

The Third PRESS



May 2022

“Truth or Consequences – Part 1”

As we know, along with the many blessings of the growing information age comes the ever-increasing probability that someone will steal our personal information – and with it our money, and our good name. But what’s even worse is when a spiritual con-artist comes along and robs a Christian of right belief. When this happens what’s at stake in not the material but the spiritual, not the temporary but the eternal.

Since the very beginning of the church Satan has planted such false teachers in the church to grow as tares among the wheat of God’s crop (Mt 13:38). Although God is patient with such false teachers, a time of judgment will come. And yet, that doesn’t mean that we should allow the weeds to run wild.

Of course, the best way to prevent the intrusion and spread of false teaching within the church is to equip the saints with right doctrine. But that isn’t so easy to do in our day where the need for spiritual discernment is mocked, and where the very existence of truth is challenged.

In its war against truth, our culture has come up with catchy little sound bites that have successfully silenced many who stand for truth – even those in the church. In turn, we hear such things in our churches like: “Doctrine divides but love unites”, and, “Jesus said they’ll know we are Christians by our love not our doctrine.” But what such simplistic statements fail to recognize is that without right doctrine there’s only sappy sentimentalism -- not self-giving, sacrificial love.

There are way too many in the church today who believe the best thing for the church to do is to set aside doctrine and just accept one another as we are. But such thinking not only denies the authority of the Scriptures, it scorns the cross.

The bottom line is that doctrine matters. And it matters so much that the apostle John, who just got done teaching that a key mark of genuine faith is love, almost in the same breath calls false teachers “liars” and “antichrists”.

Admittedly, that doesn’t sound very tolerant! But then, maybe there’s a place for intolerance in our world.

One of my favorite books, if for nothing else than for the title, was written by Ryan Dobson, and is titled: “Be Intolerant, Because Some Things Are Just Stupid”.

The passage which is the focus of this newsletter is 1 John 2:18-23, which we’ll read in just a moment. And when we do we’ll see that John didn’t call the false teachers, “fellow believers who just see things differently”. Nor was John willing “to just agree to disagree”. Instead, John makes it clear that false teachers had no place in the church.

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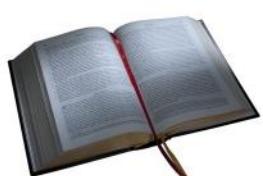
The Head of the Church
is...
The Lord Jesus Christ

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



For John we either hold to the truth claims of the Bible – including what it says about Jesus – and receive eternal life; or, we reject those claims – and receive God’s eternal condemnation.

Up until the end of chapter 2 of John’s first letter, as he confronted the false teachers within the church John presented two main tests to discern the authenticity and accuracy of their teaching. The first test (which we examined in the January newsletter) was the “Moral Test” -- which looked at the issue of obedience to the commands of God. The second test (which we examined in the February newsletter) was the “Social Test” -- which looked at the issue of relationship with God and others. The false teachers failed both tests. And yet, admittedly, those tests could be difficult to “grade” since there’s a measure of subjectivity with each – after all, who decides what level of obedience is sufficient; and how do we measure love.

To deal with this subjectivity, John introduced a more objective test – a “Doctrinal Test”. And the main focus of John’s “Doctrinal Test” has to do with what the false teachers were teaching about Jesus. This “Doctrinal Test” is developed through the end of chapter 2 of John’s first letter, and we’ll be focusing on that test in this newsletter as well as next month’s newsletter. With our examination of John’s “Doctrinal Test”, I want to consider in this newsletter John’s argument for nurturing spiritual discernment as a means to avoid spiritual deception. And then next month we’ll look at how to develop such spiritual discernment.

As we consider John’s “Doctrinal Test” for discerning whether or not one is rightly teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, let’s first read from John’s first letter, chapter 2 and verses 18 through 23, where John wrote:

Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist -- denying the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

John wants believers to be able to avoid spiritual deception, but to do so we must be discerning of both people and doctrine. In other words, we need to be able to identify both false teachers and their false teaching. In 1 John 2:18-23, John’s words help us do that.

Consider first the challenge of discerning a false teacher from a true servant of God. John addressed this issue of discernment by setting forth a contrast between false teachers and true believers – between the children of the Devil and the children of God (1 Jn 3:10). And in setting forth this contrast, John warned the “children of God” to be on guard.

The church needs to be on guard because, as John stated, they – we -- are living in “**the last hour**”.

