

The Third PRESS



November 2017

“Remaking a Masterpiece: From Creation to Recreation”

I want to begin this newsletter by say “Thank You” to all of you for your “Pastor Appreciation Day” gift given at the congregational meeting on October 8th. That gift was greatly appreciated and a wonderful demonstration of “grace” (unmerited favor!). In the demonstration of your generosity you certainly illustrated what it means to be imitators of our Lord Jesus Christ. And you showed yourself an answer to prayer. Just the week before you gave that gift, our water heater sprung a leak. And what started as a small patch of wetness on the floor turned into a significant puddle that spread over the floor. Having just scrounged up money to make a college tuition payment I was uncertain where the funds would come to replace the water heater. And then came your gift. Thanks be to God. And thanks be to all of you as God provided most of the funds needed through your generosity! Again, THANK YOU!!

Picking up where I left off in the October newsletter, I want to continue in our study of Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus by examining those sobering yet wonderful words of chapter two and verses one through seven – words that speak of humankind’s deadness in sin apart from Christ, but new life by God’s grace when we come to the Father through faith in His Son.

Before we spend some time reflecting on the significance of those words of death and life for all humanity in general and for followers of Jesus in particular, let’s first read those words given to us by God through His servant Paul, where Paul wrote:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions -- it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Eph 2:1-7 NIV)

We have all heard those “Good News -- Bad News” jokes. You know, like

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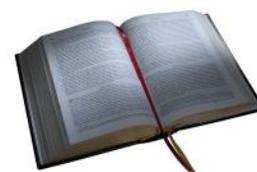
—
A community of Christ
-followers where,

The Head of the Church
is...
The Lord Jesus Christ

The Ministers of the
Church are...
Every Believer

The Passion of the
Church is...
to be Spirit empowered
ministers of
reconciliation to God,
inviting all people to
faith in Christ Jesus
our Lord and
to holiness of life.

—
Our Mission:
To Love our God and
Neighbor
To Proclaim the Gospel
through Word and Deed
To Make Disciples of
Jesus the Christ



the church Stewardship Committee, as they report, "I have some good news and some bad news: The good news is that we've located all the funds necessary to cover our budget. The bad news is that these funds are in your wallets." (If you don't like that joke blame Andy☺!)

We like to hear good news. The bad news we would prefer to do without, especially when it brings us pain and despair, like the news that your best friend has cancer, or, that your parents are getting a divorce, or, that your job has been eliminated.

We want to hear good news, and that is why many are drawn to the gospel, because by its very name it's good news – a good message – at least for fallen humanity! After all, the gospel is a message about a holy God who loves us, and who has proved that love for us even at the cost of the life of His Son! The gospel is about a God who freed us from the power of sin and death, and who desires for us to know the joy of His presence in our lives here and now and for all eternity.

But sometimes, this good news grows stale. Sometimes we forget just how good this good news really is. In many ways, our daily response to the gospel is like our daily consideration for our bodies -- where we forget how nice it is to feel well until we get the flu.

Too often we fail to appreciate the good news of the gospel because we lose sight of the alternative bad news -- and there is a direct correlation between the degree of our appreciation of good news and the degree of our fear of the alternative bad news.

Sometimes we need to remind people of how bad the bad news is so that they can remember how good the good news is. And not just so that we can remember the good news, but so that we can believe it and live in the power, freedom, and joy which that good news brings.

And so, in this newsletter, through our meditation upon God's Word, I want to help you appreciate again, or perhaps experience for the first time, what is the gospel -- the good news -- of Jesus the Christ.

To do so, let's begin at "the beginning".

In the beginning there was nothing but good news!

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth -- and it was good. And then He created humankind, male and female, in His image, and that creation was very good. (Gen 1:27, 31)

Now, in creating humankind in His image, God gave us the ability to reason, to relate, and to respond to our God and to each other. God created us with an "orientation" toward Him. Like the hiker who pulls out her compass to determine the direction she should go, God created us with an internal compass that would lead us and guide us to Him. And that was good news, because it's only as we're in relationship with God that we can exist as a complete and fulfilled creation of God.

