

The Third PRESS



JANUARY 2019

“Life Illuminating Light”

As we bring in the New Year I will be continuing in our study of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. I am picking up the study in Ephesians 5:6-14. As we meditate upon this passage let’s first read from God’s Word, where Paul wrote:

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.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible -- and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said:

**“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.” (Eph 5:6-14 NIV)**

What images come to your mind when you think about “daylight”, or “sunshine”? What images come to your mind when you think about “pitch-black”, or, “the dark of night”? What contrasts form in your mind when you think of the difference between dark-and-light, night-and-day?

Light and darkness – the contrast has conjured up powerful images in the minds of people throughout the ages – with darkness pointing to death and despair, and light relating to life and hope. And so it’s natural that light would become a key element in the expression of mankind’s beliefs throughout the ages. And it’s natural, that when the darkness of despair surrounds us we seek one who could deliver us from-darkness-into-light.

And so, it’s understandable that to the Jews, in their expressions of praise and thanksgiving, and in their petitions for help, light would play a key role.

Consider, for example, the Feast of Tabernacles, one of the three great annual celebrations of the Jewish community. At the close of the seventh day, the last and Great Day of the Feast, the Jews would gather together for an elaborate night-time festival at the Temple, a festival that included a ritual which came to be known as the “Illumination of the Temple”. The event took place in the rectangular courtyard known as the “Court of the Women”. At the interior corners of that courtyard stood four massive golden candelabrum, each topped with huge oil fueled torches. It’s said that the candelabrum were as tall as the highest walls of the Temple, and that at the top of each candelabra was mounted four great bowls, was mounted four great bowls, each holding several liters of oil. When evening would come, four young priests would ascend four young priests would ascend ladders and carry oil up to the

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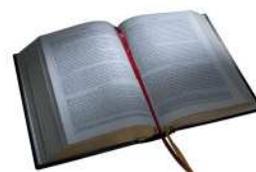
—
A community of Christ
-followers where,

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



great bowls and then light the wicks. Eyewitnesses said the flames which leapt from the torches illuminated not only the Temple but all of Jerusalem. The Mishnah tells us that “Men of piety and good works used to dance before the candelabrum with burning torches in their hands singing songs of praise while countless Levites played on harps, lyres, cymbals, trumpets and other instruments of music”, for this elaborate rite recalled that great pillar of fire -- the glorious presence of God -- which led the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings and spread its fiery billows over the Tabernacle.

It was after this ceremony, and in the same Temple Court the following morning, with the great charred torches still in place, and the images of a brilliantly lit night sky still fresh on the people’s minds, that Jesus lifted His voice above the crowd and proclaimed, **“I am the Light of the World.”** (Jn 8:12)

Jesus could not have spoken more clearly and emphatically to the people about who He was and what He came to do, for He was the Christ! And He said in effect, “The pillar of fire that came between your ancestors and the pursuing army of the Egyptians -- that fire by night and that glory cloud by day which guided your forefathers in the wilderness, illumined the Tabernacle, and came to rest on the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Solomon – that was Me!” Moreover, Jesus said, “Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Some thirty years later, in this, Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, as he called the people to discipleship, and, as he explained what the church of Jesus Christ was and is to be, he brought up the powerful images of light and darkness. And Paul spoke about light as a symbol of how the Christians in Ephesus were to live in contrast to the lifestyles of the pagans in their midst. And in speaking of light, Paul alluded to the Old Testament and applied the words of Isaiah the prophet to the Christians at Ephesus, saying, **“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned”** (Isa 9:2), therefore, **“arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is upon you,”** (Isa 60:1), for, as Paul already noted in chapter two of this letter, **“once we were dead in our transgressions and sins, but because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ”** (Eph 2:1, 3, 4).

In turn, Paul reminds us today that we’re a people who have seen a great light, therefore we too are to walk in all goodness, righteousness and truth. The commands of our passage are clear: we’re to live as children of light; we’re to test and approve that which pleases the Lord; and, we’re to expose the fruitless deeds of darkness.

And, light, in contrast to darkness, serves as a powerful metaphor for us to reflect upon as we consider what it means to live as a follower of Jesus, for: light makes the hidden visible -- we can see in the light what is imperceptible in the dark; light suggests openness and vulnerability -- we cannot hide while we’re in the light -- what you see is what you get, and what you do is visible to all; light gives comfort, security, and peace -- we feel safe in the light -- there are no boogiemens in the closet or monsters under the bed during the daytime; and, light produces growth, allows for life, enables healing and health -- plants are nourished, bodies are refreshed, and pains seem to diminish in the warmth of light.