So what’s with this expression “**the last hour**”? What is John suggesting by its use?

For John, “**the last hour**” speaks to a time of heightened attacks upon the church. And, as the Scriptures teach (Rev 13), the dominant source of those attacks will come from the “antichrist” – and even many “antichrists” (1 Jn 2:18).

Since John speaks of these concepts of “**the last hour**” and “**antichrist**” in the context of church health we should take a few moments to reflect upon what John is saying – for our health!

Now, because he used the expression, “**the last hour**”, some have mistakenly accused John of believing that Jesus was going to come before John’s death. Since John died before Christ’s return, those who hold that view discount John’s letter. But such a view is foolish. John knew full well that no one knew the time or hour of Jesus’ coming (Mt 24:36; Mk 13:33).

What John was talking about with his use of that expression is the entire period between Jesus’ ascension and His return. In other words, we, here and now, like John at the end of the 1st century, are living in “**the last hour**”. What’s more, the expression, “**the last hour**” doesn’t speak so much to a period of time as it does to a state of being. To live in “**the last hour**” is to live every day with the expectation of Jesus’ return because that’s how God calls us to live. We’re to live in such a state of readiness for Jesus’ return that, if He were to return tomorrow, and we knew it, we wouldn’t have to change a thing about how we live, or what we believe, or what we value.

Speaking of this “**last hour**” John identified a distinguishing feature of this “time”. That distinguishing feature is that many “antichrists” will arise. But that raises the question: “To whom was John referring when he used this term, antichrist?”

The answer is that John was referring to those “false teachers” who look to draw people from the worship of the one true God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

But, in order to get a better picture of who those false teachers were whom John confronted, and what they taught, we need to take a moment to consider the word John used to describe them, namely, “**antichrist**”.

John used the word, “**antichrist**”, four times in this letter. Of course, although only John used this actual title, the concept of antichrist appears in the books of “Daniel” and “Revelation”, as well as in Paul’s second letter to the church at Thessalonica (2 Thess 2:3).

Breaking down this word, we see that it consists of the word “christ”, or “anointed one,” and the prefix, “anti” which can mean either “instead of” or “in opposition to”. Since the false teachers were coming out of the church, it appears John is speaking more of those who were trying to replace the real Jesus with a counterfeit. And so, “anti” here speaks more to the idea of “instead of”. The false teachers were offering up a pseudo-Christ – who was no Christ at all. Of course, to worship a false Jesus is to be in opposition to the real Jesus (Lk 11:23).

One of the scariest things about such “false teachers” then and today – is that, as John observed – they often begin in the church (Acts 20:30). And these “antichrists” often claim to have some deeper knowledge about God – thus adding to the Scriptures their own writings. Then, using their ability to persuade others, and, taking advantage of the gullible looking for the latest spiritual fix, these false teachers create their own following – as Joseph Smith did by way of Mormonism; as Charles Taze Russell did by way of the Jehovah’s Witnesses; as Mary Baker Eddy did by way of the Christian Scientists – and the list goes on.

So how can we recognize such “antichrists”?

John gives a few things to watch for.

One thing to watch for is when Christian terms are given a different meaning. Of course this is often hard to detect because false teachers don’t usually go out of their way to clarify how they’ve changed the meanings of common Christian words. Generally, the process involves small variations so that unless one is particularly diligent one may not even know a change of meaning has occurred until one has been sucked into the false teachers’ new way of thinking.

The victims of false teachers can be like the proverbial frog in the kettle. As the story goes, if you drop a frog into a kettle of heated water it will fight with all its strength to hop out; but, if you place that frog into a kettle of room temperature water, and slowly heat that water, the frog will stay in the water until it “gets cooked”.

False teachers – especially those who seek to draw a following from the church -- know that in most cases hitting people with entirely new teachings using new terminology will scare them off. And so, instead, using the same words the church uses, and infusing them with subtly different meanings, over time, false teachers are able to lead even faithful followers of Jesus from orthodox Christianity.

Most Christian cults are notorious for doing this. They may talk about Jesus as “a savior”, but they don’t define that term as orthodox Christianity does. They may talk about God’s spirit, but they see that spirit as different from the Holy Spirit of the Scriptures – who is one with the Father. The bottom line is that whenever we listen to any teacher, we need to make sure we know the meaning of the terms he or she is using to see if the meaning they give those terms is the same meaning orthodox Christianity gives them.

