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September 2016

“Doing the First Things First”

Over the past few meetings of the Session – during our Informal/Leadership Development meeting -- Bill Multunas has been leading us in a study of “Nehemiah”. The purpose of this study is to help the Session look ahead to how we feel the Lord is leading Third Church. Bill has been doing a great job, using Nehemiah as a model, in getting us to think more deeply about such questions as: What do we feel is the mission of Third Church at this time? And, how are we doing in fulfilling that mission? And, what should we consider doing to better align our current ministries with that mission?

I appreciate the work that the Session is doing, and I look forward to what might come out of our prayers, studies and reflections in the coming months.

At the same time, “vision casting” isn’t the work of the Session alone. We all have a role to play. And to help the entire congregation to join in the discerning process, I want to spend the next few newsletters paralleling the studies Bill is leading by inviting all of us to spend some time in “Nehemiah”.

I have been encouraged through our study as a Session to dig more deeply into this wonderful and challenging Old Testament book, and I invite you to journey with the Session as together we listen to God’s Word that we might better walk in His steps and honor our God through the ministry of Third Church.

To that end, before proceeding in your reading of this newsletter I invite you to take a moment, open your Bibles, and read the first chapter of “Nehemiah”.

As we dig into the first chapter of that book, let me begin with a question: Have you ever had your heart broken -- I mean where the hurt inside was so intense that you knew you had to respond in some way?

I’m sure you have. Perhaps it came because of the loss of some treasured possession because of the memories it stirred. Maybe you experienced the brokenness that comes when a marriage, a longtime friendship, or a career comes to an unexpected, even tragic end. Possibly as you watched the news, and as you beheld the devastation of flooding (like that in Louisiana), or an earthquake (like that in Italy), your heart broke over the suffering of others.

Jesus knew such heartache. We recognize His heartache in His words as He neared the end of His ministry and approached Jerusalem, a city of sheep without a shepherd. There, He cried out...

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”(Mt. 23:37)

Jesus wept for Jerusalem. He wept for His people.

Almost 500 years prior to this, another man wept for the people of Jerusalem. His name was Nehemiah. Nehemiah hurt when his brother, Hanani, reported to him of the condition of Jerusalem.

But why? Why would this news about the condition of the city of Jerusalem bring such despair upon Nehemiah: a man who never knew the glory days of Jerusalem; a man who was living some 1500 miles from that city; a man who enjoyed the prestige and perks of being the cupbearer of the king?

In order to help us understand Nehemiah's response we need to take a look at the history of Judah, and, at the heart of Nehemiah.

Jerusalem was the holy city, the special place where David ruled, where the Temple of Solomon was built, and where God promised to dwell in the presence of His people -- in the Most Holy Place.

But Jerusalem, once a place of great rejoicing, became a place of much weeping, when in the year 586 BC it fell captive to the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. Many people were killed while others were carried off into exile -- leaving only the poor and destitute. The walls of Jerusalem were torn down. Jerusalem was left to die -- like a wounded animal slowly perishing in the desert. Furthermore, the Temple itself was destroyed, and the Ark of the Covenant was stolen, never again to be found. It appeared to the people of Jerusalem that the unthinkable had actually occurred -- that their God had abandoned them.

About 50 years later, Cyrus the reigning king of Persia, defeated the Babylonians so that Jerusalem came under Persian rule. Cyrus, who came to power in 539 BC, allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem. He also allowed for the rebuilding of the Temple, which was completed in the year 516 BC under the rule of the Persian king, Darius, after 20 years of on-again-off-again construction.

Later, under the rule of Artaxerxes I (465-424 BC), around the year 458 BC, Ezra the scribe went to Jerusalem to bring about spiritual reform. He saw some success, but the opposition against the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and the resistance to renewal by the Jews themselves was great. After 13 years of work, the city was still defenseless and the people were still defiant. As the prophet Haggai warned, the people were focusing upon themselves instead of upon their God.

And so, 141 years after the fall of Jerusalem, 71 years after the Temple was rebuilt, and 13 years after Ezra traveled to Jerusalem to bring reform, the city was in deep trouble. There was civil and spiritual unrest.

