

**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.*



*The journey to the beginning,  
The meeting, the unveiling,  
the nexus, the incarnation  
Where all roads meet and all signs point.  
Inevitable, inexorable, yet  
Tangled and terrifying.*

**December 22, 2019**

**Because we put God first, we are dedicated  
to caring for creation, for human diversity,  
for the next generations, and for each other.**

*First Reformed Church  
8 North Church Street  
Schenectady, New York 12305  
(518)377-2201 [www.1stReformed.com](http://www.1stReformed.com)*

## Welcome to First Reformed

***Absolutely everyone is invited to our worship, activities, and service.***

If you are a visitor, we hope you feel at home here. Please pick up and fill out a Welcome Card and place it in the offering plate. After the service please join us for refreshments.

### **Parking**

You may park right out in front of the church in the 'no parking' area' (only) if you have trouble getting around.

### **Childcare on Sunday**

Childcare for infants through Pre-k is available from 9:45am until noon downstairs in the Kinderwyk Nursery.

### **Youth Ed & Nurture**

Following the Children's Message all children are invited downstairs to the Youth Ed & Nurture Level to participate in Dwell Kids Class (3rd-8th grade) or Young Children and Worship (K-2nd grade); parents pick up their children there at 11:15am.

### **Children's Music After Worship**

Music for kids is offered in the upstairs music level between 11:15-12pm.

### **Elders in Worship**

Past and current leaders called 'elders' walk in together and sit in the front pew. This is to identify them as servants of the church and make it easy to see who you might talk to about the life of our congregation.

### **Helping Others Focus**

It will be easier for God to get through if we silence our cell phones. God can always call you later.

### **After Worship**

Typically, after worship, people stop for a chat and a cookie in Covenant Hall before going to a learning opportunity that lasts until noon. All are welcome.

### **Open Communion**

Our congregation celebrates the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of the month. All followers of Christ are invited to share this meal.

### **Joining the Congregation**

To become a member of the congregation, there is a one-time orientation, a meeting with the governing board, and a reception in worship. If you are interested please fill out a white pew card.



### **Hearing Assistance**

We have a hearing aid loop system that will make it easier to hear. Ask an usher.

### **Non-Emergency Number**

Schenectady Police: 518-630-0911



## Fourth Sunday In Advent

December 22, 2019

\*The congregation may stand.

### PRELUDE

The Well-Tempered Clavier  
Book I J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

*No. 21: Prelude and Fugue in Bb major*

*No. 5: Prelude and Fugue in D major*

### GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Daniel Carlson

The grace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Bill Levering

### ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Amanda, Bill and Faith Potter

Capo 1

① Eb(D) Ab(G) Eb(D) ② Ab(G) Eb(D) ③

Pre - pare the way of the Lord. Pre- pare the way of the Lord, and

Ab(G) Eb(D) ④ Ab(G) Eb(D)

all peo-ple will see the sal - va - tion of our God. Pre -

### \*HYMN

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

#9

### \*OUR NEED FOR GOD

**God of all time, we confess we are stuck in empty patterns of our past. God of the future, we long to embrace new insights, hope, and joy. God of right now, move us beyond petty distractions, and focus us on your presence and purpose in our lives.**

### \*GOD'S FORGIVING LOVE

\*RESPONSE OF PRAISE (*unison*)

*Gloria, Gloria*

#576

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (From the *Brief Statement of Faith*)

**In gratitude to God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, 'Come, Lord Jesus.'**

\*PASSING THE PEACE

ANTHEM

FRC Orff-estra

*God's Light*

Michael R. Nichols

*Baby Jesus Came to Earth*

Michael R. Nichols

FIRST LESSON

*Isaiah 7:10-16 (pg 636)*

George Trimarco

Guide us, O God, by your Word and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Daniel Carlson

SECOND LESSON

*Matthew 1:18-25 (pg 1)*

SERMON

*Looking for Signs, Listening to Angels*

Bill Levering

\*HYMN

*People, Look East*

#12

MINUTE FOR MISSION

*Christmas Offering*

## OFFERING

OFFERTORY

*Follow the Star*

Michael Sharp  
Dan Gleason, Percussion

Star of wonder star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Ever leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to Thy perfect light

Follow the star its gleaming light  
Whispers the way through darkest  
night. Follow the glow of glory bright  
Follow the star to Bethlehem.

Follow the star to seek the One  
Sent from above God's holy Son.

Follow until your journey's done.  
Follow the star to Bethlehem.

O star of wonder, start of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright:  
Ever leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to Thy perfect light.

Follow the star it's message tell:  
The night is ending and all is well!  
Follow the light and sing Noel!  
Follow the star to Bethlehem.

