

The Third PRESS



December 2018

“Living and Loving Like the Master”

Continuing through our study of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, in this newsletter we will be reflecting upon Paul’s words as recorded in chapter 5 and verses 1 through 7, which read:

“Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person -- such a person is an idolater -- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.” (Eph 5:1-7)

Have you ever watched little kids at a zoo? They may easily become captivated by a certain animal and can soon be seen trying to mimic it. I remember one time when Danny was about a year and a half old, and we were at the Tampa zoo, in the petting area. My dad and I were with Jimmy and Danny standing among the goats while Jen was outside the gate trying to get pictures. I was watching Danny who was fascinated by how the goats were eating the straw off the ground. I had turned away for a moment to see what Jimmy was up to when Jen called out my name, yelling at me to get Danny. My initial thought was that a goat was biting him, but as I turned around I saw Danny on all fours next to a goat, trying to eat the straw.

We may know better than to eat like a goat, but we all mimic or imitate others. We grab a football and get set to throw and suddenly we think we’re Tom Brady or Aaron Rogers or Mitch Trubiski (Go Bears!). Or perhaps we decide that we want to be a nonconformist, so we dress in a decidedly different way from the norms of society: we color our hair, wear ragged clothes, and undergo a variety of body piercings -- and then we hang out with all the other nonconformists who look just like us.

We all imitate certain things, trends and people in our lives, sometimes for the better, such as a teacher who inspires us to follow in their field of study; or sometimes for worse, such as a peer who tries to convince us to join them in doing foolish and even harmful.

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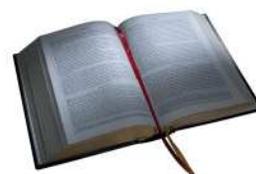
—
A community of Christ
-followers where,

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



In our passage today we read what is perhaps the most amazing command in all of Scripture, “to become imitators”, not of our friends, or even of our sports heroes, but rather, imitators of God!

We are to mimic God – to follow God’s example!

Now we can understand the charge to imitate people, such as the apostle Paul, or Abraham Lincoln, or Martin Luther King Jr. or Mother Teresa, because, although great influencers in history, these are mere humans, and we’re accustomed to imitating other people. But the command to imitate God, that seems a bit much. Yet that’s precisely what we’re commanded to do.

So what does this mean? Certainly God isn’t saying that we’re to become gods. The Scriptures are clear in letting us know that we’re not God, nor can we ever become a god, regardless of what some New Age religions and a few Christian Cults may teach.

Yet, there are attributes of God that we can and are expected to imitate if we’re to live as children of God, such things as: showing mercy; doing justice; offering forgiveness; demonstrating kindness and tenderness; living in godliness with humility; exercising self-control; practicing love. It’s these attributes, along with others, that help define what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God. And, it’s these attributes that we are commanded to imitate and nurture even as a child imitates and adopts the values and habits of a loving parent.

And so, Paul writes, **“Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love.”** And Paul reminds us that Jesus is our model of this perfect love in that He freely humbled Himself, taking the role of a servant -- seeking not to be served but to serve. (Phil 2:6-8; Mk 10:45)

Moreover, Jesus sacrificed Himself so that we could know and love God, so that we could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that we could live and love like our Master. (Jn 3:16, 14:26; Acts 1:8; Mt 28:18-19)

In turn, we’re commanded to give of ourselves completely to God, letting nothing else come in the way of, or take priority over our love for God, for a test of genuine love for God is the contentment we find in our relationship with to God. And, we’re commanded to serve those in need whether they are brothers and sisters in Christ or enemies of the faith, for a test of genuine love is our willingness to love our neighbor whoever that neighbor is. We’re commanded to forgive others even as Christ forgave us, for a test of genuine love is our willingness to forgive. And, we’re commanded to obey the commands of our Father in heaven, for a test of genuine love is our willingness to obey God’s Word – to live in holiness and purity, thus honoring ourselves and others.

