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April 2016

### On the Exclusive Nature of the Jesus' Inclusive Mission

Throughout our Lenten sermon series we looked at the seven "I Am" statements of Jesus as found in John's Gospel. And one of the things we noted was the uniqueness of the claims that Jesus was making about Himself. Jesus presented Himself as: "**the Bread of Life**" (Jn 6:35); "**the Light of the World**" (Jn 8:12); "**the Gate**" (Jn 10:7); "**the Good Shepherd**" (Jn 10:11); "**the Resurrection and the Life**" (Jn 11:25); "**the Way, and the Truth, and the Life**" (Jn 14:6); and, "**the True Vine**" (Jn 15:1).

In each case Jesus didn't say He was "a", but "**the**", which is a claim to exclusivity regarding His person and mission. But, as was noted during that series, such a claim to exclusivity doesn't sit well in our current age of "relativism" and "tolerance". And so I want to spend some time talking about this topic of "exclusivity". And I want to do so in terms of what it says about the exclusive nature of Jesus' inclusive ministry.

To that end I will begin by looking to a passage from Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, a passage that speaks to the uniqueness of the Lordship of Christ, and the church, and the way of salvation, namely, Ephesians 4:4-6, which reads:

**"There is one body and one Spirit -- just as you were called to one hope when you were called -- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (NIV)**

As we read this passage we can't help but be struck by this seven-fold use of the number "**one**" and its implications in an age where it seems that the chief virtue promoted within our society and the church is tolerance.

Clearly, Christianity is a faith system that makes a claim to uniqueness -- to worshipping **one** God who offers **one** hope through the work of **one** Lord who in turn has established **one** body through **one** baptism into this **one** faith which is empowered and sustained by **one** Spirit.

And for many within as well as outside of the church, these "exclusive" claims are seen as arrogant.

Now certainly, in a society where we think we should have the freedom to do as we will when we will, we can see how such a statement would be offensive to those outside of the church. But what's disconcerting is the many believers who take offense at the Gospel's claims to uniqueness -- as if God has no right to determine what is right!

And if we were to examine the cause for such "offense" -- an offense shared by believers and non-believers alike -- we would see that it arises from: 1). An unwillingness to accept humankind's sinfulness; 2). A failure to fathom the significance and magnificence of God's grace; and, 3). The adopting of a sinful world's idea of what it means to be "tolerant" and "inclusive".

Now, although all three causes mentioned are important, in what follows I will focus on the third "cause" mentioned above. For, our society has taken the very good and proper principle of "religious

tolerance” – meaning that all religions should be given equal freedoms – and has reinterpreted it to mean that all religions have equal validity.

Moreover, upon adopting this erroneous interpretation and application of religious equality, some reason that all faiths teach essentially the same thing. Therefore, supporters of this “religious pluralism” advocate finding what all faiths have in common and then letting that be our rule for living – the tie that would in turn bind all humanity as one.

Indeed many leaders in the Christian church even bubble with excitement at the thought of bringing elements of other faith systems into the worship and teaching of the Christian church, despite that fact that some of those beliefs and practices stand in direct contradiction to the teachings of the Scriptures!

They attempt to create a false unity by adopting a reductionist approach to faith that’s not only offensive to God in its promotion of idolatry, but that’s contrary to common sense! (In truth, as the Bible teaches, humankind’s unity comes in that we are all created in the image of the one true God. Our “unity” stems from our origin in God, but, because of our sinful nature, such unity can only be realized when we in turn worship and serve this **one** Creator and Sustainer of all through faith in the **one** Lord and Savior of all.)

Consider, for example, a few basic problems with this reductionist application to issues of faith.

First, it does not recognize that if two statements are absolutely contradictory, without qualification, at least one of those statements must be false. Hence, when two systems of belief contradict each other, as a system, at least one must be false.

Second, and following from our first observation, it doesn’t recognize that truth is, by definition, exclusive, because it rejects anything that is false!

