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November 2016

“Unwavering Commitment to Christ and His Church”

In our last two newsletters (September and October) you were challenged as a congregation to do the “first things first” with respect to our ministry together as a church; and, after setting ministry priorities, to “follow God’s vision for Third Church together”.

And, to guide those words of encouragement we entered into a study of the Old Testament book of Nehemiah – a study that the Session is doing together as we seek to discern and follow God’s vision for Third Church.

In parallel with those two articles you were encouraged to read through the first three chapters of the book of Nehemiah.

I want to continue with our investigation into the area of “vision casting” for Third Church by moving into a brief investigation of chapters four and five of Nehemiah, and through that study to consider more deeply what it means and what it takes to follow the Lord in our service to Him. And as part of that reflection I want to address the topic of persevere – of unwavering commitment – of what it takes to be God’s faithful children – doing His Kingdom building work in a world that often stands in opposition to the mission and message of the gospel of Jesus the Christ. [And one look at this year’s presidential elections shows us just how challenging the task of bringing a message of hope and life can be within a nation so divided by potential leaders so despised.]

Before continuing to read this newsletter I encourage you to read from Nehemiah chapter four and verse one, through chapter six and verse fourteen.

“Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God” -- these are the words of William Carey, often identified as the ‘Father of Modern Missions.’

Carey was born in 1761 in Northampton, England, into a poor family. At age 16 he was apprenticed to a shoemaker and continued in that career for 12 years. He had a heart to serve God and became a lay preacher and later a pastor of a small Baptist Church. His vision for missions grew.

As he studied the 28th chapter of “The Gospel of Matthew”, he realized that Jesus’ final command, “The Great Commission”, was for us today as well as the first apostles. He presented this insight to a group of ministers, to which one pastor replied, “Young man sit down! When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your help or mine.”

Carey refused to be silenced. In the spring of 1792, he wrote a pamphlet presenting and defending his vision for missions. The ‘shortened’ title reads, “An Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen.” This pamphlet helped inspire the launch of the modern missionary movement.

Carey’s personal vision moved him to India where he served for 40 years before dying on Indian soil. In those years he experienced many trials, persecutions and triumphs leaving in his wake: the

Scriptures translated wholly or in part into 44 different languages; a Christian college; and many social reforms.

Carey lived his motto: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."

That motto could very well have been Nehemiah's over 2200 years before William Carey was born.

Nehemiah was a missionary -- a man with a vision and a plan who traveled from Susa to Jerusalem to attempt great things for God, knowing every step of the way that success meant dependence upon God -- on expecting great things from God.

And so in 52 days, Nehemiah completed a task which others had been attempting with little success for the previous 90 years.

But it wasn't easy, and the efforts to rebuild the walls were not without strong opposition. Not everyone was happy with Nehemiah and some did their best to destroy him, his vision, and his plan. Nehemiah faced opposition both from within and from outside of Jerusalem, this opposition taking several different forms.

Two of Nehemiah's fiercest foes were Sanballot the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite. (We first meet these individuals in Chapter 2 of "Nehemiah".) Sanballot most likely came from either upper or lower Beth-Horon, two cities about 12 miles northwest of Jerusalem along the main road running from the North to Jerusalem. He served as a governor over Samaria, a region sharing Judah's northern border. Tobiah was probably of Jewish descent. He had family connections in Jerusalem and he would use these connections to undermine Nehemiah's efforts. Tobiah was appointed (by Artaxerxes, ruler of Persia) to serve as governor of Ammon the region across the Jordan on the eastern border of Judah. These two men were not pleased that someone had come to "promote the welfare of the Israelites." (Neh 2:10)

As the work on the wall progressed Sanballot and Tobiah became more and more angry with Nehemiah and the people of Judah. They were joined by Geshem the Arab and later by the men of Ashdod so that Judah was literally surrounded by opposition. (Neh 4:7)

Sanballot knew they had to stop this rebuilding effort -- his financial and political future was at stake. And so Sanballot began to ridicule the workers and their work. He fired off a series of cutting questions suggesting that the Jews themselves were weak and not up to the task, that the job was too big, and that they were putting confidence in a God who couldn't help them. (Neh 4:2)

Tobiah joined in the criticism by mocking their efforts, saying essentially that their wall couldn't hold a fly. (Neh 4:3)

Their words had deadly potential.