When someone comes to your door promoting their religion, one of the first things you should do is ask them to define their terms – terms like God, and Christ, and Spirit, and Salvation. And if their definition doesn’t match that of orthodox Christianity, be very careful before engaging them in a conversation!

Another thing to watch out for is when someone starts making noise about leaving the church because the church’s theology is lacking. That might be true, but before you buy into the complaints of that disgruntled person, you need to do your own homework, and check that person’s teaching against the Scriptures, and against the orthodox teaching of the Christian church.

This is one reason the creeds were written – as a tool to help test various teachings. If there’s a problem with the church’s teaching, a genuine believer will seek to work within the church and among the leaders to correct the error, not

seek to leave the church and bring others with them. Certainly sometimes errors can become so bad that a split is necessary. But such should only occur after every avenue for the recovery of truth has been tried.

John spoke to this situation of divisiveness within the church when he wrote:

"They went out from us, but they were not really of us: for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us." (1 Jn 2:19)

Note that John was not speaking here of those who for some reason become disillusioned with one church and seek a new church. That isn't a good way to deal with issues, although, for some, it's the best they can do considering their current spiritual state. Instead, John was talking about those who leave the church and seek to divide the church as they leave. John was speaking of those who claim to have new truth that others don't understand and who leave their church looking for a place to plant their seeds of heresy.

While such departures can hurt, we mustn't allow false teachers to remain in the church just to keep the peace. After all, as John noted, they never really were a part of the church anyway, because that's not how genuine believers behave!

Something else to look for if one's teaching is suspect is to see to whom those false teachers are directing the devotion of others. As John noted, a key goal of false teachers is not to call people to follow the Jesus of the Bible but to follow either a distorted view of Jesus – or even to follow the false teacher himself or herself. But to do that is not to share the same Spirit as genuine followers of Jesus.

If a person truly belongs to the Lord and is walking in God's Spirit, he or she will want to build up the Body of Christ, and will work to direct people, not to themselves, but to Jesus.

Still another thing to look for when doctrinal disputes arise in the church is whether or not there's a willingness to persevere together to seek truth. Every church is imperfect. And all leaders will disappoint and make mistakes. But a church is a family in Christ Jesus. On the one hand all believers are born into the church universal through new birth. At the same time, by God's command we're to be a part of a particular church. And so, when we join a church we do so out of obedience to God and with the conviction that our sovereign God put us there, at the time, for the work God has for us within that particular expression of the Body of Christ. And that means that unless God clearly moves us, we need to worship and serve, live and share, with the spiritual family God gives us. In fact, it's only by persevering together and serving together that we come to learn what being the family of God is all about.

Every mature person knows that the more involved we get in the life of the church the more challenges, frustrations, hurts, and disappointments we will experience. But it's when we persevere together through those challenges that our love for God and each other grows. To put it another way, if we want to stay a babe in the faith then one way to ensure that is by jumping from church to church, or, by staying on the fringe of the church. But if we want to grow up in Christ we need to get connected and get involved, and stick with a church as long as it is walking by faith in the one true God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

A final thing to note as we consider what John said about those who reject orthodox teaching is that John was more concerned about purity of doctrine than he was about church growth or unity.

Notice that John never suggested that the church should compromise on its core doctrines so as to be more inclusive of other teachings. What's more, we shouldn't just let false teachers go if they choose, rather, we should show them the door. At the same time, we do need to make sure that the doctrinal differences are serious enough to warrant letting a person go. And that's why it's important that we all understand what doctrines of the church are essential and in turn non-negotiable; and what doctrines may be important but are not essential. As the saying goes, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

Of course for John, charity toward the church may mean the stern rejection of false teachers!

John wrote in our passage to warn of anyone who breaks from the true church by introducing false doctrines, and who then tries to form a new group with a new theology. In turn, for John, the test of right teaching is submission to and adherence to the apostolic teaching contained in the New Testament.

And so, if you come across someone offering up a new theological truth that no one else has discovered, beware. Rather than buying into some new teaching, John is encouraging the church to abide by the old gospel truth that was proclaimed from the start (see also Gal 1:6-9).

In summary, John admonishes the church to avoid spiritual deception by being discerning of those who are placed or find their way into positions of influence within the church. At the same time, John suggests that we must be discerning of what those people teach. In other words, to avoid spiritual deception we must be able to recognize truth – we must be able to tell the difference between a counterfeit and the real thing.

