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### “Making Our Personal ‘Declaration of Dependence’”

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776, 56 men from 13 colonies gathered together in a room in Philadelphia to sign one of America’s historic documents: “The Declaration of Independence”.

The signing of this document marked the birth of this nation. But the birthing pains were great. Those who signed knew that their signature would cost the lives of many. And there was no guarantee that their revolution would succeed.

The quest for independence of this small nation would take a huge toll -- a toll many of those 56 who signed that day would have to pay with their own blood or the blood of their children. These were 56 men of means, not poor beggars who had nothing to lose, or wild-eyed rebels looking for a fight. Most of them were rich men who enjoyed much ease and luxury in their personal lives; prosperous men, wealthy land owners, substantially secure in their prosperity, respected in their community. Yet they knew their quest for freedom -- the freedom they and the common people cried out for -- would cost, because freedom is never free.

And these men did pay a price, along with many others. Of these 56 men, nine died in the war, either from its hardship or from enemy bullets. Twelve had their homes, from Charleston to Rhode Island, sacked, looted, occupied by the enemy or burned. Two lost their sons in the army, and one had two sons captured. Their wealth and prestige did not shield them from pain. They put their lives and all that they had on the line so that today we might enjoy freedom.

For that we should give thanks.

And we celebrate “Independence day”, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, to remember that we are free. But what this country seems to have forgotten, or at least conveniently ignored in its celebrations of our independence, is that the declaration of our forefathers was as much a “Declaration of Dependence” as it was a cry for freedom. After all, within “The Declaration of Independence” stands a plain and clear recognition of our dependence upon the grace of God Almighty. For the closing words of “The Declaration of Independence” read:

*“ . . . with firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”*

Yet in our country and even in many of our churches today, we’re repulsed at the thought of dependence. We value individualism -- our rights -- and we become enraged at the thought that anyone should tell us how to live, or, that anyone should declare that what we believe is wrong, even when the One speaking to us is God Almighty.

We want to be our own masters. We want independence -- a stubborn self-reliance like that reflected in the secular poem by William Ernest Henley (“Invictus”) which reads:

*Out of the night that covers me,  
Black is the pit from pole to pole,*

*I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unquenchable soul.  
In the fell clutch of circumstance,  
I have not winced nor cried aloud;  
Under the bludgeoning of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.  
It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.*

These words sound noble, but they reflect a sickness -- a sickness that's at the very heart of sin -- a disease that ushers in independence -- the disease of "I" -- the sin that has plagued mankind since Adam first bit into that forbidden fruit -- a sin challenged by verses 5 and 6 of Proverbs chapter 3, which read:

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
in all your ways acknowledge Him,  
and He will make your paths straight.**

These two verses, well known by most of us and memorized by many, have been identified by some Jewish scholars as the one passage in all of the Scriptures (referring to the Old Testament) upon which the essential principles of Judaism may hinge. For, in Proverbs 3:5-6 we encounter three commands and one promise which together proclaim the truth of the grace of God. In turn, this passage stands as a special statement -- a "Declaration of Dependence", as, within these two verses, is that key and all-inclusive call to TRUST.

Trust God with all your heart. Give yourself into God's care. Believe God. Take Him at His Word. Know that God is good and that He does work all things for the good of those who love him. (Rom 8:28)

Believe that God is good even when your circumstances would suggest otherwise: even when you see or experience families devastated by divorce or illness or death; even when prayers cried forth in desperation seem to go unheeded; even when your whole world seems to be caving in.

Trust God with all of your being!

Why? Because the Almighty God commands it. Because God tells us that He is good and His steadfast, loyal-love endures forever. And because He has shown forth His goodness in the past -- both throughout history and, if we take the time to look, in our own lives.

Trust in God because in His goodness He too suffered pain, a pain God endured as He left His Son alone, hanging upon a cross, as a testimony of the fullness of His love for us. (Mt 27:46)

Trust in God because the alternative to trusting God is to disbelieve Him.

