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### “An Invitation to Engage in Christian Apologetics”

As I hope you know, the Adult Sunday School class has begun a new study in the area of Christian apologetics. Simply put, Christian apologetics is about sharing the Christian faith in a way that clears away confusion and connects with others so that they might more rightly understand what it is that Christians believe -- with the goal of inviting others into a relationship with God through faith in Jesus.

Apologetics is often presented as a defense of the gospel, and that is true in part. But apologetics isn't merely about defending what we believe, it's about trying to remove obstacles that might prevent others from seeing the truth of the gospel.

And although this class has already begun, we are just at the beginning and I would love to have all of you join us.

But for those who can't I want to get you thinking about your faith, and apologetics, and what it would mean for you to be actively engaged in “defending” your faith.

With that in mind I want to reflect a little in this newsletter on a foundational passage out of which our Sunday school course has been developed.

That passage is from 1 Peter 3:15-16 which reads:

**“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that you have that is in you; yet do this with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that when you are slandered by those who rebuke your good behavior in Christ, they may be put to shame.”**

So what is Peter saying here? And how can these words guide, inspire and encourage us in sharing our faith?

To answer these questions we need to understand first of all that Peter was writing to Christians who were living in a hostile world (1 Peter is a letter written around 64 AD by the apostle Peter to Christians who had been scattered throughout Asia Minor because of persecution.). And what Peter is saying is that the best witness in a hostile world is a witness that combines God-honoring behavior with truth expressed in love, all under the Lordship of Jesus. And his words apply whether we're facing persecution for our faith, or we're just nervous about standing out among our non-Christian peers.

Now there are three key thoughts I want us to focus on as we consider Peter's theme of "making a defense" for the gospel in our world.

The first key thought speaks to the reality of hostility to those who seek to follow Jesus. In the immediate context of our passage, we see this "hostility" in words like "harm" in verse 13, "suffer" in verses 14 and 17, and "slander" in verse 16. (see Jn 15:18-19)

The second key thought of our passage speaks to the power of words and deeds working together to witness to God's goodness. Peter wrote of sharing our faith verbally with gentleness and respect, but also living in such a way that our "conscience" is clear.

The third key thought of our passage addresses who it is that we live to honor and serve – that we seek to live godly lives for Jesus -- who is our Lord.

These three themes serve to identify for us the place where we've been called to witness, namely, a hostile world; the practice of our witness, namely, good behavior combined with thoughtful words; and, the power behind our witness, namely, Jesus and His Lordship over us.

So let's look at 1 Peter 3:15-16 with our focus on these three key thoughts.

In the context of this passage Peter notes that the place Christians are called to witness is an often-hostile world. Of course, regardless of how others treat us, followers of Jesus are to seek peace (Rom 12:18). And we seek peace in a world filled with good and giving people and with evil and self-absorbed people – and with most of us being a combination of both! And as Peter suggests (1 Pt 3:13), if we're zealous for what's good most people will welcome us. After all, since all people are created in God's image, and since God's common grace is sustaining our world, in general, people can distinguish between good and bad behavior; and most people will appreciate those who seek to do good. (Prov 16:7)

But that's not always the case. After all, no one's life was better than the life of Jesus. And yet few experienced the scorn, rejection and shame that Jesus did because He was good. In fact, in Jesus' case He was "too good for His own good". But then, such is often the case when "light" exposes "darkness" (Jn 1:5) – because evil doesn't appreciate having its deeds disclosed.

Of course, as Peter notes in 1 Peter 3:13-14, if we maintain a good conscience – doing what is right even when we're slandered for it -- eventually our enemies will be put to shame (1 Pt 2:15), because, one day God's judgment will come upon the good and the evil. And the righteous will receive their blessing. And the wicked will face their condemnation.

This, in fact, is part of the motivation for persevering in doing good – knowing that regardless what we face today, one day all will face God's judgment. And the wicked, even if they prosper in this life, will get their due. And the righteous, even if they suffer in this life, will experience the blessing of life with God for all eternity.

Implicit in this distinction is that none can be considered righteous without first putting their faith in Jesus; and then letting His Spirit work His sanctifying power in our lives. All this to say that God's justice will prevail, and those who stand with the Lord in this life will experience the "good life" for all eternity. And yet, for a time, in this world, genuine Christians may face hardship for trying to live the life to which God calls us.

