

ANNUAL REPORT

The Grace of Giving
2017

Third CHURCH

"And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

2 Corinthians 9:8

Third Church



The Grace of Giving: Letter from Corey

“But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” 2 Corinthians 8:7

I have always loved the phrase that Paul uses in this verse, “the grace of giving.” It is such a capacious phrase, so expansive, that has multiple levels of meaning.

First, “the grace of giving” refers to God’s own grace for us. God has poured out his undeserved grace upon us, not just in our salvation but also in his ongoing provision.

Second, “the grace of giving” refers to our own acts of giving which flow from an experience of grace. When we experience the joy of God’s grace to us, our own generosity becomes a joyful expression of our experience of that grace rather than a begrudging duty or obligation.

Third, “the grace of giving” means that others experience God’s grace when we give. God extends the experience of his kindness and mercy through acts of human generosity.

So the “grace of giving” is about God’s grace TO us, God’s grace IN us, and God’s grace THROUGH us. The gospel of grace is like a powerful engine in our souls as we both receive grace, experience grace, and then extend grace to others. Grace begets grace. Generosity begets generosity.

This report is a beautiful display of the grace of giving. We see God’s generous grace to us, providing for

our church family in abundant ways. We see God’s grace at work in us, as we have served one another, our city and world. And we see God’s grace at work through us, as we witness how our generosity has enabled the work of this church to flourish.

As we anticipate the year ahead, may the Lord continue to lead us that we might excel in this grace of giving.

Grace and peace of our Savior+

Reflections on Generosity

Throughout the Bible, God tells us he will use the generations to make himself known. Like in Psalm 89: “I will sing of the Lord’s great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.” At Third we have the blessing of a community full of different generations who have experienced God’s faithfulness. We invited people from three of these “generations” to share reflections on giving our time, talents and treasure to further God’s kingdom. Our hope is that each of us might be encouraged to trust and believe all God’s scripture promises, bringing us into a deeper personal relationship with him.



Peyton Jenkins

My Granddaddy, L.D. Blankenship, was one of nine children and to say they didn’t have much would be an understatement. He and Grandma got married straight out of high school and with literally dollars to their name, made their first purchase together—a Bible at the dime store. Their tiny country church, Zion Baptist, has a sign that reads ‘Last Week’s Offering’ and I rarely remember it being more than a few hundred dollars. But many times over I heard Granddaddy say that they always prioritized giving and that throughout their lives the more they gave, the more they received.

Granddaddy and Zion taught me that giving isn’t just a financial gift and it’s not about compulsion. It’s an extension of the heart. And to this day, I’m quite sure that those few hundred dollars in ‘Last Week’s Offering’ are among the Lord’s most treasured. This is my grandfather’s legacy—one that Becky and I hope to give to our grandkids one day.



Greg & Denise Ellen

We have come to understand that stewardship is much more than the giving of money, but also the giving of ourselves and our time.

Scripture tells us that we each have been given unique gifts that help contribute to the flourishing of the body of believers. As a family, we have tried to make purposeful decisions about our time, so that we could be actively involved in the life of the church, using the gifts God has given us.

Over the years, our involvement has looked different; sometimes it has been in small, behind-the-scenes ways, and other times it has been in larger, more visible ways. But in each way, as we sought, however imperfectly, to serve God and others, He stretched us and grew us in our relationship with Him, and He blessed us with a richness that comes from life in relationship with other believers.



Rob & Kathie Cox

Generosity is giving more than the norm or average. The norm to God is giving away 10% of your gross income. Generosity is probably giving more than others think you should or more than is expected. Why should we, as followers of Jesus, be generous? Well, God himself commands it and expects it. The Bible repeats the same message over and over. In Psalms, in Proverbs, in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, God shouts at us in our ears:

“The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller. The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed; those who help others are helped.”
Proverbs 11: 24-25

And why does God expect it and command us to be generous? Because, **he** is generous. If you doubt it, just recount your life and look around.