But then, as the Bible reveals, sin entered the heart of humankind and shattered that image in which we were created. And so, like a broken mirror that distorts a reflection, we've become a broken image of our God. And like a lost hiker, without compass or map or any guiding markers, we've become "disoriented" -- separated from our God. And, to be separated from God is to be spiritually dead. And that, quite obviously, is bad news!

The apostle Paul wrote to remind the church at Ephesus of their new relationship in Christ, of the riches that they shared as children of God (Jn 1:12; Rom 8:17), and of the holiness and majesty of the one true God who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pt 2:9). And, Paul wrote to remind the church that as a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) they were to live as children of God and not as children of the world (Eph 5:8).

Paul wrote as he did because he understood how easy it would be for the church to devalue the good news -- to forget the goodness of God and return to their idolatrous ways -- a temptation faced by the church throughout the ages.

In turn, Paul began chapter two by saying: **"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins."**

Spiritual death is the state of all people apart from Jesus Christ, apart from the grace of God. This means that at one time we, like the believers at Ephesus, like Paul himself, were dead. Although physically alive, spiritually, without Christ, we were dead -- separated from God and with no way to Him.

Now this is hard for many to accept because if we were really dead, if non-believers are really dead, then there is nothing anyone could do to revive themselves. In turn, our souls would be eternally condemned. And we don't like to hear that. We want to be able to do something -- to be in control of our own destiny. And so we invent alternative teachings.

For example, some suggest that things aren't quite so bad. They teach that men and women are essentially good and we need only to have opportunity to let our goodness shine forth. Certainly then we will please God and He will accept us. According to this view we're like young, healthy people who only need to eat right and to exercise and then, spiritually speaking, we'll remain young and vibrant.

Others admit that we're sick. In fact some might even confess that people are mortally ill -- on our death beds grasping for each breath -- unable to even swallow our medicine. They admit our inability, but then they portray God as the physician who comes to our aid by giving us our needed medicine -- a medicine which, combined with our body's natural functioning, helps to bring healing. Yes, without the doctor's medicine we would perish, they teach, but it was our bodies making use of that medicine, which actually facilitated the healing.

Theologically speaking, they talk about God's grace as being necessary for a person's salvation but that ultimately it's the person who makes that grace effective unto salvation -- even as a sick body makes use of the medicine given.

But, as the Scriptures teach, the unalterable truth is that we were "dead" in our sins and trespasses. In turn, metaphorically speaking, no medicine no matter how good could ever bring us back to life, since our bodies could do nothing with the medicine.

We could be "injected" with every drug known to mankind, but, spiritually speaking, we could not respond because, as Paul tells us, we were dead -- and a rotting, decaying corpse can't do anything to "resurrect" itself.

That is why Martin Luther, who would become a major leader of the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, was driven to such great despair. You see, Martin Luther believed the church at that time which taught that eternal life needed to be -- and could be -- earned in some way. Yes, they taught, we're sinners deserving death, but, one could secure their salvation by God's grace in combination with the right amount of prayers-and-penance-and-works-and-indulgences.

Martin Luther worked at becoming a monk among monks -- searching for that peace and assurance of eternal life -- until one day he came to grips with the fact that he was "spiritually dead" -- and a "spiritual corpse" can't do anything to help bring about its salvation.

Salvation is a free gift from a gracious God. Salvation is a miraculous work done by a mighty God -- and Him alone.

Yet, Christians and non-Christians find themselves in the same trap that ensnared Martin Luther for years. We think that we can earn God's love, or, what is hideously worse -- we think that we deserve our salvation and the blessings that God can bestow upon His people. In fact, that is what some of the Pharisees believed at the time of Christ. And that's why, when the Jewish teacher Nicodemus came to Jesus, Jesus said to him: **"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. . . unless he is born of water and the Spirit."** (Jn 3:3, 5)

Jesus was saying that salvation was wholly dependent upon re-birth, re-creation, re-generation, which is solely the work of the Spirit of God. And Jesus reiterated this truth as recorded in the sixth chapter of John's gospel when he said, **"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."** (Jn 6:44)

The term used for "draw" in verse 44 is the same Greek word as that used to imply taking hold of and dragging. It's a term that speaks of being compelled by the Father, through the Holy Spirit, to come to Jesus; as opposed to merely being wooed, or enticed, or invited to come to Him.