Moreover, light never flees darkness, rather, light aggressively drives darkness away, causing darkness to retreat!

As literal darkness is a description for the absence of light, so figuratively, darkness speaks of the absence of that which allows for healing, growth, security, and hope, for it speaks to life without God. And with the absence of God comes the spread of pride, hate, lust, envy, falsehood, gossip, immorality and idolatry; along with loneliness, gloom, and meaninglessness.

Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden and walked in the presence of God -- spoke with God face-to-face. But when God withdrew His presence, darkness slithered in, clouded the understanding of Adam and Eve, twisted the clear command of God, and caused them to stumble -- to fall into sin and to experience the pain, suffering, and separation that comes as a consequence of sin.

In the realm of that darkness which is the absence of God there can be only falsehood and deceit, spiritual imprisonment and an all-consuming despair -- a despair like that experienced by a man who is regarded by some as one of the 19th century's most brilliant philosophers, but whose life philosophy was one of darkness and despair -- a view of life that infected his soul, driving him to madness; a view of life that blinded and still blinds the hearts of many.

Friedrich Nietzsche was born on October 15, 1844, the son of a Lutheran minister who died when Friedrich was only 5 years old. Nietzsche was baptized in the church but never nurtured his Christian heritage. An exemplary student, Nietzsche was appointed to a professorship at the University of Basel, Switzerland, when he was 25. Nietzsche's life reflected the hopelessness of a man who rejected the God of his father and sought to replace God with a "Superman" -- one who, by the power of his own will, could dominate his world.

Now, despite finding himself unable to believe in God, Nietzsche understood that a world without God would ultimately become a world of darkness. And yet, some of his disciples took his ideas, and, in an attempt to create Nietzsche's "Superman" -- a "Master Race" -- they terminated the lives of many. At first their godlessness led to the extermination of the child born deformed and the elderly who became a burden on society -- killings a society living in the darkness of self-centeredness often tolerates, and sometimes even welcomes. But then such godlessness, which will always lead to a devaluing of human life, led to the extermination of healthy but unwanted peoples -- the gypsy, the Jew, and whomever else got in the way of individuals like Hitler and Stalin. Only then did Nietzsche's nihilism -- that is, the belief that existence is meaningless and there is no absolute good -- come to be seen for the evil that it was.

And yet, the nihilism of Nietzsche is pervasive today: sometimes subtly, as society eliminates the one true God and then starts to play "God" in determining what is right and what is wrong, who is worth saving and who isn't; and, sometimes overtly, as people, young and old are so consumed by darkness, despondency and indifference that they go on killing sprees before taking their own lives.

But, God's desire and design for us is to flee the darkness, and instead, to live in the light: a light that celebrates and nurtures life; a light that reveals meaning and purpose to life; a light that enables us to see what is good and right and true.

And so, out of His love for us, God calls us to walk in the light, and, to be a light that shines in the darkness showing others the way of escape from despair, hurt, and meaninglessness.

But, in order to walk in the light we must first receive the light which is Christ!

Jesus invites us saying, come to Me, believe in Me, trust Me and I will give you rest, I will give you life, I will bring you comfort, peace and hope (Mt 11:28-30), for Jesus is the true light that gives light to every person (Jn 1:5). And God's desire is that the light of Christ would fill our lives, warm our hearts to His presence, and open our eyes to the needs of the world.

And so, if you are one who finds yourself groping through life as if in a deep dark valley, look up, look to the Son, look to Jesus and experience the guidance and comfort that comes from the one who is "Life Illuminating Light"!

In turn, we, as Christians, must no longer make a place for the darkness, because Christ, the light of the World, is with us -- is in us -- so that we not only live in the light but we actually become light -- God's very instruments of illumination in a dark, lonely and hurting world.

However, even when we've come to Jesus and have given our lives to Him in faith, it's no easy task to live as children of the light because still there's a part of us that prefers the darkness, for the darkness conceals our weaknesses and our sins. For a time at least, the darkness allows us to hide, to wear masks, to masquerade as that which we are not -- deceiving our world, and in many cases deceiving ourselves. The darkness allows us to enjoy the lusts of our hearts -- the lust for wealth or power or sensual desire -- foolishly believing that such lusts are not only hidden from the world's view but even from God's!