Third, such reductionism essentially reduces each belief system to a common denominator in an attempt to promote peace and unity, which, in a humanistic society, is understood as the ultimate goal of religion. But, the peace and unity that this philosophy seeks can’t endure because it’s purchased at the expense of truth. And to attempt to promote peace and unity without a foundation of truth is to build one’s house upon the sand. (Mt 7:26)

Fourth, it assumes that any contradictions that do arise between various faiths are non-essentials so that if a Christian believes Jesus is God and another faith system does not, then the issue of the identity of Jesus is removed to the realm of the non-essential.

And fifth, it assumes that we, as intelligent humans, are able to pick apart each religious system and piece together the truth. In other words, this humanistic reductionism assumes we are inherently good enough and wise enough to recognize and apply the truth in a consistent and loving manner. But then, there is no need for a God who reveals truth -- who is the author of truth. We can create, develop and maintain one unifying system of truth. Of course the natural question then becomes, if we can do this why is there such diversity of faith systems to begin with?

It’s clear that such a reductionist approach to issues of faith will never create a system of belief that is truly inclusive! For in fact, there is no common underlying set of “religious” beliefs, values and practices to which each and every person would choose to adhere. As a case in point we need only consider the atheist and the theist, both of whose most basic premise excludes the other!

And so, any “religious” system (and atheism is a “religion” – even, ironically, having its own god(s)!) that includes some people will inevitably exclude others!

What is the bottom line?

There is no system of belief with its “religious” practices that is not exclusive in some way!

But does being exclusive and making claims to uniqueness automatically imply arrogance on the part of those who accept such a system of belief?

The answer to that question depends upon what ultimately is the source which derives and defines the beliefs held by a particular faith system.

And, in the case of Christianity, if we can show that it is true and that it is founded upon truth, then not only would it not be arrogant to believe it (although it certainly has its arrogant adherents) but it would be more arrogant to reject what God has revealed in and through Jesus the Christ!

And so we come to the heart of the issue: Was Jesus telling the truth about Himself?

Now there is no denying how Jesus viewed Himself.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus said, "**I and my Father are one**" (Jn 10:30); and, as already noted above, Jesus declared, "**I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me**" (Jn 14:6 NIV).

When Peter confessed, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God**" (Mt 16:16 NIV; see also Martha's confession – Jn 11:27), Jesus acknowledged Peter's statement as true by identifying God as the source of Peter's insight. (Mt 16:17)

When asked by the chief priests, "**Are you the Son of God?**", Jesus responded saying, "**You are right in saying I am,**" thus He claimed to be equal with God. (Lk 22:70; Jn 5:18)

When Thomas, upon seeing Jesus alive (having been raised from the dead) confessed, "**My Lord and My God!**", Jesus did not rebuke Thomas for speaking in error, but rather confronted him for needing to see before he would believe that truth. (Jn 20:28)

And, in John's vision, while exiled on the island of Patmos, Jesus identified Himself, saying, "**I am the Alpha and the Omega, who is, and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."** (Rev. 1:8, 22:13 NIV)

Clearly these are not the claims of any average, ordinary person.

No ordinary man or woman, not even a self-proclaimed or God ordained prophet, ever made such grandiose claims of himself or herself: not Elijah nor Elisha nor Anna; not Buddha nor Confucius nor Mohammed.

Only Jesus was so bold as to make such claims.

But are His claims justifiable?

To answer this we need to look at His person and works.

Looking first at some of His works, note the following.

Regarding prophecy, Jesus assumed the role of the long-awaited Messiah of the Old Testament (Lk 4:16-21; see also Isa 61:1-2). In fact, there are over 300 prophecies and allusions to the coming of the Messiah in the Scriptures and Jesus alone filled every one of these -- prophecies which were recorded before His birth, allowing Him no control over the situations if He were a mere man (e.g., the location of His birth).

Many scientist have done studies on the probability that one person could fulfill in their life just a fraction of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. The number was astronomical with all who have done serious studies concluding that it just could not have happened as a random event.

Did Jesus "just happen" to be the right person at the right place at the right time -- over and over again -- fulfilling prophecy after prophecy by chance?

Or could it be that He was/is indeed the Messiah – the Son of God?

But Jesus not only fulfilled the prophecies given by others, Jesus Himself prophesied about events in His own life, events beyond His immediate control: like how Peter would deny Him, and how Judas would betray Him; about how He would be crucified, buried, and come forth from the tomb on the third day.