Simply put: we’re commanded to live and love like our Lord, Jesus. (Jn 13:34)

But love -- so central to the gospel and so essential in the life of every person, Christian and non-Christian alike -- is sometimes misunderstood, and often intentionally distorted, as was the case in Ephesus. Paul wrote to the Ephesians to imitate God in love, but Paul was writing to believers immersed in a culture that took the perfect love that God gave to humankind and so distorted it that it could no longer be identified as love. It should perhaps more appropriately be called lust or covetousness.

Paul was writing to new Christians residing in a society where prostitution was common; where slaves were often sexually abused; where chastity by women was valued but not necessarily practiced; and, where it was acceptable for men to participate in a variety of sexual expressions -- many which were immoral and some which were unnatural!

Paul was writing to a community where “covetousness of” another human being was confused with “love for” another human being, and where greed extended beyond the material to the sexual, with people seeking to satisfy their lusts in whatever way society would tolerate, regardless of whether it was right or wrong!

Unfortunately, the culture to which Paul wrote some 2000 years ago is not much different than 21st century America, where sexual promiscuity or the perversion of the intent of sexual intimacy (that being

between one man and one woman in the context of the marriage covenant) is not only accepted but expected, and where the only shame in our culture is that directed toward those who refuse to be tolerant of such immorality.

Now, in our passage today Paul uses the words: *porneia*, which means immorality; *akatharsia*, which means impurity, *pleonexia*, which means excess, *aiskrotas*, which means moral filth, and, *eutrapelia*, which means crude jesting. And each of these words carry the idea of some type of sexual perversion: whether in word -- a dirty joke or innuendo; or in deed -- an immoral practice; or in thought -- a covetous, greedy desire.

And so, after calling Christians to be imitators of God and exhorting us to love, Paul deals with a particular area of the expression of that love -- how we perceive, respect, and relate to one another as male and female created in the image of our God; or, in other words -- the area of our sexual being -- its uses and abuses.

God's love does not allow for fornication, adultery, sexual perversion or any language that belittles the sacred relationship intended for a man and women in the context of marriage.

Now love among human beings is certainly not limited to or dependent upon sexual expression. We are, after all, command to love one another -- men and women and young and old. But when love is expressed through sexual intimacy, it's something that's good, that's sacred, that's to be cherished, and, that's to be practiced only in the covenant relationship of marriage between one man and one woman. And, later in this chapter Paul will speak of the grandeur of such a love relationship, but first he must address what the Ephesians substituted for love, namely lust -- a coveting after another person in a way that's not only immoral, but often times unnatural. For, it was and is improper for Christians to misuse sex -- to engage in immoral sexual relations regardless of the consent of those involved -- which means that just because something is done in private does not make it proper or tolerable!

And it was and is improper to speak in a way that makes a joke of, or degrades the sexual act -- transforming it from something holy and beautiful to something sordid, perverted, hideous, even idolatrous. The Christian was and is to rise above the standards of the surrounding community -- and is instead to imitate God's standards.

And so, to practice, or dwell upon, or consider, or allow oneself to be exposed to such immoral conversations and activities is detestable to God, for, even a hint of sexual perversion or abuse can lead to insensitivity toward the feelings and welfare of others, to brutality, to abuse, to discrimination, to the loss of dignity, and even to the loss of life.

Of course we're enlightened (to be read with a tone of sarcasm☺). We live in the age of a New Morality where one's ethics depend upon one's situation. We're part of the sexual revolution and so we think we know more about the proper place of sex than even God Himself.

As a result we live in a culture rife with the spread of sexually transmitted diseases -- and this despite, or perhaps more accurately, because of the "sex education-slash-indoctrination" that our youth receive at school. And we live in a time where our high-schools need to offer day-care centers so that teens can complete their educational requirements -- with children raising children. And, if all else fails, we have walk in clinics that will eliminate the "problem/condition/inconvenience/mistake".

Paul wrote to a people drowning in self-indulgence -- a people whose greed drove them to all sorts of sin and sexual perversion. Paul wrote to 1st century Ephesus. And Paul is writing to 21st century America, for we are a people who have so redefined love that responsibility, and sacrifice, and self-control, and purity are seen as antiquated prohibitions that hinder self-actualization. In turn, God's will

has been pushed out of secular society's standards for genuine love, and, unfortunately, God's will has far too little influence in the lives of many Christians.

