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October 2016

“Following God’s Vision Together”

In our last newsletter we were challenged as a congregation to do the “first things first” with respect to our ministry together as a church.

And, reflecting upon the opening chapter of the Old Testament book of “Nehemiah” we saw that one of the first things we need to do as a congregation as we seek to move forward in ministry is to pray. We need to call upon the Lord to equip us and lead us if we’re to be a congregation that honors our God with the gifts He has given to us.

I want to continue with our theme of “vision casting”, and more importantly, visionary living for Jesus, by continuing our study through the book of “Nehemiah”. And so in this article we will spend some time reflecting upon how to do ministry together strategically – with heart and mind set upon discerning and doing God’s will. To that end I would encourage you to pause for a moment and read chapter 2 from the book of “Nehemiah”.

John Perkins, African-American author, minister of the gospel and founder of Voice of Calvary Ministries in Jackson, Mississippi, overcame much persecution and adversity to reach out to the needs of the oppressed and outcast. He once stated: “There are three kinds of people in our society: those who can’t see or refuse to see the problems; those who see the problems and because they didn’t personally create them are content to blame someone else; and, those who see the problems, and, although they didn’t create them, are willing to assume personal responsibility for solving them.”

In the year 445 BC God moved the heart of Nehemiah to be that person who, although he didn’t personally create the problems Jerusalem was facing, was willing to take personal responsibility for helping to bring restoration and renewal to that city.

As I noted in last month’s article, at the time of Nehemiah Jerusalem was in a state of despair. The walls of the city, which were torn down and set on fire some 141 years prior, were still not rebuilt. The reforms that Ezra, the Jewish teacher, tried to bring about for the past 13 years were making little headway. And the officials of the surrounding regions were oppressing many of the Jews.

When Hanani, Nehemiah’s brother came with others to inform Nehemiah about the situation in Jerusalem, Nehemiah’s heart broke. Nehemiah mourned, fasted and prayed for his people and his city. Although he lived in Susa, in a palace some 1,500 miles journey from Jerusalem, he knew that he needed to respond to the report he heard from his brother.

Nehemiah was a man of prayer. He was intimate with God. He heard God’s calling as God laid upon the heart of Nehemiah the burden that God Himself felt for His covenant people, and Nehemiah’s heart broke.

Sin and idolatry led to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. But God promised to restore that city and His people if they would repent and turn to Him. And God called Ezra, Nehemiah and others before them to help bring about such restoration and reform.

And so, after four months of prayer and fasting, Nehemiah, cupbearer to king Artaxerxes I, approached the king ready to do that which God had laid upon Nehemiah's heart. In an attitude of prayer, and with complete dependence upon God, Nehemiah presented his request before the king.

It's important to pray; and it's important to act. Nehemiah prayed; then acted; then prayed while he acted. Nehemiah understood the vital relationship between speaking with God and serving God – that prayer without action is often presumptuous, and action without prayer is often powerless.

Because Nehemiah was willing to pray, and because he was willing to work, God used Nehemiah to transform a city. And God can certainly do the same for His church, when His people come before Him in prayer and then act upon those prayers!

God gave Nehemiah a burden but with that burden He also gave Nehemiah a vision. Nehemiah was given a vision for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. During those four months of prayer, Nehemiah was listening to God and devising how he could best respond. He used the time to determine what he would say to the king, and, to calculate what he would need from the king in order to act upon the vision God had given him. Therefore, when Nehemiah approached the king he had a dream with a plan!

In Chapter 2 and verses 5-8, Nehemiah presented his request to the king. And the king responded favorably. And Nehemiah gave God the glory, acknowledging that it was because the gracious hand of his God was upon him that the king granted his request. In all his planning and later in the execution of his plan, Nehemiah never lost sight of who was in control. He never lost sight of the sovereignty of God.

Nehemiah trusted in God's guidance, and, because he trusted God, Nehemiah was willing to use his skills and his position of influence to gather the necessary data so that he could present an intelligible proposal to the king. Nehemiah planned for the necessary supplies knowing that he would need wood to repair the gates of Jerusalem and that he would have to get his wood from Asaph, the keeper of the king's forests. Nehemiah set a tentative schedule knowing that he would need to be away for a while to carry out his full plan of restoration and renewal. Moreover, as Nehemiah arranged his travel and shipping route he knew he would need letters for safe passage through the Trans-Euphrates region.