And if we disbelieve God we must then turn our trust to someone or something else, because the reality of our humanity is that we need to depend upon someone or something. We were created for relationship -- trusting relationship. It is the foundation of our humanity. And so, if we don't trust God, we will put our trust in someone or something else: perhaps in a flawed political system; perhaps in a charismatic but delusional spiritual leader; perhaps in our possessions; perhaps in any of the myriad of false gods being worshipped in our day.

The truth is no one and nothing can meet our deepest needs except our Creator God, and so to put our ultimate trust in anything or anyone but God will leave us disappointed and lost!

The author of proverbs warns against this, and in particular he warns against relying upon our own insights, leaning upon our own understanding -- our own ability to bring hope and wholeness to our lives.

But that is exactly what we do. That is the manifestation of the "I" that is in the center of SIN. That is the "I" that drives us to pursue INDEPENDENCE.

Now, we may trust God easily enough with those distant, abstract things like our eternal salvation and the general management of the world. But all too often WE are the captains when it comes to every day affairs. No matter how bloodied and beaten we get -- we hold our position, we stay in charge.

Yes, we trust God, but only to a degree, because, if the truth be known, deep down most of us trust our own abilities even more.

Hezekiah was the king of Judah between 729 and 686 BC. He was a good king as kings went. He walked with God, spent time in prayer, consulted God's prophets and was usually faithful to God, especially when things were going well. But when trouble came, well, then it was a different story.

At one point in His reign, while Hezekiah was in Jerusalem, the city came under siege by the Assyrians. They surrounded the city and threatened to take it by force. Hezekiah knew he couldn't survive such an attack so he prayed to God for help. But he also bought some insurance! You see instead of fully trusting God and God's promises of deliverance, Hezekiah initiated plan B. He tried to hire an army from Egypt.

Hezekiah leaned upon Egypt instead of trusting God. And God, through the prophet Isaiah, likened Egypt to a dried, splintered, stiff reed which would gash through the hand of the one who leaned upon it. As Isaiah prophesied, Hezekiah's source of hope would instead be a source of pain. It was a powerful picture -- one that caused Hezekiah to repent of His sin and turn to God for deliverance. And in God's mercy, deliverance came.

When we trust in our own ingenuity and doubt God's ability, our lives are pierced, our hearts are run through.

Now God is not calling us to disregard all our skills and abilities, after all, those are God's gifts to us. But He is saying not to rely upon them independent of Him, not to grab the tools without the power necessary to use the tools -- which is easy for us to do, especially when we're good at something.

The author of Proverbs goes on to say: "**in ALL your ways ACKNOWLEDGE the Lord God.**"

In ALL that we do, in work and play, we should acknowledge God. We should acknowledge our dependence upon Him. We should acknowledge -- in our heart and mind -- that God is present; that God is holy; that God is good.

If we do this, if we depend upon God, if we TRUST God with all our heart, and LEAN NOT upon our own understanding, and in all our way ACKNOWLEDGE Him, then God promises: to direct our path; to make our path straight; to lead us in the way of righteousness.

But what do these promises mean? Do they mean that life will be easy? Do they mean that we will never experience deep, heart wrenching, and perhaps even paralyzing pain?

As C. S. Lewis tells us in that allegory of the Christian Life, "The Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe", when Lucy asks Mr. Beaver if Aslan, the Christ figure, is safe -- Mr. Beaver responds: "*Of course he isn't safe. But he is good.*"

God is good and in His goodness He promises to lead us along the good path. But the good path is not always the safe path -- the straight path is not always the pain free path.

Recall John the Baptist, the messenger who went before Jesus preparing Jesus' way and calling people to make straight a highway for their God. John's reward, in worldly terms, was to be imprisoned and have his head cut off. (Mt 14:10)

And what about that straight highway that was to be set for the King of kings? It was lined with scorn, rejection, and betrayal, and it came to a dead end at a garbage heap, at the foot of a cross. (Jn 1:23)

If we trust God, if we depend upon Him, our path may be filled with pain and hurt, for it may not be easy, but it will be good; it may not be fun but it will be right, because: God is not in the business of granting us ease, rather, God is in the business of giving us hope (Isa 40:31; Rom 15:4); God is not in the business of making life fun, rather, God is in the business of making life full (Jn 10:10).

