

The Third PRESS



May 2018

As we continue through our examination of Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus with our reflection on what it means for us to be the people of God here at Third Church, I would like us to spend some time looking at the final verses of chapter three of that letter – two verses that serve as a closing doxology to Paul's "doctrinal" half of this letter – a letter that flows with praise to God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

After speaking to the unity of the church, which moved Paul into his second prayer in this short letter for the church, Paul's words rose up into a majestic doxology through which God called the people to praise God, and in so doing he reminded them of the "ability" of this God who is worthy to be praised.

Paul wrote:

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Eph 3:20-21)

I want to begin our reflections with a question: Have you ever had the feeling that something promised to you was too good to be true, and still you held on to a thread of hope?

I remember when I was little, whenever my dad would go out and we would ask him where he was going it seems he always answered the same, "I'm going to see a man about a horse." I don't know where that expression originated, but being a gullible child I actually thought that we might get a horse. Now, we lived in Chicago on a small rectangular lot with our neighbor's houses about ten feet to each side of us so I don't know where we would've kept a horse, but I hoped.

That was a childish dream. I had no logical reason to believe that we would get a horse, and, perhaps if I would've known more about clichés, I would've known the difference between a promise grounded in truth and a phrase used to silence an inquisitive child.

Paul has made some grand promises in this letter to the Ephesians. Paul has written about believers being chosen by God the Father before the foundation of the world. Paul has stated how we've been redeemed by the blood of Jesus -- through His sacrificial death upon the cross and His resurrection from the dead. Paul has identified the Church as co-heirs with Christ in the abundant blessings of God, and that our status as children of God has been sealed -- set in stone through the empowering and indwelling Holy Spirit.

We who were once dead in our sins have been made alive through faith in Jesus Christ by the grace that God the Father has extended to us. And by His grace we have purpose -- we have a part to play in God's divine plan. (Eph 2:1-10)

What's more, we're now one with all believers in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile; male or female; black or white or red or yellow or brown; European, or African, or Asian or American. The Church of Jesus is a family which cuts across all barriers -- a family commanded to love and serve one another as brothers and sisters in Christ – a command that will bring us peace and joy when we come to embrace it and live it!

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 ThirdChurchTroy

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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



These are wonderful promises and weighty demands. Yet they seem like pie in the sky dreams as we acknowledge our own sinfulness, and, as we observe in our world and in our churches, the racism, the sexism, the economic disparity, the envy, the jealousy and the bitterness that divides, wounds, and even kills.

Yet God promises to unite us as one, and He promises to do so for His own glory and on account of His own holiness.

And so, after three chapters of promises and prayers, the first half of Paul's letter comes to a climax expressed in this call to praise God who has promised to pour out His power upon us in order to work in us His good and perfect will! And along with the call to praise God is the affirmation that God is able to make good on His word!

Paul's words are not pie in the sky promises used to silence a gullible Church. Paul says God can do all that we ask! Even more, God can do exceedingly immeasurably above all that we can imagine.

In other words, God is able! God is able to bring us from death to life through the sacrifice of Christ. God is able to give us meaning, purpose and hope in a world that often seems out of control and filled with despair. God is able to claim us as His children and unite us as one in Christ Jesus despite all the barriers of our world that seek to divide. God is able to heal our hurt, our grief, our sorrow, our physical pain and emotional bruises, and so transform us that we can be His instruments to bring healing to others.

In fact, the reason Paul can speak the magnificent truths he shared in these first three chapters of Ephesians is that God is able to do not only what we can ask or imagine, but immeasurably, abundantly more!

Now as we reflect upon God's ability I would like us to consider that one word, "**ABLE**", and, using it as an acronym, I would like us to investigate four ways suggested from our passage in which God reveals Himself as the One who is "able".

First, God is able because God is **Almighty**!

God alone has the power and the authority to do all that God wills.

As the Almighty God, God has the power to create, for the Scriptures say, "**In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.**" (Gen 1:1)

As the Almighty God, God has the power to bless and to curse. Even His righteous servant Job in the midst of his despair confessed, "**the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.**" (Job 1:21)

As the Almighty God, God has the power to judge, for the Scriptures say, "**It is mine to avenge; I will repay, says the Lord.**" (Rom 12:19)

And, as the Almighty God, God has the power to forgive, for again the Scriptures read, "**I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.**" (Rom 9:15)

God is holy and just, One who is to be honored and feared because of His great power, but also One who is to be loved because He has chosen to use that power to make us His own special people.