This was the report that Hanani brought to Nehemiah. It was a heartbreaking message, for although Nehemiah was doing well as a Jew in Susa, some 1500 miles from Jerusalem, his love was for his people, his city, and his God. Hanani knew this and so, when he learned of the situation in Judah, he went to tell Nehemiah.

What moved Hanani to bring this report to Nehemiah when he did? We don't know. We rarely if ever can truly understand the ways of God.

However, we do know that Nehemiah was cupbearer to the king. That was a position of great honor and trust. As perhaps the king's most trusted servant, Nehemiah was a confidant to the king. Not only would Nehemiah test the king's drinks before presenting them to the king, thus making sure they weren't poisoned, but some cupbearers, as seems to be the case in this situation, were also involved in giving counsel to the king. And kings were often especially gracious toward their cupbearers. And that would prove advantageous to Nehemiah -- who was at the right place at the right time to be used greatly of God.

Hanani shared with Nehemiah an issue that weighed heavy upon both of their hearts. And God used Hanani as the spark that set Nehemiah on fire, with the result that God raised up one of the greatest leaders in the history of the Jews.

God can do the same with us, for we may never know the impact that even our seemingly small, most ordinary acts will have upon our own lives or upon the lives of others, when we do them in accordance with the will of God for the glory of God.

Few, if any of us, would recognize the name Edward Kimball. He was just a Sunday school teacher in Boston in the mid 1800's. But he had a heart for God -- a heart that broke for his students. Kimball had a special burden for one young man who worked in Holton's Shoe Store in Boston. Determined to share the gospel with this young man, he visited him at work on April 21, 1855. He found the young man in the back of the store wrapping and stocking shoes. Kimball gathered his courage and began to speak to the boy about Jesus Christ. That day, a new life was brought into the kingdom of God

and Dwight L. Moody rose up to become one of the greatest evangelists and preachers this nation has ever known.

Hanani told Nehemiah about the condition of Jerusalem and Nehemiah's life was forever changed.

In verse 4 of Chapter 1, we read of his initial response:

“When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven.”

When Nehemiah heard the report that the people -- his people -- were in trouble and disgrace, that the walls of Jerusalem were still in ruin, and that all efforts at reconstruction and reform were being hindered by opposition from a few regional Persian rulers, he wept and mourned, and he fasted, and he prayed.

Nehemiah's heart broke because he identified with the suffering of his people even though he lived at a distance from them. He felt the love and fellowship about which Paul spoke when he wrote:

“Rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn.”(Rom 12:15)

Roberta Hestenes, one-time president of Eastern College outside of Philadelphia spoke of an experience when she was overwhelmed by her own heartache, and that for a people she had just met.

She was visiting Ethiopia with World Vision. One day, she entered a camp of about 75,000 people during the height of a famine there. As she began walking through the camp, a small frail woman approached her and she placed a scantily clothed child into Roberta's arms. Roberta asked the woman, through a translator, how old the baby was. It looked very sick and severely mal-nourished. Six years old was the reply. Roberta couldn't believe it, from the size and weight of the child she would have guessed about 18 months. As she held the baby, who wasn't a baby, and as she looked upon the other victims of that famine, she wept.

The next day, as she was introduced to a group of African relief workers, she heard the brother in charge say, "Friends, our sister has wept. Receive her." Roberta's heart broke over the things that break the heart of God.

Nehemiah's heart broke over the things that break the heart of God.

Let me ask you. What breaks your heart? Does your heart break over the things that break the heart of God – things like injustice, prejudice, greed, violence, gossip and slander? Or, does God's heart break because of the things that break your heart – things like not getting your say or not getting your way?

And how do you respond to your heartache? Does your heartache cause you to flee the presence of God so you can be absorbed in the pity of self? Or, does your heartache cause you to run into the outstretched arms of the only God who can bring you peace?

Nehemiah responded to his heartache by turning to his God through fasting and prayer.

Fasting was a common practice among the Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC -- as they mourned the glory of a city that once was, and the apparent absence of the God who dwelt there.

Fasting -- the kind of fasting Jesus calls us to in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 6:16-18) -- serves to help us to focus upon God, for, true fasting directs our attention to God rather than drawing other people's attention towards us. In fact, we notice that Nehemiah was fasting and praying for almost four months before the king suspected that something was troubling Nehemiah.