Jesus was a great prophet but He was much more.

Many throughout history, Christians and non-Christians alike, have identified Jesus as a great teacher, and indeed He presented Himself as such. (Jn 3:2)

But, if He were only a man, could we really consider Him a great teacher? After all, the teaching of Jesus creates a moral dilemma. If you study Jesus' teaching you will discover, as the contemporary theologian John Stott notes in his book "*Basic Christianity*", that:

"The most amazing feature of Jesus is that He was constantly talking about Himself . . . This self-centeredness of the teaching of Jesus immediately sets Him apart from the other great religious teachers of the world. They were self-effacing. He was self-advancing. They pointed men away from themselves, saying, 'This is the truth, so far as I perceive it; follow

this.” Jesus said , ‘I am the truth; follow me’. . . And the most remarkable feature of all this self-centered teaching is that it was uttered by the One who insisted on humility in others.”

Can one who presents Himself as being without sin and able to forgive sins (Jn 10:30, 17:4; 2 Cor 5:21; Lk 5:20-21, 7:48; 1 Pt 2:22), as being the only way to God (Jn 3:16-18, 14:6; Acts 4:12), as being God in the flesh (Jn 1:1-2, 14, 18), be considered a mere man and also a great teacher?

As C. S. Lewis has stated in his book, “*Mere Christianity*”:

“You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit on Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great **human** teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

No, if Jesus was not who He presented Himself to be, the only Lord and Savior of the world, then, as C. S. Lewis has noted, He was either a lunatic or a liar, but certainly not a great moral teacher.

To decide if Jesus was speaking the truth about Himself, we must consider that: Jesus fulfilled prophecies, both His own and that of others; Jesus revealed Himself as a teacher, One who spoke with an authority never before seen in a mere man; and, Jesus performed miracles.

Not only did He teach with power but He displayed supernatural power through His many miracles.

Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life (And we know how impossible that is for any mere mortal!) No one could bring any charge of sin against him. (Heb 4:15; Mk 14:52; 1 Pt 2:22)

Jesus calmed storms, fed multitudes, healed the sick, raised the dead, and cast out demons. (Jn 20:30-31)

And then, in the most glorious miracle of all, He died for the sins of all who would put their faith in Him; and, rising again from the dead on the third day, He claimed victory over death, so that we might be restored into a right relationship with God the Father through faith in Jesus. (1 Pt 3:18; 1 Cor 15:3-4)

No other religious leader was able to offer His own life as a payment for our sins! (1 Pt 3:18; 1 Jn 2:2, 4:10)

No other religious leader rose from the dead and in so doing conquered sin and death! (1 Cor 15:55-57)

No other religious leader gives us new and abundant life here and now and for all eternity! (Jn 10:10b, 11:25-26)

Jesus was clearly a man without equal. History verifies that He was a unique man making unique claims. He was One who called and still calls all men and women to worship Him.

Jesus said He is the truth and all the evidence supports His claim.

He has shown Himself to be God incarnate, the one and only Lord, the one and only Person throughout all history who is worthy of our complete and uncompromising faith.

Therefore, any system of belief that reduces, denies, or rejects Jesus as the one and only way of salvation -- any religion that compromises the claims of Christ -- must by definition, be false.

These counterfeit systems may contain some truths within them, but only Jesus is the embodiment of truth -- for, there is indeed only “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.” (Eph 4:5-6 NIV)

And, in turn, “**Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.**” (Act 4:12 NIV)

And so we see that Christianity is exclusive.

But the exclusiveness of Christianity is not with regard to one’s race or sex or ethnic origin or social status or educational achievement or even moral goodness.