\*DOXOLOGY *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow* #592

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

\*HYMN

*Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

#8

\*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE

*Twofold Amen*

Dresden

POSTLUDE

## **Prayers of the People**

Requests for prayer may be noted on a pew card and placed in the offering plate. We pray regularly for those who are ill, those who serve their country, those who hunger, and those who are our enemies. As part of our prayers this morning, we remember with thanksgiving members of our church who entered eternal rest in previous years about this time:

*Robert Brown, Clarence Gillespie, Shirley L. Rochelle, Helen H. Masjoan, R. Ned Landon, Fran Zentmire*

If you are aware of a departed member, whose name has not been noted near the anniversary of their death, please contact the church office.

## **Celebratory or Memorial Flowers**

Sign up for flowers in the church office where you can choose a date for donating flowers to remember a loved one or to honor a special event. The cost of the flowers is \$30 for two bouquets. You may send your check payable to Chancel Guild c/o Marlene Risseeuw, 2140 Niskayuna Dr., Niskayuna, NY 12309.

## **Hooray! Ninth Beverwyck Anthology**

The newest edition of The Beverwyck Anthology is out! Single copies or a gift set of all the issues (1-9) can be found in the Johnson Library.

## **Faith Book Shop**

Christmas related items in the Shop include two styles of Advent candle holders, candles of the traditional advent colors and candles with a Christmas design. You'll also find small, handmade wreaths, cards depicting FRC in winter, stocking stuffers, children's books and Bill's book, "Travels With Levering."

## **Green Steps: Happy Holiday Habits**

Trimming the Trappings this Season: Food is a focus of all holidays. By choosing organic, locally sourced, veggie-focused ingredients, you can greatly help the planet. Make conscious portion choices about portions, ensuring less food waste. Composting and avoiding disposable plates and utensils helps keep waste out of landfills.

## **Nostalgia Night - Dec 29**

College aged and slightly-older siblings are gathering for a night of nostalgia and catching up with old friends. There'll be Domino's Pizza, Sardine Hide & Seek, weird group building activities! Spooky Steeple Tour! And perhaps...Special Guest Appearances. Sunday, Dec 29 at 6pm meet in Friendship Hall. Contact Lisa Etkin with questions or suggestions: 1streformedmvc@gmail.com, 518-377-2201x306.

## **FRC on Festival Tree**

At the Stockade Festival of Trees, stop in to see renditions of FRC sanctuaries in the snow by Len Tantillo, Percey Lee, and Kitty Trimarco. The last day for the Festival is today, 10am-5pm.

## **Offering Envelopes**

2020 Offering Envelopes are available in the church office. There are extra available if anyone needs them.

## **Post-Worship Hospitality**

Please consider hosting our post-worship fellowship by signing up for a couple of Sundays during the year. Sign-up in Covenant Hall.

## **The Chrismon Tree In Sanctuary**

Chrismon, meaning “symbols of Christ,” is a combination of the words "Christ" and "monogram." Chrismons are fashioned from centuries-old Christian symbols, the Bible and church histories using various materials of white and gold to represent majesty and purity. FRC's Chrismons were originally made for annual tree festivals at Schenectady Museum in the 1970s and 80s. When the festivals stopped, Mrs. Harrison Todd brought the beautiful ornament collection to FRC as a donation. Pattern books and instructions are available for making Chrismons or create your own.

<b>Sunday Volunteers</b>	<b>This Week</b>	<b>Next Week</b>
<b>Bookshop</b>	Jane Wilkinson	Committee Member
<b>Children &amp; Worship</b>	Jeanette Davidson	Elsa Hjelm
<b>Counting Deacons</b>	Ralph Rosenthal, Gay Doolittle	Christina Jones, Kristin Lion
<b>Dwell Kids Teacher</b>	Dave Pizzolo	James Gonda
<b>Forum</b>	Christmas Story Telling, Sharing Family Traditions by Joe Doolittle	Coffee & Conversation
<b>Jazz Vespers</b>	Azzaam Hameed, solo piano	Wayne Hawkins, solo piano
<b>Kinderwyk</b>	Liz Gleason, Peter Lion	Lian Drisgula, Ellie Rowland
<b>Liturgist</b>	Daniel Carlson	
<b>Preacher</b>	Bill Levering	Daniel Carlson
<b>Processing Elders</b>	Darwin Brudos, Gay Doolittle, Phil Falconer, Don & Marilyn Leach, Richard Rose	Karen Gonda, Del Pierce, Birdie Blackmer, Art Casey, Mary Jewett,
<b>Reader</b>	George Trimarco	Kristin Lion
<b>Refreshments</b>	The Pizzolo Family	Please Sign up in Covenant Hall
<b>Ushers</b>	Jim & Sharron McCullough, Renate Reeves-Ellington, Bill & Amanda Potter	Art Shultes, Hendrick & Joanne Arnold, Joan Lindsay

## Alumni Choir

Anyone who has sung in a choir is invited to participate in the 'alumni choir' for the 5pm Christmas Eve Service. Rehearsals are Today at 12pm, Dec 23 at 7pm.