Yet, despite Jesus' clear teaching, there's often an arrogance in the church -- the arrogance of thinking we're somehow deserving of God's love based upon our own merits. It's an arrogance that arises because we forget the bad news of our sinfulness, and, at the same time, fail to appreciate and be humbled by the good news of God's graciousness.

We were all once dead in our sins, subject to the sway of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. We were totally depraved – radically corrupted. Not that we were as bad as we could possibly be, and not that we have no good in us, but that every part of our being was corrupted by sin, so that, left to ourselves we could never respond to God's perfect love, nor can we love God with the perfection that "saving love" demands. (Mk 12:30)

As Paul wrote, we were not only spiritually dead but we were actually practicing evil. For, as the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8 (vv. 5-8): **"Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; . . . And the mind of sinful man is death, . . . , for the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."**

We were enslaved to sin because in our fallen state it was sin alone that satisfied the lustful desires of our heart.

I was once told an intriguing story about how Eskimo's would kill a troublesome wolf that threatened their supplies, and even their lives. As the story went, they would take a long, razor sharp knife and jam it into the snow and ice with some of the blade sticking above ground. Then they would pour some blood on the blade and surrounding snow, and stick a few pieces of meat to the frozen blade, and wait. The wolf would pick up the scent of the flesh and blood and approach the blade, licking the snow and eventually the knife. At first lick the pain would be intense as the razor sharp blade would cut the wolf's tongue. But the taste of fresh warm blood would draw the wolf back for more, licking-and-slicing, as the lust for blood would overcome the pain of the blade -- a pain deadened by the numbing cold. Eventually, the wolf would weaken, collapse in the snow and bleed to death. Killed by its own hunger for more blood.

Lest we think the story was a bit mellow-dramatic – even perhaps fictitious – what's not fictitious nor mellow dramatic is the man who destroys his family in the quest to advance his career or to satisfy his sinful passions; or the woman, who, for the sake of personal convenience, terminates the life of her unborn child; or the person who verbally or even physically attacks another because of their race, or sexual identity, or political position, or social status.

The heart of the sinner apart from Christ is so hardened that we not only reject God but we pursue unrighteousness. We become children of disobedience bringing about our own destruction as we pursue the delicacies of the world -- the lusts of the flesh and the enticements of the Devil. The result being that all apart from Jesus Christ will die -- all who are separated from Jesus Christ will experience the wrath of God. For, those who reject God's love and who fail to obey God's law must receive the wrath of God. After all, God's love and wrath are two sides of the same coin.

This must be so if God is to be a just and holy God.

And when we sin against God, a God who is defined as love (1 Jn 4:16) -- a God whose entire nature is love -- our crime is not just against some arbitrary rules and regulations but against love.

Now, it's possible to perform some work to earn release from a debt. It's possible to make atonement for a broken law. But it's impossible to make atonement for a broken heart. And sin, although it's the breaking of God's Law, is even more the breaking of God's heart – for it's the rejection of God's love.

Suppose you're at football game and you have a few beers with the guys. It's time to head home, so you hop into your car and cruise along, picking up speed, but it's okay because the road is empty, empty that is, except for that child who appeared as if from nowhere. Your speed and dulled reflexes make a deadly combination and a life is ended. And you must pay the price for your sinful choices – you're arrested and sentenced. As time goes by you pay your debt to society. You are free. The law has no hold upon you. But what about the parents whose heart you broke?

You can never make things right for them. There is no amount of time you can do or service you can render that will atone for a broken heart. It's against their love for their child that you have committed this crime, and the only thing which can heal your relationship with them is an act of free forgiveness on

their part -- an act of grace -- a giving forth of undeserved, un-earnable love-and-forgiveness-and-acceptance.

And so it is with our holy God.