The exclusivity of the gospel depends only upon one’s response to Jesus, which itself is only possible through the regenerating work of the only sovereign God. (Jn 6:44-45, 65; Rom 8:29-30, 10:9-10; Eph 1:3-14)

In fact, no faith system is more inclusive than Christianity, for being a Christian is not dependent upon the abilities and works of sinful humans, but rather, upon the grace of a loving, merciful and holy God -- so that, **all** who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved! (Rom 10:13)

And, as we wrestle with the "inclusivity" of Jesus' "exclusive" claims, as believers in Jesus we must remember that:

1. We did not discover the truth, but rather God uncovered the truth for us (1 Cor 2:16). Therefore there is no place for arrogance in the church.
2. God has applied the truth to us -- a people who were once dead in our sins but who have been made alive in Christ (Eph 2:1-5). This is glorious news, and we are commanded to spread this same good news to others who desperately need to hear of the love and forgiveness of Christ (Mt 28:18-19). Therefore there is no place for apathy in the church.
3. God has revealed His truth, and in His truth is the command to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mk 12:30-31). Therefore, there is no place for disunity, pride, prejudice, hatred, or discrimination in the church. (Col 3:5)

In closing, I would encourage you to consider for yourself which is the more arrogant action: to accept the truth with a grateful heart and in love to attempt to share that life-saving, life-transforming truth with others; or, to hear the truth and yet to reject it as being true, and in so doing, to turn one's back upon the One who, with nail scarred hands, reaches out to all people saying:

**"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."** (Matt 11:28-30 NIV)

May God bless you as you serve God in the power of His Spirit – submitting yourself to the one and only, exclusive Lord and Savior, who alone makes available the one and only way of salvation – namely, belief in Jesus the Christ and His inclusive invitation:

**"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."** (Jn 3:16 NIV)

God's peace.

John McAuley

PS: I would like leave you with a metaphor from an article by Robertson McQuilkin ("*Perspectives*", p.161) for your reflection as you consider the exclusivity of the gospel.

In a dream I found myself on an Island – sheep Island. Across the island sheep were scattered and lost. Soon I learned that a forest fire was sweeping across from the opposite side. All were doomed to destruction unless there were some escape. Although there were many unofficial maps, I had a copy of the official map and there discovered that indeed there was a bridge to the mainland, a narrow bridge, built, it was said, at incredible cost.

My job, I was told, would be to get the sheep across the bridge. I discovered many shepherds herding the sheep which were found and seeking to corral those which were within easy access of the bridge. But most of the sheep were far off and the shepherds seeking them few. The sheep near the fire knew they were in trouble and were frightened; those at a distance were peacefully grazing, enjoying life.

I noticed two shepherds near the bridge whispering to one another and laughing. I moved near them to hear the cause of their joy in such a dismal setting. "Perhaps the chasm is narrow

somewhere, and at least the strong sheep have opportunity to saved themselves," said one. "Maybe the current is gentle and the stream shallow. Then at least the courageous can make it across." The other responded, "That may well be. In fact, wouldn't it be great if this proves to be no island at all? Perhaps it is just a peninsula and great multitudes of sheep are already safe. Surely the owner would have provided some alternative route." And so they relaxed and went about their business.

In my mind I began to ponder their theories: Why would the owner have gone to such great expense to build a bridge, especially since it is a narrow bridge, and many of the sheep refuse to cross it even when they find it? In fact, if there is a better way by which many will be saved more easily, building the bridge is a terrible blunder. And if this isn't an island, after all, what is to keep the fire from sweeping across into the mainland and destroying everything? As I pondered these things I heard a quiet voice behind me saying, "There is a better reason than the logic of it, my friend. Logic alone could lead you either way. Look at your map."

There on the map, by the bridge, I saw a quotation from the first under-shepherd, Peter: "For neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other way from the island to the mainland whereby a sheep may be saved." And then I discerned, carved on the old rugged bridge itself, "I am the bridge. No sheep escapes to safety but by me."

In a world in which nine of every ten people are lost, three of four have never heard the way out, and one of every two cannot hear, the Church sleeps on. "Why?" Could it be we think there must be some other way? Or perhaps we don't really care that much.



The Prayer Chain consists of people who commit to praying for needs in the lives of our faith family as they arise. There are two ways you can participate in this ministry.

- You can receive prayer requests by email and then lift those concerns in prayer.
- You can be a part of the telephone prayer chain. When prayer requests come in the first person on the list is called and they pass the request down the chain. Each person on the telephone prayer chain then has the responsibility to call one other person on the chain to get the prayer request circulated to all.