Nehemiah fasted, a discipline that many of us in the Christian Church have quietly ignored, which may in part explain our inability to hear God when He speaks to us, and to follow His will when He guides us. For, fasting helps us to wait upon the Lord by removing external distractions that try to consume our lives and grab our attention.

Now, there are many ways to fast. For some, a fast may involve skipping a meal, for others it may mean turning off the TV, avoiding the mall, or spending time alone away from others. Whatever the

particular fast may be, remember that a fast is done so that we can focus our time and energy toward listening to God, not so that we can flaunt our own spirituality.

Nehemiah fasted because the city of God lay in ruins and God's people were hurting.

We are not a church in ruins, but we do face challenges that can lead to discouragement, and even division. We need reconciliation within this body so that we can rightly offer it outside this body. We need to spend time fasting so that we can focus upon God, receive His power, and work toward healing, one-with-another.

I challenge all of us to make a regular fast a part of our Christian life – perhaps eliminating one meal a week during which time we can pray and read God's Word. Maybe we can't skip a meal, but we can eliminate an activity and so allow for an extended time with God. The practice of such a discipline will not guarantee that everything will work out as we would plan, but it may help us to be better able to hear and more willing to accept the plans of God.

Nehemiah learned of the situation in Jerusalem from Hanani sometime in November or December and he spent the next four months praying and seeking God's will so that he could know how he, as an individual, should respond to the condition of his people.

Nehemiah understood the importance of prayer. It was his first response, his instinctive reaction. Prayer was an integral part of his effort to rebuild Jerusalem. (Neh 1:4; 2:4; 4:4,9; 5:19; 6:9, 14; 13:14, 22,29,31).

How does prayer fit into your life? Is it a perfunctory duty of your Christian walk, a continual point of discouragement that weighs you down with feelings of guilt and inadequacy? Or, is it a natural response of your spirit even as breathing is of your body? Is it a first recourse to help you in all situations? Or, is it a last resort, called upon only when things get beyond your ability to control?

Prayer was more than a duty for Nehemiah. Prayer was a part of who he was. And because prayer was such an integral part of his life, he knew where he had to go and what he had to do in order to properly care for his broken heart.

Nehemiah heard a report and his heart broke. And his heart broke because he was a man of prayer. And because his heart was often in communion with the heart of God, he was intimate with God. And because of his intimacy with God, he could feel the pain of God's own heart. And because he could feel the pain of God's own heart, he could not ignore Hanani's report.

Nehemiah was burdened by the situation of his people, and so he responded the best way any person who knows God should -- he prayed.

Abraham Lincoln echoed this sentiment when he carried in his own heart the weight of a nation divided against itself, for he said:

"I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of those about me seemed insufficient for the day."

A sobering reminder and challenge for this church in our day.

Nehemiah's prayer, recorded in verses 5-11 of Chapter 1, contains three essential elements. I want us to look at this prayer because identifying these elements may help us in our own prayer lives, and may enable some of us to pray more effectively and faithfully.

First, Nehemiah offered up words of adoration. He acknowledged God's greatness and offered praise and thanksgiving, speaking of God's covenant love and faithfulness in verse 5. And so first there was adoration. Nehemiah professed the holiness of God.

Nehemiah knew the power of praise, for when we praise God we get our hearts and minds off of ourselves and our wants, and onto God and His will. The praise of God's people renews the heart of God's people, and causes Satan and His demons to flee – for our greatest weapon against the influence of Satan in our lives is our praise and worship of our God (Ps 8:2).

Next, Nehemiah responded as all should respond who dare come into the presence of God. In verses 6 and 7, Nehemiah confessed the sins of the people as well as his own sins.

Nehemiah interceded for the people of Jerusalem and in that intercession included a confession of their sin.

And he could have stopped there, after all he wasn't responsible for their situation. He wasn't around 141 years ago when judgment came upon Judah. It wasn't his fault. And he wasn't even in Jerusalem under Ezra's oversight. He was in Susa, working hard, making a living, earning every penny he could. It's not his fault the people in Jerusalem couldn't get their act together.