Our Year at a Glance

Throughout the Bible, God's people take time to remember how he has led them out of captivity into freedom, out of brokenness and into his love. This year, we are doing just that, and we are seeing the beauty of his grace all around us.

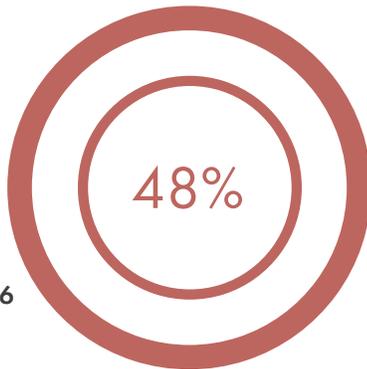
We look back over this past year, and we see so many traces of God's grace. Meaningful connections with our neighbors—both on Forest Avenue and in our individual neighborhoods: grace. Many babies being born: grace. Growth in our congregation: grace. Equipping new missionaries to spread the Gospel: grace.

We count ourselves blessed to be able to partner with God in his renewal of all things. And as we submit ourselves to the work of bringing his Kingdom

to bear on earth, we recognize and humbly accept the smallness of our role in it. We are his vessels, and all this fruit that we remember at the end of the year is grace—undeserved, abundant grace. So may we celebrate with gladness how he has been with us, giving us his presence, and filling us with grace.



GROWTH IN AVERAGE ATTENDANCE SINCE 2016



GROWTH IN AVERAGE ATTENDANCE SINCE 2014



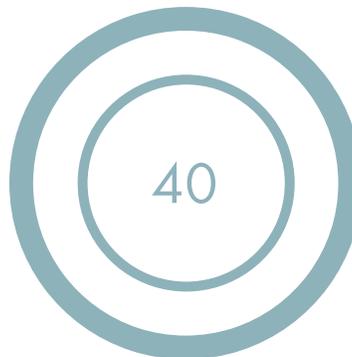
BABIES BORN SO FAR IN 2017



AVERAGE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE



NEW COVENANT PARTNERS



AVERAGE WEEKLY VISITORS



VISITORS SO FAR THIS YEAR

Bursting at the Seams



This summer, our fall planning looked a little different than normal. Rather than just swapping out room names and assigning teachers, we were in max-capacity planning mode. It was looking like our building would no longer fit all the students, kids, and babies that we anticipated coming through our doors on Sunday mornings. We were actively planning to use space next door at Tuckahoe to accommodate everyone. The growth of our family and student ministry program has nothing less than exploded, and we were searching for space to fit everyone.

And while we were able to creatively maximize our space this year without having to send some folks across the street, who knows what next year will bring! The Lord continues to show his grace to us by bringing newcomers through our doors, particularly in young families. These new faces and growing families bring so much life and joy to our congregation and though growth doesn't come without some pains, we are grateful.

New Class Terms This Fall

This year, we reoriented our Sunday discipleship classes **to be term-based and to focus on teaching and training**. This change is simple, but important. By giving our classes clarity and focus, we will better be able to equip our people with knowledge of the word, that they can then go out and put into practice in their Parish Groups, in their workplaces, in their homes and with their friends.

1 Wall that had to be knocked down to create a larger space for elementary-aged children.

10 Number of students on the new Student Ministry Leadership Team

20 Volunteers serving in nursery classrooms each Sunday morning. In total, there are **53** different volunteers each month. This is in addition to the **9** paid childcare workers

28 Baptisms of children and infants so far this year

29 Volunteers serving in elementary-aged classrooms each Sunday morning

33 Students on the Club 56 Retreat this year—largest retreat to date! (**10** new children added to Club 56 this year!)

45 Percentage of new covenant partners who are bringing (or birthing!) children into our church family

50 Average student ministry attendance on a given Sunday morning. **16** Adult volunteer teachers for student ministry on Sunday mornings. **47** the maximum number of chairs that can be set up for the students and leaders in our current space

600+ Average attendance (including children and students) of our Sunday morning discipleship classes around the church

Missions

This past year was the first full year that we've had a Missions Pastor in place for quite some time. With LJ coming on staff, we've been able to dedicate more time, energy, and sheer administrative support to one of the core passions of this church family: our missions program. We've welcomed more missionaries (and eaten many more lunches with them!), hosted speakers, supported new mission partners, and laid the groundwork for building upon our already strong missions foundation.

