation over Labor Day weekend at Fowler!

~Daniel Carlson

Save the Date

Wednesday, 6 p.m. April 11 in Assembly Hall, Faith In Schenectady invites all to help us welcome a new baby girl to our group. (featuring Easter Egg hunt and dinner) Details to follow.

Youth Groups

JHYG April 15 and 29 at church from 5-6:30p.m. We will meet at church for a night of games, discussion and fellowship.

SHYG April 15 and 29 at church from 7-8:30 p.m. We will meet at church for a night of discussion games and fun. Also look out for movie nights and service projects.

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 15th 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, or view our Website at 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

Knitting Supplies Needed

Abby Norton-Levering is soliciting contributions of yarn and other knitting and crocheting supplies, to be donated to Interim House, a drug and alcohol addictions treatment program for women in Philadelphia. As part of their treatment, all the women of Interim House are taught to knit and crochet, as a healthy alternative addiction. Many women feel that knitting has taught them to calm and center themselves. One woman stated, "knitting saved my life. I wouldn't have made it through the program without it."

Interim House takes full and partial balls of all varieties of yarn, needles and crochet hooks of all sizes, as well as knitting books and magazines. Please include with your donation a short note of encouragement and a bit about yourself—the women of the program love hearing about where their yarns originated. Any donations can be given to Abby, and she will ensure they are delivered to the right people. Want to know more about the Interim House knitting program? See their website at mcduf.blogspot.com. Call Abby at 518.630.6151 or email her at applekale@yahoo.com to arrange for a pick-up of your donation.