Sometimes this may mean that we have to experience various trials. But as we persevere in trust, we will also experience a deeper sense of God's peace, love and goodness.

We are commanded to trust God, to acknowledge Him, to turn away from our own self-centeredness, and to turn toward His promise to lead us to Himself. But then, that's what the gospel is all about -- the grace of a Holy God offering Himself to us, asking us to depend upon Him so that we may experience the glory of His presence.

Unfortunately, too often we fail to live out and to teach this kind of responsible dependence -- the kind of responsible dependence our forefathers knew this country would have to exercise if it were to survive.

Instead we teach INDEPENDENCE -- an idea foreign to the Scriptures, for Christians are never called to independence. Instead, we're called to **responsible dependence** upon God and one another as a community of believers in Christ. We're called to be the Body of Christ -- connected to each other and directed by our Lord, Jesus. (Eph 4:1-6; 1 Cor 12:13)

Consider for example, parenting: parents spend much of their time teaching their children how to be independent, the captains of their soul, when we should be teaching them how to be **responsibly dependent**. Parents are to model Christ's love and care. In a sense they're called to model God to their children. When children are young, they depend upon their parents, and they should. But as they grow older and become less dependent upon their parents for their daily needs, instead of telling them they need to learn to survive on their own, parents should be transferring that trust which their children once put on them to God -- helping their children to trust in the Lord always and in all situations.

Young people need someone to depend upon just like adults do. If their trust isn't directed from the parent to God young people will look to someone or something else for that security and significance for which we all long. Instead of gently directing young people to God in the time of their life when they are most vulnerable and insecure, too often they're told that they have to learn to be independent, self-made individualists. But the truth is, God never calls us to be independent. He calls us instead to trust in Him with all our heart.

It has been 240 years since those 56 men signed "The Declaration of Independence", and our country has severely drifted from the course the signers of that document intended. Yes, all were not committed Christians, but all knew our need to trust in God, and to depend upon Him.

There's a cry rising up within this country for reform, but that will never happen until the church of Jesus Christ experiences revival. And revival must begin with a renewed trust in God: a trust in His Word that moves us to read it, study, cherish it, live it, and rely upon it for instruction and comfort; a trust that God hears our prayers -- a trust which is foundational to earnest prayer because we can't pray earnestly if we don't believe that the One to whom we are praying cares about us, or even exists to hear us; a trust that convicts us to repent, to confess the sin of "I" that pulls us from God.; a trust that moves us to acknowledge God's goodness and holiness all along the road upon which He leads us, regardless of the hills or valleys or cliffs or crevasses which may cross our path. (Ps 23:1-6)

For revival to come, the church of Jesus Christ must take a stand for the glory of God. It will be a costly stand, because the forces that oppose you and I are great, far greater, in fact, than those faced by the 56 signers of "The Declaration of Independence". For our enemy does not wear a red coat even though some have portrayed him in a red suit. (Eph 6:12)

And so, it's fitting, as we open this month of July with an "Independence Day" celebration, to ask ourselves: Are we willing to give our lives into God's care and over to God's cause? Will we trust the Lord with all our heart, and lean not upon our own understanding, but in all our way acknowledge Him? Will we stand up for Jesus and make our own "**Declaration of Dependence**"?

If we're willing to do that, we can know that God will make our paths straight -- leading us straight to Him!

God's grace and peace be with you,

Pastor John



## 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

## 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 July we will be collecting juice boxes and bottles of juice.**



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



The Community Garage Sale in June was a huge success! It was a great day with many opportunities to meet and interact with people from the community and we received \$320.00 that will be used for the Back-to-School Fair in August. "Thank you" to all who participated!