But that's not what Nehemiah did. He owned the sins of his people as if they were his sins. In sharing in their grief he was willing to share in the responsibility for their judgment. He confessed his sin as well as the sins of his countrymen.

We in the church must recognize and accept the responsibility for the sins of the church -- sins committed by those who have gone before us -- for much evil has been done by the church.

One of the biggest obstacles to reconciliation between the races in this country is a failure on the part of the Caucasian community to repent of the sins of our Forefathers. The church of Jesus Christ should be at the forefront of such reconciliation – repenting of sins propagated by the church against blacks, women, the poor, the outcasts of society, as well as against one-another. Instead, we not only fail to confess our sins and those of our ancestors, but we have become adept at closing our eyes to them. Moreover, we try to adjust the parameters of certain sins so as to alleviate our own feelings of guilt. We change the label of sin foolishly thinking that a change of labels will also change the consequences.

A Methodist minister in Australia, Dr. Howard, preached one Sunday about sin. One of his church officers came afterward to talk with him in his study.

He said to the pastor, "Dr. Howard, we don't want you to talk so plainly as you do about sin, because if our boys and girls hear you talking about sin so much, they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but do not speak so plainly about sin."

The minister went to a utility closet and brought back a small bottle of strychnine that was clearly marked, "Rat Poison". He said, "I see what you want me to do. You want me to change the label. Suppose I take off this label of "Poison" and put on some milder label, such as "Essence of Peppermint."

Don't you see what I've done? The milder you make the label; the more dangerous you make the poison.

Nehemiah, moved for the needs of the people, realized the danger and extent of their sins and so he confessed their sins as well as his own. He knew that genuine restoration among God's people could only come through reconciliation with God.

Fundamental to our prayers must be the acknowledgment that we, the church of Jesus Christ, are sinners; but thanks be to God, if we repent, we can be forgiven through Christ, who died so that we might live.

Nehemiah understood the covenant promises of God under which he and his people lived (vs. 8-9), the covenant set forth by Moses in Deuteronomy (Chapters 28 and 30) and spoken to Solomon by God Himself at the dedication of the first Temple, when God said:

"If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land." (2 Chron. 7:14)

Nehemiah clung to that promise for his people and for himself as he confessed his own sins and those of his people.

Finally, Nehemiah closed his prayer with a petition. Nehemiah expressed the people's dependence upon God. He cried out to God for help. He knew that if something was to be done to help the people of Jerusalem, God would have to lead and sustain the effort.

Now, Ezra had journeyed to Jerusalem to bring revival but his efforts were halted by a decree from Artaxerxes I, the very man whom Nehemiah served and with whom he needed to speak if he were to help his people.

And so Nehemiah prayed, because he knew that before he spoke with the king he needed to speak with the King of kings.

Nehemiah was in an important position as cupbearer to the king and he used that God-given position to help serve the people for whom his heart broke. In his praying, he gives us a model which may help us in our prayers, a model which includes Adoration, Confession and Petition.

But, even more than giving us a model of how to pray, he gives us a model of how to help a hurting people through difficult times, and how to do it as a faithful disciple of Jesus. Nehemiah's example begins with a broken heart -- a heart that broke because Nehemiah walked with God. This brokenness then moved him to pray specifically, knowing that, in order to have the wisdom and courage to act in obedience, he first needed to exercise the dedication and discipline to pray with diligence.

It has been said that: the self-sufficient do not pray, they merely talk to themselves; the self-satisfied will not pray because they have no knowledge of their need; and the self-righteous cannot pray because they have no basis on which to approach God.

Nehemiah was a great leader because he was a great prayer. He was not self-righteous for he knew he was a sinner in need of God's forgiveness. He was not self-satisfied for he knew his own limitations. He was not self-sufficient, for he depended upon God.

Nehemiah knew that the restoration of the city of Jerusalem was ultimately in the hands of a sovereign God. Only God could put the pieces in place and bring restoration to Jerusalem.

Do you wish to see revival in this church and a spiritual awakening in this community?

Do you wish to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ?