We all know how dangerous the tongue can be -- how destructive a properly placed criticism can be.

James, in his epistle, describes the tongue as a spark that can destroy a forest (Jms 3:5). Sanballot and Tobiah were attempting to start that fire.

Adventuresome and courageous pioneers have often faced the critical laughter of jealous, insecure observers:

- The first American steamboat took 32 hours to go from New York City to Albany. People laughed.
- The horse and buggy passed the early motor car as if it were standing still (and unfortunately it often was). People laughed.
- The first electric bulb was so dim that people had to use a gas lamp to see it. People laughed.

Nehemiah was attempting to build walls long in ruin. Sanballot and Tobiah laughed. They sought to deflate the vision of the workers. They knew that one properly placed criticism could bring the work to a screeching halt.

Nehemiah responded to their insults, mocking and jeers by praying and by encouraging the people to trust God. His faith enabled their faith.

Nehemiah didn't take the attacks personally, he took them as attacks against God -- as sins -- and he turned his attackers over to God's judgment. And he kept the people working.

Nehemiah's roots in God were deep so that the insults of Sanballot couldn't sway him. He was like an iceberg which is about 90% underwater. Although the strong winds of insult and ridicule were attempting to push Nehemiah in one direction, the steady current of God's love and will were moving him along in the direction he needed to go.

The ridicule wasn't working, so Sanballot, Tobiah and the others decided to up the stakes. They plotted to attack Jerusalem. If verbal attacks wouldn't work, they were ready to threaten with physical violence.

But wait a minute. Nehemiah was God's servant! He was doing God's work! When opposition arose he prayed for God's help! So why were things getting worse? Because sometimes that's what happens. After all, the Bible never promises that faithfulness to the Father will be easy. However, it does promise that God will be with us through the trials – that He would never leave us nor forsake us. (Mt 28:20; Heb 13:5b)

Nehemiah trusted in God despite the renewed attack and probably because of the renewed attack. He didn't waiver in his commitment. He showed his confidence in God by praying in front of the workers, letting them hear his prayer. Nehemiah wasn't afraid to pray boldly fearing that perhaps he or God would look bad if God didn't respond as petitioned. He trusted God to do what was right. Nehemiah needed God too much and his relationship with God was too important not to turn to Him.

Now the threats of violence came at a time when the people were getting tired. The wall was only half built and the rubble seemed insurmountable. The people were losing sight of their goal. They were weakening physically and emotionally. It seemed that Sanballot would soon taste victory.

On the morning of July 4, 1952, twenty one miles to the west of California, on Catalina Island, a 34-year-old woman waded into the cold, shark-inhabited water to begin her swim to California, determined to be the first woman to carry out this feat.

Florence Chadwick began her swim, struggling because of the thick fog just to see the boats around her which served to guide her and keep the sharks away. As the hours ticked away she swam on. The fatigue of the swim and the cold water were taking their toll. The thick fog prevented her from seeing the shore so she had no idea how she was progressing. She was being worn down physically and emotionally. She couldn't go on. After several hours of hard work, she asked to be pulled from the water. Her effort failed, by half a mile.

Later she said that if she could've seen the shore she would have made it. She was licked not by the cold, or the fatigue, but by the fog. Her vision was obscured and she quit.

The Jews were tired and under threat of attack. Their vision was being obscured.

Nehemiah knew he had to act, so once again he and the people prayed together (Neh 4:9). But Nehemiah did more. He armed the people and positioned guards along the walls dividing them up according to family. This strategy would not only encourage them to work harder for their family's safety; but it would call to mind God's past faithfulness and how Israel of old always went to battle in family units.

And, Nehemiah halted the work. The potential for loss of vision and the defect which that would bring was great enough that Nehemiah knew he had to deal with the people before proceeding. So he spoke with the people, planned a strategy that helped them feel secure from external attack, and once again pointed them to the One who could restore their vision and encourage their hearts. Nehemiah turned their eyes upon God.

John White, author of Excellence in Leadership says:

"No test of leadership is more revealing than the test of opposition. Christian leaders can go to pieces under such pressure. Some grow too discouraged to continue. Others build walls around themselves (and shoot murderously from behind them). They become embattled,

embittered and vindictive. Not so Nehemiah. Nowhere does his leadership shine more brilliantly than in his handling of opposition.”