Peter wrote: if we do suffer for the sake of righteousness – because we believe that Jesus is Lord and because we're seeking to live under His lordship – then we are blessed. And by "blessed" he doesn't mean that we will necessarily feel good, or that suffering is fun. Rather, Peter was speaking of the privilege of suffering for Jesus, and the joy of knowing we're pleasing God. (Heb 12:2)

Perhaps Peter was recounting his own experience when, after being flogged by the religious leaders because he refused to be silenced regarding the gospel, he rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the Name. (Acts 5:39-41; see also Phil 1:29)

Certainly Peter was reflecting the teaching of Jesus who said,

**“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven.”** (Mt 5:11-12a)

As Peter made clear in 1 Peter 3:17, sometimes it’s God’s will that we suffer for doing what is right. But even in that suffering, we can trust that God is sovereign over the situation. And so we need not fear the works of sinful men, for God will work all things for the good of those who love Him and who have been called according to His purpose – even those things that lead one into suffering (Rom 8:28). In turn, believers need not and should not live in fear of what sinful humankind can do to us. Instead, we should live in a right fear of the one true God. (Lk 12:5; Acts 10:35)

So the first thing we need to recognize is that our fallen world is hostile toward Christ, and if we identify with Jesus, there’s the possibility that the world will be hostile toward us (Jn 15:18-20). For some that hostility might lead to imprisonment, or torture, or death. For others it may lead merely to ridicule or rejection. But regardless of the degree of hostility, we must be willing to show ourselves faithful to our God and not waver in the faith, after all, God calls us to bear witness to His mercy and goodness even toward the insensitive, or mean-spirited, or wicked. And we can’t be faithful witnesses if we flee the challenges that may come with standing for the truth of the gospel – even if those challenges come from those we thought were friends.

Given that we should be good and faithful witnesses to God’s forgiveness, acceptance and love wherever God places us, the question becomes, “How do we do it?”

And this brings us to the second key thought of our passage, namely, that our witness must combine good behavior with thoughtful, truthful words. Simply put, we must practice “lifestyle apologetics” – a defense for what we believe that is under-girded by how we live -- after all, a right witness to the truth of the gospel begins with right behavior. (see Titus 2:7, 10, 14, 3:1-2, 8, 14)

As Christians we’re to be zealous to do good.

Sadly, we often hear about Christians and even Christian organizations who are involved in shady if not blatantly immoral activities. And this is often used as ammunition to demean and mock Christianity. The sad truth is that sometimes the church comes across as less caring than secular organizations, and Christians come across as less compassionate than those who deny the truth of the gospel. Sometimes, those who are to be a light to the world seem to be “dimmed” by the influence of the world.

Peter challenges such poor testimony as he calls believers to keep a good conscience – to do what we know in our heart is the good and right thing to do. Of course in saying this, we need to note that our conscience is not an infallible guide. Being sinners, all human beings suffer from a distorted and even perverted conscience -- even those who have been redeemed through faith in Jesus.

And so, the only way to trust that our conscience is leading us in what is good and right is to submit heart and mind to the testing, proving, leading and guiding of God’s Word and Spirit. But, if we do let God’s Word and Spirit inform our conscience, and if we then seek to live under the leading of this Biblically informed conscience, we can trust that what we’re doing is pleasing

in God's sight. A good conscience – a Christ conformed conscience -- is essential for effectively witnessing to the goodness and love of God. (Rom 12:2; 2 Tim 3:16-17)

At the same time, if we're not letting God's Word and Spirit inform and transform our heart and mind, then it's foolishness to think that letting our conscience be our guide will bring honor to God. There are many wicked people who aren't bothered in the least by their wickedness. So despite what Jiminy Cricket might say, we should only trust our conscience to be our guide if it is a Biblically informed conscience.

But if our conscious is being rightly informed and conformed, then we should listen to that inner prompting as we seek to walk in godliness. And we should remember that lost people are watching our behavior, even when we don't realize it; sometimes even to the point that how they chose to live their life depends upon how they see us living ours.

I'm reminded of a story about a wealthy Christian woman in Kenya who had a young man working in her home. After three months he informed that woman that he would be leaving to go and work for a sheik who lived across town. Not wanting to lose his services the woman offered to increase his pay. The young man replied that he wasn't leaving for a better paying job. He explained that he had been trying to decide whether to become a Christian or a Muslim. And so he decided to spend three months working for that sheik and three months working for her, and then, after watching each he would decide which faith was the more real.