Nehemiah had a dream, and he planned ahead as best as possible – all this even before actually seeing the situation in Jerusalem first hand. It was a risky step, but then to step out in faith is always risky. Of course, serving God with humility and trust is always worth the risk.

God gave Nehemiah a mission, even as we have a mission. His mission was different from ours because we live under a New Covenant in Christ -- a covenant in which there is no special land or city that God desires to call His own. But there are special people whom God desires to claim as His own! Therefore, as people under a New Covenant established and sealed through Jesus Christ: although we're not ultimately called to restore a place to God, we are called to restore a people to God; and although we're not ultimately called to rebuild walls which protect a city, we are called to rebuild lives which connect to God; and although we're not ultimately called to point people to a program or a cause, we are called to point people to a person -- to the Christ.

As children of God in Christ, God asks us to humble ourselves and pray. And God charges us to use our gifts and resources to serve one another so that, in our love for one another, others might see the love of God in us, and in seeing the love of God in us, they might receive that love for themselves through faith in Jesus. (Mt 5:16; Jn 13:34-35)

God gave Nehemiah a vision -- a mission -- and because God touched Nehemiah's heart, Nehemiah knew he had to act.

We have a vision for our church -- a mission which is articulated by three key phrases:

- To love our God and neighbor;
- To proclaim the gospel through word and deed; and,
- To make disciples of Jesus the Christ.

Simply put, our vision is to be a church that exalts God, proclaims Christ, and makes Disciples.

And we have a plan to help implement that vision, a plan that includes quality leadership, gifted members, and numerous resources.

We also have a dream, a dream for this church and its ministries that includes growing our church deep in our faith and wide in our reach – that many others might come to know Jesus and grow in faith with us. It's a dream so to grow our church family that our congregation may be filled to overflowing with people who love God, love one another, and love the lost! But such dreams don't just happen. They take prayer, and courage, and humility, and sacrifice, and a passion to glorify God in all that we do. Such dreams take repentance where we have brought hurt, and forgiveness where we've been hurt, and a willingness to be reconciled to God, to one another, and even to our enemies. In other words, such dreams require that we put on Christ in all that we do, and in who we are. (Col 3:12-14; Phil 2:3-5).

And the good news is that although this may seem like an unachievable dream, an unreachable vision, we serve a good God who is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine, when we give ourselves wholly to Him. (Eph 3:20-21; Phil 4:13)

Now Nehemiah, in his rebuilding process, faced much opposition but he knew that the only healthy way to respond to a broken heart was to exercise his trust in God. He wasn't even in Jerusalem when God first gave him God's vision, so he didn't know all that his mission would require. But he planned as best as he was able, and then he stepped out in faith. And with each new step he leaned a little more upon his God.

Eventually, Nehemiah traveled to Jerusalem, but before taking charge he spent three days resting, looking, listening and learning. God had given him an initial vision when he was in Susa. Now, while in Jerusalem, God was working to clarify that vision.

And one of the first things he observed is that the people in Jerusalem became apathetic. They lost any vision or excitement for what God could do in and through them.

Arnold Toynbee, a great English historian, once said, "Apathy can only be overcome by enthusiasm, and enthusiasm can only be aroused by two things: first -- an ideal which takes the imagination by storm; and second -- a definite intelligible plan for carrying that ideal into practice."

Nehemiah came to impart vision and restore passion, and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was part of the plan -- a catalyst for the greater work of renewing the heart of God's people.

Nehemiah had a vision, but, before presenting that vision, he worked to clarify the vision. And so after three days of observation, he gathered a few trusted individuals and went out on the third night to survey part of the city wall. He went out the Valley Gate located near the southwestern part of the city, traveled down and around the southern tip of the city and part way up the eastern side. Then he turned around retracing his path and entering through the gate that he first went out.

Nehemiah carried out his own project analysis. He inventoried his resources and surveyed the job site so that he could submit an accurate proposal – so that he could communicate the cost of walking in the will of God and of seeing God's plan come true.

