Sunday Worship Service

FIRST REFORMED CHURCH



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 people in the midst of life, and comfort to those in life's later years to labor together for the betterment of humankind; and to care for all of God's creation. 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 love, protect and 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.

December 28, 2025

First Reformed Church
8 North Church Street
Schenectady, New York 12305
(518) 377-2201
www.frcschenectady.church/

FIRST REFORMED CHURCH
Schenectady

Welcome to First Reformed Church

We are a welcoming and affirming congregation and absolutely everyone is invited to our worship, fellowship, learning, and mission.

Kinderwyk Nursery
Parents may drop off children 5 years old with nursery caregivers any time after 9:45 am. Kinderwyk is located on the Youth Level, accessible by elevator or stairs.

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.

Helping Others Focus
Please silence your cellphones during worship.

Services Virtually
While nothing beats worshiping in person, all Sunday morning and Jazz Vesper services are live streamed and recorded. Find services at frcschenectady.church clicking the YouTube image there.

Offering
We now offer Venmo as an additional way to donate to the church! Use Venmo (follow QR code below) or put your donation into the offering plate. Thank you!

You Don't Have to Go It Alone
Stephen Ministers are members of our congregation trained and supported to provide one-to-one compassionate Christian care to those in the midst of a crisis or challenging time. Please contact the office or Maria Todd at mariagt44@yahoo.com for further information.

After Worship Fellowship
Please join the members of the congregation for fellowship in Covenant Hall after today's service.

Parking
In addition to street parking, there are four areas set aside for your use when attending events and worship. You may use all the lots within sight of the church for events here.

Church Office
The church office is open Monday-Friday 9:00am - 4:00pm.

New to First Reformed?
New to the church? Either use this QR code or fill out a pew card and put it in the offering plate.

First Sunday after Christmas Day
10:00am
*The congregation may stand.
Preacher: Rev. Abby Norton-Levering
Liturgist: Joe Doolittle
Special Music: Folk Band - Max Caplan, Abby Norton-Levering, John Norton, Alex Mancuso, Barbara Mancuso and special guest Mike Lawrence
Prelude: John Norton
Postlude: Sahana Sathish
Audio/Visual: Zechariah Allen
Ushers: Christina & Matt Jones

PRELUDE #19 in A (Perf. # 76) from the Well Tempered Clavier, Book 1 J. S. Bach

GREETING AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
ANNOUCEMENTS

First Forum: Coffee & Conversation

Jazz Vespers: Featuring: Nat Mussman, piano; Vinny Marotta, bass; Isaac Nokes, drums (Lucas)

Extending FRC Sympathy: Bill Barton & Ken Roinos entered God's nearer presence, Bill passed on Sunday, December 21, and Ken passed on Monday, December 22. We pray for God's comfort and strength for Betty, Ruth and their families. Arrangements will follow.

Epiphany Potluck Sunday January 11th: Bring your favorite dish to share, and join us for fellowship and fun after worship. We will be closing the Christmas season with a Christmas Carol hymn sing, procession of the maji through the church building, and our traditional epiphany galette cakes. Interested in baking a galette? Contact Barbara Mancuso (518-269-9751 or brmancuso@yahoo.com) for the recipe! We need bakers!

Do you want to grow in your faith by joining the First Reformed Church (FRC)? Email Pastor Todd at frcminister@gmail.com. The first class will be Sunday, January 25th from 11:30am-12:30pm in the Mohawk House. He will set up two more, one-hour classes at the interested parties' convenience during January and February that will focus on GETTING BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH: 1) Jesus, 2) each other, and 3) and the church.

Pastors' Epiphany Bible Study on Luke's Gospel on Tuesdays from 10-11 AM in the Mohawk House. (If you'd like to participate, but are not free at that time, email frcminister@gmail.com or frcassociateminister@gmail.com to ask for an evening time on zoom.) Pastors Todd and Lucas will take turns leading through the highlights of this radical gospel. And, by participating, you can enrich our Sunday sermon on the same passages!