And, as already noted, this isn't as easy to do as it may sound, after all, we live in a day where the very idea of the existence of such truth is questioned – where the very possibility of being able to discern truth is challenged!

Back in the late eighties philosophy professor Alan Bloom wrote the best seller, "The Closing of the American Mind". In that book he noted:

"There's one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the University believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative."

Bloom continued:

"The danger students have been taught to fear from absolutism is not error but intolerance. . . . In turn, tolerance is the only virtue which all primary education for more than fifty years has dedicated itself to inculcating."

We live in a day that has rejected the idea of absolute truth, especially in the spiritual realm. For many in our day, it smacks of arrogance for anyone to say that they know the truth, and that others who do not share their views are wrong. Sure, everyone is free to have their own opinion, they say, as long as no one claims that their opinion is the only right opinion. This is even seen in many Christian churches: where the preaching of Christ as the only way to salvation (Jn 14:6) has been replaced with Jesus being one of several ways; and, where the sharing of ideas and personal stories is more important than the exposition of the Scriptures.

Obviously, this was not John's perspective as he claimed that anyone who introduced a teaching that conflicted with the message he taught from the beginning was a liar!

So what are the implications of John's unwavering belief in the existence of absolute truth?

We can identify at least three implications.

A first implication is that right belief really matters.

John wrote:

"No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also." (1 Jn 2:23)

In other words, if you deny the truth about God's Son, as revealed in the New Testament, you don't have eternal life.

Not only is John saying that there is truth but he's saying that there are definite and severe consequences for those who fail to accept that truth.

A second implication is that sound doctrine is necessarily linked with a personal relationship with God.

Again, recall that John wrote that if you deny the Son, you don't have the Father. And in verse 24 John went on to talk about "abiding" in the Son and the Father. "Abiding" is John's word for fellowship with God. No one can know God without knowing Jesus – who is the revelation of God. And no one can know Jesus without entering into a personal relationship with Him – a relationship that's by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ Jesus alone.

In other words, right doctrinal knowledge about God is only possible through genuine relational knowledge of God.

John presented a third implication of his belief in the existence of absolute truth, and that deals more precisely with what one must believe about Jesus. From John's letter we see that not only is it important to know about Jesus, but there are certain things that we must know. In fact, it's in this area that most heresies grow.

From the context of our passage, it seems that what the false teachers were distorting was the nature of Jesus – His deity and His humanity. And this is where most cults error in our day. Some deny His humanity, and in so doing eliminate any possibility that Jesus could be our substitute to pay the penalty for our sins. Some deny His deity, but in so doing leave us with a Messiah who was unable to pay the full debt our sins accrue. To deny Jesus' full humanity and full deity is to deny the efficacy of His death upon the cross, and, is to reject His ability to be our Mediator in heaven. But to deny the work of Jesus is also to deny the person of Jesus. And to deny the person of Jesus is to deny the Father as well – who is one with Jesus. And to do that is to leave those who make such denials worshipping a god who is no god at all!

In presenting his “Doctrinal Test”, John demonstrates that we should be diligent to preserve the unity of the Body of Christ. But as John also demonstrates, we mustn’t do so at the cost of truth. For John, there’s no room for compromise on the core beliefs of the Christian faith, because as John knows, such compromise could lead to the death of the church.

During WWII Neville Chamberlain of Britain tried to keep the peace by appeasing Adolph Hitler. After giving Poland to Hitler, Chamberlain went back to England proclaiming “peace in our times.” But Winston Churchill wisely observed, “An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last.” Sure enough, Hitler tried to eat Great Britain too.

To avoid spiritual deception, we need to be discerning of people, especially of teachers, who claim to offer some new truth, or hold out some new promises (or old lies repackaged in attractive new wrappers). To that end we need to know our Bible; and, we need to study orthodox Christian theology; and, we need to learn church history – for as Winston Churchill said, “Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it” – and such is true when it comes to deception within the church as well as in the world.

May we be a people who know the truth; who walk in that truth; and who are able, with the guidance of God’s Word and Spirit, to discern falsehood; that we might preserve the health of the church, persevere in the faith, and produce the fruit of righteousness, for the glory of God.

Remember in Prayer...

