

The Third PRESS



October 2018

“New Attire for God’s New Creation”

Continuing in our study through Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, our passage for reflection in this newsletter is from Ephesians 4:17-24. In this passage, after challenging the believer to avoid allowing themselves to be tossed about by waves of false teaching, Paul continued his exhortation to live as the new creation that we were meant to be in Christ by writing:

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Alexander the Great was one of the most ruthless-yet-successful military leaders in history, having conquered most of Europe and Western Asia during his reign in the fourth century BC. The story is told that following one particular military campaign, as Alexander rested from the battle, a young deserter was brought before him. A hush came over the army as the young man was thrust at the feet of Alexander.

Alexander looked down at the trembling boy and asked, “What is your name?”
The young man responded timidly, “Alexander, sir.”

Again Alexander the Great, starring hotly at the boy, asked more loudly, “What is your name?”

The youth cowered at Alexander the Great’s feet and fearfully muttered, “Alexander, sir.”

Finally, Alexander the Great rose to his feet and shouted down at the boy, “What is your name?”

The boy, fearing for his life, whimpered, “Alexander, sir.”

To which Alexander the Great bellowed -- “Then either change your ways, or change your name!”

In the fourth chapter of Ephesians, Christians are called to walk in a manner worthy of the calling we’ve received in Christ – to walk worthy of “the name” we bear. Paul tells us that we’ve been set apart by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to live as the body of Christ, united in faith, hope, and love. Moreover, Paul reminds and encourages the believer that we’re given all the gifts necessary to be the church of Jesus Christ in this lost world. In turn, our life is to stand apart from the life of the non-believer; after all, we’re Christians! We bear the name of our Savior.

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 ThirdChurchTroy

—
A community of Christ
-followers where,

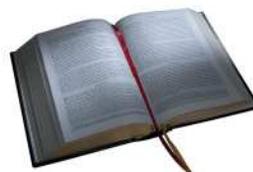
The Head of the Church
is...
The Lord Jesus Christ

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



And that means we have to change -- change the way we think and act -- for Christians are not to conform to the things of this world, rather we're to be transformed by the renewing of our minds -- to the glory of our God! (Rom 12:2)

Now, as we examine Ephesians 4:17-24, you may recall that when we began our study of Ephesians (months ago now!), we spoke about the vileness of that city. Ephesus was a major urban center with all the enticements of a big city of the first century. It was a wealthy trade center. It was an educational center where the great teachings of the Greek philosophers were disseminated. Sorcery and fortune telling were common practice in Ephesus. In fact, in Paul's work there he had to combat the witchcraft and sorcery that not only had a hold of people's hearts and minds, but was a major source of income for many. Ephesus was the home of many gods to the pagan world, most notably, the goddess Artemis (Diana), whose temple, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The fifth century BC Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, described Ephesus as the "Darkest of vileness. The morals were lower than animals and the inhabitants of Ephesus were fit only to be drowned." And there's no reason to believe that this city was much better when Paul went there to preach the Gospel.

As John MacArthur describes it, "The church at Ephesus was a small island of despised people in a giant cesspool of wickedness."

The pagans in Ephesus had made sexual immorality and self-indulgent-greed a tolerated, then accepted, then promoted, then flaunted way of life.

But then, that's a pattern we see repeated in our own day when behaviors that were once perceived as sinful and shameful now are paraded on our streets, applauded by much of our media, and promoted in our schools.

The good gifts of God like chastity, purity, and self-control have been presented as evil, and the evil behaviors of fallen humanity like promiscuity, infidelity, and self-indulgence have come to be seen as good, so that the church finds itself living in a world where darkness is cherished and light is shunned -- for evil loves the dark.

Now, Paul used many powerful words to describe the condition of the Gentile whose life was alienated from God, and at the core of his descriptions was Paul's focus on the "futility of their thinking": minds darkened in their understanding of truth; hearts hardened to the things of a holy and righteous God; consciences desensitized to the evil about them.