He went at night -- mostly likely because Nehemiah knew that there were some in the city who would oppose his plans for reconstruction and he wanted to present his plan to the people before others could start to speak against it. Nehemiah knew that there would be nay-sayers who would try to squash anything that would threaten their own position or power or lifestyle, and so he used the dark of night to gather the information he needed in order to properly direct the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

On another night, in the mid-1800's, another man's life was changed because of his own late night walk. William Booth couldn't sleep and so he went for a walk through the streets of London. He walked through the poor side of town and there, in the cover of darkness, he saw the impoverished and beaten lives that existed in that setting. The rain was beating down on some of London's outcasts who were sleeping near the curbsides. When William Booth returned home, he told his wife, "I've been to hell." Out of that nightmarish experience came the dream of the Salvation Army.

Had William Booth not left the security of his own home, he might never have become aware of the needs of the homeless masses. And, he might never have experienced the joy of bringing to life God's dream for him.

Had Nehemiah not left Susa -- had he not left the comfort of that palace -- he could never have had his vision clarified, and he never would have been able to direct the people in the rebuilding of their city and in the renewal of their faith.

So what about us? Are we hiding in our own "comfort zones" which blind our eyes to the needs of God's people and deafen our ears to God's calling upon our lives? Are we missing the blessings that God has for us because we find it easier to bemoan our present trials rather than to work for future triumphs? Is there something in our lives that we need to set aside -- some activity, or goal, or possession, or desire -- so that we can respond to the vision God's has for us as individuals?

And what about our church? What must we do to bring new energy and clarity to the vision that God has given to this church? We claim that we have a burden for Troy and our surrounding neighborhoods. We claim that we're here to be a light to our community. But, do we need to walk the streets of our neighborhoods with new eyes so that we can feel more deeply and know more clearly how we can be that light, exposing both the darkness in our neighborhoods as well as the darkness in our own hearts?

Now, after four months of praying and planning, after approximately four months of travel, after three days of looking, listening and more planning, and after one final late night inspection, Nehemiah was ready to begin the work. But he knew that he couldn't do it alone. So, Nehemiah shared the burden of his heart with his fellow Jews.

Nehemiah had a vision and a plan but he knew that if he was to accomplish the task he needed the help of the people. As we shall see in the November article, Nehemiah would face much opposition both internally as well as externally. In order to overcome this opposition, he needed many workers who were united in the task and excited about seeing it completed. He needed a unified effort.

Nehemiah presented a vision and a plan but he didn't stop there. He opened the eyes of his people to their own need, and then to the only One who could help satisfy that need. He told the people about God's faithfulness and how God had gone ahead of him every step of the way, for Nehemiah believed with all his heart that: "**Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.**" (Ps. 127:1)

Nehemiah told how the very king that had halted Ezra's reforms was now allowing the people to go ahead with their building, and, even more, that he was helping them to acquire the needed supplies!

Thankfully, Nehemiah shared his dream and the people responded. They began the work!

I believe chapter 3 of Nehemiah is one of the most encouraging chapters in the Scriptures because it shows what can happen when God's people unite to work single-mindedly to achieve a goal to which God calls them.

Nehemiah planned thoroughly and had almost everyone who was available involved. As you read through Chapter 3, you see that Nehemiah took a wall of about two-and-one-half miles in length, and divided it up into about forty-two manageable sections. He then assigned those sections to forty-one different groups of people, determining the length of the sections and who would work on the 10 different gates according to the skills and size of each group. Nehemiah made assignments according to gifts, abilities and resources, thus challenging each group equally without putting an unbearable burden upon any one. Nehemiah respected each person and valued each contribution -- regardless of how large or how small!

What's more, for those persons who had homes near certain sections of the walls, Nehemiah assigned those families to those respective sections, thus ensuring a form of quality control, since if the wall was poorly constructed, their own homes would be the first to be destroyed. Nehemiah knew how to incentivize the people!

Moreover, Nehemiah didn't let his own pride get in the way. He didn't try to control every action. He let the workers use their gifts. He enabled and equipped them so that they could share in the labor and also share in the joy of a project well done.

Nehemiah used his gifts to help others use their gifts so that together they might receive God's gift to them – a restored city for the people, but more importantly, a reconciled relationship with their God.

Nehemiah knew that his calling was not to do the work alone, but to enable, equip, and encourage others so that they could do the work together. He modeled in his time what Paul charges the leaders of the church to do in our time, namely, **“to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”** (Eph 4:12)

When God calls us to make disciples -- something that He in fact calls all Christians to do -- He desires that we would be ministering to and with others so they can learn and grow, fail and succeed, and experience the pleasure of serving God together.