Then let your heart break for the things that break the heart of God – the godlessness, the injustice, the immorality, the hypocrisy, the greed, the racism, the idolatry, the self-centeredness -- and pray. Take opportunity to pray whenever and wherever possible; when alone or with others; while at a stoplight or waiting in a line at the check-out. Make prayer as natural as breathing. Pray without ceasing (1 Thes 5:17).

If we want to see transformation in our own lives and in our world, we must be a people who pray, because when we pray we commune with God. And when we commune with God, God allows us to be His vessels to bring our God into communion with His world.

Now, Nehemiah didn't just pray and think that his work was done. But before he used his own abilities, he prayed and employed the abilities of almighty God.

David Livingstone -- missionary, explorer, man of God -- was burdened for the people of Africa. He gave all of himself to those people, even up to his final breath. And when he was found dead in his hut in Africa, he was on his knees next to his cot. He died as he lived, a man of prayer.

One of his frequent prayers went as follows:

“Send me anywhere only go with me. Lay any burden on me only sustain me.

Severe any ties but the ties that bind me to your heart and to your service”

I know Jesus prayed and lived such a prayer; I believe Nehemiah prayed and lived such a prayer; but the question we must ask ourselves is: Are we willing to pray and live such a prayer?

A lost and desperate world, a bewildered and searching community, a wounded and hurting people await your answer!

May God's grace and peace be upon you as together we seek to live out the mission of Third Church to the glory of our God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Christ's 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 McGann

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

September Birthdays

9/1 Philip Nolan
9/2 Mike Lashmet
9/2 Aubrey Multunas
9/3 Sally Nolan
9/3 Kirsten Whitman Hope
9/7 Cassie Phelan
9/7 Joshua Reynolds
9/12 Fallon Shoemaker
9/20 Ethan Whitman
9/23 Marie Whitman
9/24 Jaime Miller



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September Anniversary

9/19 Deena Dominy & Howard Solomon

Serving This Month

September 4th

Worship Assistants: Natalia Multunas and
Greeters: Dean and Doris Calamaras
Head Greeters: Peter Laz
Nursery: Deena Dominy and Angelina Solomon
Communion: Rob Jensen
Fellowship Host: Ofori Family

September 11th

Worship Assistants: Sue Laz
Greeters: Jason Laz
Head Greeter: Mike Giddings
Nursery: Alice Bentley
Communion: Sue Laz, Vera Whitman, Alice Bentley, Andy Miller
Fellowship Hosts: Lois Pasinella

September 18th

Worship Assistants: Deena Dominy and Ella Miller
Greeters: Jennifer McAuley and Pat Gilmaier
Head Greeter: Andy Miller
Nursery: Jennifer McAuley
Communion: Bill Multunas, Dean Calamaras, Deena Dominy, Doris Calamaras
Fellowship Hosts:

September 25th

Worship Assistants: Kelly Valerio and Jesse Ofori
Greeters: Bill Multunas
Head Greeter: Rob Jensen
Nursery: Megan Laz
Communion: Eric Ofori, Hazel Landry, Jason Laz, Jennifer McAuley
Fellowship Hosts:



Christian Nurture News

Beginning **Sunday, September 18th**, Sunday school for children and youth will be held after worship during fellowship time on the third Sunday of each month.

After much thought and prayer the Inward Ministry Committee has decided to return to a format for Sunday school that we used a couple of years ago in the hopes of getting more of our children and youth to participate.

Two classes will be offered – one for pre-k through 3rd grade to be led by Sue Laz and one for 4th – 8th grade to be led by Bill Multunas.

We are excited about this opportunity to involve more young people in our Christian Nurture program and ask you to pray for those young ones and their families as they seek to nurture faith in their children in a culture that does not value and often mocks such faith.

We also offer several opportunities for adults to come together to support and encourage one another in our walk with the Lord.

The adult Sunday school class continues to meet at 9:15 on Sunday mornings. The Wednesday evening Bible study meets at 6:00 each week and as we move into the Fall the Men's and Women's Bible studies will be starting up again.

We would ask you to prayerfully consider your participation in one or more of these opportunities with the goal of nurturing your faith and growing in your walk with the Lord so that together we might all grow in our love for the Lord for our good and for His glory.

If you have any questions or would like more information, or if there is a topic you would like to learn more about, please speak with Bill Multunas.