And Paul began with their "thinking" because he was speaking about a people who prided themselves in their wisdom and knowledge, and, because he recognized that "as one thinks so one becomes."

And so Paul warned the Christians, reminding them that at one time their hearts were hardened to the greater things of God -- love, joy, peace, and hope -- being instead filled with greed, deceit, and a lust for sexual excess and perversion. They were self-absorbed -- seeking to gratify their own desires regardless of the cost to others. The sad truth was that before they came to know Christ, the believers in Ephesus were just like the pagans about them who rejected the necessity and sufficiency of an all loving, all powerful God.

Such was the lifestyle out of which many of the first century Christians came. And that is why Paul exhorted the church to avoid the enticements of the world, and, to recognize, as the apostle Peter stated, that they were aliens and strangers in the world -- living by different values and serving a different God! (1 Pt 2:11)

But is such an analysis and such an admonition really appropriate for our day? Do Paul's warnings have anything to say to us as 21st century Christians living during what some consider to be the greatest age in the history of mankind? After all, aren't we better people today -- wiser, more educated, more civil, more moral?

The Age of Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries ushered in much human advancement. But with it came what is known as Secular Humanism, an ideology that attacked the sovereignty of God leaving western society with a 'god' whose existence and essence has, over time, been reduced to whatever one desires.

And, over the years this Secular Humanism has come to give rise to what is known as Relativism, the belief that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute. This belief in turn has led to a breakdown in basic civility as each person presumes the right to declare what is right and what is wrong based upon their own preferences. This relativism has also contributed to what can be characterized as systemic narcissism, especially within western culture.

And the result of such movement from a God-centered to a human-centered worldview has encouraged and even extolled such depraved minds as the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche -- whose ideas eventually fueled the madness of Mussolini and Hitler.

In fact, in our own lifetimes we've witnessed entire nations who failed even to wince at the extermination of millions of people -- Jews, Cambodians, Ugandans, Kurds, Sudanese and Syrian Christians. And at the same time we've seen "more advanced" nations endorsing euthanasia, infanticide and abortion!

We have people who have become so deluded by false teachers, corrupt ideologies, and misinformed theologies that they will coldly take the lives of others, even at the cost of their own life. And what's worse, many of these deluded fanatics are cheered as heroes and set forth as role models for gullible youth!

And although many of these individuals claim some connection to a 'god', they're not following the true God, for, to honor the true God is to honor His creation -- which means to cherish all life and to pursue peace.

No, we do not live in an age of "Moral Enlightenment and Moral Progress", rather, we live in an age of despair and darkness -- as dark, if not darker, than first century Ephesus.

We live in a society where the conscience of the non-believer, and even many who call themselves Christians, is being desensitized to evil. But then, what should we expect when we spend twenty or thirty hours a week in front of a TV or computer saturating our minds with images of violence and immoral behaviors, and with language that is base, vulgar and degrading.

Moreover, we live in a day where therapists tell us that it's unacceptable to speak of sin, and where personal culpability is seen as an antiquated evil that must be done away with.

Consider the words of psychiatrist, Dr. Karl Menninger, as recorded in his 1973 book titled, "Whatever Became of Sin?" where he wrote:

"In all of the laments and reproaches made by our [present day] seers and prophets, one misses any mention of sin, a word which used to be a veritable watchword of prophets. It was a word once in everyone's mind, but now rarely if ever heard. Does that mean that no sin is involved in all our troubles -- sin with an "I" in the middle? Is no one any longer guilty of anything? Guilty perhaps of a sin that could be repented and repaired or atoned for? Is it only that someone may be stupid or sick or criminal -- or asleep? Wrong things are being done, we know, . . . but is no one responsible, no one answerable for these acts? . . . has no one committed any sins?"

