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January 2008

The New Year is upon us and it's time for those resolutions to begin.

We often joke about our New Year's resolutions – about how long it will take us to do what we said we would stop doing, or how long before we stop doing what we said we would do.

But I believe there is something good about making such resolutions, even if we struggle to keep them. The New Year is a good time for reflection and consideration. It's a good time to reflect upon the past year, and our lives, and how we lived this past year: How we've loved and served others? How we've used our gifts for God's glory? How we lived as a people of hope and purpose?

The New Year is also a good time to consider what we need to change in our lives that our lives might better glorify God. And in our considering, the New Year gives us opportunity to plan, and at least begin to act, that we might grow in Christ, living more and more of our lives in a manner that pleases God.

The New Year with its resolutions serve as a reminder of God's love and forgiveness, and of God's desire to work in us what is pleasing in His sight.

And so, as we enter the New Year, I hope you have or will commit to looking back, and looking ahead, and asking the Lord to guide your ways and direct your steps, that this New Year will be one of maturing ever more in Christ, and of being more and more the person God wants you to be.

Of course, such reflection might mean doing some new things as well as giving up some old things.

As for me, one of the areas I want to be more faithful in is my Bible reading and personal prayer times.

Last year I read through the Bible and it was a great experience (Although it wasn't easy! There were times when I fell behind several days and had to work hard to catch up!). I have read through the Bible several times in the past, but then I had stopped doing it for a few years (or better, I had started and then gave up!).

I would encourage you to set up a Bible reading plan that fits your needs and desires. Reading through the entire Bible may not be for you, but certainly reading some portion of the Scriptures every day should be a part of every believer's routine.

In some ways, reading a portion of God's Word every day is to our spirits what eating every day is to our bodies. Sure, we don't always remember what we eat, but we know when we don't. You may not seem to get a lot out of your Bible reading on a particular day, or even for several days in a row, but God's Word works in our heart and mind in ways we don't even realize giving us spiritual and emotional health and strength.

I encourage you to turn to God's Word every day. Take up your Bible and read. If you're not sure what to read, follow along with our Bible reading plan at Third Church, which for the next 5 months will involve reading one Psalm a day. Or, do what I am doing and get one of those "One Year" Bibles that are already laid out with daily readings. Giving about 15 minutes a day, you will find yourself at the end of the year having read through the entire Bible.

Of course there are many other things we can resolve to do that would be good for each of us – like getting physical exercise regularly (at least 3 times a week); and getting a full nights sleep; and eating

healthy meals; and watching less TV; and gathering weekly with our faith family to worship the Lord; and finding a particular ministry where we can use our gifts to help others (like visiting shut-ins, or serving meals to the homeless, giving of our financial resources to the needy).

As I mentioned, I am resolving to read through the Bible again this year, along with my weekly study of the Bible for the studies I lead. I also am using a few different prayer guides to help direct and discipline my prayer times. I have a few books of prayers that I plan to read from daily as “catalysts” for my own prayers. One such prayer book is “The Valley of Vision”. It’s a collection of some 90-plus Puritan prayers. I would encourage you to find some such resource and allow the prayers of saints of old to help “inspire” and “expand” your own prayer life.

Another resolution you might want to consider is to connect to a small group of some sort that will help nurture your faith, whether that group be a support group (Like our Men’s group that meets on Wednesday evenings), or a Bible study group (like our two women’s studies that meet on Wednesday morning and Thursday evening; or like our youth group), or a service group (like serving at the Capital City Rescue Mission; or hosting International Students; or serving with the choir), or a Sunday school (I’m beginning a new study on Christian Ethics on January 13th as we consider current issues from a Christian perspective – issues like abortion, euthanasia, poverty, genetic engineering, war, etc.). Whatever type of small group it might be, connect with one that will encourage you in the faith and challenge you to grow in your knowledge of and love for God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

As we move into the New Year I want also to let you know about my preaching plans. This year I’m excited about beginning a series of sermons on the book of “Acts”. As I have the series laid out now, it will take at least the full year to work through this book (approximately 47 Sundays), but I believe it will be an edifying experience for us all.

The book of “Acts” focuses upon the spread of the gospel and the growth of the church in the first decades after the death and resurrection of Jesus. “Acts” is about seeking the Lord, and sharing the gospel, and facing hardship for the faith, and standing strong in the Lord. I believe this book is relevant to our times as we seek to be the presence of Christ in a world that is often hostile to the gospel – if not overtly then certainly covertly.