The plans of Sanballot were frustrated for now. By God’s grace, Nehemiah had held the people together despite these external threats.

However, tougher and more deadly challenges lay ahead. A volcano was rumbling and about to blow. The stress of the work upon the people and the inability for some workers to provide for the basic needs of their family was causing severe internal pressure among the Jews.

The unified effect was losing its unity and becoming a real effort!

The rich were exploiting the poor. It was Jew using and abusing fellow Jew. (Neh 5:1-5)

This was too much for Nehemiah. The sins of the people which brought on the destruction of Jerusalem and which hindered earlier attempts at reconstruction were surfacing once again. And Nehemiah was not happy!

When Sanballot threatened attack, Nehemiah was annoyed and concerned, but when he learned some of his fellow Jews were exploiting others among the Jews causing them severe hardship and suffering, he was downright mad! (Neh 5:6)

As Franky Schaffer wrote in his book A Time for Anger: the Myth of Neubiolite: “There are times in which anyone with a shred of moral principle should be profoundly angry.”

And Nehemiah was living at such a time -- we are living in such a time!

The Scriptures were clear in their teaching. An Israelite was not to charge interest to a fellow Israelite who was impoverished thus laying an unbearable burden upon them (Ex. 22:25-27). Those who were wealthy in Jerusalem were doing just that, forcing families to sell their children into slavery just to eat.

Nehemiah again halted the work and confronted the abuse. He reminded the people that they were once slaves to the Gentiles. He rebuked them for using their freedom and wealth to exploit their own people. And he called for an end to the lending of money with interest. He himself took the lead by using his own resources, which were apparently quite substantial, to provide for others, refusing to accept any of his governor’s salary from the people.

Nehemiah confronted a challenge we in the church need to face as well, a challenge Pogo the cartoon character stated so succinctly, “We have met the enemy and he is us...”

God calls us to love one another and bear one another’s burdens (Gal 6:10; Rom 12:13; Jms 5:1-6). Our love for our fellow believers is supposed to set us apart from the world, making us attractive to the world so that they will desire what we have -- a love and fellowship through the Holy Spirit that humanity alone can imitate. (Jn 13:34-35)

Sometimes I wonder just how attractive my love is. And I ask myself: Am I giving of myself so that others may see Christ in me? How am I responding to my brother or sister in Christ who is in need? How am I serving my own family in Christ let alone the rest of His creation? Am I giving of my possessions as I ought? What about my time? My gifts? I bear the name Christian -- little Christ -- but what would Jesus think about how I turn away the homeless or drive past the needy on my way to the restaurant? Is my advantage and privilege causing my brother and sisters in Christ to suffer?

Do you ever ask yourself such questions?

I don’t know how you are supposed to answer such questions. I’m struggling to know how I personally need to answer them. But it’s hard to deny that Jesus is calling us to answer such questions, and the longer we delay the greater the odds that His church will no longer bear His name.

We often read the second chapter of Acts and are amazed at how the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to speak the gospel in different tongues. I think that an equally amazing miracle was how the Holy Spirit moved them to share their possessions with one another so that none of the disciples were in need. (Acts 2:43-47).

In the second chapter of the epistle by James, he tells us about true faith saying:

“What good is it my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food? If one of you says to him; ‘Go, I wish you well, keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

The Jews were rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem but at the same time they were erecting internal walls of hostility through their abuse of fellow Jews. Nehemiah needed to restore the rock walls and tear down the walls of greed, prejudice and pride which were leading to oppression and divisiveness. He had to deal with the problem quickly and decisively if the unified effort was to stay unified.

Nehemiah also realized that there was no use surrounding the people with a fortified wall to protect them from their enemies if they would then be enclosed with people they did not love!

Nehemiah confronted the people, showed them that they were sinning against God’s law and told them how they needed to change. And, by God’s grace, they repented; and the internal threat was put to rest -- and the work continued.

As the construction went on, Sanballot and his cohorts made one last series of attempts to try to prevent the wall from being completed. Earlier they tried to demoralize the people but Nehemiah was too good of a leader to let that happen. Thus, their only alternative was to attack Jerusalem at its heart. They went after Nehemiah directly.

First they used intrigue. Perhaps they could entice Nehemiah to meet with them. Maybe they could confess that they had been a little overzealous but if they all got together certainly they could work things out.