The bad news, the news Paul reminds us of today, is that as sinners we don't just break God's Law, which in itself is deserving of our condemnation, but even more we "break God's heart". And there is nothing we can ever do to atone for a broken heart. And so, left to our own devices, we're dead in our sins and trespasses. And we can't revive ourselves no matter how good our behavior or how industrious our effort.

All would seem hopeless. But then we read those words in verse 4 of our text: "**But God!**" "**But God**" -- that great adversative that opens the door for hope and peace. "**But God**" -- perhaps two of the most beautiful words in all of Scripture.

We were dead in our sins, "**but God**", because of His great love for us, who being rich in mercy, has made us alive in Christ through His grace.

God's grace is necessary for our salvation -- because we were dead in our transgressions. And God's grace is sufficient for our salvation -- because God and God alone has the power to give us life.

This insight caused Martin Luther to rise up and proclaim to the 16th century church and the world: We can be saved! We can be forgiven! **But**, our salvation does not come from our own works. Our salvation is by God's grace -- God's unmerited favor: through which God draws us to Himself; through which God gives us life; and, through which God fills our hearts with hope and our lives with a restored, reoriented, renewed desire for Him.

We can never earn God's forgiveness. But, through the grace of God working in us to recreate us -- to regenerate a spiritually dead heart -- we can experience God's love and acceptance and forgiveness. And that is good news!

Indeed, it is good news that our salvation is based upon God's love and the work of His Son, Jesus the Christ, because, if forgiveness and salvation could be earned, if it were not a free gift from a loving God, then it could be lost as well. But new life in Christ is not based upon the abilities of a sinful, fickle people; rather it's based upon the power and faithfulness of a Holy, unchanging God -- a God who first created a people in His image, and then recreated us in that same image in order that we might experience His love, and, in order that God alone might be worshipped, honored, and glorified.

With God's forgiveness comes new life, so that through God the bad news becomes good news! However, such a transformation can only come through God who first demonstrated His power in raising Christ from the dead, and who, even now, has so worked His power in the hearts and lives of believers that, spiritually speaking, we already dwell "**in the heavenly realms in Christ**".

Our place is secure, our salvation is sure -- due solely to God's amazing grace.

On a tombstone in Olney England stands the inscription:

"John Newton, clerk, once an infidel and Libertine, a servant of salvers in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy."

John Newton grew up under the godly influence of his mother until her death when he was 7. Following in his father's footsteps he became a seaman at age 11. His early years at sea were filled with rebellion and wickedness. Eventually he captained his own ship and became a successful though ruthless slave trader. During one particularly treacherous storm, John Newton's heart was opened to the things of God and the Scriptures he learned as a child convicted his soul. Yet, although he committed his life to Christ, he tried to continue in his slave trade. But the Spirit of God convicted him, causing him to give up his ship. He eventually rose up to become one of England's greatest spokesmen against slavery. John Newton became an Anglican minister -- a gifted preacher and song writer. His most popular song, "Amazing Grace", represents his own conversion experience. Nearing the end of his life,

Newton was quoted as saying: *“My memory is nearly gone but I remember two things, that I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior.”*

I have some news for you today, news that transformed the lives of saints like the apostle Paul, like Martin Luther, and like John Newton -- good news and bad news. The bad news is: You and I are great sinners, and, while separated from Christ we were dead in our sins. The good news is: We have a great Savior in Christ Jesus. Through His crucifixion and resurrection we have been made alive, along with all the saints who throughout the ages have confessed faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Perhaps this is new news to you today. Perhaps your eyes have been opened and your heart made receptive to God’s “good news” for the first time. If so, I assure you that such revelation comes solely from the hand of God, and I would encourage you to entrust your life into the care of the only one who can truly care for you.

Perhaps this is old news for you. That’s fine as long as it is not stale news, for the only thing sadder than one who is still dead in their sins is one who has been made alive in Christ but continues to live as if still dead.