As we enter the New Year I pray that God will give you the desire and discipline to live more fully, more joyfully, and more thankfully as the Lord leads and empowers you. And I would ask you to pray for me, that I might have the discipline to do those things I’ve resolved to do that will grow my faith and make me a better servant of Third Church, and ultimately that will honor God. And if there are things I haven’t resolved to do that the Lord desires of me, then pray for me, that I will have the insight to rightly discern and commitment to faithfully do as the Lord leads.

I look forward to serving with you in 2008, and I pray that it will be a year of bearing great fruit in our lives and in God’s church – to the praise of His Holy Name.

Love in Christ Jesus,

Pastor John

PS: Join with me in welcoming Lauren Lomanto to our ministry as she uses her gifts to help us better worship and serve our God. Lauren will be serving with us from January 6th through May 11th, as the Lord enables. Please pray for her ministry to us and her studies at RPI, and please show her the warmest welcome and the most gracious hospitality as she serves with us.



Remember in Prayer...

Our Shut-ins at home:

Madeline Mundell, Tillie Herman, Roland and Ilean Lovering, Annette Simpson, Les and Peg Allen

At The Springs: Thelma and Ernie Naylor

At Heritage: Kay Ray

At Evergreen Commons: Wilson Large

At the Atria: Dick Peverly

Those dealing with health issues:

- Jim Geddis, Fred Morlock, Wayman Sagendorf

Our Church:

- Pastor John, the Elders and Deacons
- The new Congregational Care Committee

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.

Youth Fellowship

Our **Youth Fellowship** group meets on the **first and third Wednesdays** of each month from **6:00 – 7:30**. Anyone in grades **6-12** is welcome to join. We usually have a time for games and other activities, a devotional time, and, of course, **SNACK** time. For more information please speak with Bill Multunas.

Girls Fellowship

The Girl's Fellowship will meet **January 12th** at **1:00 at the church**. Any young ladies in grades 6-12 are invited to join us.



FAMILY NIGHT January 12th from 4-7 P.M.

The Christian Nurture Committee is planning an evening of fun, fellowship, and food (of course!) on January 12th. Everyone is invited to join us to share a meal together and spend some time playing games. We will then end the evening with a brief time of worship. Please bring a dish to share and your favorite game – and a friend!!



MEN'S GROUP

After taking a break for the holidays, the Men's Group will be starting up again in January. We will gather on January 13th at 6:00 and share a meal together and recap what we learned in the first 5 sessions of Phillip Yancy's study on God's grace. We will continue with the final 5 sessions that study beginning on January 27th at 6:00. All men are invited to join us for this time of fellowship and study.

Welcome to Lauren Lomanto

The Session has voted to hire Lauren Lomanto to serve as our minister of music while Joan is away. Lauren is a gifted musician who is a classically trained pianist and has several years experience working with church and school choirs. She is an RPI student (Computer Science program) and also active in RPI's music program. Lauren grew up in Mineola, TX where she was Valedictorian of her high school class. She is a member of the St. John the Evangelist Church in Emory, TX. We welcome Lauren and look forward to worshipping with her.

Those Serving this month:

January 6th

Greeters: Janice Bardon, Deena Dominy
Bob Somerville: Head Greeter
Lay Leader: Jon Purnell, Christian Multunas
Fellowship Hosts- Sue Laz

January 13th

Greeters: Bob Pike, Bob Klein
Brian Castle: Head Greeter
Lay Leader: Michele Reynolds, Abby McAuley
Fellowship Hosts: Steve and Olivia Weatherwax

January 20th

Greeters: Michael and Matt Giddings
Luanne Castle: Head Greeter
Lay Leader: Jerry Whitman, Joshua Multunas
Fellowship Hosts: McAuley's

January 27th

Greeters: Dean and Doris Calamaras
Andy Miller : Head Greeter
Lay Leader: Sue Laz, Michael Giddings
Fellowship Hosts: PotLuck Luncheon

Next Communion

January 6th

Serving will be Jon Purnell, Vera Whitman, Dean and Doris Calamaras

General Financial Update for October 2007

	Year to Date	November
Total Income	\$118,162.49	\$12,261.27
Total Expenses	\$108,389.81	\$ 8,338.03
Cash (Lose) Gain	\$ 9,772.95	\$ 3,923.24

Thank You from Norman: RPI Exchange Student

Thank you for providing such a friendly environment to have a fellowship in! You people have been a great Community to grow in. Thank you for all the kindness shown to me, all the little help here and there, all the small jokes that we have, and for the good times we spent. Although I had not had the chance to say thank you to each & everyone who have helped me. I'll take this opportunity to express my utmost gratitude to you.