## Christmas Offering:

The Matogou community of Carrefour, Haiti gets their water from a contaminated spring. Schenectady's Rotary Club has been bringing small-scale water filtration systems to the Carrefour region for many years. Matogou community leaders asked for a larger scale system that would provide safe water without the need to wait. The Matogou Project was developed to solve this problem, with a well, a pump, a generator and a chlorination system with gravity feed to three kiosks. Schenectady Rotary is seeking to raise funds to make this happen and is reaching out for help. Please give generously to help this community in need.

## Narthex Nativity Scenes

There are two beautiful settings portraying the birth of Jesus Christ in the narthex windows. The David Coons Van Voast Memorial Crèche along with a wonderful nativity scene designed by Kathy Petersen from her vast collection of miniatures depicting the Holy Land. We are thankful to Holly Van Voast and Kathy Petersen and her family for installing all of the treasured figures and ornaments making up these special panoramas.



## Christmas Eve Tuesday, December 24 Service Schedule

### 5pm ..Intergenerational Service

The youth of FRC serve as readers, liturgists, ushers and musicians during this beautiful candlelit service celebrating the birth of Jesus.

### 8:30pm.....Music of the Season

Music of the Season with Harpist Lydia Zotto playing carols with the choir.

### 9pm....Carols & Candles Service

Come light a candle and sing "Silent Night" again. This year we are also featuring violinist Ann Marie Barker Schwartz on *The Wexford Carol* joined by Abby Norton Levering and Leonid Polishchuk for the anthem *Saw You Never?*.

### 11pm .... Christmas Jazz Vespers

Featuring Max Caplan and Pete Toigo. The Lord's Supper will be celebrated

**The sanctuary and chapel is adorned to the glory of God and in loving memory of:**

- Margaret (Peg) Shultes from her family
- Alice and Russell Jones and Dr. Charles Assini, Parents of John and Carolyn Assini.
- Dr. Charles Assini and Russell and Alice Jones by the Assini Family
- David by Audrey Bain and Family
- Dick Blackmer and given by his family.
- Our parents from Wayne & Amy Brule
- Mr. & Mrs. Richard E. Burgoyne from their family
- Timothy Burgoyne from his family
- Our mothers, Ethel Slabaugh and Priscilla Carlson from Mary & Daniel Carlson
- Parents and siblings by Gay & Joe Doolittle
- William Dotter by his wife, Elsie & children
- Sylvia & Dolph Ebeling, Lorraine Ebling and Elyne Schulte by Scott Ebeling
- Rudolph and Therese Mahlberg, and Paul Erickson, by the Erickson family
- William and Louise Stange and Sam Croce by Marlene Risseeuw and the Erickson family
- Erin Falconer, Raymond & Marion Falconer, Donald & Lois Weidenfeller from Phil, Jane & Trevor Falconer
- Merry Christmas from Marjorie Geiger
- Roy Hjelmar, Sidney White, and Elsie White by the Hjelmar Family
- Scott Jewett by his family
- LeRoy Jewett by his family
- Harold Lapham from his family
- My friend Brenda Spencer from Joan Lindsay
- Robert Matz and Meg Kester by Mary Matz
- Mark McDermott by his wife, Gini
- Rev Margaret "Peg" Miller from her family
- The Cottrell Family from Anne Putnam
- The Bolz-Putnam Families from Anne Putnam
- Frederic P and Florence Reimer from Florence Reed
- Rick Reimer by Florence Reed
- Robert E. Reed from Florence Reed and family
- Our parents given by Richard & Kate Rose
- To honor our family by Ellie & Gene Rowland
- Hans and Mary Stern by their Children
- Daniel J. Thuener by, Vernetta and family
- Donald Troost from Carol, Deborah & Matt
- Earle and Dena Van Heyningen by daughter Carol Troost
- Claribel & Clarence H Linder Sr. from The Walraven Family
- Ann Walraven from The Walraven Family
- Carolyn Shepherd Welch by the Welch family
- Anne Shepherd Wemple, Robert V. Shepherd and Susan Shepherd by the Welch family
- Palmer V. Welch, Marian A. Welch, Mary C. Welch by the Welch family
- Glenn Winchester by his family and loved ones.
- Gene Zeltmann from his family
- Eugene Zeltmann from Mary Zeltmann



“Beyond the edge of the world there’s a space where emptiness and substance neatly overlap, where past and future form a continuous, endless loop. And, hovering about, there are signs no one has ever read, chords no one has ever heard.” — Haruki Murakami