But Nehemiah saw through their scheming and refused to be distracted from the task and vision that God had given him. (Jn 2:24-25)

However, they didn’t give up. They tried this three more times and after three rejections, they added a new twist to their plot. They sent Nehemiah a letter which suggested that his motive for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem was so that he could become king of Judah and pull away from Artaxerxes. They tried to intimidate Nehemiah by attacking his integrity and his loyalty to the king whom he served. To intensify matters, the letter was not sealed. The hope was that Nehemiah would be concerned that rumors would get back to the king -- as well as annoy the Jews -- thus instilling fear of retaliation.

Nehemiah was being blackmailed.

Sanballot was attempting to force a meeting with Nehemiah so that they could kill him, but Nehemiah refused to yield to their scheming. And again he prayed and asked for strength. (Neh 6:9b)

But the attacks continued.

This time, Tobiah contracted a relative Shemaiah to try to take down Nehemiah from within the city walls. The tactic was clever. Shemaiah, a priest would try to lure Nehemiah into sinning and thereby shake his own confidence that God would continue to guide him in this rebuilding project, and, discredit him among the people and so raise doubts as to whether God would indeed watch over them. (Neh 6:10)

Shemaiah locked himself in his house, playing the role of a prophet who, like Ezekiel and Jeremiah, acted out his prophecy. He tried to convince Nehemiah that he was in grave danger and that it would be best for Nehemiah and the people he was leading if Nehemiah took refuge in the Temple.

Nehemiah knew that Shemaiah was not from God for the thing he asked Nehemiah to do was contrary to God’s Law. Nehemiah was not a priest and so he was not allowed into the “Holy Place”.

Nehemiah knew God’s Word -- he knew the Scriptures -- and so Shemaiah failed in his attempt to cause Nehemiah to sin. (As we recall the temptation of Jesus by Satan at the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry we can see whose side Shemaiah was really on! (see Lk 4:1-11)

Nehemiah knew the vision and plan God had given him. And he did not waiver in his commitment despite persecution. Through all the attacks -- internal and external -- Nehemiah persevered.

Saints throughout history have met opposition, oppression and persecution and many by God's power have remained faithful even unto death.

One name that comes to my mind is Perpetua. Perpetua was born into a wealthy Roman family, but she converted to Christianity, and refused to deny Christ. She had an infant son who, when she was arrested and imprisoned for being a Christian, was taken from her. She was put in a cell with her attendant, Felicitas, who also was a Christian. Felicitas was eight months pregnant at the time. She gave birth to her child in prison.

Perpetua and Felicitas were sentenced to be executed in the amphitheater, in Carthage, North Africa. The day of their execution came. The two women were sent into the arena to face a mad heifer which gored them until the crowd shouted "Enough!"

The two young women were then brought to the executioners to be beheaded. As the sword came down on Perpetua, the executioner's hand trembled. Perpetua cried out in pain and then guided the sword to her throat. Her faith held firm to the end.

Perpetua persevered in her faith. She did not waiver. It cost her everything in this life!

Nehemiah persevered. He too did not waiver in his commitment to God. He expected great things from God and attempted great things for God.

We face opposition every day. Maybe we won't have our lives threatened, but we face temptations to compromise our faith, to conform to the standards of the world, and to cause disunity within the Body of Christ.

From his day, Nehemiah teaches us a lesson on being a faithful disciple of Christ in our day, because he understood what we must grasp -- that our struggle in this life is not merely against flesh and blood but is most especially against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Eph 6:12)

Our enemy is relentless, clever and strong. But our God is stronger.

And, like Nehemiah, we can know success in our ministry, whatever that may be, if we:

- Let our hearts break for the things that break the heart of God; and,
- Pray; and,
- Allow God to give us a vision for ministry – as individuals and as a church; and,
- Use our gifts and God's wisdom to develop a plan to implement that vision; and,
- Work together; and,
- PERSEVERE!

As we serve, we will be opposed from within and outside of the church. May God give us the strength to withstand those attacks that come from outside of the body of Christ, and the humility to repent of those attacks that arise from within Christ's church.

And may the Holy Spirit so empower us that we may: "Expect great things from God, and, attempt great things for God."