With significant growth in mission dollars since 2015, the Mission Team has placed priority in new mission development on Evangelism and Church Planting efforts with Unreached People Groups. Unreached people live in areas where there is little to no Christian presence; no churches, few believers, and often an environment hostile to open communication of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They have little to no opportunity to hear and come to know Jesus Christ.

THE 2017 BUDGET

- **\$1,010,000 total amount** allocated to missions in 2017
- **\$350,000** increase in the missions budget from 2016 to 2017
- **49.5%** percent increase in missions spending since 2015

10

Number of mission partners we've added in 2016-2017 who are working among unreached peoples

\$24,000

Dollars raised by VBS children with a matching gift from the Missions Committee that went to our local partner CrossOver Clinic, and our international partner, SAT-7

18

Students in Jobs for life (representing 6 different nationalities!)

Meet Some (Not All!) of Our New Mission Partners



JEREMIAH MARSDEN

served as an intern at Third several years ago, but spent much of

his formative years as a child in Moscow, Russia, where his parents (Third members, Laurie and Donald Marsden) served as missionaries. His reentry experience to the States was very difficult and over the years he has sought after a better understanding of the complexities of cross-cultural childhood. After college and beginning a career in the States, he discerned a call to serve in Kazakhstan helping prepare for and navigate new cultures and reentry. He is serving as a guidance counselor and teacher at Tien Shan International School.



SAT-7 is a Christian satellite television station broadcasting the Gospel throughout the Middle East and North Africa. They beam the Good News of the Kingdom of God straight into people's homes into the center of family life.

SAT-7 Academy, a new division that began this fall, is broadcasting educational programs 24/7 to children in refugee camps. Our VBS gift (see above) was the first one SAT-7 Academy received!



DAVID, SARA

& FAMILY serve in Central Asia. After working with an

unreached people group for seventeen years they were asked to leave by the local government. Proselytizing is illegal in many parts of the world and many missionaries must be secretive and careful about how they share their faith and witness knowing that doing so could have a dire outcome. Now, doors have opened for this family in a region close to the border of their prior post but in a new country where they can more freely share about Christ. In this new location, they'll actually still be serving the same people group they've previously been with— Praise the Lord!

Strategic Planning

Perhaps some of the most notable happenings of the past year has been the work coming out of our Strategic Planning Team. Between the five groups that make up the team, people were meeting every week of this entire year to pray, to plan, and to follow God's leading for the next steps for our church family.

Each group has worked to unveil a little bit more of who God is shaping us to be in our coming years. The fruit from this work has been a distillation of what we're called to do, vision for who we want to be, and hope for how we will be used in God's grand plans to renew all things.

Working Group 1: Communicate Our Purpose

This group was assembled to clarify the mission and vision of our church, as well as to explore implications for branding, signage, and communication.

The work of WG1 this past year has been to both affirm who we are, and clarify how we share that amongst ourselves and also to the rest of the world around us. Since the other Working Groups were knee-deep in discerning the former (who we are, what we're called to, and how we care for one another), this team has intentionally stayed a few steps behind. As many of the teams wrap up their work in the coming months, WG1 will continue so they can reflect these updates and changes in our language, branding, and materialized presence.

VISION STATEMENT

First up for this group was to commit themselves to evaluate our mission and vision statements, and decide whether they clearly share who we are and what our particular calling is. Their goals? To make sure the statements around our identity were approachable and intriguing for non-believers, but still resonant of depth and truth.