And so having been reminded of God’s great love for you: I encourage you to trust in that love; I encourage you so to believe upon this good news that your spirit is revived and your passion for God is restored; and then, I encourage you to live as one who has been brought from death to life, and who now can live each day in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the grace and peace that is for all God’s children – from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Love in Christ Jesus,

Pastor John

PS: As we bring the month of October to a close, the Protestant church remembers the “Protestant Reformation Movement” of the 16th century. And one of the key figures of that movement was Martin Luther, to whom is attributed that theological affirmation: “justification by faith alone” – an affirmation arrived at through his study of Romans 1:16-17, and supported by Ephesians 2:1-10 – a portion of which we investigated in this newsletter. This “Reformation Sunday” (October 29th) recognizes the 500th anniversary of what is often identified as the beginning of the “Protestant Reformation” (October 31st, 1517), when Martin Luther presented his thoughts regarding life in Christ for discussion among the people of God. As we Presbyterians remember this event from 500 years ago, may it direct us to give thanks and praise to our God, who, because of His great grace, has chosen to work His saving power in us, all to the praise of His name! To God be the glory!

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 November we will be collecting cereal and oatmeal.



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

Veteran’s Day



During the worship service on **November 12th** 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.



Remember in Prayer...

Our Shut-ins at home:

Tillie Herman, Marcella Goard, June Giles

At the Eddy: Dot Multunas, Edna Wells

Those dealing with health issues:

Stan Bentley

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

Dan serving in Africa:

For wise use of his time
For his lesson planning and teaching
For his French teacher that he will continue to
be open to the conversations we are having
with him
For his team
For local believers
For his continued spiritual growth

Our college students:

Brian Giddings (Roger Williams)
Abigail McAuley (Boston College)
James McAuley (Albany Law School)
Joshua Multunas (Gordon Conwell)
Alida Sceccitano (Boston College)
Natalie Sceccitano (Houghton)
Angelina Solomon (SUNY Albany)
Serena Solomon (Coastal Carolina)



Growing as Disciples

Part of the work of the Inward Ministry Committee is to have resources available to help all of us in our spiritual growth.

In addition to Sunday school classes and Bible studies, there is a church library located in the corner room at the top of the stairs. There are books available on a variety of topics including Bible study, discipleship and Christian living. You are encouraged to take advantage of the resources available. Simply sign out the book you wish to read and then return it when you are finished.

In addition, there are resources available for you to take and read in the narthex –

Knowing Christ and Walking With Him, by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, looks at who Jesus is and what it means to put your faith in Him.

What Did Jesus Really Mean When He Said Follow Me?, by David Platt, challenges us to examine our spiritual life according to the biblical standard.

More Than a Carpenter, by Josh McDowell. McDowell was a skeptic and decided to do his own research to disprove the claims of Jesus and the beliefs of Christians. To his surprise, he discovered that Jesus was exactly who He claimed to be.

Who is Jesus, by R.C. Sproul. No person in history has provoked such widely divergent assessments as Jesus of Nazareth. By wrestling with the biblical titles for Jesus and the accounts of His life and ministry, Dr. Sproul unfolds the scriptural portrait of Jesus, the Son of God.

What is the Great Commission?, by R.C. Sproul, explores the great commission by laying out the biblical basis for missions, defining the gospel and evangelism, and addressing the need to mobilize Christian believers for missions. This book is a challenge to the church and to individual Christians to obey Jesus' command to go and make disciples.

The Upper Room is a bi-monthly daily devotional magazine with Scripture readings and prayers for each day.

Our prayer is that everyone will take advantage of the various resources that are available as, together, we seek to grow as disciples.

Thanksgiving Breakfast and Worship
November 23rd 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



**Winter Collection for Capital City
 Rescue Mission**

Throughout the season of Advent we will be collecting items needed by Capital City Rescue Mission to help those in need be prepared for the cold weather. Each week during Advent we will focus on a different item.

- Week of December 3rd – gloves and mittens
- Week of December 10th – hats
- Week of December 17th – socks
- Week of December 24th - blankets

With the weather turning colder, the Mission struggles to provide these necessary items to those in need. Throughout the winter months we will also be accepting donations of new and gently used coats. There will be a box near the entrance to the sanctuary for you to place your donations in.