## Serving This Month

### July 3<sup>rd</sup>

Worship Assistants: Bill Multunas and Kelly Valerio

Greeters: Joe Pasinella

Head Greeters: Andy Miller

Nursery: Deena Dominy and Angelina Solomon

Communion: Dean Calamaras

Fellowship Hosts: Valerie Bidwell,

Vaughn Skarzynski

### July 10<sup>th</sup>

Worship Assistants: Eric and Jesse Ofori

Greeters: Deena Dominy and Jason Laz

Head Greeter: Mike Giddings

Nursery: Alice Bentley

Communion: Deena Dominy, Doris Calamaras,

Eric Ofori, Jason Laz

Fellowship Hosts: Jen and Stephanie Miller

### July 17<sup>th</sup>

Worship Assistants: Natalia Multunas and Ella Miller

Greeters: James McAuley

Head Greeter: Rob Jensen

Nursery: Megan Laz

Communion: Jennifer McAuley, Jerry Whitman,

Mike Giddings, Natalia Multunas

Fellowship Hosts: Christian Multunas

### July 24<sup>th</sup>

Worship Assistants: Sue Laz, Natalia Multunas

Greeters: Dean and Doris Calamaras

Head Greeter: Christian Multunas

Nursery: Lois Pasinella

Communion: Peter Laz, Rachel Farnum,

Rob Jensen, Sue Laz

Fellowship Hosts: Vera and Jerry Whitman

### July 31<sup>st</sup>

Worship Assistants: Deena Dominy, Eric Ofori

Greeters: Jennifer McAuley and Pat Gilmaier

Head Greeter: Peter Laz

Nursery: Deena Dominy and Angelina Solomon

Communion: Vera Whitman, Alice Bentley,

Andy Miller, Bill Multunas

Fellowship Hosts:

**General Financial Update for  
May 2016**

	Year to Date	May
Total Income	\$66,700.00	\$14,189.00
Total Expenses	(\$70,909.16)	(\$14,881.59)
Difference	(\$ 4,209.16)	(\$ 692.59)

**July Birthdays**

7/1 James McAuley  
 7/3 John Pedersen  
 7/3 Hazel Landry  
 7/6 Edith Lovell  
 7/10 Enjema Tabe  
 7/11 Michael Giddings  
 7/11 Dorothy McGan  
 7/13 Virginia Steffen  
 7/13 Tillie Herman  
 7/13 Doris Calamaras  
 7/14 Deena Dominy  
 7/15 Jon Purnell  
 7/23 Michele Reynolds  
 7/26 Jason Laz  
 7/28 John McAuley



**July Anniversaries**

7/7 Chuck & Kim Davey  
 7/8 Jan & John Pedersen  
 7/11 Andy & Pat Miller  
 7/19 Vera & Jerry Whitman

**Luncheon - SPONSORED by  
The Third Pres. Senior God Squad!**

Saturday, July 16, 2016 in Post Memorial Hall. We will have our lunch catered by Carol's place at 12 noon. Entertainment begins about 12:45 with "MOONSHINE HOLLER", a husband and wife team with traditional American music.

We will continue to support Ronald McDonald House with our financial donations, and individual servings of microwavable food, fruit, or crackers.

Please RSVP before July 13<sup>th</sup> to Vera & Jerry Whitman at 283-4147.

**Back to School Fair  
August 27<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 – 1:00**

As a way to serve our community and help children to be prepared for the start of school, Third Church will once again host a Back to School Fair for families in need in our community.



Each child that attends will receive a backpack and school supplies. A Bible or other age appropriate devotional material as well as information about our church and its ministries will be included with each backpack.