So, instead of sin we talk of mistakes or judgment errors. After all, popular philosophy has taught us that everyone is good, we just need to develop our self-esteem so that we will, by our nature, think right and do right. We fail to see that our fallen sinful nature is precisely our problem! As Paul argues, it is because we're sinners that we can't think right and do right apart from the transforming power of Christ in us!

Charles Colson (1931-2012), founder and president of Prison Fellowship Ministries, declared in his 1993 Templeton address:

"This myth that mankind is basically good deludes people into thinking that they are always victims, never villains; always deprived, never depraved. It dismisses responsibility as the teaching of a darker age. It can excuse any crime, because it can always blame something else -- the sickness of our society or the sickness of the mind.

One writer called the modern age "the golden age of exoneration."

When guilt is dismissed as the illusion of narrow minds, then no one is accountable, even to his conscience.

The irony is that this should come alive in this century, of all centuries, with its death camps and killing fields.

As G. K. Chesterton once said, “the doctrine of original sin is the only philosophy empirically validated by centuries of recorded human history.”

And so we live in a society whose understanding is darkened, whose hearts are hardened to the ethics of God but open to the values of a fallen world. And, as a result, we read of a drug dealer and cocaine addict from the Bronx who was acquitted of murder after killing eight children and two women whom he shot in the head at point blank range. The jurors decided that drugs and stress “were a reasonable explanation for his actions”, so they found him guilty on a lesser charge that brought only a light sentence. And we hear about an FBI agent who was fired after he embezzled two thousand dollars, then gambled it away in a single afternoon at a casino. Later he sued, arguing that his gambling addiction was a disability so his firing was an act of illegal discrimination. He won the case. And we’re confronted with the growing acceptance of pre-marital sex and living together prior to marriage, despite the clear data that shows that there is no safe-sex outside of marriage, and, that living together before marriage dramatically increases the chances that the marriage will end in divorce! And, we’re invaded by the pornography industry, which now has open access to our homes via the Internet, polluting the minds of youth and destroying families as men and women are being blinded by their own lust, unable to see the devastation caused by viewing such materials. In fact studies show that sexual addictions are harder to overcome than any other addictions. Make no mistake, pornography is a deadly drug that must not be allowed an entryway into our lives -- which means that much that passes for entertainment in our day, even much that is aired on TV during the supposed “family hour” is not only not worth watching but is detrimental to our moral health.

Unfortunately, this present decay in society is not just occurring outside the church. We have so adopted the ways, trends and values of our society that we find ourselves often afraid and sometimes even unable to stand up for the truth revealed in God’s Word. As a result of our ignorance of the Word of God, and our numbness to the deceitful schemes of a fallen society, we have bought the lie that says, “What you believe is great for you and what I believe is great for me” and in turn we’re afraid to affirm that there is only one Lord and Savior of all, and He has revealed Himself in the divine-human, Jesus the Christ. Indeed, the church has become so afraid of being labeled “un-loving” or “intolerant” that we’ve lost the nerve to stand up for truth, and, we in turn fail to show genuine love -- a love that cares enough to tell another that what they’re doing is wrong!

Much of the church of Jesus Christ is dressing itself in the rags of a sinful world, hoping to blend in, to be acceptable, when in fact God calls us to be different, to put on “new attire”, to, in the words of corporate America, “dress for success.” But, the success we dress for is not measured by what we own, or how much we earn, or how popular we are. Rather, our success is determined by how deeply we love, how diligently we serve, how earnestly we defend truth, and how honorably we bear the name Christian.

And so Paul exhorts us in Ephesians 4:17-24, to live as disciples of Jesus, who is the Truth, who is Love come in the flesh, who has shown us how to embrace the sinner and yet hate and reject the sin.

And Paul admonishes us saying that if we’re Christians then certain things are true about our life and must be reflected in our behavior!

First, as followers of Jesus we must strip off the “old man”, the “old woman” -- that person whose heart was turned from God, that person who was bent upon living for self. Moreover, each day must include a conscious self-examination, making sure that we do not put on again the old rags of our sinful nature – rags that will pollute our minds and misdirect our actions.