Our Shut-ins at home:

Stephanie Miller, Marilyn Gibbs, Edith Lovell

At the Eddy: Dot Multunas

At Beechwood: Edna Wells and June Foltz

At Van Rensselaer Manor: Don King

At Peregrine Senior Living: Jan Pedersen

Those dealing with health issues:

Stan Bentley, Marilyn Gibbs, Doris Calamaras

Our Church:

Pastor John and the Session

Our Community:

Those who do not 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

The war in Ukraine

Our college students:

Brian Giddings (Roger Williams)

Dan McAuley (Gordon Conwell)

Angelina Solomon (SUNY Albany)

Christian Multunas (RPI)



May Birthdays

5/4 Joshua Multunas

5/7 Steve Dickson

5/10 Arrey Tabe

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 & Sarah Purnell

General Financial Update for March

	Year to Date	March
Total Income	\$ 41,496.00	\$ 15,723.00
Total Expenses	\$ 45,198.73	\$ 15,812.00
Difference	\$ (3,702.73)	\$ (89.00)

Help Fill the Shelves at Hope 7's Food Pantry!

Hope 7's food pantry has stayed open to serve families in need right here in our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Any non-perishable food items and/or toiletries are always welcome. Currently they could use juice, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo.

Donations can be dropped off at the church; taken to the food pantry (Monday through Friday from 9:30 -11:45 AM); or you can contact Sue Laz to arrange for a pick-up.

COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE June 4th 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. 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, 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.

If you can help or if you have any questions, please speak with Sue Laz.



Special Mission Offering

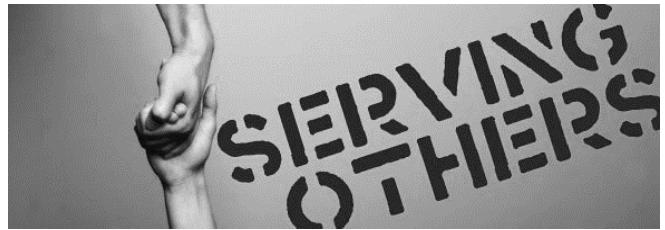
Beginning on Easter Sunday (April 17th) and running through Pentecost Sunday (June 5th) we will receive a special mission offering. In the past these funds have been used to support the ministries a variety of ministries.

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

- support for Capital District Youth for Christ as they seek to minister to and share the gospel with middle and high school students
- support for Dan McAuley as he finishes his studies at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and prepares for his ordination.

If you wish to give to this special offering, please make your check payable to "Third Presbyterian Church" and note that it is for the mission offering and whether you want it to go to support Youth for Christ or Dan McAuley. Special offering envelopes are available in the narthex.

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



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

From Perry Jones (Capital City Rescue Mission) – "Thank you for you most generous gift to help our struggling neighbors devastated by homelessness and hopelessness at Capital City Rescue Mission. Because of the real struggle felt by so many men and women in our community, your gift will make a substantial difference. Thank you for your partnership in this compassionate work which offers hope and support in the name of Jesus Christ."

From Andy Lightcap (Capital District YFC) – "Jonah has continued to stay involved in these last two years. Just a few weeks ago several of the Campus Life leaders had the opportunity to go cheer Jonah and his brother on at their soccer game. As we cheered him on, you could see his eyes light up with pride. We are investing in kids like Jonah by going to where they are and entering their world with the hopes of showing them Jesus. While this particular Saturday was just a soccer game, I believe Jonah saw Jesus through our team and our prayer is that he will soon surrender his life to Him."

Jonah is just one of many kids we are coming alongside of with the hope of showing them Jesus. Will you please pray for more opportunities, more volunteers, and more kids so we can see a revival among teenagers in the Capital Region?

From Peter Halder (Bangladesh YFC) – "After a long break, we are able to start our work among the Madrasha (Islamic religious institution) students again. There are so many issues those students are facing, therefore authorities invited us to help their students to get free of those struggles, like drugs, depression, and peer problems.

A few staff, including Nancy and I, tested positive for COVID, but now we are all negative and working from the office. All educational institutions are open again, so our school campus ministry moved with full speed again.

All Hi-Clubs are at full speed after a long pause. All of our kids at all six homes are doing well.

We appreciate your prayers and financial support to reach unreached people and lost kids. Please continuously pray and support as He leads your heart."

Newsletters from the Vissani's, Niki Campbell, and Peter Halder are posted on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Bible Quiz for May 2022

This Bible quiz will consist of questions related to John chapters 20 and 21.

