



WILLING HEARTS

Dear Third Family,

In his book, *The Prodigal God*, Tim Keller tells the following story:

Once upon a time there was a gardener who grew an enormous carrot. This man loved his king, so he took it to his king and said, "My lord, this is the greatest carrot I've ever grown or ever will grow. Therefore I want to present it to you as a token of my love and respect for you." The king was touched and discerned the man's heart, that he wanted nothing in return, so as he turned to go the king said, "Wait! You are clearly a good steward of the earth. I own a plot of land right next to yours. I want to give it to you freely as a gift so you can garden it all." And the gardener was amazed and delighted and went home rejoicing.

But there was a nobleman at the king's court who overheard all this. And he said, "My! If that is what you get for a carrot – what if you gave the king something better?" So the next day the nobleman came before the king and he was leading a handsome black stallion. He bowed low and said, "My lord, I breed horses and this is the greatest horse I've ever bred or ever will. Therefore I want to present it to you as a token of my love and respect for you." But the king discerned his heart and said thank you, and took the horse and merely dismissed him. The nobleman was perplexed. So the king said, "Let me explain. The gardener's gift was a gift of love, from the heart. But you're just trying to make a profit. That gardener was giving me the carrot, but you were giving yourself the horse."

I love this story because it captures the heart of what Christian generosity is all about. So often we give our money and resources to others while in reality we are giving to ourselves, like the nobleman. We give to assuage guilt, we give to make ourselves feel like a better person, we give so others will think more highly of us, we give out of a vague sense of obligation, hoping that somehow God will think better of us. But all of these motivations are at the core self-centered. We are giving only to get.

The gardener exhibits what true gospel centered giving is all about. Giving that is motivated by Jesus is fueled by a willing heart, a heart that is so full of gratitude for God's grace and affection for God's character, that the giver offers the gift simply for the sake of love.

THIRD —
*training disciples to love
and transform the world
through
Jesus Christ.*

Rev. Corey Widmer
Lead Pastor

Rev. Ed Satterfield
Associate Pastor for Congregational
Care & Administration

Rev. Rick Hutton
Associate Pastor for Students
(grades 6 - 12)

Andrea Woie
Student Ministry Associate

Tom Barila
Director of Christian Education

Lynn Hardwicke
Associate Dir. of Family Ministry

Tracie Meadows
Associate Dir. of Family Ministry

Kathy White
Associate Dir. of Family Ministry

Dr. John White
Director of Music

Kim Taulbee
Associate Music Director

Beth Nichols
Director of Lay Ministries

Becca Payne
Director of Communications

Tim Latham
Director of Young Adult Ministries

Rev. Richard Haney
Parish Associate

Rev. Nan Clarke
Parish Associate for
Care Ministries

As we move into our stewardship season and begin to prepare for faith commitment Sunday (November 1), the Stewardship team has chosen the phrase "Willing Hearts" as the theme for this year. "Willing hearts" comes from the book of Exodus. In Exodus 35:20-29, it is stated five times that the people gave out of "willing hearts" for the building of God's tabernacle. In Exodus 25:2, God says "You are to receive the offering from everyone whose heart moves them to give." In Exodus 36:4-7, Moses must halt the giving because so much excess is being supplied! These people are like the gardener.

As we head into 2016, we must be thoughtful, prayerful and wise about how we are stewarding God's precious resources. We are planning our budget carefully, and we will all be in this together as we anticipate how God is calling us to participate in his mission together. But above all, my prayer for our community is that God will give us hearts like the gardener- willing hearts- so that our giving flows out of love and gratitude for all that God has given to us.

May the Lord give us willing hearts.

Grace and peace of our Savior+
Corey

NEW STAFF DEVELOPMENTS: Welcome!

Meet Jeff Hummel - Church Organist and Accompanist

After an extensive search, we're happy to introduce Jeff Hummel, our new organist. Jeff comes to us after spending over 40 years in the church-music ministry, both in part-time and full-time capacities. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Church Music at Asbury University, and since 1997 has used his gifts serving the congregation of St. Giles. Outside his time spent at the organ, Jeff, a Chesterfield resident, loves classical music and traveling. He is the proud father of three children, and grandfather to four.

A seasoned music ministry leader, Jeff is passionate about serving the Lord at Third through his God-given talents and abilities.

We are so grateful for Jeff's beautiful and joyful gift that he'll be sharing with us in our Sanctuary.