In fact, any idea of a "moral standard" has found disfavor in the contemporary definition of love as practiced by much of our "popular culture", and by many in our churches, for we live in an age that seeks to suppress any absolutes, especially when they infringe upon our freedom of choice – after all, isn't love never having to hear, "you're wrong?"

So what's the result of all this?

We have people who call themselves Christian and yet believe that adultery and premarital sex are permissible, and that asking young people to wait until marriage before having sex is not only unrealistic and unfair, but even detrimental to their development (Because their Creator doesn't know how they're supposed to develop!)? And we have people who claim they love God and yet they defend the practice of homosexuality despite all the Biblical evidence that denounces such actions. Moreover, many call pornography "art" or "freedom of expression", despite how it degrades God's good creation of male and female; how it feeds the mind with inappropriate thoughts; and how it fuels sinful addictions that destroy entire families, and nations.

And we have churches of Jesus Christ who claim that they preach love for God but fail to demand obedience to God, despite the fact that God's word says, "**This is love for God: to obey His commands**" (1 John 5:3a; Jn 14:15, 15:14). Of course, the way some of these churches get around this call for obedience is to revise the Scriptures, while at the same time selectively choosing which commands we must obey.

Many Christians disregard the words of God and yet have the audacity to claim that their behavior pleases God. And the primary reason they believe it pleases God is that it pleases them – they're at peace with their lifestyle – as if how we feel about certain behaviors should be the measure of the appropriateness of those behaviors!

But there is no mistaking the words found in 1 Corinthians 6:9b-10 which read: "**Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.**" (see also Gal 5:19-21; 1 Tim 1:8-10; Rom 1:18-32)

And yet, our society and even the church often defends such behaviors if enough people want to practice them, and if those practitioners make enough noise. As a case in point, consider those in the Presbyterian Church (USA) who support the ordination of practicing, non-repentant homosexuals – despite the clear Biblical evidence that such behavior is sinful (e.g. Rom 1:24-25). Now, in an attempt to justify their position, they often say something like, "Does that mean we ought not to ordain practicing non-repentant porn-addicts, or alcoholics, or materialists, or gossips, or racists, or sexists?" thereby implying that there are so many of these individuals serving in leadership positions that we certainly cannot confront their behavior, call it what it is, sin, and remove them from their position if they don't repent of their sin. But the answer to their question ought to be, "Yes, that's exactly what it means!" We ought not ordain nor keep in leadership anyone who is knowingly living in direct disobedience to what God calls a sin, and who is not willing to recognize that their behavior is a sin, and who is not seeking to change such behavior! No one who continues in known sin without trying, by God's grace and the help of the community of faith, to turn from that sin, ought to serve as a leader in the Church.

Now, certainly we are all sinners. We all need God's grace, and, the acceptance, care and support of the church. But, there's a big difference between a person who struggles with a particular sin yet realizes it's a sin and is earnestly seeking to live in obedience to God, and a person who refuses to acknowledge and repent of behavior that's clearly sinful – and even worse, who seeks to have such behavior sanctioned by the church.

People who reject any attempt at self-control, which is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23), and instead seek to justify their sin (even calling it “love”, which is a clear perversion of how God’s defines love) -- whether that be sexual sin, or covetousness, or greed or pride or any other form of idolatry -- have no place in the Kingdom of God or in the Church of Jesus Christ. They’re not children of God but “sons and daughters of disobedience.”

Jesus makes it clear that those who know they’re sinning and yet continue in that sin -- unrepentant and without remorse -- have nothing to do with Him, and so He says to such individuals: **“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”** (Lk 6:46)

To knowingly and willing refuse to surrender every area of our life to Jesus is to come to Jesus on our terms and not His – which is the height of arrogance against a holy God! God is God and we are not, and we’re not in the position to call acceptable what God has called sinful. We have no right to negotiate the terms of discipleship -- no matter how much better it makes us feel about ourselves!