Thanks to the generous giving of the Third Church family we were able to minister to 21 families at the Back-to-School Fair that was held on August 27th. We gave out 45 backpacks with school supplies and there were games, crafts, and food available throughout the day. Bibles and other age-appropriate devotional materials were given out with each backpack. It was a great day of ministry to our community!

Your donations of school supplies, money, baked goods, and your time and effort all helped to make this event possible.

Some of the backpacks were sponsored by:

- Diane Lewinski in memory of Herbert Gibbs
- Hazel Landry
- Joe and Lois Pasinella
in memory of Anne Rymanowski and in honor of Delores Whitten
- Stephanie, Jennifer, Scott, Jaime, Ella, and Nora Miller
in memory of Philip J. Miller
- Jan and John Pedersen
- Belinda and Paul Halicki
in honor of Alice and Stanton Bentley
- Peter and Sue Laz
in memory of Jules and Lois Multunas; and Ted and Anna Laz.

General Financial Update for July 2016

	Year to Date	July
Total Income	\$95,486.00	\$17,115.00
Total Expenses	\$99,061.16	(\$14,738.42)
Difference	(\$ 3,575.16)	\$ 2,376.58

More Thanks....

Received from Serena Solomon:

"Thank you so much for your gift of \$300 to support my ministry at King's Domain this summer! Your prayers and financial support are greatly appreciated.

This summer I had the opportunity to share the gospel with over 40 young girls. Being immersed in this truth for 8 straight weeks, God revealed to me just how much I need the gospel everyday in my own life.

I've learned so much! I am sad that camp is over, but excited for how He will use me back at school. Thanks again!

Received from Niki Campbell (InterVarsity at RPI and Russell Sage College):

"As another school year comes to a close, I am once again amazed at the work God has done through the InterVarsity chapters at RPI and Russell Sage College. We have had the privilege to walk alongside five friends as they said "yes" to Jesus for the first time. We were blessed in launching and hosting more than 15 witnessing small groups between the two campuses. We are thrilled to be walking alongside more friends whom we hope meet the living Christ. Your partnership helps to make these things happen by providing training, staff support, scholarships and prayer support to the InterVarsity students at RPI and Russell Sage College. Thank you."

These notes show how what may seem like a small, insignificant gift can have a big impact on the lives of others. We may never know how many lives were touched because of our gifts to these ministries. Thanks to your generous giving to Third Church we can support these and other ministries that are reaching out share the good news of Jesus Christ with those who so desperately need it.

Bible Quiz for September 2016

This quiz will focus on Luke 24:1-53.

1. True or False: On the first day of the week when the women went to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea to further prepare Jesus' body for burial, they needed the help of the soldiers to open the tomb for them.
2. True or False: While wondering about the empty tomb, two men in gleaming clothes appeared to them and said, "Why do you look for Jesus here? This is the wrong tomb."
3. True or False: Mary Magdalene was among those women who went to the tomb where Jesus was buried on that first day of the week.
4. True or False: Upon hearing that the tomb was empty, Peter sent two disciples to go and investigate and to report back to him.
5. True or False: That resurrection day Jesus met with two men along the road to Emmaus, and revealed to them all that the Scriptures said about Jesus.
6. True or False: With Jesus' teaching of the two men along the Emmaus road, Jesus revealed how the Christ had to suffer all the things that Jesus suffered that He might then enter His glory.
7. True or False: Jesus appeared suddenly to His disciples in that Upper Room on the day of His resurrection.
8. True or False: Upon seeing Jesus, all those disciples present in the Upper Room that evening of His resurrection immediately believed that Jesus had risen from the dead.
9. Fill in the blanks: "The Christ will suffer and _____ from the _____ on the _____ day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to _____ nations, beginning with Jerusalem. You are _____ of these things."
10. True or False: After meeting with His disciples following His resurrection, and after saying His good-byes, Jesus journeyed off to the far east to perform miracles and teach others all that He taught the Jews.

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 100. What does the preface of the Lord’s Prayer teach us?

The preface of the Lord’s prayer, which is, “Our Father which art in heaven,” teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

Q 101. What do we pray for in the first petition?