God bless and till we meet again up there!

Normanwijaya@gmail.com

Community Nursery School News

Four's News

A very happy 2008 to everyone. We hope everyone had a very nice holiday and you're all ready for a brand new year. We had to really scramble to get our Christmas projects accomplished, what with all of our snow days and illnesses there was not a lot of extra time, old man winter really socked it to us in December.

We went on a special field trip to the Times Union Center to see Finding Nemo on Ice. What a wonderful production, we all had a great time.

Our Christmas party went especially well this year, we combined both of the three's and four's classes to enjoy some songs and refreshments. Thank you to all of our parents who sent in some delicious treats for us all to enjoy. And how about our special visitor, I'll bet he was surprised to see so many smiling faces. Thanks "SANTA".



We're hoping to have a little extra time now that our holiday projects are complete...that is until next month.

SESSION MEETING - THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - DECEMBER 10, 2008

Those members in attendance were Sue Laz, Vera Whitman, Jon Purnell, Peter Laz, Bill Multunas, Dean Calamaras and Jerry Whitman. Also in attendance were Steve Weatherwax and Andy Miller, incoming 2008 Elders.

ORDER OF THE DAY Examination of incoming Officers for readiness to serve. A motion was made and carried unanimously to affirm the readiness and appropriateness of Steven Weatherwax and Andy Miller to serve as Elders for Third Presbyterian Church.

ACTION ITEMS

1. A motion was made and carried unanimously to approve that 10% of any overage in the 2007 General Fund budget be designated to the Mission Committee for mission use.
2. A motion was made and carried unanimously to approve the hiring of Lauren Lomanto as Minister of Music for the period January 6, 1008 through and including May 11, 2008.
3. A motion was made and carried unanimously to approve the use of a donation to buy new pew cushions for the Sanctuary.
4. A motion was made and carried unanimously to elect Jack & Dolores Robb as Financial Secretaries for 2008.
5. A motion was made carried unanimously to elect Terry Marra as General Fund Treasurer for 2008.
6. A motion was made and carried unanimously to approve the 2008 General Fund budget.

CLERK'S REPORT

- Correspondence received:
 - Capital Region Theological Center – Winter/Spring 2008 offerings. (posted in office)
 - Graduate Christian Fellowship – Thank you for use of Post memorial Hall on November 10th for our one-day retreat.

PASTOR'S REPORT - Possible sermon series on Acts after completion of Malachi.

MISSIONS

- We decided to raise to 12% the amount of the General Fund budget to be used for mission work.
- We are using up the funds left in the contingency fund for 2007 as follows:
 - \$300 Voice of Martyrs – for special student and community packs, Bibles and related things to use.
 - \$355 Youth For Christ – for the ministry of Kevin Post.
 - \$355 Presbytery Disaster Assistance – help with disaster where cyclone hit.

STEWARDSHIP & ADMINISTRATION – PROPERTY

- Manse painting is being finished up.
- New back door on the church has been installed and the boiler room door has been turned around.
- New snow blower has been purchased.

STEWARDSHIP & ADMINISTRATION – FINANCE

- Reviewed the 2008 Pledge Report.
- Gave financial report update as of November 30th.
- 2008 offering envelopes will be handed out in December.
- Thank you letters to members who have pledged will be going out in December.
- General Fund audit has begun in December and will be completed in early 2008.
- Financial Secretaries for 2008. (See Action Item #7)
- General Fund Treasurer for 2008. (See Action Item #8)
- 2008 budget. (See Action Item #9)

CHRISTIAN NURTURE – YOUTH MINISTRY

- Bible reading program – Matthew – coming to an end. Will begin Psalms in January through May.
- Excel Conference January 18th – 21st, 6 possible attendees.
- Family Night January 12th from 4-7 PM, dinner, games and worship.

CHRISTIAN NURTURE – MEN & WOMEN MINISTRY - Second half of Men's Study on *What's So Amazing About Grace* by Phillip Yancy will be held January 13th, 27th, February 3rd, 10th and 17th.

OUTREACH – COMMUNICATIONS & EVANGELISM

- Displays set up in the Narthex and at the top of the stairs by Pastor John's office with Christmas literature and church information.
- Our next meeting will be January 21st and we will be discussing Outreach efforts and advertising for Lent and Holy Week.

COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL - Christmas Mission Project – we will be collecting school supplies to help the class at School 12 that one of our parents teaches.