The Upward Ministry Committee is in the process of updating the prayer chain. If you would like to be included in the prayer chain (either email or telephone), please speak with Sue Laz.



## Remember in Prayer...

### Our Shut-ins at home:

Tillie Herman, Marcella Goard, June Giles,

**At the Eddy:** Dot Multunas, Edna Wells

**At Schuyler Ridge:** Dolores Robb

**At Brookdale:** Dot McGan

### Those dealing with health issues:

Stan Bentley, Doris Calamaras, Joshua Valerio

### Our Church:

Pastor John and the Session

### Our Community:

Those who don't know the Lord  
Those dealing with financial difficulties  
That our schools would be places of safety

### Our World:

Missionaries serving around the world  
Open doors for sharing the Gospel message.  
Persecuted Christians around the world

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## Family Dinner and Game Night

**April 9<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 – 7:00**

You are invited to join us on Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup> for an evening of fun and fellowship. Dinner will be served at 5:00 and after dinner there will be some time for fun and games – card games, board games, and even outdoor games, weather permitting. Bring your favorite game and a few friends to share in the fun!



If you would like to provide soup or dessert for the meal please speak with Peter Laz.

## Serving This Month

### April 3<sup>rd</sup>

Worship Assistants: Bill Multunas and Ella Miller  
Greeters: Deena Dominy and Jason Laz  
Head Greeters: Mike Giddings  
Nursery: Alice Bentley  
Fellowship Hosts: Calamaras Family

### April 10<sup>th</sup>

Worship Assistants: Eric Ofori and Kelly Valerio  
Greeters: James McAuley  
Head Greeter: Rob Giddings  
Nursery: Jen McAuley  
Communion: Deena Dominy, Doris Calamaras, Eric Ofori, Hazel Landry  
Fellowship Hosts: McAuley Family

### April 17<sup>th</sup>

Worship Assistants: Natalia Multunas and Jesse Ofori  
Greeters: Dean and Doris Calamaras  
Head Greeter: Christian Multunas  
Nursery: Deena Dominy, Angelina Solomon  
Communion: Jason Laz, Jen McAuley, Jerry Whitman, Mike Giddings  
Fellowship Hosts:

### April 24<sup>th</sup>

Worship Assistants: Kelly Valerio and Natalia Multunas  
Greeters: Jen McAuley and Pat Gilmaier  
Head Greeter: Peter Laz  
Nursery: Wendy Giddings  
Communion: Natalia Multunas, Pat Gilmaier, Peter Laz, Rachel Farnum  
Fellowship Hosts: Whitman Family

## Help Fill the Shelves at Hope 7's Food Pantry!

Hope 7's food pantry serves families in need right here in our own community. The need is great and has been growing every year!

**During the month of April  
we will be collecting soap, shampoo, and  
deodorant.**

Donations of other non-perishable food items will also be accepted.

## COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

June 4<sup>th</sup>  
9:00 – 2:00

The Outward Ministry Committee is once again planning for a Community Garage Sale this summer so as you do your spring cleaning begin saving the treasures you no longer need and plan on joining us on the 4<sup>th</sup>. There is no cost to participate. Just bring a table and your treasures to sell. If you would like to use one of the church's tables please speak with Andy Miller.

If you would like to help out, we are looking for people who can help with set up and clean up and we need a few people who could man the food table and the church information table.



If you are able to help out or if you have any questions, please speak with Sue Laz.

### April Birthdays

4/2 Bruce Giddings  
4/7 Rob Jensen  
4/9 Natalia Multunas  
4/11 Ella Joan Miller  
4/13 Jennifer Miller  
4/13 Matthew Giddings  
4/15 Joe Hope  
4/18 Irene Ofori  
4/26 Jack Wocher  
4/27 Tori Davey  
4/28 Victoria Hope  
4/28 Stephanie Miller  
4/29 Jan Pedersen



### April Anniversaries

4/13 Karen & Bob Moore  
4/24 Mort & Beth Casey

### General Financial Update for February 2016

	Year to Date	February
Total Income	\$27,183.00	\$12,156.00
Total Expenses	(\$28,550.27)	(\$14,598.30)
Difference	(\$ 1,367.27)	(\$ 2,442.30)

### Serving at the Capital City Rescue Mission April 16<sup>th</sup>

We have the privilege to minister to those in need by helping to serve the evening meal at the Capital City Rescue Mission. We will meet at the church at 5:00 and carpool or you can meet us at the Mission around 5:30. Serving involves ensuring the tables are set for dinner, serving the meal, and cleaning up the tables afterwards. If you can help please speak with Andy Miller or Rob Jensen.