Therefore when we respond to God's love we know that we're sustained by the greatest power in all the world, and that the One who promises is not only willing, but also able to keep His promise.

And so, our God is mighty to sustain us when the temptations of this world – the physical or material or emotional enticements -- seek to drive us from Him. Our God is mighty to comfort us when we feel lonely or depressed or abandoned by those in whom we trusted. Our God is mighty to rekindle the flame in a smoldering marriage, to renew the ministry of a struggling church, to comfort the aches of a weakening body; and, to keep us, our children and our loved ones in His perfect peace despite the terrors of a sin corrupted world.

Our God is able to do all this, and to do it for our ultimate good and His eternal glory because we worship the only Almighty God!

God is able because God is **Almighty**.

Second, God is able because God is **Boundless**.

No time span can limit the working of God. God works within real time but is not bound by time, for Peter writes **“with the Lord: a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.”** (2 Pt 3:8)

And God’s timing is always right – He will never have to apologize for being “late”, rather, one day we shall find it is we who will need to confess for being impatient!

No space can contain the glory of God, for the Lord declares, **“Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.”** (Isa 66:1-2)

And David cries out in the 139th Psalm, **“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.”** (Ps 139:7-8)

We are never beyond God’s reach, and we need never ask of God, “Can you hear me now?”

No need can drain the resources of God. God has not been given a budget within which He must work. There is nothing that we need which shall over extend God’s ability to provide, for God declares, **“the world is mine, and all that is in it.”** (Ps 50:12)

And, no sinful heart is beyond the grace of God, for Paul wrote earlier in this letter, **“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.”** (Eph 2:8)

Moreover, the very purpose of our Lord’s coming was to seek and to save what was lost (Lk 19:10), as Jesus confirmed with those wonderful words: **“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.”** (Jn 3:16)

God is not bound or limited by our abilities, our desires, or even our sinfulness. What God chooses to do shall be done.

Yet, we often put limits on what we think God can do or should do – for us and for others. We put God in a box. We compose our picture of God and then we expect God to work within those parameters. And we worship this god who is bound and limited by our perceptions and misconceptions, with the inevitable outcome that we’re not worshipping God, but only our corrupted idea of God.

As J. B. Phillips admonishes, our tendency is to create a god who is too small.

And so we create a “magic genie god” whom we expect to appear on command and grant all our wishes -- not realizing that many of our wishes will do more harm than good. Or we create a “policeman god” whom we expect to protect all the good people, like us, and punish the bad people – and we want a say in who is who. Or we create a “blind, deaf and dumb god” who accepts all as they are and demands nothing in return: a god who is strong on self-expression and weak on sin; a god of “love without truth” which is not love at all but merely self-indulgence! Or we create a “dispassionate god” whom we feel could never know us, never accept us, never truly care about us!

Left to ourselves we will always create a god who is no god at all – an idol whom we will eventually tire of worshipping. Which is one reason why I believe so many young adults drift from the church. All too often the God they’re called to worship really isn’t worthy of worship. All too often there’s little sense of awe when the church gathers to worship -- no genuine, healthy, humbling fear of the Lord. And, because the church has failed to present God in all His holiness and glory, His power and majesty and awesomeness, the god of many churches eventually becomes irrelevant, worldly, and not worth our time or energy, or worship!

Ironically, in our modern day attempt to make God more accessible and more palatable we have made Him to seem insignificant. And, if God is truly insignificant, then the relativism, the nihilism, and the fatalism that infects much of our youth culture should not only to be accepted but it is to be expected!

But God is the **Almighty, Boundless** God who will not fit into our molds, and who is supremely relevant, for He alone is the Author and Sustainer of all of life!

Yet, until we recapture an understanding of the boundless majesty of our God -- until we renew in the lives of believers a right understanding of the fear of the Lord -- God will always be overshadowed by the affairs of our busy schedules.

Paul directs us to praise the one true God.

And the God he calls us to worship is worthy of our praise because God is able to do more than we ask or imagine.

And God is able because God is **Almighty** and God is **Boundless**.

Third, God is able because God is **Loving**.

All that God does is done in love, including His creation of male and female in His image.