But sooner or later, the light which is Christ and His truth, will expose our sins, strip away our masks, and cause us to stand before a Holy God with our inner ugliness fully exposed -- a filth which God alone can wash away; for light, by its very presence, exposes and judges (Jn 3:17-19). And although painful at times, it's this judgment -- a

judgment from a gracious, merciful God -- that leads to repentance, forgiveness, acceptance and new life. It is this penetrating, convicting, cleansing light that brings the healing that all people so desperately need.

And, as we're confronted daily by the light of Christ, and cleansed by the grace of God, we can have the courage to remove our masks and live in genuine freedom -- for through Christ and Christ alone comes freedom: freedom to love and be loved; freedom to forgive and be forgiven; freedom to be the person God created us to be without fear of rejection -- for our God will never leave us nor forsake us.

Moreover, as we let the light of Christ cleanse and purify our lives, we then become "Life Illuminating light", as the Spirit of God transforms our hearts, renews our minds and empowers us, in love, to convict and comfort those who are groping about in darkness.

But this requires that as followers of Jesus, we let every aspect of our life should shine forth the love of God.

And this requires that the Christian home be a place where faith is nurtured and unconditional love is modeled -- with its forgiveness and acceptance. Like a house lit up and decorated for Christmas -- joy should radiate from our homes in a way that causes visitors to stop, and reflect, and go away different because of the experience.

Our homes should be places: where hurts can be shared and ministered to with tenderness; where husband and wife submit to one another out of reverence for Christ, modeling servant-hood and grace to their children; where children respect and honor their parents, and honor each other; and, where God is worshipped and obeyed, and given the position as Head over the household.

God wants our homes to so shine with the love of Christ that we can throw open our curtains, unafraid to let the world see us as we are, knowing that even as others look in upon us, so the light of our walk with God shines out upon them.

Likewise, the Christian church should be a beacon of love and hope: a place where our worship exalts our God, convicts our hearts, challenges our minds, and refreshes our spirits; a place where people are not beat down, but rather, built up in the power of God! Our church should be a place of genuine caring with humility. We're family, and so we ought to live, not as acquaintances who have occasional contact, but as a close-knit family. And, as family, we should look after each other -- offering charity with our resources, providing service through our deeds, and bringing encouragement with our words.

At times, like any family, we may need to confront some tough issues and challenge some unacceptable behaviors, but when this is done it must be done in love-with-forgiveness and for the benefit of the entire body of Christ, not out of selfish motive, or malicious intent, or for personal gain.

The light of Christ must be freed to shine in the Church of Jesus Christ: so that our sins may be exposed with the goal of healing and health, and, so that God's will may be discerned with the goal of pleasing our Heavenly Father through obedience to His will. Then we, as the body of Christ, will be a place from which 'Life Illuminating Light' radiates. Then we, by our actions, through our love for one another and our burden for the world, will be a people who can expose darkness, transform hearts, and most especially, please God.

And make no mistake, a community of faith that genuinely loves with the love of God can help re-form and re-direct the hardest heart.

In his youthful zeal, the apostle Paul vigorously persecuted the church -- pursuing, imprisoning and even approving the execution of Christians. Then he was confronted by the glory of God and the truth of the gospel. But he was not left alone to ponder that truth and its place in his life. Rather, Paul was welcomed, cared for, protected and nurtured by some of the very people he once sought to imprison. Paul learned truth and experienced love, and as the two were brought together in his life, he went forth to become the greatest evangelist in the history of Christianity.

We're called to walk as children of light -- to flee the darkness, and instead, to do that which pleases our Lord, for, as we walk in the light of Christ, and bring forth the fruit of God's goodness and grace, we'll not only expose

the darkness around us, but, we'll be those instruments who can, by God's power, minister to the hearts of those blinded by the dark-spirits of a fallen world.

And, when we love and serve in the power of God's Spirit and in accordance with God's Word, we can know that our steps will be guided by the One true light, so that even if we stumble or fall on our journey, our guiding light will lead us home, for Jesus is our light in this world. And Jesus is the one who calls us to rise up, to step out, and to so let His light shine in us that people may see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven. (Mt 5:16)

As we do that, we in turn: will experience the fullness of the joy of our salvation; will have life and have it to the full; will find our homes, our churches, and our schools to be places where the darkness is changed to dawning, and the dawning to noon day bright, so that Christ's great kingdom will come to earth, the kingdom of love and light.