We saw this very type of ministry lived out in August, first through the ministry of VBS, and then through the “Back to School Fair”. Many from among our congregation gave to make those ministries possible, and many others came to lend a hand in serving some children and families in our community. Both were wonderful opportunities to show and share God's love with our community – and we thank God for the opportunity. That's what visionary, unified ministry together looks like – to God be the glory!

Nehemiah had many laborers from Jerusalem and the surrounding towns, people of different social and economic classes working side by side. He had the temple priests getting their hands dirty with the union workers: the goldsmiths and perfume makers. He had city officials, merchants, city guards, temple servants and even women -- who weren't expected to do construction – all willingly laboring toward one goal. They were given their assignments. They were given the needed resources. They were instructed in the necessary skills. And then they were set loose to serve.

Now, lest we think that all the Jews living in and around Jerusalem formed one big happy family joyfully serving a united vision, we need to note that not everyone was willing to work. For example, the nobles of Tekoa, a small town about 11 miles south of Jerusalem, refused to help. So instead, the common people of that town took two sections on which to work!

Many others from surrounding towns came to help in the work as well. It wasn't their city and they had no immediate interest in whether or not the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt. But they came just the same because they saw something exciting happening in Jerusalem.

People want to be a part of something exciting. People want to invest into a dream with a plan.

We have that here. I believe we just need to ignite anew the passion of our hearts, and then watch as people come to see and to be a part of the great things that God is doing and will continue to do at Third Church.

The people rallied around Nehemiah because he had a dream with a plan; and, because, using his God given abilities, he clarified that vision; and, because he involved others thus implementing that God-given vision through a unified effort.

This task of rebuilding the city walls was attempted several times over the previous 90-plus years since Cyrus, the king of Persia, first allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem (in 538 BC). But now, by God's grace and through the leadership of Nehemiah the walls were being rebuilt.

One broken heart and ten months later; after much prayer and planning and 52 days of labor (Neh 6:15); and even amidst severe opposition (as we shall see in future newsletters), the walls of Jerusalem were restored. Much transpired over those 10 months of Nehemiah's life, but God used him to lead and inspire others to carry out God's promise of restoration.

Our world has been impacted drastically on many fronts over the last few years. The overthrow of leaders in the middle east and north Africa, the rise of radical Islamic terrorism, the ongoing disease of racism, the expanding numbers of refugees, the fragile state of the global economy, and, of course the continuing erosion of moral values with the diminishing desire to confront moral sin. It can easily feel like

there is no longer any passion for God, or His truth, or His justice. It can easily feel like the heart of God's people is less a roaring flame and more a smoldering ember.

But we must never forget that often times a great fire begins with a single spark – a single heart in tune with the heart of God.

Rev. Laszlo Tokes was such a spark. A pastor of a small Hungarian Reformed Church in Timisoara, Romania, he spoke out against the persecution and oppression of the Hungarians living in Romania and against the church which had turned its back to this oppression. In August of 1989, Pastor Tokes made his protest known on Hungarian television. From that point on, he was a marked man. He was harassed by authorities and his life was threatened. He wasn't allowed to purchase food or visit relatives. He had to send his son away for fear of his life. One night in November, 1989, four masked thugs broke into his apartment where he and his pregnant wife were living. They beat and stabbed Laszlo and tore up his apartment. The harassment continued until he finally took refuge in his small church.

The authorities of his own denomination told him to leave his church building, but he refused. Soldiers were sent to take Laszlo away, but when word got out that Laszlo was to be taken by the Romanian Army, his parishioners surrounded the church forming a human wall to protect their pastor. Word spread quickly through the city and soon hundreds of people -- people who didn't even know Pastor Tokes -- surrounded the church. Thousands of others began to protest in the city square in Timisoara, and the police reacted. Rioting erupted leading to the death of hundreds.

But within days the people of Romania rallied together and rose up. The Army backed down and the government of Romania collapsed. Perhaps the most oppressive of all the communist governments fell.

One person with one vision, willing to put their life on the line and so inspire others to follow – that's what Pastor Laszlo Tokes did for Romania; that's what Nehemiah did for Jerusalem; that's what our Lord Jesus Christ did upon a cross some 2000 years ago when He gave His life so that we could dream God's dreams and work God's plans together – so that we might have abundant life here and now and life everlasting to come; and that's what Jesus calls us to do when He says: **“Anyone who does not take up his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”** (Lk 14:27)

We often look about our world and want to cry out, as I'm sure Nehemiah cried out when he heard about the state of his people: Why the suffering? Why the hurt? O God! Why must our hearts break?