There will also be:

- ❖ Games, crafts, and other activities for the children to participate in
- ❖ Food and beverages
- ❖ New and gently used children's clothing and shoes for the families to choose from

How can you help? You could:

- ❖ Provide cookies or brownies for the food area
- ❖ Sponsor a backpack at a cost of \$25. Forms for this are available in the narthex and in the church office.
- ❖ Donate school supplies (1 subject spiral notebooks, loose leaf paper, marble composition books, boxes of 24 crayons, markers, glue sticks, scissors, 2 pocket folders, highlighters, dry erase markers, pencils, pens, and pencil sharpeners)
- ❖ Volunteer to help with set-up, clean-up, cooking and serving food, sorting supplies and filling backpacks, helping with the various games and craft activities.

There are baskets in the sanctuary for you to place your donations of school supplies in. Monetary donations can also be made by using the "Mission" envelopes in your box of offering envelopes or by indicating that your donation is for the Back to School Fair.

If you would like to help with this ministry, please speak with anyone on the committee – Sue Laz, Andy Miller, Pat Gilmaier, Jason Laz, Peter Laz, Rob Jensen, Jen McAuley or Pastor John.

## Bible Quiz for July 2016

This quiz will focus on Luke 23:1-26.

1. Who was Jesus brought to after being questioned by the council of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law?
2. What were the three charges laid against Jesus by the Jewish religious leaders?
3. When Pilate first examined Jesus did Pilate find any charge to hold against Jesus?
4. To whom did Pilate send Jesus when Pilate learned that Jesus was a Galilean?
5. True or False: Herod was deeply displeased to have Jesus appear before him.
6. What did Herod and his soldiers do to Jesus before sending Him back to Pilate?
7. True or False: Upon a second examination of Jesus, Pilate concluded that Jesus did indeed deserve to be executed.
8. While calling for Jesus' arrest, who did the people ask to be released instead of Jesus.
9. True or False: Pilate gladly gave Jesus over to be crucified?
10. Who did the soldiers seize to help Jesus carry His cross?

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### 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 us. 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 89. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?**

The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching, of the Word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation.

**Q 90. How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?**

That the Word may become effectual to salvation we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer; receive it with faith and love; lay it up in our hearts; and practice it in our lives.

**Q 91. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?**

The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that does administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

**Q 92. What is a sacrament?**

A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

**Q 93. Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?**

The sacraments of the New Testament are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

## **SESSION MEETING-THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-JUNE 13, 2016**

### **CLERK'S REPORT**

- Average attendance for May 2016 was 44.
- Membership roll is 66.
- Arianna Katie Ofori, daughter of Eric & Irene Ofori, was baptized on June 12, 2016.
- The Clerk's records were approved without exception at the Clerk's Peer Review session on May 14, 2016.
- Reminder of activities before the next Business Meeting: 07/10 – Worship & Communion at The Eddy at 3:30 PM. 07/16 – Luncheon sponsored by the Senior God Squad at church at 12 Noon.

### **UPWARD MINISTRY**

#### **WORSHIP & PRAYER**

- Susan and Danny Forte will be doing a Minute For Ministry on the ministry of Horizons on July 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Perry Jones will be preaching on July 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **INWARD MINISTRY**

#### **CONGREGATIONAL CARE**

- Added Megan Laz and Lois Pasinella to the Sunday morning Nursery rotation. List currently stands with five volunteers on it.
- Visitation Ministry being headed by Vera Whitman is in place. She will be coordinating with several individuals to accompany her on visitations.
- Upper Room has been renewed.

#### **CHRISTIAN NURTURE**

##### **YOUTH MINISTRY**

- Sue Laz will be heading up our 2016 VBS Ministry. Registration fee is \$10 and will be limited to 25 children. The curriculum is "Son Surf Beach Bash" and will be held August 8-12, from 9-11:30 AM. Daily events will include: Bible Story Time, Craft Activity, Recreation Time, Snack Time.
- Youth Sunday School is currently out of session for the summer.

##### **ADULT MINISTRY**

- Adult Sunday School is going well and is currently studying the topic of Christian Apologetics.
- Men's and Women's Bible studies on hiatus for the summer.