We were created to live in a love-relationship with God, and from the first sin of mankind up to the present God has been working in love to reunite us with Himself. And so Paul writes in chapter 2 of this letter, "**because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions.**" (Eph 2:4-5)

Now the love that God extends to His children is different than the kind of love often offered in the world. And the difference between God's love and the love the world has to offer can be compared to the difference between a covenant and a contract.

The love offered by the world is more like a contract. And a contract is meant to protect one party from another if failure in the relationship occurs. Sadly, many people enter marriage today having planned, at least in their minds, how to get out of the marriage before it even begins, and, what the "cost" might be just in case it doesn't work!

In such "contractual" relationships there's little understanding of commitment and even less of self-sacrifice. Instead what is entered into is a self-serving agreement. And one way this is evidenced in our society is in the growing acceptance of couples living together before, or even instead of, entering a marriage covenant.

But, the love extended to the church by God is covenant-love – even a marriage sealed in heaven!

God is the Groom and we are the Bride, and He will be true to His union with us! Moreover, God has placed His integrity on the line as His pledge to fulfill His covenant. We may anger God. We may doubt God. We may even turn away from God. But God will never turn away from His Bride. For, God's love for us is based upon God's decision to make us His, independent of our goodness and worthiness.

Now, our relationship with God may lack the joy and fulfillment that God meant it to have, but, that's only because of our disobedience.

And God may discipline us, but God only disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. (Heb 12:10-11)

Therefore, Paul could write with confidence that nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord -- not even our own infidelity to God. (Rom 8:38-39)

God's love for us is unconditional! In truth, even as the rebellious heart of sinful mankind was causing nails to be driven through the hands of Jesus, Jesus was crying out to the Father for our forgiveness, since, "**While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.**" (Rom 5:8)

God is able to love us, and does love us, even when we're not pleasant to be around!

For God is able to do abundantly more than all we ask or imagine according to the working of His Spirit within us, His Church, because God is **Almighty**, God is **Boundless**, and God is **Loving**.

Fourth, God is **Eternal**. And being eternal means that God always has been and always will be God, the one and only God worthy of our praise, for God is "**the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End**" (Rev 22:13). And being eternal means that God's love, justice and mercy shall never end for they flow from the nature and essence of an ever-faithful God – who existed long before there ever were faithless human beings (2 Tim 2:13). And being eternal means that God will be with us whenever we need Him, and even when we think we don't.

And so, God's eternality means that we have an "Ever-present Helper" who offers everlasting hope, a hope that will not be disappointed, a hope that one day will be fully satisfied when we meet God face to face.

For the God we worship is **ABLE** to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine – indeed, He is the one and only one who is able for He is the only **Almighty, Boundless, Loving, and Eternal** God!

Now does God's ability mean that we will never experience pain, or loneliness, or suffering, or disappointment -- in our own lives or within the Church?

Are these promises of Paul merely a cliché to silence a naive people -- an opiate for the masses as Karl Marx claimed?

There was young boy who at one time in his confusion and heartache might have agreed with Karl Marx, for he grew up believing in God's love and grace, believing that God was able, but then, when he was ten years old, his mother became ill and he prayed fervently for her. He called upon this God whom he trusted but her condition only worsened. Day after day she languished in pain and it seemed as if God was deaf. Finally, one night, his father walked into the boy's room with tears in his eyes, carrying the message that his mother was dead.

Over the years that young boy grew and developed into a brilliant scholar. But as he did he left his faith behind. And this young man seemed to be doing fine without God. He believed he had no need for prayer or worship anymore. Christianity became a mere legend for him -- at first to study and then to refute. Yet, his fascination with many Christian writers and poets kept drawing him back to that faith he had long before rejected. He wanted to believe something but the wound caused by his mother's death, and even more, by God's apparent silence in her pain, seemed too deep to overcome. God's promises rang hollow so Clive fled God, but he always had a nagging sense that God was haunting him, stalking him -- as if God was the hunter and Clive was the prey.

Unable to flee from God any more, one evening in 1929, Clive reluctantly admitted that God was God. He knelt down to pray wondering if the God whom he had abandoned so long ago would actually listen to his voice. And so, in prayer, that young man called out to God for help and realized that night that God had never left his side. In that moment Clive knew that God was no legend. The one who seemed powerless, proved Himself able, and C. S. Lewis, the author of "The Chronicles of Narnia", "Mere Christianity", and many other Christian books, and one who is considered to be one of the greatest Christian apologist of the 20th century, was born anew by the grace of God.