Luncheon December 9th

Come and enjoy some fun and fellowship. A luncheon sponsored by the Senior God Squad will be held on December 9th in the Post Memorial Hall. Lunch is at 12 noon with entertainment following; a barbershop quartet! Please RSVP to Vera or Jerry Whitman by December 4th at 283-4147.

**General Financial Update for
 September 2017**

	Year to Date	September
Total Income	\$122,103.82	\$13,388.82
Total Expenses	\$127,039.35	\$13,579.91
Difference	(\$4,935.53)	(\$ 191.09)

Serving This Month

November 5th

Worship Assistants: Eric and Jesse Ofori
 Greeters: Valerie Bidwell, Vaughn Skarzynski
 Head Greeters: Rob Jensen
 Nursery: Deena Dominy and Alice Bentley
 Communion: Jen McAuley
 Fellowship Hosts: Sue Laz

November 12th

Worship Assistants: Natalia Multunas and Dean Calamaras
 Greeters: Deena Dominy
 Head Greeter: Peter Laz
 Nursery: Lois Pasinella and Ella Miller
 Communion: Natalia Multunas, Jason Laz, Eric Ofori, Andy Miller
 Fellowship Hosts: Lois Pasinella

November 19th

Worship Assistants: Bill Multunas, Kelly Valerio
 Greeters: Joe Pasinella
 Head Greeter: Andy Miller
 Nursery: Jaime Miller and Diane Lewinski
 Communion: Pat Gilmaier, Peter Laz, Andy Miller, Rick Russell
 Fellowship Hosts:

November 26th

Worship Assistants: Deena Dominy, Eric Ofori
 Greeters: Alice Bentley
 Head Greeter: Rob Jensen
 Nursery: Jen McAuley and Lois Pasinella
 Communion: Rob Jensen, Andy Miller, Sue Laz, Alice Bentley
 Fellowship Hosts: Holly Steciuk

Mission Updates

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” 1 Peter 4:10

Your giving to Third Church enables us to support many varied ministries, both locally and around the world. The funds we give and the prayers offered for our various mission partners are greatly appreciated and we wanted to share some of the thoughts and comments we have received from those we support.

From Dan (in East Africa) – “This past week-and-a-half the pace of life here has really picked up. I taught my first two classes this week and realized that it takes way more time to prepare for class than it actually does for me to teach it. I’m also stepping into a new role within my team. It involves trying to deal rightly with charity concerns. We started a committee to evaluate how we give financially, because money can become so divisive and toxic when not handled carefully.

I plan on going out to the countryside next weekend to visit my old French teacher. He started an English school in his village and we want to support him and offer some conversation classes for the students.”

From Joshua Multunas (at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary) – “Classes are now in full swing, and the workload has been, frankly, much more than I expected. I figured after working full-time and taking classes part-time, this would be a breeze, but the second-year classes are much more intense. It has been a lot of work, but good work, and I am finally figuring out a good system for getting everything accomplished.

One thing I’m looking to nail down is trying to settle on a church. Part of the degree program is mentored ministry, so all students aiming for pastoral ministry need to find a church to work at part time under the direction of the church’s pastor. This is an area I would appreciate prayer for, that I would be able to join with a church whose pastor I really look up to and would be able to learn a lot from.

I really appreciate all of your support and know that I am keeping you all in prayer.”

From Perry Jones (Capital City Rescue Mission) – “Thank you for your gift to help hungry and struggling men women in our community. You are providing nutritious meals, safe shelter, good used clothing, recovery and discipleship programs and free medical care to hundreds of men and women. Beyond physical needs, despairing people ready to give up on life are offered forgiveness and new life in Christ.

David came to the Rescue Mission struggling with addiction and homelessness. He joined the New Life Program and was reminded that God loved him, had never abandoned him and would forgive him. Today David is progressing and even leading lunchtime devotions for our guests.

Thank you for making an amazing difference to David. On his behalf, and many other men and women, thank you for investing in their lives.”