Confirmation Class — Open to Everyone 7th Grade and Up Our new Confirmation Class begins Sunday, January 25! This 8-session journey is for anyone 7th grade and older who wants to explore their faith, learn about the Bible and the church, ask big questions, and grow in community. We'll meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays from 11:15–12:15 p.m., moving toward a student-led worship service in May. All are welcome — bring your curiosity and your questions!

CALL TO WORSHIP #Psalm 148

Leader: Praise the Lord!
People: Praise the Lord!
Leader: Praise God from the heavens; praise God in the heights!
People: Praise God, all you angels! praise God, heavenly host!
Leader: Leaders and followers, people of every kind,
People: Young men and women, old ones and infants!
Leader: Let us praise the name of the Lord,
People: For God's name alone is exalted; God's glory is above earth and heaven.
Leader: Praise the Lord!
People: Praise the Lord! AMEN!

*HYMN Away in a Manger #25

*OUR NEED FOR GOD "Into the Darkest Hour" by Madeline L'Engle Isaiah 63:9

It was a time like this, War and tumult of war, a horror in the air.
Hungry yawned the abyss-and yet there came the star
and the child most wonderfully there.

It was time like this of fear & lust for power, license & greed and blight-
and yet the Prince of bliss came into the darkest hour in quiet & silent light.

And in a time like this how celebrate his birth when all things fall apart?
Ah! Wonderful it is with no room on the earth the stable is our heart.

*GOD'S FORGIVING LOVE

Isaiah 63:9 reminds us that "it was no messenger or angel, but *God's presence* that saved God's people; in compassion God redeemed the people, lifted them up and carried them all the days of old." God continues to show up for us, in us, and among us, even at a time like this. Let us open the stable doors of our hearts and welcome God in.

*RESPONSE OF PRAISE *Gloria Patri* #579

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.
World without end. Amen.

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *(adapted from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession)*:

We believe in the revelation that God wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people. We believe that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged. God brings justice to the oppressed, gives bread to the hungry, frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind. God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, and helps orphans and widows. God calls the church to follow in God's way. Therefore, the church must stand by people in any form of suffering and need, and work against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

ANTHEM *Good For Goodness* *Brittain Ashford*

(The Folk Band would like to thank Brittain Ashford for allowing us to perform this song in our worship service.)

Maybe it's the days, shorter than days should ever be.
Maybe it's the nights that have you feeling alone.
Maybe it's this city, dressed up in all her finery
Or the year that passed in a blink of an eye,
Reminders of promises we couldn't keep.
Whatever the reason has you down…

Let your heart be light
Let your spirit rise in the deepest darkest hour of the night.
Let us keep hope, let us raise our voices loud.
Louder than we thought our heavy hearts would allow us.
Let us be guided by kindness and grace.
Let us be good for goodness sake.

If you're feeling forgotten, like you're among strangers
And you've lost the only way you know how.
If you're feeling restless, like this all seems endless
Those sleepless nights in front of our screens,
Searching for something beyond our reach.
Whatever the reason has you down…

And let us be gracious. Let us be forgiving.
We must be courageous despite our misgivings.
And let us speak up, and let us speak out.
And let us be present and let us be loud.
Let us lead with compassion, let us love with grace.
Let us listen, these are choices we make.
Let us be guided by kindness and grace.

Let us be good for goodness sake.
CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:

FIRST READING Hebrews 2: 10-18

SECOND HYMN In the Bleak Midwinter #36

SECOND READING Matthew 2: 13-23

SERMON "A Time Like This"

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *All the Diamonds in this World* Bruce Cockburn

(The folk Band would like to thank Bruce Cockburn and Bernie Finklestein for giving us permission to play this song for our worship service. "All the Diamonds in this World" is a song composed by Bruce Cockburn in 1973 the day after he realized he is a Christian and speaks to Christ coming to us and calling us to being our deeper, truer selves through faith.)