Second, as followers of Jesus we have put on the “new man”, the “new woman” -- that person who now stands in relationship with God through Christ, that person who can live in true righteousness and holiness with God and fellow believers because of what Jesus has done. This means that each day

we must clothe ourselves with those garments that honor our God -- with those actions and attitudes that bring forth the fruit of goodness and kindness and love. (Col 3:12-14)

If we are Christians, then, we must live daily in the truth that we've been crucified with Christ and we no longer live for ourselves, but Christ lives in us. Therefore, the life we live in the body, we must live by faith in the Son of God, who loves us and gave Himself for us. (Gal 2:20)

Through the grace of God, we've been stripped of our sinful nature and clothed with a new nature. And this means that we must not be content to walk in darkness, for we have knowledge of the things of God because we've been given "the very mind of Christ." (1 Cor 2:16)

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:17-24 that, by the working of God, we're being renewed in the spirit of our mind. And so, as followers of Jesus, a continual, ongoing renewal takes place within us as we walk in obedience to God: so that we can know right from wrong; so that as followers of Jesus we can discern the difference between godly love and the "false love" that the world "cloaks in the garb of tolerance" -- which is often just a clever ploy to sanction sin.

Paul exhorts us in Ephesians 4:17-24 to walk by faith -- to walk in the knowledge of Christ as presented in the Scriptures.

And, although we still sin, as we grow in Christ our consciences will be made more alert to our sin and to the things that dishonor God; and, in turn, our wills shall be strengthened to help us resist the lusts of the flesh, the enticements of the world, and the temptations of the devil.

But in order to experience such victorious living in Christ it's vitally important that we saturate our minds with the Word of God, that we surrender our lives to the Spirit of God, that we surround ourselves with the community of God, and that we offer ourselves in worship to God -- centering our hearts and minds upon God instead of self!

And this in turn means we must fill our days with God-honoring activities. We must read materials that build our faith and edify our spirits -- not trashy love stories that draw us away from reality and into an unhealthy fantasy, and not simplistic Christian literature that minimizes the cost of discipleship. We must radically alter our TV viewing -- for there's little if anything worth watching, and even the decent programs are surrounded by commercials which present images and promote values contrary to Biblical Christianity. We must be disciplined in the regular reading and meditating upon God's Word, while spending time in prayer with God. And, we must make an intentional effort every day to be a servant of others, sharing God's love through our words and actions, and in all of this looking for ways to speak of the hope and peace we have because of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul encourages us to live as people who have been stripped of our old garments of covetousness, sexual immorality, and all kinds of impurity, and who have put on the new garments of righteousness -- of right living with one another, and, of holiness -- of right relating to God.

And this is done by submitting to a loving God: who delights to form our hearts that we might experience and share the love of God; who relishes transforming our minds that we might believe and speak the truth of God; and, who is pleased to conform our wills that we might discern and obey the commands of God.

The world would have us to live different than this. The world and the "ruler" of this world, the Devil, will tell us that the only sin is that of claiming that there is such a thing as sin. The world would have us to believe that guilt is unhealthy and that our conscience should be our guide -- as long as our conscience matches whatever is the trend in our day.

But, Christians are not of the world. If we're in Christ we've been recreated -- clothed anew to live in true righteousness and holiness. And so, let's live as we were taught in Christ. Let's live as disciples of Jesus. Let's live as believers who bring honor to the name Christian. And let's do so that we might be a blessing to our world and bring glory, honor and praise to Jesus the Christ!

Grace and peace to you,

Pastor John

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

Hope 7's food pantry serves families in need right here in our own community. The need is great and has been growing every year!

During the month of October we will be collecting toilet paper.