And the consequence of such disobedience will be to experience the wrath of God.

The wrath of God -- now there’s an unpopular concept! Many Christians seem to think that the Scriptures identify two different Gods -- a God of the Old Testament who is wrathful and to be feared, and a God of the New Testament who is love -- with love being defined as being all-accepting, all-tolerant, all-embracing. But the Scriptures identify one and the same God throughout. And throughout Scriptures that God is a God of love who pours out grace and mercy for all who trust in, commit to, and obey Him, but also a God of love who exercises vengeance and wrath upon all who pervert, distort or reject His perfect standards of love. Indeed, the Bible knows nothing of a love which does not call for godliness and holiness. (Jn 3:16-18; Rom 12:19; Col 3:6; Heb 12:28-29)

Now, in our text, Paul says we’re not to fellowship with evil doers because we will eventually think and act like those with whom we closely associate. But Paul is not saying that we’re to avoid contact with non-believers and those who live in ways that dishonor God, for the issue is not about interaction but about living in community with -- in fellowship with such individuals. Paul knows that we will develop the values of those with whom we live in close, intimate, sharing relationships, which is why Paul stated in First Corinthians, **“Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character.”** (1 Cor. 15:33)

So Paul says, we’re not to participate in, nor ignore the behavior of those who reject God’s laws and live in clear disobedience to God’s teachings.

As believers, we’re most certainly to reach out to all people with the gospel of Jesus Christ -- the drug addict, the homosexual, the materialist, the greedy person, the prideful person, the bitter person -- for they’re hurting and in need of God’s forgiveness and acceptance. However, when a person clearly rejects God and God’s standard of love, when a person intentionally persists in sinful behavior after knowing that it’s displeasing to God, then we must be very careful to communicate to that person that, although we care about them as a person, we strongly disapprove of their profane lifestyle, and we most certainly will not participate in nor support such behavior.

Yes, we, the church of Jesus Christ, above all other people and organizations, must serve those people who are struggling with sinful behaviors and seeking to overcome them, after all, we too are sinners and we all have our areas of struggle. And so we must love the sinner in the midst of their struggle – offering forgiveness and acceptance in Christ, even as we ourselves need to continually receive such forgiveness. But, we must not condone or in any way support or encourage the sinful behavior of others, even as we must not condone, justify, or look past sinful behaviors and thoughts within ourselves! In fact, sometimes the most loving thing we can do is to confront sin and call a person to repentance!

We’re commanded to imitate God -- to remember the costly love demonstrated by Jesus when He died on the cross, and to mimic such deep, faithful, committed love, to God and to one another: a love

that flows out of obedience to God; a love that pours forth thanksgiving to God; a love that comforts, confronts, challenges, and convicts.

Our love is to be a copy of the love of our Lord Jesus: a love imprinted upon our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit; a love that's characterized by obedience -- by godliness with contentment -- so that when people look at us and relate to us, they would see something different and unique, something beyond the natural, a love possible only through submission to the supernatural indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

We have all heard about the celebrity searches where they try to find look-alikes of famous movie stars or athletes. Well, Paul tells all Christians are in a look-alike contest of sorts, but what matters for us is not our physical features, but how we're living and loving like our Master -- how we're imitating the one true God.

And so, as we move through this Advent season and reflect upon how Jesus, being "Immanuel" -- "God with us" -- entered our world to be God before us, it's fitting to ask ourselves: Are we so living our lives that when others see us: They see Jesus? They think about Jesus? They long to know Jesus? They desire to live for Jesus?

And, it's fitting to ask ourselves how well we're walking in purity, pursuing godliness, shunning evil, and calling all people to holiness in Christ Jesus -- speaking the truth with compassion but also without compromise.

It's fitting to ask ourselves: How well are we living and loving like our Master -- even Jesus Christ our Lord?

God's grace and peace be with you,

Pastor John

Remember in Prayer...