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 Colonie: Dot McGan

Those dealing with health issues:

Stan Bentley, Doris Calamaras

Our Church:

Pastor John and the Session

Our Community:

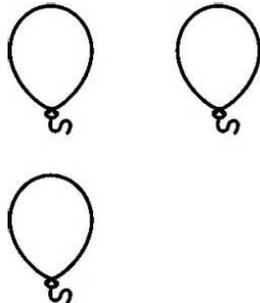
Those who don't know the Lord
Those dealing with financial difficulties
That our schools would be places of safety

Our World:

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

November Birthdays

11/2 June Giles
11/2 Eric Ofori
11/7 Gianna Ofori
11/7 Arianna Ofori
11/8 Jerry Whitman
11/12 Jennifer McAuley
11/14 Scott Miller
11/16 Alyssa Whitman
11/17 Vera Whitman
11/18 Alice Bentley
11/18 Emily Somerville
11/21 Karen Moore
11/29 Michael Calamaras
11/30 Jacob Shoemaker



November Anniversaries

11/18 Scott & Jaime Miller
11/21 Dean & Doris Calamaras
11/29 Eric & Irene (Amponsah) Ofori

Serving This Month

November 6th

Worship Assistants: Deena Dominy and Natalia Multunas
Greeters: Jen McAuley
Head Greeters: Mike Giddings
Nursery: Lois Pasinella
Communion: Jason Laz
Fellowship Hosts: Vera and Jerry Whitman

November 13th

Worship Assistants: Kelly Valerio and Connie Russell
Greeters: Pat Gilmaier and Bill Multunas
Head Greeter: Rob Jensen
Nursery: Deena Dominy and Angelina Solomon
Communion: Jen McAuley, Jerry Whitman, Vera Whitman, Natalia Multunas
Fellowship Hosts: Ofori Family

November 20th

Worship Assistants: Bill Multunas and James McAuley
Greeters: Dean and Doris Calamaras
Head Greeter: Peter Laz
Nursery: Alice Bentley
Communion: Pat Gilmaier, Peter Laz, Rachel Farnum, Rob Jensen
Fellowship Hosts: Lois Pasinella

November 27th

Worship Assistants: Eric Ofori and Sue Stierer
Greeters: James McAuley and Deena Dominy
Head Greeter: Andy Miller
Nursery: Jen McAuley
Communion: Sue Laz, Vera Whitman, Alice Bentley, Andy Miller
Fellowship Hosts: Jennifer and Stephanie Miller

Thank you

Dear Church Family,

My family and I sincerely appreciate your prayers and sympathy at this difficult time. It is a comfort knowing you are thinking of us as we grieve my father's death. Thank you for your thoughtfulness.

Wendy Giddings and family

From Music and Audio-Visual Ministries...

'TIS THE SEASON...

No, not that one! This isn't Wal-Mart after all. Plenty of time for Christmas in due time. No, it's November, and November is all about *Thanksgiving*. So, I give thanks...

- I give thanks for Jerry, Vera, Sue (Laz), Natalia, Kelly, Hazel, Diane, Ginny, Sue (Stierer) and Phyllis--who sing their hearts out in choir week after week, all the while graciously dealing with my bizarre sense of humor and other (lovable) quirks in our hour together at Wednesday rehearsals
- I give thanks for Jason, Mike, Josh, and Nate--who throw themselves into the repertoire of *The Red Letters* every few weeks, leading contemporary worship songs with passion, all the while allowing me to join in, raising the average age of the group precipitously
- I give thanks for Rick, Connie, Rachel, Abby (when home from school) and Natalia of our Acoustic Worship Team--who share many of the same songs but offer them in a *calmer and gentler* format, alternating with *The Red Letters* (Rachel often predicts my lovable quirks and bizarre sense of humor before I even display them!)
- I give thanks for Jesse, James (two different people!), Rick, Jason, Sue, and Nora for making all the bells and whistles of our AV system seem simple, ensuring that God's Word is heard clearly and providing tools to facilitate our worship
- I give thanks for Peggy and for Chuck, our other two staff members--for their excellent stewardship of our printed materials and our physical plant--God being honored in their attention to detail
- I give thanks for Andy Miller and Rob Jensen--for their ever-present help when it comes to *anything* involving our building and grounds
- I give thanks for Sue Laz--who just knows stuff!
- I give thanks for the men who gather for breakfast at Alexis Diner just about every Friday--for allowing me to *poke my head in* once in a while
- I give thanks for our elders--for their serious and thoughtful attention to issues and matters requiring biblical and humble spiritual leadership
- I give thanks for Pastor John--for how seriously he takes his role to mentors those elders and provide for the spiritual growth and maturity of the congregation through his careful study, teaching and preaching of God's Word, and for his partnership in worship leadership
- And I give thanks for all of you--for the community of faith you have welcomed me into and for your heart to worship and serve the living God
- *Happy Thanksgiving!*