### **OUTWARD MINISTRY**

#### **OUTREACH & MISSIONS**

- Our spending for June 2016: \$500-Capital City Rescue Mission, \$500-Voice Of The Martyrs, \$500-Bangladesh Youth For Christ, \$200-InterVarsity at Hudson Valley Community College, \$300-InterVarsity at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute & Russell Sage College
- Spring Mission Offering brought in \$1,750.00. This will be split between InterVarsity at Hudson Valley Community College and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.
- The Community Garage Sale raised \$320. The money will be used to offset the cost of the Back -to-School Fair.
- Dan McAuley will visit with the committee regarding his mission endeavors in Djibouti.
- The Back-To-School Fair will be held on August 27<sup>th</sup>.

## STEWARDSHIP

### GENERAL FUND/FINANCE

- We had a negative cash flow during May of \$692.59. This brings our year-to-date deficit to \$4,209.16.
- We are about 6.3%, based on income, behind on income, in order to break even, which is about \$841 per month.

**PROPERTY** - Three handicap toilets were installed in bathroom downstairs.

**PERSONNEL** - We will be reviewing the position description for all employees to see if any changes or updates need to be made.

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

### A “THANKS”, a “HELP WANTED” and a “HOW’D THEY DO THAT?”!

Next month our Audio-Visual Ministry, and in fact, our entire congregation, says goodbye to Brian Giddings, who heads off to college at Roger Williams University in Rhode Island. (How do they ever grow up this fast?!) Since we began our formal audio-visual ministry last summer, Brian has served with excellence as one of our video techs, displaying the lyrics to the songs and hymns that we sing each week from our computer in the balcony. He will be hard to replace, but replace him we must! God HAS to be calling someone else to this ministry. Now, you can play *hard-to-get* and make me play hide and seek with you or you can come forward willingly now! The choice is yours. But seriously, if you can maintain your attention span and press the spacebar on a computer keyboard, you can fulfill this function nicely. Everything is programmed for you in advance and ready to go on Sunday. And with our other techs in the rotation, you need only be scheduled to do this one to two times a month. Please ponder and pray about this and speak to me if YOU'RE indeed the one God is calling!

So, how DOES all that get *programmed* into the computer each week, you're wondering? I'm delighted you asked! “Back in the day”, as technology like this first began appearing in worship services, some poor bloke (yours truly, for example) had to type in every word for everything in worship that was to be projected (songs, hymns, Bible verses, announcements), either onto those first overhead transparencies or later into computer-connected projectors. Microsoft's *PowerPoint* was really the only program available to us for the job and it was quite tedious and time-consuming, not to mention the challenge of keeping track of the hundreds and hundreds of individual slides. That all began to change in the late 90's as proprietary software was developed for the worship environment that came fully loaded with databases containing thousands of songs and hymns as well as multiple translations of the Bible. No more endless typing! Access to all that material was right at your fingertips, ready to display with just a few clicks of the mouse. Of course, one was still left to manually enter new songs as they became available but it was HUGE progress.

Nowadays, it's mostly a matter of calling up the hymns and songs we're using each week utilizing a program called *MediaShout* and tweaking the formatting with backgrounds, fonts, colors, and line breaks so that the songs look best visually on the screen without too much text or busyness on any particular slide. *MediaShout* gives the user enormous control over how things look to the intended “audience”, but of course, all that control just means a plethora of controls and options to wade through before one is satisfied with the end product. But thankfully, it's fun and I look forward to it each week!

*With Joy in the Journey,  
Sal Sceccitano*



## Mission Spotlight: Medical Benevolence Foundation of the PC(USA)

The **Medical Benevolence Foundation (MBF)** of the **PC (USA)** has supported healing ministries and programs in over 100 hospitals and clinics throughout the world since 1964. Funds are used to support mission hospitals, rural clinics, construction of medical facilities, training of indigenous medical personnel, and support to medical missionaries.

Infectious diseases such as AIDS, Malaria, and TB cause nearly half of the deaths of people under 45 in developing countries. These diseases, though treatable with proper medication, claim millions of lives every year. The MBF funds programs in hospitals, community and congregation-based programs to support the prevention, treatment, and cure for these diseases.