Meet Miranda Patterson - Office Manager



As Judy Hall steps into a part-time Executive Assistant role supporting Corey, the Session, and John and Kim in music, Miranda has come on board to carry Judy's former Office Manager responsibilities. Miranda will be handling the daily management of our office and administrative team, working closely with Alan, the Director of Finance and Administration.

Miranda most recently was working as the Office Manager for the Engineering Department at Henrico Doctors's Hospital. She's grateful for the opportunity to work for a smaller, supportive team at Third, where she can balance her work life and her passion for being in the outdoors and camping with her family. Please welcome Miranda as she supports everyone in the office, and helps the team run smoothly.

Meet Jason Hall - Nights & Weekends Sexton

For years, our buildings and facilities have been managed by daytime staff - without dedicated night and weekend support. We couldn't be more grateful to introduce Jason Hall, a new teammember who will be present at the church on weekday evenings, and on the weekends to help prep for Sunday services and events. He will also be available to take on project work and assist in maintenance. A jack of all trades, Jason has skills that range from biomedical engineering to tech repair and organic gardening.

We are counting it as a great gift to have Jason offer his presence in our church building in times when we greatly need it.



Meet Becca Payne - Director of Communications



Although it was bittersweet to say goodbye to Arielle as she went back to school, we're excited to have Becca Payne pick up where she left off. Becca actually grew up at Third, but most recently attended Hope Church and worked as a Manager of Content Strategy with the local company Unboxed Technology.

A writer at heart, Becca loves the written word and has written about faith, family, and community life for publications such as Kinfolk Magazine, The Other Journal, and Christianity Today Online.

Becca is particularly excited to begin using her gifts for communications, media, strategy, and writing to further the Kingdom of God through Third Church. Join us in welcoming Becca as she helps shape and develop this role.

MAKING WAY FOR ONE ANOTHER – *A personal reflection on unified worship*

We've gone through many changes together over the past years. We've walked through these changes together, but also in our own unique ways with the Lord — experiencing different expectations, challenges, and hopes. Today, we share Barbara's story of walking through the changes with our worship services. We hope you are encouraged by her words.

Dear fellow member of Third Church,

It has come to my attention that you may be struggling with the new convergent worship services. If so, would you indulge me by reading my experience with the same?

For many weeks now, I have been a depressed old woman, not understanding what was happening to me. My daughter suggested it might be the recent loss of one of my closest friends of eighty years. So I began to look for the real reasons for my depression. My unhappiness, it seems, started with the beginning of the new worship style. I was frustrated at not having but a few hymns offered and the fact that Mark Koontz retired at the same time. Musically, it seemed that the bottom just dropped out of that part of worship. I was having difficulty following the contemporary music in the bulletin, becoming lost, not able to keep up with going back and forth, turning pages, unable to find where I needed to be. In my frustration and sadness, I cried and cried, and felt overwhelmed.

I heard of others who were not happy, not only not happy, but leaving the church! I began to pray that God would not let this happen to our beloved family, who had just suffered through years of disillusionment with the larger church organization, and then, the long and arduous dismissal process. Satan must be in the midst of this mess! Once unified in the ECO, he was not going to let us, so easily, succeed in finding joy and peace together in worship! Satan started in the music, and I took it up from there.

I began to feel sorry for myself, saying, *"I'm old, losing my hearing, my mobility. I only have a few years left and now I'm losing my old friends, my love songs that I've known and sung for over eighty years. These hymns and the Word of God have been the foundation of my faith and beliefs. They have stolen my joy!"* I knew I must talk to Corey.

I told Corey all of the above, with tears and anger. I shared that, for the first time in my life, I had become angry in worship (Oh, Satan is good at his work!) and I knew that this was very wrong. I asked why the old familiar hymns were presented with different words and alternative tunes, and why some hymns were so totally unfamiliar? Corey said he would check into why this was happening. He listened to me rant and cry and he assured me that he would correct it if it was indeed happening. One redeeming fact is that the preaching is still from the Word, clear and challenging.

*These younger members
are the future of
Christianity and the
future of Third Church.*

After talking with Corey, who was most sympathetic and caring, trying to find out what I needed to be satisfied, I was still upset. So, I spent time in prayer, tearfully seeking what God was doing in this mess, and revisiting my rantings with Corey. God took me to a new place. He calmed my heart and my anger. He reminded me of what an old friend had told me long ago, *"Christianity is just one generation away from extinction."* In my mind's eye, I looked at the hundreds of young adults with their young children who come every Sunday to Third, knowing and believing in Jesus as their Savior and Lord. This **is** the next generation....and beyond. These younger members **are** the future of Christianity and the future of Third Church.