In the first petition, which is, “Hallowed by your name,” we pray that God would enable us, and others, to glorify Him in all that whereby He makes Himself known, and that He would dispose all things to His own glory.

Q 102. What do we pray for in the second petition?

In the second petition, which is, “Your kingdom come,” we pray that Satan’s kingdom may be destroyed, and that the Kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the Kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Q 103. What do we pray for in the third petition?

In the third petition, which is “Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,” we pray that God, by His grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to His will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

Q 104. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

In the fourth petition, which is, “Give us this day our daily bread,” we pray that, of God’s free gift, we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy His blessing with them.

Q 105. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

In the fifth petition, which is, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” we pray that God, for Christ’s sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask because by His grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

Q 106. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

In the sixth petition, which is, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Q 107. What does the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer teach us?

The conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer, which is, “For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen,” teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise Him, ascribing Kingdom, power, and glory to Him; and in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, “Amen.”

In just a few days, our nation and even the world, will observe the 15th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. Despite the cliché, it truly IS hard to believe that 15 years have passed since that fateful Tuesday morning, with its gloriously blue (not a cloud in sight) sky--a sky that was cruelly pierced by two passenger jets in NYC, one in Washington, and a fourth over the skies of rural Pennsylvania. Each transformed into a human missile against the will of its passengers. Only one able to eschew its target, due in no small part to the uncommon bravery of the 40 souls on board.

While the trauma and heartbreak has passed for many, it is no surprise that it would linger for those whose friends and loved ones were obliterated in one heinous moment of time. As we reflect on those early weeks, when we were all stunned and processing our grief in so many different and personal ways, I am reminded of the ways that music provided much-needed solace to the hurting. It would take some time before songwriters and composers were able to turn to their craft and produce new offerings to aid us in our mourning. In the meantime, being an ardent devotee of classical music, I was drawn to several existing pieces that seemed to capture the angst and prevailing mood of the nation. Music like Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings, not written to mark a sorrowful occasion but nonetheless managing to assuage our collective pain. Another was Sergei Rachmaninov's Vocalise, a piece innocently intended as a mere vocal warmup for singers, with only a haunting melody--no words. It's been arranged over the years for just about every conceivable instrument. When I put together a slide-show of 9/11 images for the first anniversary, I chose that piece, recorded on violin by a friend of mine and with me on the piano, as the soundtrack. It haunts me to this day. And lastly, the slow movement from Bruckner's Seventh Symphony, written as he received news of his friend and fellow composer, Richard Wagner's death--a piece that plumbs the very nadir of grief and yet manages to work its way to both triumph and, with its shift from minor to major key at the conclusion, a melancholic hope.

As the years would pass, a number of modern classical composers began to wrap their souls around 9/11 themes with interesting and thought-provoking works of their own. WTC 9/11 by Steven Reich, recorded by the Kronos Quartet, works in the frantic emergency channel voices of FDNY firefighters and the calm and cool yet tense voices of NORAD air traffic controllers. Christopher Theofanidis took the bold step of penning an entire opera: Heart of a Soldier, which focuses on the story of Rick Rescorla, head of security for the Morgan Stanley Investment Firm. Rick had a premonition about the 9/11 attacks and had put into place a number of evacuation procedures for their employees that resulted in the saving of scores of lives that day. And Missing Towers by the renowned David DelTredici, a piece evoking the scars and wounded skyline of the city.

However you found and took comfort in those dark days of 2001, use this 15th anniversary to reflect on all that has transpired and the goodness and faithfulness of our God, who has sustained us.

With Joy in the Journey,

Sal Scicchitano

SESSION MEETING-THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH- AUGUST 8, 2016

ACTION ITEMS

1. A motion was made and carried to excuse Eric Ofori from tonight's meeting.
2. A motion was made and carried unanimously to authorize any possible financial shortfall from either and/or Vacation Bible School and the Back To School Fair, to be underwritten from the Ed Paul Youth Funds account.

INWARD MINISTRY (Encourage. Equip)

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

- Planning for a church-wide picnic on Sunday August 28th. It will be held Sunday following Sunday worship. Bring a dish to share, meat and drinks will be provided.
- Cards, calls, and visitations program is ongoing.