From Andy Lightcap (Capital District YFC) – “Steve is the director of our Shiloh’s Edge program. Brad is one of YFC’s most faithful volunteers. This past summer he was with Steve on a very memorable trip. Steve and Brad took two young men on a grueling hiking trip that not only challenged them physically, but also challenged them spiritually. Steve has told me that these young men were challenged to surrender everything to Jesus. That is what relational ministry and YFC is all about. Investing in the lives of kids so that they might know Jesus. Through your prayer and support of our ministry generations of kids are walking with Christ. Thank you for partnering with us as we reach lost kids.”

From Niki Campbell (InterVarsity at RPI and Sage) – “Last Friday at large group, four students on their way to another event stopped by. They had heard that we were the group going around and delivering cookies to people’s dorm rooms. When we explained that it was indeed us and why we would do such a thing, they immediately filled out a contact card. They sought us out to follow up with them! It was so encouraging and the best interruption we could have had during our large group meeting.

Thanks you for all the prayer and support I have received so far. This time of year is exciting but can also be exhausting. Your prayers and support help sustain me, and I am grateful.”

Information and updates on all of our mission partners can be found on the bulletin boards in fellowship hall.

Updates and prayer requests from Dan as he serves in Africa are posted on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Bible Quiz for November 2017

As we move through November we will begin a series of sermons from 2 Thessalonians. The questions below come from the first chapter of that New Testament letter.

1. True or False: 2 Thessalonians was actually written before 1 Thessalonians but it gets its name because it is the shorter of the two letters.
2. True or False: Paul gave thanks to God for the church at Thessalonica because of its growing faith, and its increasing love for one another.
3. True or False: Unlike when Paul sent his first letter to the Thessalonians, the church wasn't experiencing persecution at the time they received this letter.
4. Fill in the blank: "God is _____: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you."
5. True or False: Paul wrote that Jesus will reveal Himself riding on a "chariot of fire" escorted by His powerful angels.
6. Fill in the blanks: When Jesus returns, "He will _____ those who do not know God and do not _____ the gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ."
7. True or False: Paul wrote that the judgement that Jesus will bring upon unbelievers will only be temporary.
8. Fill in the blanks: "We _____ pray for you, that our God may count you _____ of His calling, and that by His _____ He may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your _____."
9. True or False: Paul prayed that the name of the Lord Jesus would be glorified in the church at Thessalonica.
10. Fill in the blanks: "Grace and _____ to you from God our _____ and the Lord Jesus Christ."

From Music and AV Ministries...

“...Who from Their Labors Rest”

As we head towards the end of the calendar year in December we complete the *Liturgical Year* even sooner at November's end. Our civil calendar might refresh with New Year's Day but our Church one kicks off with Advent. The final days of that liturgical year are marked with several notable observances:

- *Reformation Sunday* on the last Sunday of October, noting Martin Luther's break with the Roman Church as he established Protestantism with his 95 theses nailed to the cathedral door in Wittenberg
- *All Saints Day* on November 1, also known as *All Hallows Day*, (whose eve is Halloween) which celebrates the lives of all the saints
- *All Souls Day* the following day on November 2, recognizing all the faithful departed

The word usually translated “saints” in our English Bibles is the Greek word, *hagioi*, utilized frequently by the Apostle Paul to denote the *holy ones*, those who have been “sanctified” (set apart) and made holy. Not perfect, mind you, but made holy through Christ, who calls us to live holy lives, set apart to a godly purpose.

No greater hymn captures the essence of saints departed and challenges us living today than “*For All the Saints*.” With a text written by Bishop William How in 1864 and originally set to a tune by Victorian composer, Joseph Barnby, it tells how God sustained the saints who went before us through trying times. The hymn received a new musical treatment in 1906 by the well-regarded English composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams. The tune, known as *Sine Nomine* (literally, “without name”) has a perpetually moving bass pedal line, painting a picture of the saints streaming through those pearly gates in countless numbers, “Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia.” The marriage of text with tune produces a truly regal hymn, a masterful blend of majesty and joy.