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

General Financial Update for August

	Year to Date	August
Total Income	\$109,602.50	\$12,365.00
Total Expenses	\$113,945.15	\$13,685.60
Difference	\$ (4,342.65)	\$ (1,320.60)

October Birthdays

10/2 Daniel McAuley
 10/9 Andy Miller
 10/13 Kelly Valerio
 10/19 Sue Laz
 10/21 Natalie & Alida Scechitano
 10/23 Peter Laz
 10/26 Marcella Goard



October Anniversaries

10/5 Sal & Deb Scechitano
 10/6 Jack & Joan Wocher
 10/25 Natalia & Bill Multunas

Serving This Month

October 7th

Worship Assistants: Natalia Multunas, Eric Ofori
 Greeters: Joe Pasinella
 Head Greeter: Andy Miller
 Nursery: Deena Dominy, Megan Laz
 Communion: Dean Calamaras
 Fellowship Hosts: Wendy & Rob Jensen and Bruce Tolagian

October 14th

Worship Assistants: Bill and Natalia Multunas
 Greeters: Jen McAuley
 Head Greeter: Rob Jensen
 Communion: Natalia Multunas, Jen McAuley, Rob Jensen, Sue Laz
 Fellowship Hosts: Church Picnic

October 21st

Worship Assistants: Eric and Jesse Ofori
 Greeters: Pat Gilmaier, Bill Multunas
 Head Greeter: Peter Laz
 Nursery: Jen McAuley, Irene Ofori
 Communion: Vera Whitman, Alice Bentley, Andy Miller, Bill Multunas
 Fellowship Hosts:

October 28th

Worship Assistants: Sue Laz, Dean Calamaras
 Greeters: Dean and Doris Calamaras
 Head Greeter: Andy Miller
 Nursery: Alice Bentley, Megan Laz
 Communion: Dean Calamaras, Deena Dominy, Doris Calamaras, Eric Ofori
 Fellowship Hosts: Calamaras Family

Pot Luck Luncheon Sunday, October 14th

During our regular fellowship time on October 14th we will have a pot luck luncheon. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be provided. Bring a side dish to share and join us for a time of fellowship.





Remember in Prayer...

Our Shut-ins at home:

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

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 the local believers that they will
grow in this season in a new way.
Pray that he will be able to finish well as he
heads towards the end of his two year
commitment.
Pray for wisdom and guidance for his future
plans.

Our college students:

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



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

Our next Sunday school class will be held
October 21st following the worship service.

Bible Quiz for October 2018

Our Bible quiz continues in Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth as found in the New Testament. For this quiz our questions will come from chapter 3 and 4.

1. What did Paul say he "gave" the church at Corinth (in terms of teaching) because they were not yet ready for solid food?
2. Who, along with Paul, seems to be a catalyst for the divisions in the church, despite Paul's and this person's attempt to lead the church in the way of the Lord?
3. In the end, to whom does Paul attribute the spiritual growth of believers?
4. Fill in the blanks: "No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is _____."
5. Fill in the blanks: "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's _____ and that God's _____ lives in you?"
6. Fill in the blank: "The wisdom of this world is _____ in God's sight."
7. How did Paul say the church should regard men like Peter, Apollos, and him?
8. Who said, "Therefore I urge you to imitate me?"
9. Who did Paul send to deliver "1 Corinthians" to the church at Corinth?
10. True or False: Because of their spiritual immaturity Paul threatened that he would come and use force if necessary to restore order, humility and godliness to the church at Corinth.

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 generous compassion is helping to provide our homeless neighbors in the Capital Region with thousands of nutritious, hot meals, shelter and other vital care. 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.”

From Dan (in East Africa) – “Thank you for all the encouraging words and the prayers! In my last email I mentioned how I had gotten sick and had been in the hospital and planned to return home to rest. I was able to go home, see my doctor, and recover well.