This new place, where God took me, opened my eyes to the fact that, after all the years that I have had the worship “my way,” I cannot now deny these young adults their preference of including some contemporary songs in worship. That does not mean that I am not important, or that traditional worship is not important, or that I won’t continue to lobby for my favorite hymns, but I can certainly sacrifice some of my desires for more of theirs.

I thought of the truth that **we** are one Body in Christ and must make way for one another in love and in worship. I feel that I was called to this church. Just like the missionary in the field who must worship within the customs of the people with whom he serves, so am I called to accept new customs of a changing culture. Together, we will build new traditions and establish a Kingdom culture.

I was reminded of the church I grew up in, here in Richmond, which has a sanctuary capacity of 700! They faced a similar situation as ours, and they pushed to have worship “their way.” Now they have 15 to 30 people worshipping in that sanctuary on a Sunday morning. The Lord has removed His lampstand from that sanctuary because they forgot their first love. Christ is the reason for our being at worship, not the hymns or the spiritual songs, not the organ, nor any other instrument or **any** other reason.

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In this new revelation, I’ve discovered that God gave me the responsibility to encourage younger members to come to know and appreciate these spiritually inspired hymns and to encourage their faith to be renewed by them. The younger members need the wisdom and experience of the older generation. They need to see how spiritual traditions sustain a believer over a lifetime. We are walking examples of God’s sustaining power. Not just to the younger generation, but also to our young, maturing pastor, who has not had the life experiences that his elders have had. And yes, this older member needs to also learn to appreciate the newer, Spirit-inspired spiritual songs. We all can learn and appreciate both the old, and the new, **together**.

In this new place, God asked me to look at the world’s abuse, homelessness, hunger, and poverty. As I stood there, in the lap of my luxury, He asked, “*Why are you concerning yourself with the insignificance of your discomfort, when, out there is such real suffering in the world?*” Talk about a perspective-changer! I am so in awe of God speaking to me, correcting my selfish, sinful thinking, and for His forgiveness!

I am ashamed of my former attitude. I cannot let the future generations see me grumbling and complaining because I’m not getting “my way.” Is that pleasing to God? No! I want them to see my joy in worship, my love of God, my love for them, and my thankfulness for their presence in worship. Seeing how these young people know and love the Lord, renews my faith and assures me that the church will prevail!

To those of you who have left, please come back amongst those who know and love you. To my older sisters and brothers, I need you to be here to send me off to my eternal rest, when the time comes. To my younger brothers and sisters, I’m eager to create new traditions with you! We need one another now. This is the time to come together!

Your sister in Christ,
Barbara Satterfield

Please read Colossians 3:8-17, the scripture that God gave me as He gently turned me to the truth. Meditate on this as you contemplate how God may encourage your heart, as well.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

SMALL GROUPS FOR FALL 2015

Are you interested in joining a small group? The fall is the best time to join! Small groups are formed for the purpose of community, discipleship, and outreach. Most groups are between 8 to 14 members and meet weekly, bimonthly, or monthly in member's homes.

If you are interested in joining a small group this fall, please email Beth Nichols at bethn@thirdrva.org with the following information:

- Type of group (Mixed, Women, Men)
- Your availability

We will seek to connect you with others interested in forming a small group, and will help guide you in getting started.

SMALL GROUP STORY

How God Works in Small Groups

We often refer to our congregation as a church family which makes me think of a group of people who live in proximity to one another, know of and care for each other's ups and downs, and hopefully who do more celebrating than arguing with each other all the while remaining loyally connected because of shared roots. But our church family is rather large, geographically disparate, and sometimes I've felt a little relationally disconnected within the church family even though I've been connected to this same church for almost 40 years!



Our small group has helped our nuclear family to graft ourselves into the larger church family in meaningful ways. We can more intentionally care for and be cared for by members in our small group because we do know a bit more about the details of each others lives. We love the age diversity that Third Church represents. Including our children, the ages of our small group members span 7 decades. We see God at work in the wisdom and faithfulness modeled by our most mature (!) members. Those of us closer to the mid-point of life are thankful for the camaraderie of peers but are hungry for the perspective and investment of men and women who have lived, worked, worshiped, wed and parented through a bit more of life. Lastly, we learn from each other as we discuss the sermons and find ways to apply what we are learning in scripture. And

it seems...as we we meet regularly, there is a little accountability, a lot of encouragement and a greater sense of rootedness that strengthens us to branch out, as God calls us, into the broader church family and beyond.