In the summer of 1985 I had the opportunity to take several youth from the Troy area to the first of what was become a series of Christian conferences in Washington D.C. The theme song for our gathering was titled "Carry the Torch." Prior to our final evening of worship together, little flashlights were distributed to all participants (Today people could just activate their phones!). And so, with the Auditorium lights out, and over 15,000 young people on their feet, the flashlights glowed, and the air was filled with song, as the teenagers sang:

*"We will carry the torch,
we will lift high the flame,
we will march through the darkness
to the light of his name,
'til the glory of God
is seen by the world,
we will carry the torch of the Lord."*

That's an enormous challenge, but it was the challenge accepted by those youth that night, and it's the challenge before us every day as individuals, as families, as the church of Jesus Christ. We're called to be a light for the Lord in a dark and desperate world. We're commanded to walk as children of the Light.

And so I ask, will you rise up like those 15,000 young people and pledge, as we enter a new year, to be a light that shines with the love of Christ? At home? At school? At work? Will you carry the torch of the Lord out into your world? For Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." And, as the apostle Paul reminds us, not only do we have the Light of life, but, by the power of God's Spirit, we can be light to a world engulfed in darkness!

May the light of Christ Jesus shine in and through you in 2019 and into eternity, to the glory of God!
God's grace and peace be upon you this New Year!

Love in Christ Jesus,

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

Our college students:

Brian Giddings (Roger Williams)
Joshua Multunas (Gordon Conwell)
Alida Scicchitano (Boston College)
Natalie Scicchitano (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 January we will be collecting peanut butter and jelly.



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



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

Our next Sunday school class will be held **January 20th** following the worship service.



Time for a Check-up!

The annual physical exam by a doctor is something most of us do on a regular basis. We do this to make sure we are healthy and to hopefully diagnose any issues before they become major health problems.

In the same way, we need to perform a "Spiritual Check-up" periodically to ensure that our faith is healthy and growing.

Consider the following categories and rate yourself on how you are doing:

- I make Sunday morning worship a priority.
- I spend time in God's Word every day.
- I participate in a Bible study group or Sunday school class.
- I spend time in prayer daily.
- I pray regularly for those I know who do not know the Lord.
- I pray for opportunities to tell others about Jesus.
- I give sacrificially of my finances to the work of the church.
- I willingly give of my time and talents to the work of the church.



As we consider these things let us each resolve to take the necessary steps to grow in the areas where we have given ourselves a low grade.

There are many resources available to help us. The church library has many books that can be borrowed and there are several resources available in the narthex that are free for you to take. We offer several opportunities for Bible study and of course, worship is available every week!

Please feel free to speak with Pastor John or any of the Session members – their names are listed on the back of the order of worship – if you have questions or if you would like some help or encouragement as you seek to grow in your walk with the Lord.

Our prayer is that we will all resolve to set some goals for our spiritual growth and then strive to meet those goals. We do this not just to be able to give ourselves a good grade and feel good about ourselves. Rather we grow in our faith that we might more rightly love, worship and serve our God – that He might be glorified in our lives.

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 Perry Jones (Capital City Rescue Mission) – “Your gift not only provides physical nourishment, you also help fill the emptiness of our city’s homeless and hungry neighbors by offering spiritual hope. You are making a difference to women like Page and her young son. Paige came through the doors struggling with addiction. Today she is able to devote her energy to sobriety, learning God’s Word and how to be a responsible and caring mother. Your support of Capital City Rescue Mission is a true blessing to our entire community. Thank you, kind friends. You bring so many hope and blessings in Jesus.”

From Niki Campbell (InterVarsity at RPI and Sage) – “We are still handing out cookies to those who have asked us to. Last week, a late night group of students were knocking on doors and handing out cookies. One of the doors they stopped at was a room full of young ladies who had forgotten they signed up for the cookie list. They were so excited, during a particularly hard evening of studying, that InterVarsity students showed up with a sandwich bag of joy in the form of a few cookies. It has been helpful to know that the cookies we share bring immediate joy to those who receive them. And with them comes an invitation to learn a little more about Jesus, who brings lasting joy.

