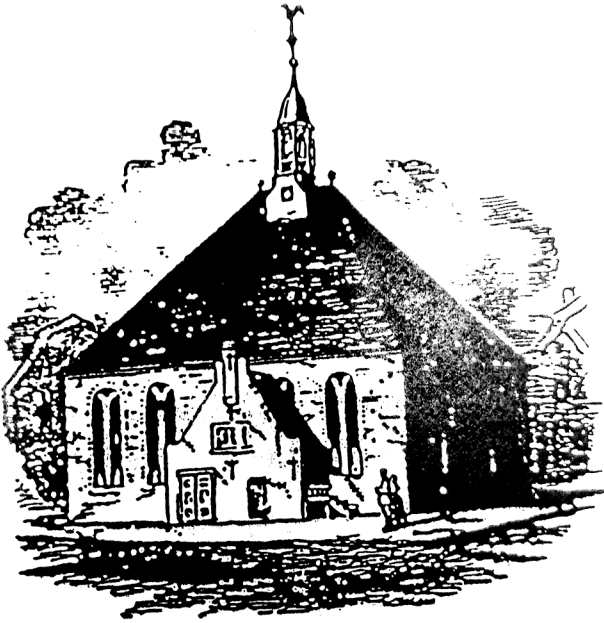


Heritage Sunday

The First Sunday in May



THE FIRST CHURCH IN ALBANY

110 North Pearl Street
Albany, NY 12207
(518) 462-4449

NOTES ON THE WORSHIP SERVICE

BANNERS

The banner bearing the Coat of Arms of the Reformed Church in America was made during our 350th Anniversary year by Pat Huba. The “Lily Among the Thorns” was also made by Pat Huba for the 200th anniversary of our building.

BAPTISMAL BOWL

The ancient baptismal bowl, the gift of Jacob Wendell, is engraved “Voor De Dyste Kerek tot Albany, Anno 1719”

THE PULPIT BIBLE

A prized memento of First Church is the Bible used in the pulpit of the Old Stone Church. Published in Holland in 1741, it carried the official endorsement of the High and Mighty Lords of the States General of the Netherlands as being in conformity with the canons of the National Synod of Dort.

“BAG-ON-A-STICK”

Our offering this morning will be received in the center aisle through the use of a “bag-on-a-stick.” These unique devices were utilized each Sunday from the 17th—19th centuries.

NOTES ON THE FIRST CHURCH SANCTUARY (DESIGNED BY PHILIP HOOKER—1798)

THE CHANCEL ARCHES were designed by Hooker, between the arms of the inner arch there was originally a small semicircular extension containing narrow windows. This extension was eliminated when a lecture hall was erected behind the sanctuary in 1830.

THE LILY AMONG THE THORNS above the chancel dates back to the 16th century when it was adopted as a rallying symbol by the early Dutch Reformationists struggling against the tyranny of Philip of Spain who had decreed their extermination. It is based upon the second chapter of the Song of Solomon, which may be translated: “*Like a lily among the thorns, so is my sweetheart among all maidens.*”

THE LECTURN on the left of the chancel was designed by the Tiffany studios in 1918 as an appropriate companion to the Hour-Glass Pulpit.

THE PEW DOORS as well as the elevation the floor and the solid partitions between pews testify to the fact that the building was built without central heating. It was heated with wood stoves until 1859, when coal became available.

THE BALCONY in 1798 was intended for enslaved persons. The Dutch were pioneer slave traders to the New World and in the early years, Albany had many slaves. Slavery was abolished in New York in 1827.

THE COAT OF ARMS on the front of the balcony is that of the Dutch Reformed Church, which is modified from that of the Prince of Orange who led the revolt against Spanish repression. The revolt established both the United Provinces of the Netherlands as an autonomous nation and the Dutch Reformed Church as a Dutch adaptation of Calvinism. To avoid an image of ethnic provincialism, the Reformed Church in America dropped the “Dutch” designation in 1869.

THE PIPE ORGAN was considered too raucous for the House of God by 18th century Calvinists. It was added in 1859 by enclosing a columned porch on North Pearl Street to create a narthex below and an organ loft above. The present organ of approximately 4,800 pipes was installed as a WWII memorial in 1948,. It was built by the Austin Organ Company.

THE ELDERS’ PEWS on either side of the chancel are occupied by elected lay leaders who are responsible for the congregation’s spiritual welfare.

THE DEACONS’ PEWS are the two front pews on either side of the center aisle; the low boxes in front are for storing the “bag-on-a-stick” devices formerly used for collecting the offering.

THE SPECIAL BLOCK OF PEWS facing the aisle on the north side was for city officials; that on the south side for state officials.

THE GOVERNOR’S PEW occupied by Theodore Roosevelt and his family while he was governor of New York, is the third pew on the left of the center aisle.



FOUNDED IN 1642
"OLDEST PULPIT IN AMERICA"

First Church in Albany

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www.firstchurchinalbany.org