1. On the morning of Jesus' resurrection who were the first of Jesus' followers to the empty tomb?
2. True or False: When Mary Magdalene first saw Jesus in the garden after His resurrection she fell at His feet and called out, "My Lord and my God!"
3. What does the word written as "Rabboni" (Aramaic transliteration) translate to in English?
4. Why were the disciples gathered in the Upper Room with doors locked on the evening of the first day of Jesus' resurrection?
5. To whom did Jesus say, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
6. Later, when Jesus appeared to some of His disciples by the Sea of Galilee how many disciples were present?
7. How many fish did the disciples catch before they encountered Jesus? How many after they followed His instructions?
8. Who among those on the boat fishing was the first to recognize that it was Jesus who was calling to them from the shore?
9. After they had all eaten, to whom did Jesus ask, "Do you love me?" How many times did Jesus ask that question (in various forms)?
10. Of whom, and to whom, did Jesus say: "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

(Answers: 1. Some women, including Mary Magdalene; 2. False; 3. Teacher; 4. For fear of the Jewish leaders; 5. Thomas; 6. Seven; 7. Zero, 153; 8. John; 9. Peter, three; 10. John, Peter.)

Session Meeting
Monday, 7pm -- April 24, 2022

Those members present, which did constitute a quorum, were Deena Dominy, Sue Laz, Abby McAuley, Bill Multunas, and Kelly Valerio. Also present was Andy Miller.

Action Items: A motion was passed to approve the agenda and the Session minutes of March 14th, 28th, and April 11th.

Old Business: Our relationship with PC(USA) -- Kaitlyn Wood and an elder from ECO, and Pastor of the United Church of Cohoes (ECOPC) will be meeting with us on May 23rd; Andy presented a list of some of the financial considerations of this transition to ECO; there may be some needed changes to our by-laws once we transition to ECO; a draft of the application to join ECO will be presented at our next meeting for Session approval.

Clerk's Report: Communion was served March 20th, 27th, and April 3rd, 10th, 14th (Maundy Thursday), 17th, and 24th; Average in-person attendance for March was 26; online is estimated at 10-15; Sue Laz preached on April 24th; Sal Scecchitano will preach on May 8th and Andy Miller will do Communion.

Committee Reports

- Upward Ministry (Worship and Prayer): Prayer ministry is ongoing; The choir season will end on June 5th (Pentecost Sunday)
- Inward Ministry (Congregational Care and Christian Nurture): Sent Easter cards to our shut-ins and seniors; Spring care packages will be sent to our college students; Youth Sunday school will meet May 1st following worship.
- Outward Ministry (Mission, Outreach and Communications): Mission spending for March -- Bangladesh YFC, \$1,000; InterVarsity, \$700; Church Around the World inserts, \$48; Community Garage Sale will be held June 4th from 9-2; Spring Mission Offering is underway.
- Stewardship
 - Finance (General Fund and Session Designated Funds): The General Fund treasurer's report was reviewed. There was a negative cash flow during March of \$89.00. This gives us a YTD deficit of \$3,702.73. We are short \$285 per week to break even; First quarter offering statements were distributed;
 - Property: Lawn mowing equipment has been serviced; Snow blower has been repaired and stored for the summer; Lawn mowing schedule is being prepared; Church grounds were cleared of winter debris and the curb on Cameron Road has been repaired.
- Nominating: The committee has met twice in its work and are currently studying Scripture on the role and character of the elder; We will meet again on May 15th.
- Albany Presbytery: Gave a \$2,000 gift to PDA to aid the work with refugees in Ukraine; A new General Presbyter, Rob Traywick, was approved at a special meeting held April 7th; Next meeting will be June 2nd from 4:30-7:30. This will be an in-person meeting.

Pastor's Report: Sermon series on the Gospel of John is continuing; Sunday School class on New Testament Theology is ongoing; Continued our study and discussion of Lead, by Paul David Tripp, looking at chapter 6.

New Business: We will send a card and a gift of \$500 to Capital City Rescue Mission in honor of Perry Jones' 40th anniversary of leadership there. The funds will come from the Mission Envelope funds; The church directory will be updated, and copies made available.

Next Meetings: May 9th at 7:00. Business Meeting. Please read chapter 7 of Lead by Paul David Tripp; May 23rd at 7:00. Informal/Study Meeting. Please read chapter 8 of Lead by Paul David Tripp.

Time was spent sharing congregational concerns. These were included in the closing prayer.
The meeting was closed with prayer at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Laz, Clerk



ELEVATING GOD / PROCLAIMING CHRIST / MAKING DISCIPLES
THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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