Although that young man's criteria don't necessarily serve as a valid test for truth, the reality is that how we live authenticates what we claim to believe, which is why Peter tells us that the practice of our witness involves good behavior.

What's more, Peter tells us that the practice of our witness involves thoughtful words.

In verse 15 Peter wrote:

**“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”**

The Greek word translated as **“give an answer”** is the word “apologia” from which we get our words “apology” and “apologetics”. “Apologia” carries the meaning of “a prepared legal defense.”

Peter was saying that we should be able to give a thoughtful, well-reasoned presentation of the gospel – that we should be able to explain the basic beliefs of our faith.

We're called to live a life that rightly reflects the truth of the Scriptures, but we also need to be able to explain why we live that way.

Of course Peter wasn't saying that we must have all the answers to the deep things of the Christian faith. Nor was Peter saying that we must be able to defend everything found in the Bible before we can anything about Jesus. But, Peter is saying that all believers should work to get a basic grasp of the core truths of the Scriptures:

- The truth that God is the Creator of all that is -- including human beings who are created in His very image.
- The truth that God created us to live in fellowship with Him.
- The truth that we sinned against God, and a perfectly holy God can't dwell in the midst of sinful humanity without us being destroyed by His magnificence.

- The truth that out of His love for us God made a way for sinful human beings to be restored into fellowship with Him.
- The truth that this way was made possible through Jesus Christ, who, by dying on a cross as our substitute, paid the penalty our sin deserves that we might be forgiven of our sins and brought near to God.
- The truth that this great salvation that can be ours through Jesus is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ Jesus alone.
- The truth that through faith in Jesus we're not only restored to a right relationship with the Father but we have the indwelling of His Spirit to lead and guide us.
- The truth that God is with His chosen ones always, through all our days in this life, until that day when He calls us to our eternal home with Him.

Peter said that we must be able to defend our faith. At the same time Peter warned that we must be able to do so with gentleness: respecting others -- not trying to force our faith upon them.

Peter said that we must be able to speak the truth in love so that our words, supported by our life, would persuade people to want to know more about Jesus. (Col 4:4-6; Eph 4:15)

In our text for today, Peter addressed three key thoughts under the theme of: Christian witness in the world.

The first key thought warns us that this world can be a hostile place even to what is good.

The second key thought charges us that a faithful witness of the gospel must practice good behavior with thoughtful, truthful words.

The third key thought reminds us that our witness isn't something we're to do in our own power but is to be done in the power of our Lord, Jesus Christ. (Zech 4:16)

Peter wrote that we're to "**set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts**", or better translated, we're to "**sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts.**" To "sanctify" means to make holy. It's that same word used in the Lord's Prayer when Jesus said: "**Our Father in heaven, *hallowed* be your name**" (Mt 6:9). To "hallow" God's name means to reverence God above all others.

To rightly understand what Peter is saying in our passage we need to realize that Peter was alluding to a passage from "Isaiah" chapter 8 (Isa 8:12-13). In the context of "Isaiah", Ahaz the king of Judah appears to be caught between a rock and a hard place. The superpower of the day, Assyria was sweeping westward threatening to overrun Syria, Israel, and, eventually, Judah. Syria and Israel wanted Judah to join them in standing against Assyria. When Judah refused, Syria and Israel decided to turn on Judah. But, instead of trusting God to protect Judah, as Isaiah told Ahaz he should do, Ahaz got the bright idea to try and make a deal with Assyria so Assyria wouldn't invade and destroy Judah.

And so, when Peter charged believers not to fear what men can do to them but to fear God, he was alluding to Isaiah's charge to Ahaz not to fear either Assyria, or Israel and Syria, but to trust in the power of the Lord of Hosts for deliverance.

The significant thing to note in Peter's use of "Isaiah" is that Peter took an expression that clearly referred to Yahweh in the Old Testament and applied it to Jesus – calling for believers to trust in Jesus, whom Peter was equating with God. Because all power and authority has been

given to Jesus, Peter is telling the church that we can trust Jesus for our deliverance, no matter what sufferings we may have to endure in this life for His sake. (Mt 28:20)

We need to remember that if they persecuted and killed Jesus in His first coming, they may do the same to us. But still, we're called to bear witness, even in the face of hostility, through our good behavior and thoughtful words, in submission to Jesus' Lordship, knowing that He will return in power and glory to judge all opposition and bless His faithful ones. (Phil 2:10-11)