It was recently announced that for the first time in Russell Sage’s history they will be going co-ed. This is set to take place by 2020. Please pray that the InterVarsity chapter can serve the campus that is in a big change and transition (that not everyone is happy about) and that we can bring God’s stability and love into that community.”

From Peter Halder (Bangladesh YFC) – “We come before you with a grateful heart to praise and rejoice in His faithfulness and blessings over the year. Because of His faithfulness we are finishing 2018 with great achievement. Always we pray to finish well the work He has entrusted upon us. I spent some time with one young girl who very recently had been

transformed by the Good News through one of our programs. Her story is so pathetic, heart breaking, and hard to explain. She is going through tough struggles but her faith in Jesus is strong. We are trying our best to stand beside her. Thank you for your kindness and partnership with us to see new lives in Jesus Christ. The Bangladesh YFC family wholeheartedly appreciates your love, prayer, and giving which is how we are able to exist and continue the work that He has given us.”

From Kevin Post (Capital District YFC) – “This Christmas season, our staff and volunteers look forward to sharing the story of hope and forgiveness through Christ to the youth of the Capital District. We are privileged to offer the gift of salvation that comes through starting a life-long relationship with the God of the universe. There is no greater gift that we can give than the opportunity to know God. Thank you for all the ways you invest in the lives of teenagers here in the Capital District. Thank you for helping teens find Jesus.”



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.

To date we have collected:

- 34 Pairs of gloves
- 33 Hats
- 2 Scarves
- 26 Pairs of socks
- 5 Coats and jackets
- 1 Pair of boots

Annual Meeting and Luncheon

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 27th** following the morning's worship service. We will begin with a pot luck luncheon and then move into the business of the annual meeting. You are encouraged to attend as we celebrate the past year and look ahead to this new year. The luncheon will have an international theme this year if you are able please bring a dish to share that reflects your heritage!



Many Thanks!!

The Upward Ministry, Inward Ministry, and Outward Ministry committees would like to say big "THANK YOU" to everyone who helped to make this past Advent and Christmas season meaningful for all of us. Thanks to:

- Jerry Whitman for decorating the sanctuary.
- Andy Miller for arranging for and hanging the wreaths.
- Sal, the choir and the Acoustic Worship Teams for their gifts of music.
- Everyone who filled a shoebox or gave a donation for Operation Christmas Child.
- Jerry and Vera Whitman for planning the senior luncheon.
- Everyone who purchased a poinsettia to decorate the sanctuary.
- All who went Christmas Caroling at The Eddy.
- Patty for all her work in the church office.
- Those who served the evening meal at Capital City Rescue Mission.

Last but not least, thanks to Pastor John for all the time, effort and care that was put into planning and leading our Advent and Christmas Eve worship services.

General Financial Update for November

	Year to Date	November
Total Income	\$155,173.11	\$ 15,763.00
Total Expenses	\$141,153.88	\$ 14,019.23
Difference	\$ (4,995.61)	\$ (1,743.77)

Bible Quiz for January 2019

As we begin the New Year I encourage you to make this year one focused on learning more about Jesus: who He is, what He has done for us, and what He asks of us. A good place to start is with the reading of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Of course a study of the person and work of Jesus ought to be our pursuit every year, but I encourage you to go deeper than usual and work harder than usual this year to learn about this One who is our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace – this One who is our Savior and Lord. To that end this quiz contains a few basic questions about the person and work of Jesus.

1. True or False: the apostle John opened his Gospel by identifying Jesus as being with God in the beginning?
2. True or False: the apostle John opened his Gospel by identifying Jesus as being God from the beginning?
3. True or False: Joseph was Jesus' biological father?
4. True or False: Mary had no other children after Jesus?
5. True or False: John the Baptist was related to Jesus?
6. True or False: Jesus' father was a shepherd?
7. True or False: All the disciples Jesus called to follow Him remained faithful to that call.
8. True or False: Jesus died upon a cross, was buried and was raised to life on the third day.
9. True or False: Jesus first miracle was turning wine into water.
10. True or False: Through His incarnation Jesus became fully human while maintaining His full deity.
11. True or False: Jesus is even now both fully human and fully divine.