I left to head back to Africa on Friday and I’m back and settling in, and aside from a little tiredness I’m back to full health. I plan on pacing myself as I start back with work so I don’t wear myself out but I’m excited to be back in Djibouti! I’ll send a more in depth letter soon but I wanted to thank you for your prayers and let you know that I’m doing much better!”

From Kevin Post (Capital District YFC) – “Your investment in the teens of the Capital District is received with deep gratitude. Please keep praying for our youth to come to know Jesus and find life in Him.”

From Peter Halder (Bangladesh YFC) – “Greetings from Bangladesh YFC family. The board of trustees and staff of Bangladesh YFC express deep thankfulness and gratitude for your kindness and generosity of giving toward BYFC. Your long-term partnership is making an impact in the lives of others. We so much appreciate your continuous prayer for our work. Be assured of our prayer for you too.”

Operation Christmas Child A Gift of Joy and a Message of God’s Love

Millions of children all over the world live in very difficult situations and long to know that they are loved. Since 1993, **Operation Christmas Child** (OCC) has shared the Good News of God’s love with hurting children around the world.



Through simple shoe boxes filled with toys and other small gifts children receive what may be their only Christmas gift as well as the assurance that God loves them.

We will once again be participating in Operation Christmas Child. More details will be coming soon!

Veteran’s Day

During the worship service on **November 11th** we will be recognizing service personnel who have served or are currently serving in the military. To include someone in this recognition please call the church office at 283-2420 with their name, branch of service and dates of service.



SESSION MEETING-THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-SEPTEMBER 10, 2018

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.
- Met with Connie Voys about welcoming those with disabilities. She gave a lot of information that we will be considering.

CHRISTIAN NURTURE

MEN'S MINISTRY

- The Men's Bible Study resumed their study of the Gospel of Mark. They meet the first Sunday of each month at 6:30 PM.

FELLOWSHIP/MISCELLANEOUS

- We will have a luncheon October 14 in place of our regular fellowship time.

OUTWARD MINISTRY (Engage, Evangelize, Extend)

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

- Spending for September: Capital City Rescue Mission-\$500.00, Reach Across (Dan McAuley)-\$300.00, Bangladesh Youth For Christ-\$500.00, Capital District Youth For Christ-\$500.00, Church Around The World Inserts-\$ 42.00
- We will be serving the evening meal at Capital City Rescue Mission on October 20th.
- The Back-To-School Fair was held on August 25th from 11 AM-1 PM. It was a great day of ministry and serving the community. We were able to provide backpacks and school supplies for 66 children. 36 families (68 children) were invited; 21 families (37 children) attended.. It was truly a community effort this year as we had participation and/or donations from Hope 7 (staff, volunteers and friends), the Regional Food Bank, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Fidelis Care, the Sage Colleges, St. Basil's Church, and the Rensselaer County Sheriff's Department.
- The next Questions Of Faith event will be November 18th from 6-7:30 PM. And we will be looking at Jesus – Who is He and why is He so important.
- Possible Community Dinner in the planning stages.

STEWARDSHIP (Upward, Inward, Outward)

GENERAL FUND/FINANCE

- We had a negative cash flow during August of \$1,320.60. This gives us a year-to-date deficit of \$4,342.65.
- At this point we are short about \$545 per month, or \$130.00 per week.
- Stewardship season is fast approaching; please start to consider your budget needs for 2019.

PROPERTY

- Paving Project is finalized.
- We will be purchasing this week two (2) Sanctuary ceiling fans.

PERSONNEL

- Peggy Siracusa, Church Secretary is retiring.

NEXT MEETINGS

- Informal/Study: September 24th at church at 7PM.
- Business: October 8th at church at 7PM. Please read **Holiness**, by J. C. Ryle, Chapter 9, "The Ruler of the Waves", pages 210-231.

Youth For Christ Annual Banquet

Youth for Christ will be holding their Annual Banquet on **Sunday, November 4th from 1:00-4:00 pm at their Adventure Center, 1544 Route 9 in Halfmoon.** Come and enjoy a delicious meal and hear more about the ministry of YFC and how they are impacting the lives of young people in our communities.