Training indigenous personnel is vital to providing primary health care in developing countries as they work alongside PC (USA) medical personnel. This training increases the number of quality caregivers and assures medical care in mission clinics and hospitals.

Please remember MBF and our other mission partners – Capital City Rescue Mission, Hope 7, Ronald McDonald House-Albany, Capital District YFC, InterVarsity at RPI, Sage and HVCC, Horizons, Peter Halder and his staff at YFC Bangladesh, Voice of the Martyrs, Gideons International, 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.

### Mission Update

In the spring of 2015 we received a special mission offering with half the proceeds going to the Justo Mwale Seminary in Zambia to provide study Bibles for the students there. There was a greater need to expand the school's library so instead of Bibles they carefully selected books that would be most helpful for their curriculum and for the culture in which their students would most likely be ministering. Below are the notes of thanks from the faculty at the seminary -

*"Greeting from Zambia and Justo Mwale University. Please receive my heartfelt thanks for the gift of so many wonderful books from Third Presbyterian Church of Troy. One of the biggest challenges our seminary faces is obtaining books. It can be a discouragement to our faculty that we almost never get to choose new books for ourselves or for our library. I wish you could have seen all the smiles from our faculty members as each one received such books. Please know that you and your congregation have made a real difference in keeping our faculty encouraged, and in keeping our learning and teaching fresh. Yours in Christ" – Dustin*

*"Greetings from Justo Mwale University, Lusaka – Zambia. I would like to most sincerely express my heartfelt appreciation for your kind gesture of purchasing books for me and the JMU Library. These books will go a long way in helping me in my teaching ministry and also in the students' studies. Kindly convey my appreciation to the members of your church for their noble support; and please continue with similar forms of support to other needy areas and people across the globe. Once again, thank you very much and may the good Lord of providence reward you so abundantly." – Lameck Banda*

*"I write to express by gratitude to you, your family, and the church community at Third Presbyterian Church in Troy for the gift of books. As one of the recipients of the book gifts, I wish to indicate that a number of them have been included on the list of materials for courses scheduled this term. May the triune God who is "good all the times, and all the times good" bless all of you for reaching out to us in such a real way." – Rev. Dr. D.T. Banda*

*"The books that I ordered for our library and myself are looking at me, and I had a look into a few of them. This is really a treat! Thanks so much for the role you played in getting these books to Justo Mwale and ourselves. It is a great gift which we deeply appreciate. God's blessing on your ministry." – Wynand Retief*

*"Greetings from Justo Mwale University. I sincerely thank you and all the members of the congregation for such a wonderful gesture to me and the University. Through these books you have added to the body of knowledge both to me and the students. May the good Lord richly bless you and all the members of your congregation as you minister to His glory." – Rev. Dr. V. Chilenje*

*"Greetings from Justo Mwale Library. Thank you very much. The books are a great resource to the library, students and faculty as well." – Chileshe Musonda, Librarian*

**Vacation Bible School**  
**August 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>**



If you are aged preschool through fifth grade, you are invited to join us at “**Son Surf Beach Bash**” where we will enjoy all the sights and sounds of the beach while learning all about Jesus.



We will explore the pages of God’s Word and discover the answers to our “big questions” about Jesus – Who is Jesus, Why can I trust Jesus, Why do I need Jesus, How can Jesus help me when I mess up, and What does Jesus mean to me?

Informational brochures and registration forms are available in the narthex. Please take one for yourself or to share with a friend.

Many hands are needed to make our program run smoothly. Please be praying about how you can be involved in this wonderful outreach ministry. Hands will be needed that week to help with snacks, games, and crafts. Folks will also be needed to serve as Bible teachers and small group leaders and assistants.



This is a great week of ministry, filled with fun, excitement, and energy and we hope you will join us for the adventure!



If you have any questions please speak with Sue Laz.

*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