### Fellowship Hosts Needed

Hosts are needed for Fellowship Time throughout the upcoming months. Fellowship hosts are asked to bring a few snacks for after worship. Coffee, sugar, cream, cold drinks, cups, napkins, and plates are provided. In addition to snacks, you would also be responsible for setting things up and cleaning up afterwards.

You can host on your own or you could work together with others to make the job easier. There is a sign-up sheet near the kitchen showing the Sundays where a host is needed. If you have not hosted before and would like some assistance or if you have questions, please speak with Natalia Multunas.

## Bible Quiz for April 2016

As we return to our sermon series on "The Gospel of Luke" we will focus in this quiz on chapter 21 of Luke's Gospel.

1. Why did Jesus commend the widow's offering?
2. True or False: Jesus warns that many false teachers and false prophets will come in His name.
3. True or False: Jesus warns that when we hear of wars and revolutions it's a sure sign that the end of the world will come right away.
4. True or False: Jesus warns of persecution to come upon those who seek to follow Him.
5. True or False: Jesus promises that when such trials and persecutions come He will give us the words to speak before our accusers.
6. Fill in the blank: "By standing firm you will gain \_\_\_\_\_." (NIV)
7. Fill in the blanks: "Jerusalem will be trampled by the \_\_\_\_\_ until the times of the \_\_\_\_\_ are fulfilled." (NIV)
8. Fill in the blank: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my \_\_\_\_\_ will never pass away." (NIV)
9. Fill in the blanks: "Be always on the \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to \_\_\_\_\_ before the \_\_\_\_\_." (NIV)
10. True or False: Jesus often spent His nights, after teaching at the Temple, on the Mount of Olives.



During the months of **April and May** we will be receiving a **Special Mission Offering**. The money collected will be divided between two ministries: a local ministry – InterVarsity at HVCC, and an international ministry – Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

These ministries were chosen in part because they help us to fulfill our mission as a church:

**To Love Our God and Neighbor  
To Proclaim the Gospel Through  
Word and Deed  
To Make Disciples of Jesus the Christ**

You should have received a booklet containing a "Calendar of Blessings" and an envelope for each week from Easter to Pentecost. The calendar has some suggested things that we are blessed with and often take for granted; things many in our world live without.

We ask you as you consider those things to determine how much you will give each week in thankfulness for the blessings you have been given. Put your contributions in the envelope provided and place it in the offering plate on Sunday mornings. Remember to include your regular offering envelope number so your contribution can be recorded correctly. Checks should be made payable to Third Presbyterian Church.

There is a display at the front of the sanctuary with information about InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance as well as additional offering envelopes if you need more.

If you did not receive the offering materials and would like them, please call the church office (283-2420).

If you have any questions, please speak with any member of the Outward Ministry Committee (Pat Gilmaier, Rob Jensen, Jason Laz, Peter Laz, Sue Laz, Jen McAuley, Andy Miller, Jerry Whitman, Vera Whitman Pastor John).

## THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

What we believe matters. Doctrine matters, for out of our core beliefs come our actions – actions which, by God’s grace, should bring honor to God and blessing to others and ourselves. To help build a solid theological foundation out of which “God honoring works” can flow, I encourage you to spend some time reading and reflecting upon the questions below, which have been selected from the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The “Westminster Shorter Catechism” is one of the catechisms included in the Book of Confessions of the PCUSA, and was originally written to supplement the “Westminster Confession of Faith” as a teaching document for younger Christians.

### **Q 67. Which is the Sixth Commandment?**

The Sixth Commandment is, “You shall not kill.”

### **Q 68. What is required in the Sixth Commandment?**

The Sixth Commandment requires all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

### **Q 69. What is forbidden in the Sixth Commandment?**

The Sixth Commandment forbids the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tends thereunto.