*With Joy in the Journey,
Sal Scechitano*



Winter Collection for Capital City Rescue Mission

Throughout the winter months we will be collecting new and gently used hats, gloves and scarves for Capital City Rescue Mission. With the weather turning colder, the Mission struggles to provide these necessary items to those in need. There is a box near the entrance to the sanctuary where you can place your donations.

Bible Quiz for November 2016

Our quiz questions come from the Old Testament book of “Esther”, which will form the content of our sermon series through the months of November and December. For this quiz our questions will come from the first five chapters of “Esther”.

1. What was the name of the Persian king who ruled during the story of “Esther” and who took Esther to be his wife?
2. What was the name of the queen whom Esther replaced?
3. What was Esther’s Hebrew name?
4. What was the name of the person who raised Esther? What was that person’s relationship to Esther?
5. What was the name of the Persian official who sought to bring an end to all the Jews living within Persia?
6. Whose actions caused that Persian official referred to in question 5 above to seek to kill all the Jews in the province of Persia?
7. True or False: The book of “Esther” reveals the name of God three times within the first five chapters.
8. True or False: The book of “Esther” was written to present Esther as a model for us to follow as we seek to walk in obedience to God.
9. What was the name of the city where the story of “Esther” takes place?
10. Who said: “And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this”?
11. Bonus Question: What other character of the Bible, who has a book of the Bible named after him, also lived in the city where the story of Esther takes place?

A Gift of Joy and a Message of God’s Love

Millions of children all over the world live in very difficult situations and long to know that they are loved. Since 1993, **Operation Christmas Child** (OCC) has shared the Good News of God’s love with hurting children around the world.



Through simple shoe boxes filled with toys and other small gifts children receive what may be their only Christmas gift as well as the assurance that God loves them.

Boxes and brochures containing instructions on filling your shoebox are available in the church office.

Shoeboxes should be brought back to the church by **November 13th**.

If you cannot pack a box but would like to participate in this project you can give items that can be put into a shoebox. We can use small toys, stuffed animals, toothbrushes, combs, brushes, crayons, markers, notepads, flashlights and batteries, hard candy, etc. There are boxes in the church office for donations. You can also give financially to help cover the shipping costs by designating your gift for OCC.

For more information about Operation Christmas Child or the ministry of Samaritan’s Purse you can go to www.samaritanaspurse.com

Senior God Squad Luncheon

Join us on December 3rd at 12 Noon to begin the celebration of the Christmas Season. Our dinner will be catered by Carol’s Place on Pawling Avenue. Following dinner will enjoy beautiful Holiday Music by harpist Lydia Zotto.

We will continue with our support of Ronald McDonald House with donations and individual food items to help families at RMH.

Please RSVP no later than November 28th to Vera and Jerry Whitman @ 283-4147.

**General Financial Update for
August 2016**

	Year to Date	September
Total Income	\$120,093.00	\$13,284.00
Total Expenses	\$126,126.78	\$14,147.43
Difference	(\$ 6,033.78)	(\$863.43)

**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 November we will be collecting items for Hope 7's holiday meal baskets (14.5 ounce cans of diced tomatoes and 8 oz cans of tomato sauce for chili)

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

Veteran's Day

During the worship service on **November 13th** we will be recognizing service personnel who have served or are currently serving in the military. To include someone in this recognition please call the church office at 283-2420 with their name, branch of service and dates of service.



THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Our children and youth Sunday school classes are studying through various questions and responses from the Westminster Shorter Catechism over the 2016-2017 Sunday-school year. So that we may walk with them in that journey, and so that all of us may be able to interact with them should they approach us with their questions (as they should feel free to do!), we are going to return to that catechism over the next several months that we might be equipped to give a defense for the hope that is ours in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim 2:15; 1 Tim 4:16; 1 Pt 3:15)

Q 7. What are the decrees of God?