- Heidi Little



WOMEN'S MINISTRY

FALL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Tasting the Goodness of God in All Things
November 7, 2015
9am - 1pm
Fellowship Hall • Third Church



Mark your calendars for our annual Women's Conference. This year, we welcome Sara Hagerty, author of *Every Bitter Thing is Sweet*, as our speaker.

Registration includes lunch and can be done on Third's website, or in-person at Third on Sundays in October.

Registration fees:

- \$20 through Oct. 15
- \$25 from Oct. 16 - Oct. 31
- Deadline for registration: Oct. 31

CARE AND CARDS

Have you ever received a card telling you that people at Third are praying for you? If so, it was most likely sent from a member of the Care and Cards team.

This team meets together once a month to write messages that share love and prayers among our church family. In order to keep these cards being sent out to those who need prayer, we're asking for more people to consider joining us.

Meetings are held on the second Sunday of the month. Would you consider joining us at one of our upcoming meetings?

Second Sunday of the month
12:30pm
Room 209

If you have questions, please contact:

- Denise Woodson: 745-4248,
denise.woodson@smarthinking.com
- Judy Duarte: 278-8779,
judithduarte@verizon.net

FAMILY MINISTRY PLAYGROUP

Third's playground group is back this fall!

Parents and caregivers of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers meet on the playground on select Fridays at 10am for a time of play, fellowship, and community. Invite your friends! If it's raining, we'll meet in the Little Lambs class.

Mark your calendars for the following dates:

Sept. 25
Oct. 9
Oct. 30

Nov. 6
Nov. 20
Dec. 11



INTRODUCING: WELCOME COFFEE



Starting this October, and taking place each month, we'll host a Welcome Coffee for anyone new to Third. This will be the place for those curious to know more about Third to come, meet a few people, learn about Third's vision, what we believe and how to get involved.

Questions? Contact Beth Nichols at bethn@thirdrva.org.

NEWCOMERS: *Exploring Covenant Partnership*



Interested in learning more about Third, or considering membership? Join us in our next Newcomers Class where you will learn about Third's vision for worship, discipleship, community, serving, and outreach.

Sign up online at www.thirdrva.org/membership or contact Beth Nichols at bethn@thirdrva.org or 804-282-4645 ext. 124. Childcare is provided with a reservation for the class.

OUR NEXT NEWCOMERS CLASS:

Sunday morning, October 11 from 10am - 11am

Friday evening, October 16 from 6pm - 9pm

Saturday morning, October 17 from 9am to 12pm with lunch

Sunday morning, October 18 at 11:15 service (Joining Service for new members)

SAVE THE DATE

Stop Hunger Now
Saturday, January 23, 2016

With setup and cleanup support needed Friday, January 22,
and Sunday, January 24.



WEEKLY COMMUNION

Did you know that you can partake in communion every Sunday morning at Third Church? We welcome all who wish to share in the sacrament together to meet early on Sunday morning for a time of quiet reflection and prayer.

Sunday Morning Communion
8:00am - 8:20am
Room 101



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The session calls a congregational meeting for the purposes of electing elders, deacons, and trustees, and to update the congregation on our strategic planning process.

October 25, 2015
12:30pm
In the Sanctuary



A LABOR DAY CELEBRATION

On September 6th, we invited our community and neighborhood to our grounds to celebrate the new school year and the coming of fall. Here's a snapshot of our day....



Balloons flying. Miniature zoo irresistible. Food truck aromas floating. Bike riders, joggers, and mommas 'n daddies with babies stopping by. Music in the air.



Firemen helping littles up into their shiny yellow truck. Carnival-colored bounceables beckoning riders. Folks lingering over conversations under a big blue sky.

HAIKU COMMUTE

A daily twenty-mile commute through pastoral countryside and over a fog-drenched James River provides moments of breathtaking beauty and noteworthy interest—at 55 miles per hour. Pulling over to snap a photo doesn't fit into my barely-make-it-to-work-on-time schedule, so recently I have chosen to remember the visual specifics of my commute by composing an occasional haiku as I drive. Once at my destination, I quickly scribble out the few allusive syllables triggered by a vista, a glimpse, a mood, a moment. The mixed media art comes later—visual responses to visually-inspired words.