### **Q 70. Which is the Seventh Commandment?**

The Seventh Commandment is, “You shall not commit adultery.”

### **Q 71. What is required in the Seventh Commandment?**

The Seventh Commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbor’s chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.

### **Q 72. What is forbidden in the Seventh Commandment?**

The Seventh Commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

### **Q 73. Which is the Eighth Commandment?**

The Eighth Commandment is, “You shall not steal.”

### **Q 74. What is required in the Eighth Commandment?**

The Eighth Commandment requires the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

### **Q 75. What is forbidden in the Eighth Commandment?**

The Eighth Commandment forbids whatsoever does, or may, unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbor’s, wealth or outward estate.

## **SESSION MEETING-THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-MARCH 14, 2016**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

1. A motion was made, to receive a Special Mission Offering from Easter Sunday through Pentecost Sunday, with proceeds divided evenly between Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and InterVarsity at Hudson Valley Community College.
2. A motion was made, to purchase 3 new handicapped accessible toilets for the downstairs bathrooms, money to come from the Building Fund.

### **CLERK'S REPORT**

- Miscellaneous Information: Average attendance for February 2016 was 53.
- Membership roll is 66.
- Reminder of Family Dinner & Game Night at church at 5PM. 4/09/16

### **WORSHIP & PRAYER**

- New Communion linens have been purchased.
- We are hoping to create a video of pictures of our moms and dads that will be used on Mother's Day and Father's Day. Photos can be given to Sal Sceccitano or electronic images can be e-mailed to him.

### **INWARD MINISTRY**

**CONGREGATIONAL CARE** - Working on updating the visitation team/process/schedule, still encouraging volunteers.

**SENIOR'S MINISTRY** - Date for spring/summer gathering has been set for July 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **OUTWARD MINISTRY**

- Spending for March 2016: \$1,500-Hope 7 Food Pantry, \$200-InterVarsity (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute/Russel Sage College), \$300-InterVarsity (Hudson Valley Community College)
- Our emphasis for Hope 7 for April will be hygiene items (deodorant, toothpaste, soap, etc.).
- We will be serving the evening meal at Capital City Rescue Mission on April 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Still working on a church logo and a tagline.
- Nate Smith (InterVarsity at Hudson Valley Community College) is here and beginning his ministry at HVCC.
- The Community Garage Sale will be held on Saturday June 4<sup>th</sup> from 9 AM - 2 PM.

### **STEWARDSHIP**

#### **GENERAL FUIND/FINANCE**

- Our year-to-date deficit to \$1,367.27.
- First Quarter Offering Statements will be completed and distributed in early April.

#### **PROPERTY**

- Andy Miller, Sal Sceccitano, Joe Pasinella, and Rob Jensen installed the new video projector and ran conduit and cables to support the video.
- Looking to paint the main floor conference room.
- Looking to install new handicapped toilets in the men/ladies bathroom down stairs.
- Looking to install a rack in the balcony area to hang banners.
- Looking for lawn mowing people for the season.

**ALBANY PRESBYTERY** - Next meeting is April 6<sup>th</sup> from 4-8:45 PM at the State Street Church in Schenectady.

## From Music and Audio-Visual Ministries...

### ***“MOVIN’ ON UP!”***

Not to that *dee-luxe apartment* in the sky, tempting though it might be to binge watch a few seasons of the Jeffersons on Netflix! Sorry, George and Weezy... (and sorry, under 50 folks!) No, what’s “movin’ on up” is our video projector--from 50 feet away from the screen in the balcony to just 18 feet away behind the closest ceiling beam to the chancel. I’m sure you’ve noticed over time, how difficult it was to get sharp, clear images in the sanctuary when it’s bathed in all that ambient sunlight, even with the shades drawn. We needed something a lot brighter than the projector that had served us for over 13 years.