“Contradiction is not a sign of falsity, nor the lack of contradiction a sign of truth.” — Blaise Pascal

“I come to a red light, tempted to go through it, then stop once I see a billboard sign that I don’t remember seeing and I look up at it. All it says is 'Disappear Here' and even though it’s probably an ad for some resort, it still freaks me out a little and I step on the gas really hard and the car screeches as I leave the light.” — Bret Easton Ellis

“I remind myself that not everything is a sign, that some things simply are what they appear to be and should not be analyzed, deconstructed, or forced to bear the burden of metaphor, symbol, omen, or portent.” — Diane Schoemperlen

“I had to wonder if the Lord above had flashed a heavenly spotlight over my head and whispered, "Preach this sermon just for her. She's not going to get the message otherwise." — Janice Thompson, Fools Rush In

“Signs must be read with caution. The history of Christendom is replete with instances of people who misread the signs.” — Sheldon Vanauken,

“I didn't know what kind of creature I was supposed to be until I woke on a hospital cot and was informed I had died. Nobody ever told me what I was. I figured I was broken. But it turns out that my scars were divine signs that I was granted a chance to begin again.” — Hannah Ashworth, Beyond Polaris

“The lord who is the oracle at Delphoi neither utters nor hides his meaning, but shows it by a sign. — Heraclitus

“It is your omen, only you know the meaning. To me, it is but another star in the night.” — Gerald R. Stanek, The Eighth House



## Coming Up

More information is in the newsletter at the back of the sanctuary.

<b>Sun, Dec 22</b>	9am	Chancel Choir	Sanctuary
	9am	Ukuleles For All Ages	Music Level
	9:45am	Kinderwyk Childcare	Forest Nursery
	10am	Worship	Sanctuary
	10:15am	Dwell Kids' Class	Mountain room
	10:15am	Young Children and Worship	River room
	11:15am	First Forum	Poling Chapel
	11:15am	Intergenerational Rehearsal	Sanctuary
	12pm	Alumni Choir	Sanctuary
	5pm	Jazz Vespers	Covenant Hall
<b>Mon, Dec 23</b>	11:15am	Children's Christmas Rehearsal	Sanctuary
	6pm	Community Yoga	Covenant Hall
	7pm	Alumni Choir	Sanctuary
<b>Tue, Dec 24</b>	5pm	Intergenerational Service	Sanctuary
	6pm	Intergenerational Reception	Covenant Hall
	8:30pm	Music of the Season	Sanctuary
	9pm	Carols and Candles Service	Sanctuary
	11pm	Christmas Jazz Vespers	Sanctuary
<b>Wed, Dec 25</b>	<b>Christmas Day - Church Office Closed</b>		
<b>Thu, Dec 26</b>	<b>Church Office Closed</b>		
<b>Sun, Dec 29</b>	9am	Chancel Choir	Sanctuary
	9am	Ukuleles For All Ages	Music Level
	9:45am	Kinderwyk Childcare	Forest Nursery
	10am	Worship	Sanctuary
	10:15am	Dwell Kids' Class	Mountain room
	10:15am	Young Children and Worship	River room
	11am	Care & Prayer	Dykstra Chapel
	11:15am	Children's Music	Roof Top room
	5pm	Jazz Vespers	Covenant Hall
6pm	Youth Group Nostalgia Night	Friendship Hall	

"I look for a sign. Where to go next. you never know when you'll get one. Even the most faithless among us are waiting to be proven wrong." — Jillian Lauren, Pretty

"At the midnight of our trouble, there are signs in the moon and in the stars. He will not say that he belongs to me, and still I bend to wash his feet." — Jill Alexander Essbaum, Heaven

# **FIRST REFORMED CHURCH OF SCHENECTADY**

We are a welcoming and affirming congregation and absolutely everyone is invited to our worship, activities, and service.

## **THE CONSISTORY**

### **Elders**

Del Pierce, Senior Elder  
Joanne Arnold, Senior Elder  
Karen Gonda  
Laura Lee  
Brad Lewis  
Barbara Mancuso  
Liz Mastrianni  
Vickie McGowan-Horan  
Kate Rose  
Kitty Trimarco

### **Deacons**

Sarah Bachorik  
Caroline Brooks  
Andy Chestnut  
Lian Drisgula  
Dave Hjelmar  
Christina Jones  
Kristin Lion  
Bill Rochelle  
Ralph Rosenthal  
Brandon Stabler

### **Ministers**

Bill Levering, Senior Minister  
Daniel Carlson, Associate Minister

### **Other Officers**

Catherine Lewis, Treasurer  
Kate Rose, Assistant Treasurer  
Joanne Bedell, Clerk