Painted lines and stitches give voice to a swish of a contrail, the rise of a flock of birds, the boundary of a fence, the river's current and a shaft of sunlight. Images come in and out of focus. Seasons show their colors. Mark making translates into a mottled sky or the thrust of roadside growth. Fragments of painted text suggest a story behind each bend in the road. Embedded in the record of my commute is the reference to other, more ambitious journeys—up river on a batteau, across the world to Africa—travels and travellers that crowded into the thought life of my more routine passage. But each path is precious. The intentional act of noticing, even or especially on such a repetitious route as a commute, connects the traveller with the journey, while the act of recording observations and impressions bestows value, mystery or even sacredness to the familiar landscape.

- Holly Smith



Since moving into the 500 Forest office building, we have been displaying various artists' works in the front lobby. We have named this lobby **Gallery 500**. If you are a Third artist and would like to have your art considered for display, please get in touch with Peggy Larmore at pwlarmore@gmail.com or 387-1250.

BIBLICAL PEACEMAKING SEMINAR IN OCTOBER

The principles of Biblical Peacemaking have proven to be universally counter cultural. No matter what race or country we come from, none of us is naturally inclined to obey Jesus' commands to love our enemies, confess our wrongs, gently correct others, submit to our church, and forgive those who hurt us. In fact, left to our own instincts, we are disposed to do just the opposite.

Fortunately, God has provided a way for us to overcome our innate weakness as peacemakers and learn to respond to relational disruptions constructively. His solution is the Gospel, the good news that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). God sent his Son to pay the price for our sins through his death and resurrection. When we believe this and put our trust in Jesus, God forgives all our sins. Through the Gospel, He also enables us to learn how to resist temptation, obey his commands, and live a life that honors him.

This wonderful news can radically change the way we respond to difficult relationships. Through the Gospel, the foundational G, the Lord enables us to live out the Four G's of Peacemaking. As we stand in awe of his matchless grace, we find more joy in glorifying God than in pursuing our own selfish ends. When we realize that God has mercy on those who confess their sins, our defensiveness lifts and we are able to admit our wrongs. As we accept and benefit from the way the Gospel lovingly shows us our sin, we are inspired to gently correct and restore others who have done wrong. And as we rejoice in the liberating forgiveness of God, we are empowered to go and forgive others in the same way.

- Taken from *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* by Ken Sande, Updated Edition (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2003) p. 13-14.

Do you want to become a Biblical Peacemaker in your relationships? Register for the October training seminar to learn:

- What are the Four G's of Peacemaking?
- What is it that I'm really saying when I say, "I forgive you?"
- Why do people not accept my apologies and what can I do about it?
- How can I get rid of my frustration with a specific person?
- How can I live in peace in my relationships?

Biblical Peacemaking Seminar

October 23 - 24 & 30 - 31

2 Friday nights, 7:00pm - 9:30pm

2 Saturday mornings, 8:30am - 12:00pm

**Register on www.thirdrva.org events page or contact
relationshipspeace.thirdrva@gmail.com or call 819-0260**

A WORD OF THANKS

Dear Third Church family,

In the difficult days after learning of the death of our son Greg, Third Church helped our family through this time. We are grateful for all the love, care, and help that was shared with us. Through the service that brought us peace, to all of those who helped with the organization and preparation of the food for the reception, the beautiful flowers, the prayers, the calls, cards, meals, and visits.

Thank you for all that you have done and your continued prayers.

- Mason and Jean Robinson and family

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TIME FOR A CHECKUP - *A personal reflection on Stewardship Season*

In 2000 when I was wrestling with my decision of whether or not to become a Christ follower, I was taking a walk with David Singh (a former Third pastor) during an Alpha retreat at Lake Gaston. As I explained my reservations to David, he suggested I tell God my feelings. So, while we walked I began talking aloud and it went something like this:

"God if I give my life to you, you are going to want some of my time and I already feel like I don't have enough time in a day to get everything done."

Looking back I realize just how precious time was to me; how it was what I treasured most in life.

Every so often it is good for me to consider where I was then, before I accepted Christ, and where I am now; to do a spiritual 'checkup' of what I treasure most; to see if I am growing in my trust of God to provide everything needed, including enough time.

Perhaps that is what this season of stewardship is really supposed to be about - a spiritual checkup of our growth in trusting God and His promises to us. After all, Psalm 50 (and many other scriptures) assure us that He has no need of anything from us - that all of creation is His. But our hearts, oh how He wants our hearts.

With His love,

Melissa Lincoln