But maybe -- just maybe -- this world is meant to break our hearts.

Maybe this world is meant to break our hearts because that's what it takes to get us to turn to God -- to receive a fresh vision, and to plan and to work with others so that we may carry out that vision – so that we may spread the good news of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

And maybe the real question should not be *why* but *what*?

What dreams does God want us to have for our church and our community?

What plans does God want us to follow so that we can do His will and in doing His will experience His pleasure?

What price will each of us pay to bring renewal to our own heart, to bring unity to our church, and to bring the love of Jesus Church to our community?

May our God unite us in vision and mission – and most especially in love – that we might dream God's dreams and work God's plan for the glory of God and the eternal blessing of the lost!

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, Joshua Valerio

Our Church:

Pastor John and the Session

Our Community:

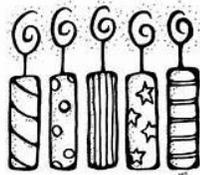
Those who don't know the Lord
Those dealing with financial difficulties
That our schools would be places of safety

Our World:

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

October Birthdays

10/2 Daniel McAuley
10/9 Andy Miller
10/11 Allison Lashmet
10/13 Kelly Valerio
10/19 Sue Laz
10/21 Natalie & Alida Sceccitano
10/22 Declan Reynolds
10/22 Isla Miriam Multunas
10/23 Peter Laz
10/26 Marcella Goard



October Anniversaries

10/5 Sal & Deb Sceccitano
10/6 Jack & Joan Wocher
10/25 Natalia & Bill Multunas

Serving This Month

October 2nd

Worship Assistants: Bill Multunas and Dean Calamaras
Greeters: Deena Dominy
Head Greeters: Peter Laz
Nursery: Lois Pasinella
Communion: Jerry Whitman
Fellowship Host:

October 9th

Worship Assistants: Eric Ofori and Kelly Valerio
Greeters: James McAuley and Alice Bentley
Head Greeter: Mike Giddings
Nursery: Deena Dominy and Angelina Solomon
Communion: Mike Giddings, Natalia Multunas, Pat Gilmaier, Peter Laz
Fellowship Hosts: Pat Gilmaier and Andy Miller

October 16th

Worship Assistants: Peter Laz and Eric Ofori
Greeters: Dean and Doris Calamaras
Head Greeter: Rob Jensen
Nursery: Alice Bentley
Communion: Rachel Farnum, Rob Jensen, Sue Laz, Andy Miller
Fellowship Hosts:

October 23rd

Worship Assistants: Natalia Multunas and Ella Miller
Greeters: Joe Pasinella
Head Greeter: Andy Miller
Nursery: Jen McAuley
Communion: Alice Bentley, Vera Whitman, Bill Multunas, Dean Calamaras
Fellowship Hosts: Jen McAuley

October 30th

Worship Assistants: Sue Laz and Jesse Ofori
Greeters: Valerie Bidwell, Vaughn Skarzynski
Head Greeter: Peter Laz
Nursery: Megan Laz
Communion: Deena Dominy, Doris Calamaras, Eric Ofori, Hazel Landry
Fellowship Hosts: Valerie Bidwell, Vaughn Skarzynski, Cassie Phelan

Slate of Officers for 2017

Rick Russell - lives in Brunswick with his wife Connie and they will be celebrating their 35 wedding anniversary on February 14, 2017. He has 2 sons, Rick and Kevin and has 3 grandsons, Jacob, Lucas and Brayden.

He works as the Principal Network Administrator for Rensselaer County and has been employed there for over 17 years.

Rick accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior in the fall of 1985 and has been in active service to the Lord ever since. He has been attending Third Presbyterian Church since November 2014 and became a formal member in June 2015.

He is involved in the Acoustic Worship Team and Audio Visual Ministry and has served at the Capital City Rescue Mission. He assisted with the installation and upgrade of the audio and video systems here at the church.