Our Shut-ins at home:

Tillie Herman, Marcella Goard, Jan and John Pedersen, Hazel Landry

At the Eddy: Dot Multunas, Edna Wells

Those dealing with health issues:

Stan Bentley, Kelly Valerio

Our Church:

Pastor John and the Session

Our Community:

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

Our World:

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

Dan serving in Africa:

Pray for his former French teacher that he will have peace and hope through Christ and that his wife will come to know that truth also.
Pray for the man he has been reading the Bible with that God would work in his heart.
Pray for the good byes and the "lasts" that will be coming up shortly.
Pray for new workers to come and serve here and in countries like Djibouti.

Our college students:

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

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 December we will be collecting apple juice.



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



**Calling all Kids
Preschool - Eighth Grade!!**

Our next Sunday school class will be held **December 16th** following the worship service.



Holiday Luncheon
(Sponsored by the Senior God Squad)
Saturday, December 8th
at noon

We will once again be collecting monetary donations and individual food/snack items for Ronald McDonald House in Albany.

Please RSVP to Jerry or Vera Whitman
at 518-283-4147

Christmas Flowers

Order forms for Christmas poinsettias are available in the narthex. If you cannot make it to church but would like to purchase a poinsettia, please call the church office at 283-2420. **Plants are \$16.00 and orders must be in by December 16th.** Payment can be submitted later if necessary. Checks should be made payable to “Third Presbyterian Church”.



Winter Collection for Capital City Rescue Mission

Throughout the winter months we will be collecting new and gently used coats, hats, gloves and scarves for Capital City Rescue Mission.

With the weather turning colder, the Mission struggles to provide these necessary items to those in need. There is a box near the entrance to the sanctuary for donations.

General Financial Update for October

	Year to Date	September
Total Income	\$134,414.50	\$ 11,141.00
Total Expenses	\$141,153.88	\$ 13,507.26
Difference	\$ (6,739.38)	\$ (2,366.26)

Bible Quiz for December 2018

Our Bible quiz for December will test your Christmas knowledge.

1. Where was Jesus born?
2. Who appeared to tell Mary that she was with child?
3. How did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?
4. How many angels spoke to the shepherds?
5. What sign were the shepherds supposed to look for when looking for Jesus?
6. Who followed a star to find baby Jesus?
7. Where was Jesus laid after he was born?
8. What gifts did the wise men bring to baby Jesus?
9. True or false: The Bible says Jesus was born on December 25th.
10. True or False: Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus because they were following a star.
11. Who told Joseph the baby's name was to be Jesus?
12. How many Gospels record the birth of Christ? Name them.

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) – “I only have about 5 weeks left in Djibouti and I can’t believe how fast the time is going. The past month has been maybe one of the busiest months here to date. We have been showing bi-weekly films in English at our school and it has resulted in some amazing conversations. Most of the films we have shown have been very overtly Christian with the goal of sharing the Gospel message. Members of our staff have been taking the time to introduce ourselves to the students at the end of the movies, sharing a testimony each time. Several students shared how powerful and thought provoking the nights have been for them and it has resulted in several students asking to read the Bible with members of our staff.

One of the most exciting things that’s happened this fall is that I’ve been meeting around once a week with a guy who wanted to read and learn about Jesus and has had some earnest questions and a growing interest to learn more. One of the hardest things about my increased time at the project is knowing that I am leaving soon.

I feel confident that my time in Djibouti should be coming to a close but the excitement

of these last two months will make it hard to leave.”

From Perry Jones (Capital City Rescue Mission) – “Your support of Capital City Rescue Mission is a true blessing to our entire community. Thank you for making a difference one man, woman and child at a time. Thank you so much. You are so very kind to share Jesus’ love with the needy.”

From Peter Halder (Bangladesh YFC) – “In 2019, it is our goal to reach more than 900,000 people through our drug prevention and HIV prevention programs. We want to see more than 75,000 youth in our Hi-Clubs. We want to open another Children’s Home with a long-term goal of seven more homes over the next few years. We want to see the number of praying mothers in the Wake Up Deborah program double and have a second National Prayer Conference. We want to have a Super Conference for high school students. WE want to see our agriculture programs harvest more than 14,000 pounds. Through all of these and other programs and events, we want to see Jesus work to transform more and more lives in our nation of Bangladesh.