All the diamonds in this world that mean anything to me
Are conjured up by wind and sunlight sparkling on the sea

I ran aground in a harbor town; lost the taste for being free
Thank God He sent some gull-chased ship to carry me to sea

Two thousand years and half a world away.
Dying trees still grow greener when you pray.

Silver scales flash bright and fade in the reeds along the shore
Like a pearl in a sea of liquid jade His ship comes shining
Like a crystal swan in a sky of suns His ship comes shining

* DOXOLOGY (tune #593)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

As part of our prayers this morning, we give thanks to God for FRC members who have entered eternal rest near this day in previous years*:* Jean Collins, Jean Bowman

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.

CLOSING HYMN Go Tell It on the Mountain #29

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: Nocturne in E-Flat, Opus 9, #2 Chopin

OUR CURRENT CONSISTORY

Elders	**Deacons**
Sarah Bachorik	Olivia Cox
Rebecca Draffen Grande	Linda Ward
Dave Hjelmar	Elaine Thuener
Del Pierce	Christina Jones
Liz Mastrianni	Elsa Hjelmar
Andrew Chestnut	Jeanne Shoulder
Kimberly Burgoyne	Gay Doolittle
Catherine Lewis	Laura A. Lee
Florence Reed	Willie Lund
Nancy Rimany	

Officers

Catherine Lewis, Treasurer
Kate Rose, Assistant Treasurer

Staff

Pastor Todd Buurstra, Interim Pastor (908-642-2889, frcminister@gmail.com)
Lucas Grove, Pastor of Preaching & Pastoral Care (860-578-0471, frcassocminister@gmail.com)
Oksana Podoba, Business Manager
Gary Nelson, Facility Manager
Robin Mooney, Bookkeeper
Darlene Muscanell, Administrative Assistant
David Toth, Custodian/Sexton
Corine Salon, Music Director
Max Caplan, Church Musician

joani jameson, Youth Ed Coordinator

Mission	Contact Person	Phone Number	Email
Pastoral Care	Joe Doolittle	518-588-2801	aldenjoe@nycap.rr.com
Stephen Ministers	Maria Todd	518-429-7931	mariagt44@yahoo.com
Prayer Chain	Vernetta Thuener	518-280-1297	vethuener@yahoo.com
Support and Care	Vickie McGowan	518-852-0113	Torymc@aol.com
Senior Elder	Becky Draffen	518-618-7502	rebeccadraffen@gmail.com
Senior Elder	Sarah Bachorik	518-225-9805	sbachori@gmail.com
Elder	Andy Chestnut	646-258-2628	atrammellc@me.com
Facilities Manager	Gary Nelson	518-928-6358	nelson1680@gmail.com
Business Manager	Oksana Podoba	518-377-2201	1streformed@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
Sunday, Dec 28	9:45 am	Kinderwyk Nursery Care	Youth Level
	10:00 am	Sunday Worship	Sanctuary / YouTube
	11:00 am	Fellowship Coffee Hour	Covenant Hall
	11:20 am	First Forum	Covenant Hall
	5:00 pm	Jazz Vespers	Covenant Hall / YouTube
Wed., Dec 31	10:00 am	Archives and Historical Concerns	Archives Room
	11:00 am	Library Open (Sign in at Church office)	Library
	12:00 am	There WILL be a Wednesday Lunch on New Year's Eve 12/31/25 from 12-1 PM. Menu: Vegetarian Lasagna, salad, bread and cookies	
	2:00 pm	Organ Practice	Sanctuary
Thursday, Jan 1		Office Closed	
Sunday, Jan 4	9:45 am	Kinderwyk Nursery Care	Youth Level
	10:00 am	Sunday Worship (Communion)	Sanctuary / YouTube
	11:00 am	Fellowship Coffee Hour	Covenant Hall
	11:20 am	First Forum	Covenant Hall
	3:00 pm	Writing Group	Library
	5:00 pm	Jazz Vespers	Covenant Hall / YouTube

UPCOMING WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Date	*Preacher*	*Liturgist*
1/04	Pastor Todd Buurstra	Barbara Mancuso
1/11	Pastor Taylor Holbrook	Open