Containing as many as 11 verses in certain hymnals (ours has six--four sung in unison and two arranged in four-part harmony), Bishop How not only hails that faithful *cloud of witnesses* spoken of in Hebrews 11, but also seeks to encourage and hold us up as well:

*O may Thy soldiers, faithful, true and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
And win with them the victor's crown of gold.
Alleluia, Alleluia!*

For a hymn which builds inexorably in power from start to finish, it is hard to pick a favorite from the last two:

*But lo! There breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of Glory passes on his way.
Alleluia, Alleluia!*

*From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost:
Alleluia, Alleluia!*

Even more than when it's sung at this time of year, this extraordinary piece of hymn writing never ceases to form a lump in my throat when I play it at the funeral or memorial service for the well-lived life of a

saint. It seamlessly weaves images of the Church Militant with the Church Triumphant. It takes us on a round-robin journey of heaven and earth. The battle may continue but the victory is ultimately won.

With joy in *that* journey,
Sal Sceccitano

THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

The Scriptures exhort us to be ready to give a defense for our faith in Jesus (1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 2:15; 1 Pt 3:15). To equip us to be able to do that we will continue in our review of the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

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

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

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

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

Q 84. What does every sin deserve?

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

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

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

Q 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

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

Q 87. What is repentance unto life?

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

Q 88. What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?

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

November Birthdays

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



November Anniversaries

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

SESSION MEETING-THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-TROY, NEW YORK-OCT.8, 2017

CLERK'S REPORT

- Request for transfer of membership for Jack & Joan Woche.
- Average attendance for September 2017 was 40.
- Due to Action item #4, membership roll is now at 64.
- Sue Laz is scheduled to preach on November 12th.

INWARD MINISTRY - CHRISTIAN NURTURE

MEN'S MINISTRY - Men's Bible Study will start up soon, studying the book of Mark.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY - The Women's Bible Study is studying the book of Isaiah.

YOUTH MINISTRY

- Child Protection revisions were handed out to Committee members. The update policy will be presented for approval at the next business meeting.
- Checking a date for Christmas Caroling, possibly December 17th.

MISCELLANEOUS

- The Adult Sunday School is continuing their study on the life of Jesus.
- Checking a date for Christmas Caroling, possibly December 17th.

SENIOR'S MINISTRY - The next Senior God Squad hosted event will be a luncheon on Saturday December 9th at noon. The entertainment will be a Barber Shop Quartet who will present a program of regular and Christmas music.

OUTWARD MINISTRY (Engage, Evangelize, Extend)

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

- Spending for October: \$500 Capital City Rescue Mission, \$300 Reach Across (Dan McAuley), \$500 Bangladesh Youth For Christ
- Operation Christmas Child is underway. Shoe boxes and brochures are available in the Narthex.
- Planning for our Community Conversations is ongoing. We hope to offer the first event after the holidays.
- Planning to offer tee shirts with the church logo for people to purchase.
- Danielle Bailey, Regional InterVarsity Supervisor, will be meeting with the Committee next week to share with us her vision for InterVarsity's ministry in the Capital District.

STEWARDSHIP (Upward, Inward, Outward)

GENERAL FUND/FINANCE - We had a negative cash flow during September of \$191.09, giving us a year-to-date deficit of \$4,935.53.

PROPERTY

- Snow Plowing arrangements have been made.
- Will be purchasing a new snow blower.
- Fall clean-up workday will be held on Saturday October 28th from 9 to noon.

PERSONNEL - Peggy Siracusa's (church Secretary) hours have been changed. Office hours are scheduled for Wednesday and Friday from 8 to noon, with other tasks being completed at home.

PASTOR'S REPORT

- Elder Communion training is ongoing.
- Beginning in January, one Elder a month will be asked to present a testimony as part of the Minute For Ministry, relating how God has been working in your life.
- We continued with our study and discussion of *A Gift Of Love* by The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

NEXT MEETINGS - Business – November 13th at church at 7 PM.

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 will be available in the narthex.

Shoeboxes should be brought back to the church by **November 12th**.

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 is a box 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.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