The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q 8. How does God execute His decrees?

God executes His decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Q 9. What is the work of creation?

The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six days [not necessarily literal 24-hour periods], and all very good.

Q 10. How did God create man?

God created man male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Q 11. What are God's works of providence?

God's works of providence are His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions.

Q 12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate wherein he was created?

When God created man, He entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

Q 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.



2016 Stewardship Campaign

"The goal of stewardship ministry is to help God's people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the use of the time, talents, and finances God has entrusted to them."- Charles R. Lane, from "Ask, Thank and Tell".

Stewardship is, first and foremost, about our relationship with God. This year, as part of our stewardship campaign, we will be focusing on four questions to help us examine our hearts and consider what it means to be good stewards of all that God has given us.

The first question we must ask ourselves is, **"Is my heart right with God?"** This is the starting point of all we do as Christians. We need to examine our hearts and see if we have really committed to following Jesus as our Savior, Lord, and greatest treasure.

Once we have committed our lives to Jesus, we then need to ask, **"What am I doing to keep my heart right with God?"** This is an ongoing process that we need to work on every minute of every day for the rest of our lives. There is much in our world that seeks to draw us away from God and we must work to keep our hearts focused on God. We do this by making worship, prayer and the study of God's Word priorities.

The next step in our Christian stewardship is to look at how we are using all that God has given to us. We need to ask, **"Am I using my time and abilities in ways that honor God and show His love to others?"** The riches and attractions of this world will one day disappear and the only things that will remain are the things we have done in obedience to God. We should be using all that God has given us in ways that will have eternally lasting results. We do this by using our time and abilities to serve those in need and to help carry out the mission and ministries of the church.

We have a responsibility to show our love for God in everything we do. God must be first in all our thinking and planning, including the use of our financial resources. This may mean changing the way we use our money so that what we give back to God will be a good and right expression of our love for God. The question we need to ask ourselves is, **"Does my use of my financial resources reflect my love for God?"**

By now, you should have received your stewardship packet containing a pledge card and instruction. If you have not received it, please call the church office.

Listed below are the various funds maintained by Third Church and what they are used for. Your pledge will go into the General Fund.

Envelopes are included with your weekly or monthly envelopes for extra gifts to the Benevolence and Mission funds. Gifts to the Building Fund and Worship Resources Fund can be indicated on your weekly or monthly envelope.

To make an extra gift to the Technology Capital Fund simply include a note indicating what fund your gift is for.

General Fund - This is the general operation fund of the church. This fund covers:

- Budgeted mission giving
- Program and office expenses
- Salaries
- Insurances (property, worker's comp., etc.)
- Regular and ongoing building expenses (gas, electric, phone, etc.)

Benevolence Fund - This fund is used for the Congregational Care activities of the Inward Ministry Committee. It is used for things like:

- Receptions following funerals

- Gifts and cards for special occasions
- Giving aid if there is a personal financial need
- Coffee hour, picnic and luncheon expenses

Mission Fund - This fund is used to support any unbudgeted mission opportunities that may arise during the year. Some things we have done:

- Given an extra gift to the Rescue Mission when their HVAC unit needed repairs after being hit by lightning
- A gift to help Serena Solomon participate in a summer mission project.
- Paying the shipping costs for Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes.

Building Fund – this fund is used for non-operating building expenses, repairs, facility enhancements, and unbudgeted building and grounds expenses.

Worship Resource Fund – to acquire and maintain worship and sanctuary needs. This includes things like banners, audio/visual equipment used in the sanctuary, furniture, choir robes, Bibles, hymnals and paraments.

Technology Capital Fund – to acquire and maintain technical assets and needs. This includes things like computers and software, the phone system, copier expenses and maintenance, website expenses, general audio/visual equipment.



Mission Spotlight: Ronald McDonald House

For several years now, the Seniors of Third Church have supported Ronald McDonald House of Albany. At their luncheons they have collected monetary donations to support the work of Ronald McDonald House. They also collect individual food and snack items for the families that are staying there.

Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Capital Region, Inc. promotes the health, development and well-being of children and their families. They accomplish this through the Ronald McDonald House, a home away from home for families of seriously ill children, and by creating and supporting programs that directly improve the lives of children and their families.