There are eight free tickets available. If you would like to attend please speak with Peter Laz.

Help Wanted

Nursery Attendants are needed to care for little ones in the nursery while their parents are in worship (you must be at least 11 years old). You would be part of a two-person team and would need to be in the nursery by 10:20. There is a speaker in the nursery so that you can still listen to the worship service.

We currently have a great group of people who rotate in their service in the nursery but there is always room to add others to this important ministry.

If you would like to be a part of the nursery ministry please speak with Sue Laz.



From Music and AV Ministries...

"EIN FESTE BURG IST UNSER GOTT!"

What, you don't know German? My bad... sorry 'bout that! While many might associate the month of October with beer drinking fests and the ghouls and goblins of Halloween, I prefer to take a higher liturgical road and focus on the Protestant Reformation that we observe on October 31. (Also makes for a much more appropriate subject for a church newsletter article!) So, the translation from the German of my title is, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Oh, why didn't you say so?

Nothing says Protestant Reformation like Martin Luther and nothing says Martin Luther like the great hymn, "A Mighty Fortress". In the same way that July 4th has become synonymous as our country's Independence Day because of the signing of the Declaration, October 31, 1517 was something of a 4th of July foreshadowing of Protestantism. It didn't involve a document signing but it did involve a document "nailing"--the 95 Theses that Martin Luther nailed to the cathedral door in Wittenburg. In these he took issue with a whole raft of practices he found that the Catholic Church in Rome was guilty of such as the selling of "indulgences"--written papal decrees that reduced one's time in the ethereal punishment of purgatory (something of a "Get-Out-of-Jail Free" card, to be crude about it). To suggest its corruption

and discontinuation would of course hit the church right in the ole pocketbook. This was enough to win Luther a "Get Out of the Catholic Church Free" card in the form of excommunication in 1520!

One of the "bones" Luther was looking to pick with the "Mother Church in Rome" revolved around the role of congregation singing in worship. As one who grew up catholic and been involved musically in many of its churches since, I can attest that Luther was onto something! He considered music a "gift and grace" from God even capable of driving out Satan and his minions. We know this to be true from 1 Samuel 16 when King Saul summoned David to play his lyre to drive an evil spirit out of him. Luther was keenly aware of the power of music to cement scriptural truths in people's hearts. He wrote, "*I wish to compose sacred hymns so that the Word of God may dwell among the people also by means of songs.*"

Indeed, his "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" is probably the single most powerful hymn of the entire Protestant Reformation Movement. Translated into nearly every known language and based on Psalm 46, it was a great source of inspiration even for those martyred for their faith. Amongst church "wonks" there is an entertaining urban legend that the music for "A Mighty Fortress" was actually a song sung in local taverns of the day. Certainly a colorful myth but for those of us who have sung the hymn, can you really picture singing it in a bar (to ANY lyrics)?! I didn't think so... Facts point to Luther having written the melody himself, possibly based on a Renaissance folk melody. Music aside, take a few moments to meditate on this glorious text--

*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
our helper he, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.*

*Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth his name, from age to age the same;
and he must win the battle.*

*And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed his truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.*

*That Word above all earthly powers no thanks to them abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours through him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
the body they may kill: God's truth abideth still;
his kingdom is forever!*

So enjoy your observance of Reformation this month but be sure to drink responsibly while doing so (and go easy on the scary Martin Luther Halloween mask)!

With Joy in the Journey,

Sal Sceccitano

Questions of Faith



November 18th, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

“Who is Jesus? Why is he important?”

Each will include a brief presentation and a time for questions and discussion. Light refreshments will be served.

Consider who you know that might be interested in learning more about what it is that we, as Christians, believe and then invite them to come with you to learn and ask any questions they may have.

Bring your questions and find answers that will transform your heart and mind!

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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