NEW BUSINESS

- Installation of Andy Miller as Elder and Ordination and Installation of Steve Weatherwax as Elder will take place on January 6th.
- Annual Congregational Meeting scheduled for January 27th.
- Committee reports are due to Peggy by January 6th.

NEXT MEETINGS

- Business – January 14th at 7 PM at church
- Officer Retreat – January 26th from 9 AM to 2 PM at church. Outgoing Elders and Deacons are invited and encouraged to attend, as we will complete our discussion/study of *Rethinking The Church* by James Emery White as part of the retreat.

Bible Quiz for January 2008

Since we spent our Advent sermon series looking at some of the angelic visits associated with the birth of Jesus, and since December's newsletter article was on angels, I thought we could begin the New Year with a little quiz on angels. As you answer each question try to give the Scripture location where you found each answer. Enjoy, and Happy New Year ☺!

1. True or False: The Bible tells us that angels are created in the image of God.
2. What is another name for the angel who is described as an "angel of light"?
3. What is the name of God's archangel?
4. What does the Bible give as the name of the angel who appeared to Mary, the mother of Jesus?
5. What does the Bible give as the name of the angel who appeared to Joseph, the stepfather of Jesus?
6. True or False: There are both male and female angels?
7. To whom did two angels appear when that person looked into the tomb on the morning of Jesus' resurrection?
8. Of whom was it said that he disputed with the Devil over the body of Moses?
9. True or False: Angels marry and reproduce and their children are called cherubim?.
10. How many angels sang to the shepherds in the fields announcing the birth of Jesus?

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

The Heidelberg Catechism was written by Zacharias Ursinus and Kaspar Olevianus in Heidelberg, Germany and was completed in 1562 and published as a teaching document with the goal of uniting Lutheran and Reformed Christians.

[We are returning to this wonderful teaching document as it is rich with doctrine that can help us all better live as one in Christ. Each month we will publish a few questions and answers. Note that questions 24 through 58 of the catechism explain the meaning and significance of words and phrases of the Apostles' Creed.]

Q. 45. What benefit do we receive from “the resurrection” of Christ?

First, by his resurrection he has overcome death that he might make us share in the righteousness which he has obtained for us through his death. Second, we too are now raised by his power to a new life. Third, the resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge to us of our blessed resurrection.

Q. 46. How do you understand the words: “He ascended into heaven”?

That Christ was taken up from the earth into heaven before the eyes of his disciples and remains there on our behalf until he comes again to judge the living and the dead.

Q. 47. Then, is not Christ with us unto the end of the world, as he has promised us?

Christ is true man and true God. As a man he is no longer on earth, but in his divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit, he is never absent from us.

Q. 48. But are not the two natures in Christ separated from each other in this way, if the humanity is not wherever the divinity is?

No at all; for since divinity is incomprehensible and everywhere present, it must follow that the divinity is indeed beyond the bounds of the humanity which it has assumed, and is nonetheless ever in touch with humanity as well, and remains personally united to it.

Q. 49. What benefit do we receive from Christ’s ascension into heaven?

First, that he is our Advocate in the presence of his Father in heaven. Second, that we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that he, as the Head, will also take us, his members, up to himself. Third, that he sends us his Spirit as a counter-pledge by whose power we seek what is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God, and not things that are on earth.

Missions News – CCRM Banquet

On 10/24/07 Vera and Jerry Whitman attended the mission fundraiser/tribute banquet at Michael's Banquet House as representatives from Third Presbyterian Church. It was a very moving evening as two people who went to the Capital City Rescue Mission in very broken states were speakers. Each of them, one man and one woman talked about the support in all respects that they received from Perry Jones, his wife and all the other staff at CCRM. Also what they each learned they could do, giving themselves to Jesus. Both of these individuals now have a positive life and are working to continue in this direction. They said it was because of people like everyone at CCRM as well as people like us that contribute to their support.

Please give of yourself, time, money or supplies to help others. Remember how much we have (but often take for granted).



LENTEN PROGRAM

Wednesday evenings at 6:15
beginning February 6th

The Worship Committee has already begun planning for the **Season of Lent**. This is a time to look inward and examine ourselves and think about where we may need to change or grow to be the person God has called us to be. We will gather on **Wednesday** evenings beginning **February 6th at 6:15** for a light meal of soup and bread followed by a time of worship. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex if you would like to bring a pot of soup to share, some bread, or some cookies. All are welcome to attend and you are encouraged to bring a friend along with you.



*Third Presbyterian Church
113 Winter Street
Troy, NY 12180*

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16