The three core programs of RMHC - the Ronald McDonald House, Ronald McDonald Family Room and Ronald McDonald Care Mobile - are focused on helping families in need. Our cornerstone Ronald McDonald House program began in 1974 based on a simple idea: Provide a "home away from home" for families of seriously ill children receiving treatment at nearby hospitals. Since that time, more than 10 million families around the world have benefited from the comfort provided by a Ronald McDonald House.

The Ronald McDonald Family Room program extends the comfort of a Ronald McDonald House to a hospital setting. The Family Room within the Children's Hospital at Albany Medical Center is located just steps from the neonatal and pediatric intensive care units, the Family Room provides a place to escape the stress and tension of the hospital.

The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile program, in partnership with St. Peters Health Care Services, provides free comprehensive dental care to underserved, underinsured or uninsured children in the Capital Region.

Please remember Ronald McDonald House and our other mission partners – Hope 7, Capital City Rescue Mission, Capital District Youth for Christ, InterVarsity, Horizons, the Medical Benevolence Foundation, Dan McAuley preparing for his mission in East Africa, Gideons International, Voice of the Martyrs, Peter Halder and YFC Bangladesh, 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.

SESSION MEETING-THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-OCTOBER 10, 2016

ACTION ITEMS - A motion was made, no second needed, to approve the revised position descriptions for the Secretary and Director of Music & Audio/Video.

CLERK'S REPORT - Correspondence received: As approved at the August 22nd meeting for Al-Anon to use Post Memorial Hall on either October 16th or 23, they have chosen the 23rd from 1-4 PM.

PASTOR'S REPORT - The Albany Presbytery Administrative Commission regarding the East Hebron United Presbyterian Church held a Congregational Meeting at that church and approved the by-laws changes and affirmed the consolidation with the West Hebron United Presbyterian Church. The new church will be called the Hebron United Presbyterian Church. The Commission will present its findings and recommendations to the Committee On Ministry of Albany Presbytery on November 2nd. The motion to approve this consolidation should be presented to the Presbytery for a vote at its meeting on November 16th.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

- Fall Care Packages to be mailed out to our college students.
- Discussed the Benevolence Fund and it's balance. We will be looking to do a Minute For Ministry concerning the fund and its use in early 2017.

CHRISTIAN NURTURE

MENS' MINISTRY - Men's Group is in the third week of their study of Philippians. They meet on Sunday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30.

WOMENS' MINISTRY - Women's Group Bible Study to begin on October 20th, and subsequent Thursday evenings at 7 PM at Pat Gilmaier's home, studying 1 Kings.

YOUTH MINISTRY - Youth Sunday School is in session. First meeting was on September 19th and we will be meeting again on October 17th. Also discussed the need to have two adults in each class to meet our Child Protection Policy guidelines.

SENIOR'S MINISTRY - Fall luncheon sponsored by the Senior God Squad is planned for Saturday December 3rd at noon time.

OUTWARD MINISTRY (Engage, Evangelize, Extend)

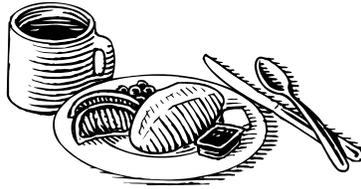
- Spending for October: \$500-Capital City Rescue Mission, \$600-Voice of the Martyrs, \$500-Bangladesh Youth For Christ, \$200-InterVarsity (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute & Russell Sage College, \$ 50-Theology Matters (taken from Mission Envelope money)
- Operation Christmas Child information will be handed out on 10/16. Shoe boxes are due back by November 13th.
- With the help of Nate Smith from Hudson Valley Community College InterVarsity, we have created a church logo.
- We will be looking at some other possible mission projects for the Fall & Winter.
- Next time to serve at the Capital City Rescue Mission is December 17th.

STEWARDSHIP (Upward, Inward, Outward)

GENERAL FUND/FINANCE - Pledge Sunday will be November 6th.

ALBANY PRESBYERY - Meeting was held at the Korean Presbyterian Church of Albany, in Schenectady, NY on October 1st.

**Thanksgiving Breakfast and Worship
November 24th at 8:00 a.m.**



Join us for breakfast followed by an
informal time of worship.

*"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good.
His steadfast love endures forever"
Psalm 106:1*

*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