Getting a brighter projector wasn’t the only issue, however. The lenses these things are sold with are generally only good for a maximum distance of 25 feet. Beyond that, a different lens is required, often adding as much as a couple *thousand* dollars to the cost. We needed to think “outside the box”, so we began *looking up!* If we could mount a projector underneath, or even better, *behind* one of the ceiling support beams, we could install the projector well within the 25-foot range, thus avoiding the extra cost of an additional lens. The front-most beam, being only 18 feet from the screen, was the obvious choice. And by mounting it on the back side, it’s largely out of view from most seating positions in the sanctuary.

The video consultant I’ve worked with for over 20 years located an excellent unit for us, and discounted it even further, as it was used briefly for demo purposes at SUNY Albany. Many thanks to Rob Jensen and Andy Miller for their invaluable help with the installation, saving us hundreds of dollars. We also ran an output cable from the projector to the pulpit, allowing us to install a small monitor there so Pastor John can follow along without having to turn around. The equipment for that was all donated.

We trust you agree that this has yielded tremendous improvement in our projection quality. I don’t know about Weezy, but I’m pretty sure George would be proud!

With Joy in the Journey,  
Sal Scicchitano

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## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Love being outdoors? Enjoy the sun? We have the perfect job for you! People are needed to help keep the church grounds groomed. Rob Jensen would like nothing more than to add you to the schedule! Please call him if you can help.





## Mission Spotlight:

### InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

The Purpose of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA is to establish and advance at colleges and universities witnessing communities of students and faculty who follow Jesus as Savior and Lord: growing in love for God, God's Word, God's people of every ethnicity and culture and God's purposes in the world.

InterVarsity's vision is to see students and faculty transformed, campuses renewed, and world changers developed. Their vision is reflected in the lives of InterVarsity Alumni who go on to serve God's purposes in the world.

To learn more about InterVarsity you can visit their website at [www.intervarsity.org](http://www.intervarsity.org).

We currently support two InterVarsity staff – Niki Campbell who serves on the campuses of RPI and Russell Sage; and Nate Smith who ministers on the campus of Hudson Valley Community College.

*Niki writes, "We are about halfway through our semester at Sage and we keep meeting new people interested in learning about Jesus. This is bringing a lot of excitement to our chapter at Sage.*

*At RPI all our small groups have at least one not-yet Christian attending, asking questions, and being part of the community. Please pray for these groups and for new opportunities.*

*The last couple of week have shown that there is a lot of potential in what we see God doing on campus. I love having you as partners in ministry. Thank you for your support!"*

*Nate shares, "Our goal at Hudson Valley is to do exactly what the National IVCF purpose and vision statements suggest. We aim to grow a witnessing community on campus that will seek to make an impact on the campus and in the world. As a result, we desire to see the power of Jesus Christ at work in the lives of students and faculty to change them and transform them."*

Please pray for Niki and Nate as they seek to share the gospel and shine the light of Christ on our local college campuses. Pray also for the Christian students and faculty on those campuses, that they would be encouraged in their faith and be challenged to live out their faith boldly.

Please remember our other mission partners – Capital City Rescue Mission, Hope 7, Ronald McDonald House-Albany, Peter Halder in Bangladesh, Gideon's International, Medical Benevolence Foundation PC(USA), Capital District YFC, Horizons, Voice of the Martyrs and our sponsored children – Emerson in El Salvador and Anyelo in Guatemala - in your prayers.

Information and updates on all of our mission partners can be found in the binder in the church office and on the bulletin boards in fellowship hall.

## **CATCH THE SPIRIT!!**

**May 15<sup>th</sup> is Pentecost Sunday.** Pentecost is the day that the **Holy Spirit** came upon the disciples in Jerusalem, they began preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ, and the Christian church was born!!

**Pentecost is a day to celebrate!** It is a celebration of newness, of recreation, of renewal of purpose, mission and calling as God's people. It is a celebration of God's ongoing work in our world.



Red symbolizes the **fire** of the Holy Spirit and therefore, red is the color of the day. The sanctuary will be decorated with red and everyone is encouraged to wear something red that morning.

**We hope you will plan to join us for this special day of celebration!!**

*Third Presbyterian Church  
115 Winter Street  
Troy, NY 12180*

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

*Our Mission:*

*To Love our God and Neighbor*

*To Proclaim the Gospel through*

*Word and Deed*

*To Make Disciples of Jesus the Christ*

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16