As you see our goals for 2019, may I so humbly request your to lift up every single event and staff of BYFC in your regular prayer and, if the Father leads your heart to give, your cheerful giving will be so deeply appreciated and will seed many transformed lives.

Every day we should celebrate Thanksgiving, but there are special times for thanksgiving, too. As people in the United States celebrate their Thanksgiving at the end of November, the BYFC family and the Halders express our deep gratitude and thanksgiving to you all. God’s richest blessing be upon you.”

Serving This Month

December 2

Worship Assistants: Deena Dominy
Sue Laz
Greeters: Jen McAuley
Head Greeter: Andy Miller
Nursery: Irene Ofori
Diane Lewinski
Communion: Vera Whitman

Fellowship Hosts: Dean & Doris Calamaras

December 9

Worship Assistants: Eric Ofori
Ella Miller
Greeters: Pat Gilmaier
Head Greeter: Rob Jensen
Nursery: Jen McAuley
Lois Pasinella
Communion: Deena Dominy
Doris Calamaras
Eric Ofori
Jason Laz
Fellowship Hosts: Valerie Bidwell and
Vaughn Skarzynski

December 16

Worship Assistants: Bill Multunas
Eric Ofori
Greeters: Dean Calamaras
Doris Calamaras
Head Greeter: Peter Laz
Nursery: Alice Bentley,
Irene Ofori,
Communion: Jen McAuley,
Jerry Whitman,
Natalia Multunas.
Pat Gilmaier

Fellowship Hosts:

December 23

Worship Assistants: Natalia Multunas
Dean Calamaras
Greeters: Valerie Bidwell
Vaughn Skarzynski
Head Greeter: Andy Miller
Nursery: Diane Lewinsky
Jen McAuley
Communion: Pat Gilmaier,
Rob Jensen,
Sue Laz,
Vera Whitman
Fellowship: Ofori Family

December 30

Worship Assistants: Eric Ofori
Natalia Multunas
Greeters: Joe Pasinella
Head Greeter: Rob Jensen
Nursery: Lois Pasinella
Deena Dominy
Communion: Sue Laz,
Alice Bentley
Andy Miller
Dean Calamaras
Fellowship: Bill & Natalia Multunas

**Serving at the Capital City Rescue Mission
December 15th**

We have the privilege to minister to those in need by helping to serve the evening meal at the Capital City Rescue Mission.



We will meet at the church around 5:00 and carpool or you can meet us at the Mission around 5:30. Serving involves ensuring the tables are set for dinner, serving the meal, and cleaning up the tables afterwards. If you can help please speak with Andy Miller or Rob Jensen.

**Join us for Lunch!
December 1st at Noon
Spaghetti and Meatballs**

On December 1st the Outward Ministry Committee will be hosting lunch for the church family and some of the clients from the Hope 7 food pantry. This is an opportunity not just to share a warm meal with those in need but it is an opportunity to get to know our neighbors! There is no cost for the meal but you will need to reserve a spot in advance so we know how many to prepare for. To reserve your ticket or if you would like to help with preparing the meal, set-up or clean-up please speak with Sue Laz.



**Christmas Caroling
at the Eddy
December 9th**

We will meet at the church at 3:00, travel to the Eddy to share some Christmas cheer with the residents there and return to the church to enjoy some food (pizza, cookies, coffee and hot cocoa) and fellowship!



We hope you will join us for an afternoon of music, fellowship, and sharing the joy of Christmas with others!



Thanks to everyone who participated in and supported Operation Christmas Child. We filled 30 shoeboxes that are now on their way to children around the world!