Sue Laz - I grew up in a Navy family and spent my childhood and early teens living in a variety of places in California and Virginia. While my father served in Vietnam we lived with Marilyn and Herb Gibbs in Poestenkill and attended Third Church. After a few more moves to a few more places, my father retired from the Navy and we moved back to Poestenkill and once again worshipped at Third Church. I have been active in the church in a variety of ways over the past 40 years (wow! Has it been that long??). I have served as an elder and a deacon. I have taught Sunday school and served on various committees. I have been in the choir now for 35 years. I view the Third Church family as just that...part of my family. Along with my family, my church family has seen me through the loss of my parents, the joys and challenges of being a parent and the general ups and downs of life. We have laughed together and cried together. We have worked and served in ministry together. It has been a great privilege to be a part of ministry here in this congregation and I look forward to continuing to serve as God gives me the opportunity and the ability.

Jason Laz - was born in Troy and grew up in Third Presbyterian Church. He works in the communications office at Questar III BOCES and lives in East Greenbush with his wife, Megan, who teaches fifth grade at St. Jude the Apostle School in Wynantskill. Jason has previously served on Session and currently sits on the Outward and Upward Ministry Committees. He also plays guitar and sings while serving as the Director of the Red Letters Praise Band. Jason's favorite activities include eating steak, drinking coffee and people watching.

Jerry (Gerald) Whitman – I came to Third Presbyterian Church from First Baptist Church of Troy (after 41 years) and joined on October 20, 1985, with my wife Vera. In fact Vera and I were part of the choir before we were members of the church. I am father to Kirsten Leigh Whitman-Hope and Kurt Teetsell Whitman. I am Grampa to Alyssa Marie Whitman, Ethan Gerald Whitman, and Victoria Catherine Hope.

After joining and stating that I really just wanted to be here and not do anything for a while, I have been very active in all aspects of church life here. I have taught both adult and youth Sunday School, and at one time or another, have been on every Committee of the church except Property, often chairing. I have also served as a Deacon in the past. I have served as lay leader, scripture reader, and done the children's story in the past, as well. I have served on two different Committees of Presbytery and on two Administrative Commissions. I have been the church's representative to Albany Presbytery for many years. I am part of the lay-preaching team here at Third, and have preached at Oakwood Presbyterian, Hoosick Falls Presbyterian, and East Hebron United Presbyterian Churches. I would like the chance to continue to serve God by continuing my work (by choice) here at Third, with all of you.

General Financial Update for August 2016

	Year to Date	August
Total Income	\$106,809.00	\$11,323.00
Total Expenses	\$111,979.35	(\$12,918.19)
Difference	(\$ 5,170.35)	(\$ 1,595.19)

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 October we will be collecting toothbrushes and toothpaste

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

Capital District Youth For Christ

YFC's fall banquets will be held **October 27th from 5:30 - 8:30** and **October 30th from 1:00 - 4:00** at the YFC Adventure Center in Halfmoon.

Reservations can be made online at www.cdyfc.org or by calling 533-3617. Tickets are \$25.00

For more information, call 533-3617 or visit www.cdyfc.org

Serving at the Capital City Rescue Mission October 15th

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.



Church Workday – October 15

You have a great opportunity to serve God and His Church as we will be holding a fall workday on Saturday, October 15, from 9-1. There are a variety of jobs that need to be completed both inside and outside the Church building. You can come for the entire time or just for a short while as all help is needed and appreciated

In order to match abilities, desires and time availability of volunteers with the tasks that need to be completed there will be a sign up sheet on the inside door of the sanctuary with a listing of the projects that need to be completed. Just sign up next to the task you would like to do. All supplies, materials and tools will be provided so all that is needed is you!

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions please contact Rob Jensen or Andy Miller. Thank you.

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.



Bible Quiz for October 2016

Our quiz questions come from the Gospel of Luke. Since our sermon series on the Gospel of Luke will come to a close in October, the following questions will be taken from that Gospel.

1. To whom did Luke indicate that he was writing his Gospel? And why?
2. To whom did the angels first appear to announce the birth of Jesus?
3. How old was Jesus when He was left behind by His parents at the close of a Passover visit in Jerusalem?
4. Who said to Jesus: "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"?
5. About whom did Jesus say: "I have not found such great faith even in Israel"?
6. When Jesus fed the 5000 men, not counting women and children, how many baskets of leftovers did the disciples gather?
7. True or False: In "The Parable of the Lost Son" the older son was glad to see his younger brother come home.
8. For how much did Peter betray Jesus to the chief priests?
9. During Jesus' crucifixion, while looking up at the cross, who said, "Surely this was a righteous man"?
10. True or False: The final chapter of Luke's Gospel contains a story of three individuals walking along the road to Emmaus.

THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Our children and youth Sunday school classes will be 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 1. What is the chief end of man?

Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

Q 2. What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?

The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.

Q 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Q 4. What is God?

God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Q 5. Are there more Gods than one?

There is but one only, the living and true God.

Q 6. How many Persons are there in the Godhead?

There are three Persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

From Music and Audio-Visual Ministries...

“THE WHEELS ON THE BUS GO ROUND AND ROUND...”

No worries. I have no plans to regress our Sunday morning hymns and songs to childhood favorites!

But modern church growth strategists have written and spoken about having the “right people on the bus”, i.e. people with the right mix of gifts, skills, and heart in the paid and volunteer ministry positions within a congregation. A worthy goal indeed!

Through over four decades of church music ministry, I have consistently found that volunteers in choirs, bands, and other musical groups tend to be *lifers*. Their musical gifts and abilities are so intrinsically tied to who they are and how they most effectively worship God, that they rarely ever come to me and say, “I need a break--I’m going to volunteer with something else for a while.” That is not to say that there are never *holes* to fill. As we’ve seen, it’s quite normative for someone very involved to move for family or job-related reasons. Recently we said goodbye to both Christian Multunas and Brian Giddings. Between them they represent a bass guitar player for *The Red Letters*, a percussionist for the Acoustic Worship Team and two AV Techs. God has already begun to *supply our need* by bringing Nate Smith, our InterVarsity mission partner to try his hand at bass guitar and Christian’s own mom, Natalia, who’s begun playing percussion for us on the Acoustic Team. I’d say *the apple didn’t fall far from the tree* but in this case, it seems to have worked in reverse!

I’d still like to see one or two other folks involved in AV, which could be audio, video, or both. Obviously a keen ear is needed for audio but other than pressing a computer spacebar, the only other skill needed for doing video is a good attention span! Surely some of you are up to this challenge?! And right now, our choir is up to 10 members but we really need a couple of men to keep Jerry company up there in the loft! Can you carry a tune in a bucket, guys? We can work with you. Come some Wednesday night at 7pm to give it a try. Who knows? You might just turn into one of those *lifers*.

A hunting we will go, a hunting we will go--heigh ho, the dairy-o, a hunting we will go...

*With Joy in the Journey,
Sal Sceccitano*

SESSION MEETING-THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-SEPTEMBER 12, 2016

ACTION ITEMS

1. A motion was made and carried unanimously to authorize the use of Post Memorial Hall by the Senior God Squad to host their Fall/Winter luncheon from 11 AM-3PM on December 3rd.
2. A motion was made, to propose the following slate of Officers for next year to the congregation at the October 9, 2016 Congregational Meeting.
 - Jerry Whitman, Sue Laz, Jason Laz, & Rick Russell, all for a three-year term. It is noted that there are still two (2) two-year terms open, and not filled at this time.

CLERK’S REPORT

- Next Communion will be served:
 - October 2nd by Jerry Whitman (Intinction)
 - October 9th by Mike Giddings, Natalia Multunas, Pat Gilmaier, and Peter Laz.
- Miscellaneous Information:
 - Reminder of activities before the next Session Business meeting:
 - 10/9 – Congregational meeting following worship.
 - 10/9 – Worship & Communion at The Eddy at 3:30 PM.

UPWARD MINISTRY

WORSHIP & PRAYER

- Choir has started up again.
- The Praise Band has begun rehearsing and will be back in worship regularly. The band will consist of Jason Laz and Mike Giddings on guitar, Josh Reynolds on drums, and Nate Smith on bass guitar.
- For World Communion Sunday we will be focusing on the country of Djibouti It will be an opportunity to inform the congregation about the country and also begin praying for the people there, Dan McAuley's ministry that will be starting soon, and for the ministry of ReachAcross.
- Sal Scechitano is looking for a few more individuals to serve in the Audio/Video ministry..

INWARD MINISTRY (Encourage, Equip)

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

- Card and Calling ministry ongoing. Sympathy card sent to Steve and Caitlin Dickson on the passing of a family member, Debbie Dickson.
- We will be sending out "Care Packages" to our youth who are currently in college.