God's promises are no pie in the sky clichés. They're not too good to be true, rather, they're good because they are true.

And they are true because God is able to do all that He promises.

And God is **ABLE** because God is **Almighty, Boundless, Loving** and **Eternal**.

The first half of "Ephesians" ends with this great doxology in verses 20 and 21 in which the Church is put side by side with the risen Lord in the call to glorify God, to bring honor to God through our love and obedience.

But with the call to glorify God comes the promise that we're not alone. We are God's children, and our God has the power to do in and through us immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine.

And so as Paul moves to the second half of this letter he delivers a word of praise to God and a word of encouragement to us, reminding us that God is **ABLE** to work His good and perfect will in us to accomplish all that God commands of us.

Being reminded of God's ability, may we have the strength and courage: to trust in Him; to open our hearts ever wider to receive His love; and, to serve Him with joy, that our service might ascend into God's presence as a never-ending-doxology to the glory of His Name!

Serving God with you,

Pastor John

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 May we will be collecting peanut butter and jelly.



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

General Financial Update for March 2018

| | Year to Date | March |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total Income | \$41,578.50 | \$15,654.00 |
| Total Expenses | \$43,822.42 | \$12,953.06 |
| Difference | \$(2,243.92) | \$(2,700.94) |

May Birthdays

5/4 Joshua Multunas
 5/7 Steve Dickson
 5/11 Stanton Bentley
 5/16 Kim Davey
 5/27 Bill Multunas
 5/29 Bridget Somerville



May Anniversaries

5/2 Sue & Peter Laz
 5/14 Jon and Sarah Purnell
 5/29 Rick & Lauren Russell

Serving This Month

May 6th

Worship Assistants: Kelly Valerio and Natalia Multunas
 Greeters: Joe Pasinella
 Head Greeters: Peter Laz
 Nursery: Diane Lewinski and Jen McAuley
 Communion: Alice Bentley
 Fellowship Hosts: Amoah Family

May 13th

Worship Assistants: Eric and Jesse Ofori
 Greeters: Dean and Doris Calamaras
 Head Greeter: Andy Miller
 Nursery: Lois Pasinella and Irene Ofori
 Communion: Rob Jensen, Sue Laz, Jerry Whitman, Vera Whitman
 Fellowship Hosts:

May 20th

Worship Assistants: Sue Laz, Dean Calamaras
 Greeters: Bill Multunas
 Head Greeter: Rob Jensen
 Nursery: Jaime Miller and Alice Bentley
 Communion: Andy Miller, Bill Multunas
 Dean Calamaras, Deena Dominy
 Fellowship Hosts: Church Picnic

May 27th

Worship Assistants: Natalia Multunas, Eric Ofori
 Greeters: Pat Gilmaier
 Head Greeter: Peter Laz
 Nursery: Deena Dominy and Ella Miller
 Communion: Eric Ofori, Doris Calamaras, Jason Laz, Jen McAuley
 Fellowship Hosts:



Remember in Prayer...

Our Shut-ins at home:

Tillie Herman, Marcella Goard, Jan and John Pedersen

At the Eddy:

Dot Multunas, Edna Wells

Those dealing with health issues:

Stan Bentley, Doris Calamaras

Our Church:

Pastor John and the Session

Our Community:

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

Our World:

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

Dan serving in Africa:

Pray for his summer plans.
Pray for peace about his future plans.
Pray for energy.
Pray for the local believers as they grow and face daily hardships.

Our college students:

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

Bible Quiz for May 2018

As you may have noticed, I have put our sermon series on 1 Timothy on hold in order to spend some time studying God's interaction with His

servant Abraham, and how God revealed His sovereign working in our world through Abraham and Sarai and His covenant with them -- a covenant fulfilled in part with that couple, but fulfilled in whole through Jesus the Christ. In the light of this, the next few quizzes will be from Genesis chapters 12 through 25. In order to narrow the subject a little for this quiz, I will be asking questions from chapters 12 through 16.

1. True or False: When Abram went to Egypt with Sarai he told Pharaoh that she was his daughter?
2. True or False: God afflicted Pharaoh and his household with great plagues because he took Sarai as his wife.
3. True or False: When Abram and Lot returned from Egypt after the famine Abram divided up the Promised Land so each could have an equal share.
4. True or False: When Lot and his family were taken captive Abram said that it served him right for living in Sodom.
5. What was the name of the priest who met Abram after he rescued Lot?
6. What percentage of the spoils that Abram won while delivering Lot did he give to the priest mentioned in question #5?
7. Fill in the blank: "Abram believed God and it was credited to him as _____."
8. In the covenant sealing ceremony of chapter 15, what did the smoking firepot and flaming torch represent?
9. What was the name of Sarai's female Egyptian servant?
10. True or False: Abram convinced Sarai to let him have a child through Sarai's maidservant (named in question #9) since Sarai was barren.