In his book, "Everyday Evangelism", Tom Eisenman told the story of a ninth grade boy name David who was part of his church's youth group. David was big, strong and intimidating for his age, but he had a heart for Jesus. In his shop class he was working on a coffee table for his mother as a Christmas present. Finishing it a few days before Christmas vacation, David left it in the classroom so that he could keep it hid from his mom until Christmas. On the last day of school before vacation, David went to the classroom to get his table but it was gone. Asking around, David discovered that a younger boy in the school – a mean spirited kid --had taken it. David could've easily gone to that kid and forced him to give the table back, but David said nothing. Instead, he went to work to make a second table. When he finished that second table, he went to the house of the kid who took his mother's table and David gave that new table to the boy.

Rather than lashing out or beating up the boy, David proceeded to share about his faith – giving a "defense" for why he did what he did. And David invited that boy to his church's youth group. The young man went, and, because of the kindness of David and the welcoming nature of the group, he gave his life to Jesus.

David is living testimony that we can be effective witnesses in a difficult and even hostile world if we entrust our lives to Jesus as Lord, and then seek to live and speak the life changing truth of the gospel.

Peter's words affirm that it won't be easy to follow Jesus in a fallen world. Sometimes we'll face obstacles from our world, and sometimes our own fears will cause us to hide our faith. And so, in the light of such challenges, Peter calls us not to fear the world but to fear, and in turn, to trust God. Peter calls us to give heart, mind and soul to Jesus that He might purify us and prepare us to be used as His faithful witnesses. And then Peter calls us to do what we know in our conscience is right – right according to the Word and Spirit of God: to witness to the goodness of God through word and deed so that others might see Christ in us, and, by the grace of God, open their hearts that Christ might be in them as well.

But first, we must step-up for Jesus -- trusting that God will honor those who rightly honor Him – even if honoring God brings trials and hardships upon us. This is what it means to deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily, and follow Jesus (Lk 9:23). But this is what a true Christian willingly and even gladly does – out of love for our Lord who did all that and more for us!

May we be compassionate and passionate "Defenders of the Faith" to the glory of God!

God's grace and peace to 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 June we will be collecting peanut butter and Jelly.**



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

## Serving This Month

### June 5<sup>th</sup>

Worship Assistants: Natalia Multunas and James McAuley

Greeters: Jason Laz

Head Greeters: Mike Giddings

Nursery: Jen McAuley

Communion: Jen McAuley

Fellowship Hosts: Phyllis Michael

### June 12<sup>th</sup>

Worship Assistants: Kelly Valerio, Sue Stierer

Greeters: Bill Multunas, Pat Gilmaier

Head Greeter: Andy Miller

Nursery: Deena Dominy, Angelina Solomon

Communion: Jerry Whitman, Mike Giddings, Natalia Multunas, Peter Laz

Fellowship Hosts: Irene Amponsah

### June 19<sup>th</sup>

Worship Assistants: Deena Dominy and Christian Multunas

Greeters: Jen McAuley

Head Greeter: Rob Jensen

Nursery: Wendy Giddings

Communion: Rachel Farnum, Rob Jensen, Sue Laz, Vera Whitman

Fellowship Hosts: Sue Laz

### June 26<sup>th</sup>

Worship Assistants: Peter Laz, Ella Miller

Greeters: Valerie Bidwell, Vaughn Skarzynski

Head Greeter: Christian Multunas

Nursery: Alice Bentley

Communion: Alice Bentley, Andy Miller, Bill and Christian Multunas

Fellowship Hosts: Jennifer McAuley

## Serving at the Capital City Rescue Mission June 18<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 around 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.



## Thanks for Sharing Your Gifts

We are blessed to have two God-gifted musicians on staff; Sal Sceccitano and Jason Laz.

Both joyfully share their talents as they lead us in worship; assisting us in entering the presence of the Lord with music as a means for praise and worship. We are enriched by having Sal and Jason as part of our family and grateful for their passion to praise God through music. Please take the time to thank them for their service.