CHRISTIAN NURTURE

- **WOMEN'S GROUP** looking to September to start a time of study.
- **MEN'S GROUP** will be studying Philipians in September. Exact date TBD.
- **YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL** will start up on September 18th.
 - It will be held on the third Sunday of the month during fellowship hour from 12:20-1:00PM.
 - Two classes:
 - PreK-3rd grade led by Sue Laz.
 - 4th - 7th grade led by Bill Multunas.
- **SENIOR GOD SQUAD** working on date and entertainment for Fall/Winter gathering.

OUTWARD MINISTRY (Engage, Evangelize, Extend)

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

- Spending for August: \$500-Capital City Rescue Mission, \$600-Voice Of The Martyrs, \$600-Bangladesh Youth For Christ, \$200-InterVarsity (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute & Russell Sage College)
- Working on the Back To School Fair for August 27th.
- Horizon's Ministry picnic at Brunswick Church on August 27th at 6 PM.
- Nikki Campbell will be giving a Minute For Ministry on September 18th.

STEWARDSHIP (Upward Ministry, Inward Ministry, Outward Ministry)

FINANCE & GENERAL FUND

Treasurer's Report:

- We had a positive cash flow during July of \$2,376.58. This brings our year-to-date deficit down to \$3,575.16.

SESSION DESIGNATED FUNDS Treasurer's report:

- Monthly report for June 30th was reviewed and received. Current balance of \$51,335.72



Mission Spotlight:

Capital District Youth for Christ

Youth for Christ reaches young people everywhere, working together with the local church and other like-minded partners to raise up life-long followers of Jesus who lead by their godliness in lifestyle, devotion to the Word of God and prayer, passion for sharing the love of Christ and commitment to social involvement.

Since 1944, YFC has had a distinctive history of youth evangelism. In the early 1940s, during World War II, many young men, mostly ministers and evangelists, were holding large rallies in Canada, England, and the United States. As the hunger for God's Word grew it became evident that there needed to be someone to coordinate this movement, providing leadership, strategy, and coordinating speakers, musicians, and locations. YFC quickly organized into a national movement with Billy Graham as the first full-time staff member

Since that time there have been several ministry models that have been created:

- **Campus Life** reaches out to youth in suburban and rural areas.
- **Teen Parents** reaches out to teenage mothers and young fathers.
- **City Life** reaches out to young people in urban areas.
- **Shiloh's Edge Wilderness Adventures** uses the outdoors to invest in the lives of students.
- **Juvenile Justice** reaches out to institutionalized youth.
- **Friend 2 Friend** equips young people to reach out to their peers.

Throughout YFC's history there has been an unwavering commitment to youth evangelism and Biblical Christianity.

Kevin Post writes, "Thanks again for investing into the youth of the Capital District with your prayers and finances. Your support gives these youth somewhere to go that offers hope and love from a God who made them uniquely special. Your support gives our staff and volunteers opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our youth."

Please remember Youth for Christ and our other mission partners – Hope 7, Capital City Rescue Mission, Ronald McDonald House-Albany, Gideon's International, Medical Benevolence Foundation PC(USA), InterVarsity at RPI, Russell Sage College and HVCC, Horizons, Voice of the Martyrs, Peter Halder in Bangladesh and our sponsored children – Emerson in El Salvador, Anyelo in Guatemala, and Nageswararao in India - in your prayers.

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 September we will be collecting paper goods (napkins, paper towels, toilet paper, Kleenex, etc.)

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

Thanks!!



Our Vacation Bible School program was held the week of August 8th and was a wonderful week of ministry to the children who came.

We had 19 children aged 4 – 10 attend and everyone seemed to have a good time...hopefully they even learned something!

Special thanks go to those who helped out during the week – Vera Whitman, John McAuley, Abby McAuley, Julie Tootell, Angelina Solomon, Alice Bentley, Alyssa Whitman, Andy Miller, Pat Gilmaier, Lois Pasinella, Sue Stierer, Doris Calamaras, Dean Calamaras, Jerry Whitman and Sharon Simonek.

Thanks also go to you, the congregation, for you donations and prayers. The kids looked forward to and enjoyed the snacks each day that were made possible by your generous donations and your prayers encouraged and enabled all that went on during the week.

*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