From Music and AV Ministries...

A "MADE TO WORSHIP" NIGHT IN AMERICA...

Every year from late August through early February, football fans across the nation spend a few hours on Sunday evenings "glued to the tube" enjoying their favorite sport on NBC's "Football Night in America." The well-known contemporary Christian songwriter and singer, Chris Tomlin was wise to tap into this fervor when he began to plan his recent road tour, calling it "Worship Night in America." Chris's ministry has been a great blessing to the Church as evidenced in the popularity of such songs as, "How Great Is Our God", "Jesus Messiah" and "I Will Rise" to name just a few. Last fall when I bought tickets for his tour stop at the Albany Times Union Center in mid-April, I was excited and filled with anticipation, as I knew this wouldn't just be a run-of-the-mill concert but truly an evening of inspiring, grace-filled worship. I and the thousands of other Christians who packed the TU Center weren't disappointed! Our own Dee Dominy was there, too (loved it!), and I ran into many friends with whom I've led and participated in worship with over the years. It was a glorious evening!

Many times, concerts such as these have lesser-known artists who "open" for the headlining performer. Indeed five different names were listed in the promotion of this event so I was expecting a "full" evening. Much to my surprise, Chris and all five of his guests took the stage at the start and pretty much held it for all two hours and 45 minutes of worship! At times the other artists might be featured on songs they wrote but the whole team was involved in a supporting role. One female artist sang several songs in Spanish to the delight of the diverse crowd. Chris and his friends all agreed that it was the most "amped-up" crowd they'd seen yet on the tour. And while seasoned performers like Tomlin have no problem interspersing personal testimonies and biblical insights, Chris aimed to ensure we were given a healthy dose of preaching and teaching! He invited his home pastor to join him on the tour, Australian-born Darren Whitehead, who shared an enthusiastic message about the "Seven Hebrew Words for 'Praise'" that are sprinkled about the Old Testament.

It's amazing how smartphones have become such a part of large-crowd experiences as this. Very nearly everyone is taking pictures, recording video, texting/snapchatting/facebooking friends or waving them around like candles with their flashlights on. Not to be left behind, I kept in touch with my two daughters throughout the concert, though for two very different reasons--Alida was at Fenway Park in Boston at a Yankees Red Sox game (so I was keeping tabs on that) and I shared some video of Matt Maher singing Natalie's favorite worship song, "Lord I Need You." Hey, when in Rome...! I do think my favorite fun moment of the night, though, came when I looked several yards over to my right and saw two nuns, in full habits, singing, clapping, and going to town on their cellphones right along with everyone else!

After nearly three hours, no one really wanted to go home. The crowd egged the band on for several encores, which they were more than happy to oblige. This was a spiritually refreshing, mountaintop

experience. Keep an eye out for similar such events and go--you'll be blessed! Another song Tomlin is well known for is "Made to Worship"--

*Before the day, before the light
Before the world revolved around the sun,
God on high stepped down into time
And wrote the story of His love for everyone.
He has filled our hearts with wonder
So that we always remember:*

*You and I are made to worship,
You and I are called to love,
You and I are forgiven and free.
When you and I embrace surrender;
When you and I choose to believe,
Then you and I will see who we were meant to be.*

We are made to worship and we were made for that "Worship Night in America." All thanks be to God.

*With Joy in the Journey,
Sal Scechitano*

CATCH THE SPIRIT!!

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."
Galatians 5:22-25*

May 20th is Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost is the day that the **Holy Spirit** came upon the disciples in Jerusalem, they began preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ, and the Christian church was born!

Pentecost is a day to celebrate! It is a celebration of newness, of recreation, of renewal of purpose, mission and calling as God's people. It is a celebration of God's ongoing work in our world.



Red symbolizes the **fire** of the Holy Spirit and therefore, red is the color of the day. The sanctuary will be decorated with red and everyone is encouraged to wear something red that morning.