*“Worship the Lord with gladness,  
come before him with joyful songs.”  
Psalm 100:2*



### General Financial Update for April 2016

	Year to Date	April
Total Income	\$52,511.00	\$12,558.00
Total Expenses	(\$56,027.57)	(\$14,040.73)
Difference	(\$ 3,516.57)	(\$ 1,482.73)

### 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.



## 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.

### June Birthdays

6/1 Bob Somerville  
6/6 Marilyn Gibbs  
6/6 Wendy Jensen  
6/10 Christian Multunas  
6/11 Pat Gilmaier  
6/16 Angelina Solomon  
6/20 Nora Miller  
6/25 Howard Solomon  
6/27 Kiko Valerio  
6/28 Aubrey Elmquist  
6/30 JR Davey



### June Anniversaries

6/18 Joshua & Colleen Reynolds  
6/19 Bob & Maureen Somerville  
6/21 John & Jennifer McAuley

## Bible Quiz for June 2016

This quiz will focus on Luke 22:47-71.

1. Where did Judas Iscariot betray Jesus?
  2. What was the sign Judas used to let the soldiers know who to arrest?
  3. In retaliation for Jesus' arrest, what did Peter do with one of the swords the disciples had with them?
  4. Where was the first place the soldiers took Jesus?
  5. As Peter sat in the courtyard watching what was happening to Jesus, who was the first to recognize him as one of Jesus' disciples?
  6. How many times did Peter deny knowing Jesus before he finally left the courtyard grieving over his denials?
  7. True or False: The soldiers guarding Jesus offered Jesus something to eat.
  8. True or False: After blindfolding Jesus the soldiers hit Him and then asked Jesus to "prophesy" who it was who hit Him.
  9. True or False: At daybreak the elders and teachers of the law met to examine Jesus asking Him if He was the Christ, the Son of God.
  10. True or False: When asked if He was the Son of God, Jesus refused to answer the Jewish religious leaders and instead asked to meet with Pilate.
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April 27<sup>th</sup> was Administrative Professionals Day. We are a little late but we want to thank Peggy Siracusa for her work in the church office. Peggy's position description is titled "Church Secretary" but in reality she is much more than that. She does all the necessary secretarial tasks and much more. She clips coupons and looks for sales to get office supplies at the lowest cost in an effort to save the church some money. She assists those who chair committees and other groups with whatever they may need. Peggy is a warm and welcoming presence in the office for those who may come into the building during the week. Stop in some morning and you will be greeted with a smile and sometimes a song....and if you pick just the right day you may even get a muffin or a doughnut!

## **SESSION MINUTES - THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - MAY 9, 2016**

### **ORDER OF THE DAY**

We conducted our final review of "The Essential Tenets of Third Presbyterian Church" proposed changes. There was no opposition to the changes submitted, so they will stand as corrected.

### **CLERK'S REPORT**

Miscellaneous Information:

- Average attendance for April 2016 was 46.
- Preaching rotation following: Andy Miller, Sal Scicchitano, Sue Laz, and Jerry Whitman.

Reminder of activities before the next business meeting: 06/04 – Community Garage Sale at church from 9 AM-2 PM.

### **UPWARD MINISTRY**

#### **WORSHIP & PRAYER**

- Celebrated Mother's Day with a slide show of pictures of our moms and had carnations for all the moms in the congregation. There will be a similar slide show of dads for Father's Day.
- Instead of the hymn sings that we have been doing prior to the start of worship during the summer, we will do a time to request hymns during the service on occasional Sundays.
- All major upgrades to the Audio/Visual system are complete.

### **INWARD MINISTRY**

**SENIOR'S MINISTRY** - July 16<sup>th</sup> is our next gathering. Information will be published soon.

### **OUTWARD MINISTRY**

#### **OUTREACH & MISSIONS**

- Spending for April 2016: \$500-Capital City Rescue Mission, \$500-Bangladesh Youth For Christ, \$500-Capital District Youth For Christ, \$300-InterVarsity (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute/Russell Sage)
- Gave a donation of \$50 to Theology Matters out of the Mission Envelope Funds.
- Gave a donation of \$300 to Serena Solomon for her summer mission to King's domain, a summer camp in Ohio.
- We will be serving the evening meal at Capital City Rescue Mission on on June 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Plans for the Community Garage Sale to be held on June 4<sup>th</sup> are in place and we currently have 20 spaces reserved. Proceeds will be used to offset the cost of the Back-To-School Fair.
- Kevin Post will be doing a Minute For Ministry on his work at Youth For Christ on June 19<sup>th</sup>.
- 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 April of \$1,482.73. This brings our year-to-date deficit to \$3,516.57.