December Birthdays

- | | |
|-------|------------------------|
| 12/2 | Eric Jesse Ofori (son) |
| 12/2 | Lois Pasinella |
| 12/5 | Edna Wells |
| 12/9 | Deb Lawrence |
| 12/11 | Dean Calamaras |
| 12/13 | Peggy Siracusa |
| 12/18 | Dot Multunas |
| 12/19 | Bill Siracusa |

**SESSION MEETING
THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NOVEMBER 12, 2018**

ACTION ITEMS

- A motion was made and carried have Joshua Multunas preach on December 30th.
- A motion was made to send a gift of \$50 in memory of Rose Scechitano, (Sal's mom) to the Heritage Hall Nursing Home.
- Miscellaneous Information:
 - Average attendance for October 2018 was 36.
 - Membership Roll remains at 56.
 - 2019 Communion schedule was handed out or placed in Elder mailboxes.
 - Reminder of activities before the next Business Meeting and beyond:
 - 12/05 – Bible Study at Beechwood at 10:15 AM.
 - 12/09 – Christmas Caroling at The Eddy at 3:30 PM.
 - 12/15 – Serving the evening meal at Capital City Rescue Mission, meet at church at 5:00 PM.
 - 12/19 – Bible Study at Beechwood at 10:15 AM.
 - 12/24 – Christmas Eve Worship Service at church at 6:45 PM.

UPWARD MINISTRY (Encounter, Exalt, Enjoy)

- Sal noted the pipe organ has been getting costlier to maintain because of its age. At this point there aren't major issues with it, but it's something to be aware of.

INWARD MINISTRY (Encourage, Equip)

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

- Visitation, phone calls, and cards are an ongoing ministry. Thanks especially to Doris Calamaras, Alice Bentley, and Vera & Jerry Whitman.

CHRISTIAN NURTURE

- **MEN'S MINISTRY** – Bible Study on Sunday evenings is ongoing.
- **ADULT MINISTRY** – Sunday School class and Wednesday evening Bible study are ongoing. Wednesday Evening Bible Study to break until the New Year.
- **SENIOR'S MINISTRY** – Holiday Luncheon sponsored by the Senior God Squad to be held on December 8th at noon.

OUTWARD MINISTRY (Engage, Evangelize, Extend)

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

- Spending for November:
 - Capital City Rescue Mission \$500.00
 - Reach Across \$300.00
 - Bangladesh Youth For Christ \$500.00
 - Capital District Youth For Christ \$500.00
 - Church Around The World Inserts \$ 42.00
 - Theology Matters \$ 50.00
 - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance \$630.00
- We will be serving the evening meal at Capital City Rescue Mission on December 15th.
- We are collecting new and gently used coats, hats, and gloves for Capital City Rescue Mission.
- Our first Community Meal will be on December 1st at noon. We will be inviting clients from the Hope 7 Food Pantry to come and share a meal with us. This is an opportunity for us to make some connections with folks from the community and will provide a hot meal and fellowship for those in need. Dean & Doris Calamaras will be coordinating the meal.

STEWARDSHIP (Upward, Inward, Outward)

GENERAL FUND/FINANCE

- We had a negative cash flow during October of \$2,366.26. This gives us a year-to-date deficit of \$6,739.38.
- Passed out and reviewed the first draft of the 2019 expense budget draft.

PROPERTY

- All winter preparations have been completed.
- Reinforcement to the paving on the rear drive has been completed.
- The two new Sanctuary ceiling fans are in process of being installed.

NEW BUSINESS

- A practice of sending “Praying For You” cards will be instituted for special prayers during our meeting, and will be signed by Session members.

NEXT MEETINGS

- Business – December 10th at church at 7 PM. We will meet with and determine the readiness of newly elected Elders to serve.

OUR MISSION

TO LOVE OUR GOD AND NEIGHBOR

TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL THROUGH WORD AND DEED

TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS THE CHRIST

From Music and AV Ministries...

“The Advent of Our God”

The Christian Church is unusual in its flipping of the calendar at the end of November, not only to the month of December but to a whole new liturgical year. *Advent* rings in the new Christian year, not January 1. And like *Lent* (whose place on the calendar is not nearly so predictable), *Advent* presents a veritable treasure trove of music to feast on in its run-up to the season it prepares us for, namely Christmas. It is always a rewarding experience to “audition” new music for our choir that will be sung each *Advent* and Christmas and this year was no exception to the myriad offering of excellent choices for us to share with you.