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 thee 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

January 6

Worship Assistants: Deena Dominy
Ella Miller
Greeters: Dean & Doris Calamaras
Head Greeter: Peter Laz
Nursery: Alice Bentley
Irene Ofori
Communion: Bill Multunas

Fellowship Hosts:

January 13

Worship Assistants: Sue Laz
Jesse Ofori
Greeters: Alice Bentley
Jen McAuley
Head Greeter: Andy Miller
Nursery: Diane Lewinsky
Jen McAuley
Communion: Alice Bentley, Andy
Miller, Bill Multunas,
Dean Calamaras

Fellowship Hosts:

January 20

Worship Assistants: Bill Multunas
Natalia Multunas
Greeters: Valerie Bidwell
Vaughn Skarzynski
Head Greeter: Peter Laz
Nursery: Alice Bentley,
Lois Pasinella
Communion: Deena Dominy,
Doris Calamaras.
Eric Ofori, Jason Laz

Fellowship Hosts:

January 27

Worship Assistants: Eric Ofori
Dean Calamaras
Greeters: Bill Multunas
Head Greeter: Rob Jensen
Nursery: Irene Ofori
Diane Lewinsky
Communion: Jen McAuley, Natalia
Multunas, Pat Gilmaier,
Rob Jensen

Fellowship:



January Birthdays

1/15 Caitlin Dickson
1/18 Kurt Whitman
1/25 Mort Casey



January Anniversaries

1/14 Alice & Stanton Bentley
1/14 Daniel & Sally Nolan

Session Meeting December 10, 2018

We met with newly elected elders Deena Dominy and Jennifer McAuley to determine their readiness to begin serving in 2019. They answered the ordination questions from the Book of Order, read their statement of faith, shared their testimony of how God has worked in their lives, shared why they agreed to serve as an elder, what gifting they bring to the Session and how they see themselves living out that gifting as an elder.

ACTION ITEMS

1. A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the readiness of Deena Dominy and Jennifer McAuley to serve as elders beginning January 13th.
2. (from the Stewardship Committee) A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the 2019 General Fund budget.

UPWARD MINISTRY (Encounter, Exalt, Enjoy)

- The Thanksgiving Breakfast was held on November 22nd. Thanks to the Men's Group for cooking.

INWARD MINISTRY (Encourage, Equip)

CHRISTIAN NURTURE

- **MEN'S MINISTRY** – Bible study on Sunday evenings is ongoing.
- **WOMEN'S MINISTRY** – Will start up after Christmas.
- **ADULT MINISTRY** - The adult Sunday school class is ongoing and the Wednesday evening Bible study is on a break until after Christmas.
- **SENIOR'S MINISTRY** – The Holiday luncheon was held on December 8th with 25 in attendance. Food items and monetary donations of \$450.00 were received for Ronald McDonald House.

OUTWARD MINISTRY

• OUTREACH AND MISSIONS

- Spending for December
 - Capital City Rescue Mission \$ 500.00
 - Reach Across \$ 300.00
 - Bangladesh YFC \$ 500.00
- The next Questions of Faith event will be Sunday, January 20th, from 6:00—7:30. We will be looking at salvation – What it is and why we need it.
- We are collecting new and gently used coats, hats, and gloves for Capital City Rescue Mission.
- Our first community meal was held December 1st at noon. We had 9 individuals from the food pantry and 9 from the congregation. It was a great opportunity to make some connections with folks from the community and provide a hot meal and fellowship for those in need.

STEWARDSHIP

GENERAL FUND/FINANCE

- There was a positive cash flow during November of \$1,743.77. This gives us a year-to-date deficit of \$4,995.61.

PROPERTY

- Two new ceiling fans have been installed in the sanctuary..

PASTOR'S REPORT

- In the coming months we will be considering some changes to our order of worship.
- Will be conducting a new member's class soon for those interested in joining the church.
- Ordination and installation of new elders will be celebrated during worship on January 13th.

NEXT MEETINGS

- January 14th at 7:00 PM, Business meeting. Please read **The Cross and Christian Ministry** by D.A. Carson, chapter 4, "The Cross and Christian Leadership".
- January 28th at 7:00 PM, Informal Study meeting.

**Annual Meeting and Luncheon
Sunday, January 30th**



During our regular fellowship time on Sunday, January 30th we will have our annual meeting along with a luncheon. Bring your favorite dish to share and join us for a time of fellowship, of celebrating God's goodness and provision in 2018 and of looking ahead to how God will work through Third Church in 2019!

Third Presbyterian Church
115 Winter Street
Troy, NY 12180

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
EXALTING GOD / PROCLAIMING CHRIST / MAKING DISCIPLES