After worship that morning we will have our **church picnic**. The Inward Ministry Committee will be providing hamburgers, hot dogs, rolls, and beverages. If you would like, you may bring something to share such as, chips, a salad or a dessert. You are also encouraged to bring lawn chairs and any outdoor games or activities.

**We hope you will plan to join us for this
special day of celebration!!**

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 given 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 month has been jammed packed and this next month looks to be just about as full. This past month I had the chance to drive out to a village close to the Ethiopian border where a local friend runs a small English school. Besides the fun of driving off-road through some pretty rough terrain – and only popping one tire in the process – we had the chance to practice with some of his students as well as learn about ways we can assist him in the future. We took any chance we had to share truth with him and we look forward to going back this month and bringing him some English books for his modest library.

My language studies have been exciting as well. This past month we have continued to read through the book of Romans which has been just as rewarding as it has been challenging. It’s been a truly amazing experience so please continue to pray and thank God for the chance to share with him. It is also incredibly exciting that this past month we got to baptize him as well!”

From Joshua Multunas (at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) – “The biggest update is that this Summer I have decided to do a five week mission trip to Dubai! This is a really unique opportunity to work with a local church and minister to people from all over the Middle East, Africa and Asia who are employed in Dubai on short-term work visas. We will be teaching church members how to both study the Bible for themselves, and how to teach other to study the Bible. This is really exciting because they will be able to take this knowledge with them back to their home countries once their work visa finish. This is one of the most effective ways I can pay forward the education that I’m receiving.”

From Andy Lightcap (Capital District Youth For Christ) – “Alex had been coming to Campus Life for a while and he has been growing in his walk with Jesus. However, when he walked in the door he declared to me that he no longer wanted to trust God because he wasn’t sure prayer worked. Alex told me about the pain he experiences every day that he is bullied at school. Alex and all of his hurt and all of his pain is why Jesus came.

James is a young man who has been attending Cambridge Campus Life. James’ father and grandfather recently died a few weeks apart. Right now James is so grief stricken and feels as though he has been dealt more than he can handle. As I think of this boy and the absolute sorrow that he is dealing with, I am reminded that kids like James are why Jesus came.

Sometimes our ministry sites can be described as spiritual triage units, full of kids who are spiritually sick. These kids are broken and wounded. They’re lost and hopeless. Our job is to bring them healing, direction and hope; to bring them to Jesus.

We are so thankful for your partnership in this ministry.”

From Emerson (our sponsored child in El Salvador) – “I greet you with all my affection, hoping God keeps you in good health and keeps your family doing great. I want to tell you about my dreams. I would like to dive and see the fish. I would like to visit Acapulco’s beaches in Mexico. I would like to be a professional chef and work in famous restaurants and hotels. That is my greatest dream. I want to ask you to pray God keeps me safe and helps me in my studies this year. Lots of love, Emerson”

Urbana Mission Conference 2018



The conference will be held December 27 – 31 in St. Louis, Missouri and is open to students aged 18-25. In addition, there is a track for adults who are interested in mission. Please speak with Sue Laz if you would like more information.

Special Mission Offering

Beginning on Easter Sunday (April 1st) and running through Pentecost Sunday (May 20th) we will receive a special mission offering. In the past these funds have been used to support the ministries of Capital City Rescue Mission, Missing Link Ministry, Nate Smith and InterVarsity at Hudson Valley Community College, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

This year there are two options that you can choose to give to:

- support for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance as they seek to minister to those suffering from natural disasters in this country and around the world.
- support for Joshua Multunas as he continues his studies at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is a ministry of compassion and hope that responds to natural and human-caused disasters that would otherwise overwhelm a community's ability to recover. PDA works with congregations to bring hope and the healing love of Christ to survivors caught in the chaos of disaster. PDA currently has teams working in 25 states and Puerto Rico and in 18 countries around the world.

Joshua is entering his final year at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary as he prepares to follow God's call into the ministry. In addition to his studies, he is being mentored by his pastor and has opportunities to work and serve in various ministries at his church and beginning in May he will be participating in a 5-week overseas mission practicum in Dubai.

If you wish to give to this special offering, please make your check payable to "Third Presbyterian Church", note that it is for the mission offering and whether you want it to go to support PDA or Joshua Multunas.

If you have any questions, please speak with any member of the Outward Ministry Committee.