Music is so very often about the *notes*, which is, of course, what makes it music in the first place! Sometimes, however, the music can “drown out” the very important place that the *lyrics* hold. After all, the choir doesn’t just sing beautiful melodies and harmonies on the syllables, *la-di-da-di-da!* So for this December newsletter article, I wanted to share with you, in prose form, the lyrics of the four *Advent* pieces the choir will sing in the month of December. It would be an excellent spiritual discipline to read and meditate on the lyrics for each Sunday’s anthem before you head out to worship each week.

Advent 1--December 2

“An Advent Acclamation” by Roger Thornhill and Stacy Nordmeyer

*Look to the light. Prepare the way. Turn from night, embrace the day.
Let all creation praise with singing, set every bell in heaven ringing.
Raise every candle, shine the news--Christ, the Light is coming soon!
Look to the dawn, prepare your heart. Waken your song, let worship start.
This is a day of celebration, join in the music of jubilation.
Raise every candle, shine the news--Christ, the Light is coming soon!
Look to the star that gilds the East, golden of heart and burning with peace.
See now the torch is rising yonder, lifting our hearts with glorious wonder.
Raise every candle, shine the news--Christ, the Light is coming soon!*

Advent 2--December 9

“Advent Hymn” by Christy Nockels

*Christ, whose glory fill the skies, Christ the Everlasting Light.
The sun of righteousness, arise, and triumph o’er these shades of night.
Come, Thou long-awaited One, in the fullness of your love.
And loose this heart bound up by shame and I will never be the same.
So here I wait in hope of you, all my soul’s longing, through and through.
Dayspring from on high be near, and Daystar, in my heart appear.*

Dark and cheerless is the morn until your love in me is born.

*And joyless is the evening song until Emmanuel has come.
So here I wait in hope of you, all my soul's longing, through and through.
Dayspring from on high be near, and Daystar, in my heart appear.*

Advent 3--December 16

"Advent Fanfare" by Barbara Furman and Lloyd Larson

*The Lord is coming soon. Prepare the way with joyful alleluias.
He comes the vine to prune. Declare the day with joyful alleluias.
Make straight the crooked way, let every mountain be made low, the rugged places plain.
For Christ the Lord is coming, is coming, is coming! Sing allelu, sing alleluia!
Behold the eastern sky! Prepare the way with joyful alleluias!
Redemption draweth nigh. Declare the day with joyful alleluias.
His reign shall be forevermore! Set free your voice of praise
For Christ the Lord is coming, is coming, is coming!
Sing allelu, sing alleluia!*

Advent 4--December 23

"Hear the Angels Sing" by Michael Perza

*Bethlehem sleeps while shepherds lie watching their sheep.
Mary's heart is waiting to leap at the birth of God's Son this morn.
Angels proclaim the good news, and voice a refrain giving glory to God's holy name.
Unto us a child is born.
"Gloria in excelsis Deo!" Angels singing to earth below at the birth of the infant king.
Peace on earth to all women and men of good will.
Amid winter's chill, hush and be still. Hear the angels sing.*

*Prophets foretold his coming from scriptures of old.
Yet few mortals will ever behold the Messiah in infancy.
Led by the light of a star so heavenly bright, Magi journey by day and by night
To pay homage on bended knee.
"Gloria in excelsis Deo!" Angels singing to earth below at the birth of the infant king.
Peace on earth to all women and men of good will.
Amid winter's chill, hush and be still. Hear the angels sing.
Come adore. Come adore the infant Lord.
Sing a song of sweet accord as the angels sing.
Hear the angels sing.*

A blessed Advent to all!
With Joy in the Journey,
Sal Sceccitano

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115 Winter Street
Troy, NY 12180

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
EXALTING GOD / PROCLAIMING CHRIST / MAKING DISCIPLES