CHRISTIAN NURTURE

MEN'S MINISTRY

- Men's Bible Study will begin on Sunday, September 25th and meet weekly at the church. Paul's letter to the Philippians will be studied.

YOUTH MINISTRY

- Youth Sunday School starting Sunday September 18th and will meet monthly (3rd Sunday). Sue Laz will lead the K-3rd class and Bill Multunas will lead the 4th and up. The youth will be studying the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

- **ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL** continues to meet on Sunday mornings and is studying Christian Apologetics.

- **SENIOR'S MINISTRY** will be sponsoring the Fall/Winter luncheon on Saturday December 3rd.

OUTWARD MINISTRY Engage, Evangelize, Extend)

- Spending for September: \$500-Capital City Rescue Mission, \$500-Bangladesh Youth For Christ, \$300-InterVarsity (Hudson Valley Community College), \$500-Capital District Youth For Christ
- We will be finalizing the church logo and tagline soon.
- We will be looking at some mission projects for the Fall and Winter.
- Next time to serve at the Capital City Rescue Mission is October 15th.

STEWARDSHIP (Upward, Inward, Outward)

GENERAL FUND/FINANCE

- We had a negative cash flow during August of \$1,595.19. This brings our year-to-date deficit to \$5,170.35.
- We are short about \$150 per week in order for us to break even.
- 2017 Committee budgets are due to Andy Miller by October 10th.

PROPERTY - We will be holding a Church workday on Saturday October 15th.

PERSONNEL - Reviewing all position descriptions to see if any changes need to be made.

NOMINATING - The Committee considered many names and had significant prayerful consideration, we have extended the offer to a number of eligible members. We would like to present four people who have accepted the call to become Elders for three-year terms:

- Jerry Whitman, Sue Laz, Jason Laz, and Rick Russell.

ALBANY PRESBYTERY - Next meeting is Saturday October 1st at the Korean Presbyterian Church, 71 Knox Dr. Schenectady, NY from 9 AM-4 PM.

Mission Spotlight:



Voice of the Martyrs

“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.” Hebrews 13:3

Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) is a non-profit, inter-denominational Christian organization dedicated to assisting the persecuted church worldwide. VOM was founded in 1967 by Pastor Richard Wurmbrand, who was imprisoned for 14 years in Communist Romania for his faith in Christ. His wife, Sabina, was imprisoned for three years. In the 1960s, Richard, Sabina, and their son, Mihai, were ransomed out of Romania and came to the United States.

Through their travels, the Wurmbrands spread the message of the atrocities that Christians face in restricted nations, while establishing a network of offices dedicated to assisting the persecuted church. The Voice of the Martyrs continues in this mission around the world today through the following main purposes:

VOM’s Five Main Purposes:

1. To encourage and empower Christians to fulfill the Great Commission in areas of the world where they are persecuted for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. To provide practical relief and spiritual support to the families of Christian martyrs.
3. To equip persecuted Christians to love and win to Christ those who are opposed to the gospel in their part of the world.
4. To undertake projects of encouragement, helping believers rebuild their lives and Christian witness in countries where they have formerly suffered oppression.
5. To promote the fellowship of all believers by informing the world of the faith and courage of persecuted Christians, thereby inspiring believers to a deeper level of commitment to Christ and involvement in His Great Commission.

VOM’s Mission Statement

“Serving the persecuted church through practical and spiritual assistance while leading Christians in the free world into fellowship with them.”

To learn more about VOM’s ministry to the persecuted church around the world you can visit their website at www.persecution.com or “like” them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/vomusa.

Please remember Voice of the Martyrs and our other mission partners – Hope 7, Capital City Rescue Mission, Ronald McDonald House, Capital District Youth for Christ, InterVarsity at RPI, Russell Sage and HVCC, Horizons, the Medical Benevolence Foundation, Gideons International, 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.

“Giving Hope...Transforming Lives”

The **Capital City Rescue Mission’s Annual Banquet** and Silent Auction will be held on **Tuesday, October 18th and Wednesday, October 19th** at Treviso, Italian Community Center, 257 Washington Avenue Ext, Albany. The silent auction begins at 5:30 followed by dinner at 6:30.

Reservations are required and can be made online at capitalcityrescuemission.com or by calling 462-0421. Tickets are \$25.00

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.samaritanspurse.com



*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