Three Stages of Spiritual Growth



Being Fed by Others – *“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.” – 1 Peter 2:2*

Each one of us began our walk with the Lord because someone told us about Jesus and took the time to teach us about Him and what it means to follow Him. Think about who has “fed” your faith and give thanks for them.

Feeding Ourselves – *“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” - Psalm 119:11*

“The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” – Psalm 119:130

As we grow in our faith, we must learn to “feed” ourselves through the study of God's Word. Like learning any subject, learning about God and how to live for Him requires homework. Being in worship regularly is essential for our spiritual growth but our faith also needs “feeding” the other six days of the week. How are you feeding your faith?

Feeding others – *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” – Matthew 28:18-20*

As part of our walk with the Lord we are to be “feeding” others. We are to be telling others about Jesus and what it means to live for him. We are to nurture those new in the faith as they learn to feed themselves and encourage them to also feed others. Who are you “feeding”?

SESSION MEETING-THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-APRIL 9, 2018

ACTION ITEMS - A motion was made and carried unanimously to approve the use of Post memorial Hall on Saturday June 16th for the Spring Senior Luncheon, from 11 AM-2 PM.

UPWARD MINISTRY - WORSHIP & PRAYER

- For Mothers' Day (05/13) and Fathers' Day (06/17) we will have devotional books to hand out.
- We are looking for a few people to serve as song leaders on Sundays that the choir does not sing.

INWARD MINISTRY - CHRISTIAN NUTURE

MEN'S MINISTRY - The men continue to meet on the first Sunday of each month at 6:30 PM.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY - The Women's study will start up again next week on Thursday evenings at the home of Pat Gilmaier.

ADULT MINISTRY

- The Sunday morning Adult Sunday school class is ongoing.
- The Wednesday evening study group will be starting up again next week.

YOUTH MINISTRY - Sunday school for the kids will meet on April 15th.

SENIOR'S MINISTRY - The next Senior God Squad sponsored luncheon will be on Saturday June 16th. More information to follow.

MISCELLANEOUS - Pentecost is May 20th. There will be a church picnic during Fellowship Time. There will not be Sunday School for the kids that day.

OUTWARD MINISTRY

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

- Spending for April 2018: Capital City Rescue Mission-\$500, Reach Across (Dan McAuley)-\$300, Bangladesh Youth For Christ-\$500, Capital district Youth For Christ-\$500
- The Easter Egg Hunt was held on Saturday March 31st from 1-3 PM. In attendance were 30 kids and their families.
- The Spring Mission Offering is underway and will be received through Pentecost, with the proceeds going to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Joshua Multunas.
- The Community Garage Sale will be held on Saturday June 2nd.
- We are looking to hold a series of events that will address questions of faith such as, who is Jesus, how can I know the Bible is true, what does it mean to be a Christian, etc. Our hope is that these events will draw in those who are unchurched but may be seeking or questioning.
- We are considering ways we might be able to network with other churches in the area.

STEWARDSHIP

GENERAL FUND/FINANCE

- We had a positive cash flow during March 2018 of \$2,700.94. This gives us a year-to-date deficit of \$2,243.92. Short approximately \$190 per week.
- Manse Investment Fund balance is \$119,224.07.

SESSION DESIGNATED FUNDS- March 2018 balance sheet handed out and reviewed. Balance \$48,835.63.

PROPERTY - Ordered and installed 4 new shades in the Sanctuary. The City of Troy has been contacted about cleaning the drainage ditch. They plan to do this sometime in May.

PASTOR'S REPORT

- Sermon series to begin in Genesis 11, concerning the life of Abraham.
- We continued in our discussion and study of ***Holiness*** by J. C. Ryle.

NEXT MEETINGS - Business – May 14th at church at 7 PM. Please read ***Holiness*** by J. C. Ryle, chapter 4, "The Fight", pages 83-107.

COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE June 2nd from 9:00 – 2:00

The Outward Ministry Committee is once again planning for a Community Garage Sale this summer so as you do your spring cleaning begin saving the treasures you no longer need and plan on joining us on the 2nd. There is no cost to participate. Just bring a table and your treasures to sell. If you would like to use one of the church's tables please speak with Andy Miller.



If you would like to help out, we are looking for people who can help with set up and clean up and a few people who could man the food table and the church information table. For all you bakers, we are also in need of some goodies for the food table.

If you are able to help out or if you have any questions, please speak with Sue Laz.

Third Presbyterian Church
115 Winter Street
Troy, NY 12180

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