There was nothing to report at this time from **SESSION DESIGNATED FUNDS, PROPERTY, PERSONNEL, NOMINATING, or ALBANY PRESBYTERY.**

## 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 82. Is any human being able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?**

No mere human, since the Fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but does daily break them, in thought, word, and deed.

**Q 83. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?**

Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

**Q 84. What does every sin deserve?**

Every sin deserves God’s wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come.

**Q 85. What does God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse, due to us for sin?**

To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.

**Q 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?**

Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel.

**Q 87. What is repentance unto life?**

Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his/her sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, does, with grief and hatred of that sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

**Q88. What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?**

The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer, all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.



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### 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.



## Mission Spotlight: Gideons International

Gideons International, founded in 1899, serves as an extended missionary arm of the church and is the oldest association of Christian businessmen and professional men in the United States of America.

Gideons is an Association of Christian business and professional men and their wives dedicated to telling people about Jesus through sharing personally and by providing Bibles and New Testaments. While they are known worldwide for their work with hotels, they predominantly share Scriptures in schools and colleges, prisons and jails, hospitals, and medical offices. To date, the Gideons have placed 1.9 billion Scriptures and are on their way to 2 billion.

Having God's Word can and does lead people to faith in Christ, and those new Christians then grow by studying their Scriptures and even use them to share their faith with others.

For this reason, the Gideons focus on distributing complete Bibles, New Testaments, or portions thereof. These copies of God's Word are printed in more than 90 languages and are either given directly to certain individuals or placed in selected public locations where large numbers of people, who may be searching for answers, will have the ability to encounter the Word of God.

Bibles and New Testaments are personally distributed by members to:

- Students in the 5th grade and above
- Prisoners and police, fire, medical and military personnel
- Anyone else Gideons witness to individually

God's Word is placed in key locations, including:

- Hotels and motels
- Hospitals, convalescent homes, medical offices and domestic violence shelters
- Prisons and jails

Gideons International started distributing the Word of God in 1908. Today, they have more than 300,000 members—and an untold number of supporters—in more than 190 countries across the globe. These dedicated individuals give their time and money to make it possible for others to learn about the love of God by giving them access to His Word. They have placed or distributed more than 1.9 billion Bibles and New Testaments around the world . . . and counting.

For more information visit their website – [www.gideons.org](http://www.gideons.org).

Please remember Gideons International 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, Medical Benevolence Foundation PC(USA), 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.

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

### “Summer Is Icumen In...”

or “summer is arriving” is the title of a famous medieval round heralding the transition from spring to what a much more contemporary song referred to as the “hazy, lazy, crazy days of summer” (still dating myself, I see!). But we try not to skip too many beats here at Third Church in our worship-related ministries of music and AV. The choir will take a few well-deserved months off--kudos and my appreciation to them for another fulfilling season. The *Red Letters* will be with us on Sundays here and there this summer, occasionally missing a turn due to travel and vacation schedules. There will be a few occasions for our *pick-up* Men’s Ensemble to lead us in worship in July and August. This is a good opportunity for any men to give group singing a try. We work on very basic pieces and just rehearse briefly either before worship or after a short time of coffee/fellowship time. We’ll also have a few designated Hymn-Sing Sundays, which we’ll give you advance notice of in our weekly Order of Worship. These will take the place of our opening hymn or song instead of the prelude (for those of you who like to arrive closer to fashionably late!). And our Acoustic Worship Team and AV Techs will *remain on the job*, continuing to lead and support our musical worship ministries with excellence.

If you’d like to “try your hand” at anything musical, summer makes a fine time to “stick a toe in the water” before making the full dive. And if you’d like to learn how our AV systems operate, perhaps leading to service in that area, training is available at any time. Just give me a call (365-5870) or shoot me an email ([sal.scecchitano@gmail.com](mailto:sal.scecchitano@gmail.com)).

A former colleague of mine had a memorable way of trying to honor *sabbath* in large and small ways. He remembered it this way:

Divert DAILY  
Withdraw WEEKLY  
Monasticize MONTHLY and  
Abandon ANNUALLY

For many of us, summer is the time we set aside for that week or two of blissful vacation--our attempt to abandon annually. May we all enter into that blessed peace and rest God has promised.

*With Joy in the Journey,*  
Sal Scecchitano

Thanks to the generosity of the Third Church family, our Spring Mission Offering received **\$1,700.00!!** The funds will be divided between Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Nate Smith’s ministry with InterVarsity at Hudson Valley Community College.

## 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.

*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