After months of research, conversations, prayer and discernment, Session approved the refreshed vision statement written by this group, that we are:

**Called together for the renewal
of all things through Jesus Christ.**

Working Group 2: Align Staff & Session

The fruit of the work of Working Group 2 (to reorganize the staff to support current vision) is beginning to come to full implementation at the end of 2017 and early in 2018.

CHANGES TO 5 STAFF POSITIONS

- **Ed Satterfield to Executive Pastor:** less care ministry involvement, increased focus on leading staff and key ministry teams
- **John White to Pastor of Worship and Pastoral Care:** increased role in leading pastoral care efforts and work with funerals
- **Tom Barila to Adult Ministries Director:** added focus on supporting the new Parish Leadership Teams
- **Beth Nichols to Director of Connection Ministries:** added focus on supporting the new Parish Groups
- **Rick Hutton:** added oversight of College Ministry staff

4 NEW POSITIONS

- **Pastor of Discipleship and Parish Ministry:** Derek Mondeau was hired and will start November 1!
- **Administrative Assistant and Database Administrator:** to support the Parish Pastor and the Parish leadership teams (now searching)
- **College Ministry Intern:** Phillip Yelverton has been serving since August
- **Assistant for Graphics and Publications:** approved and awaiting funding in 2018

Working Group 3: Connect, Train, & Send God's People

This group had the difficult task of bringing vision, structure, and accountability for our calling to grow each person at Third into more fruitful and mature disciples of Christ, and integrate them into authentic community.

Perhaps the most visible of all the groups, this team has accomplished many things over this year, including shaping the Parish Model, equipping leaders (Shepherding Elders and Deacons), and aligning all of our ministries and programs to this way of caring, connecting, and serving our church and the greater Richmond area. They've modified our covenant partner statements, drawn parish area map lines, and cast vision for our discipleship classes on Sunday mornings. This team has committed themselves to follow the Spirit's leading, answering the question: **how can everyone at Third be known, cared for, and encouraged to mature as disciples of Christ.**

THE PARISH MODEL

Come January, we'll officially launch the Parish Model. Parish life will have two primary components: Parish Areas, and Parish Groups.

PARISH AREAS

Parish Areas are twelve neighborhood communities within our larger church family. These smaller communities will insure that each person in our church comes to be known more intentionally and intimately. The Parish Areas will help Third to feel smaller, even as we continue to gather weekly as a large body of believers. Our shepherding elders and deacons will be organized across these Parish Areas, meaning that the tangible care and shepherding they provide will be locally focused on the geographic region they too reside in.

PARISH GROUPS

Within the Parish Areas, one to two open Parish Groups will meet regularly and offer anyone in the Parish Area the option of belonging, growing and serving neighbors in a specific neighborhood.



COVENANT PARTNER QUESTIONS

The team also revisited our Covenant Partner questions and helped them to more closely align with our vision statement, as well as our clarified vision for discipleship, community, and mission.

"Together, will we dedicate our time, talents, and money to the Lord's work by sharing the grace of Christ with our neighbors and participating in God's mission to renew all things through Jesus Christ? Will we?" - One of the revised questions for

new Covenant Partners and current Covenant Partners when a class of new members joins.

Working Group 4: Modernize Our Infrastructure

This team has been considering what we might do to improve our facilities at Forest Avenue by connecting with our neighbors and creating an opportunity to explore what was needed in the immediate area around the church. The Charrette, an iterative design process, engaged many neighbors and cultivated many ideas that continue to be developed with the school, Forest Avenue and residential and business neighbors.

We have engaged two architectural firms to work with us in developing master campus plans—Walden Studio and BCWH Architects. We are currently completing a full assessment of our current facility and future needs in conversation with the staff, key ministry leaders and the congregation. 2018 will be a year of shaping and finalizing potential plans for the development of our facility to meet current and future needs.



Working Group 5: Love Our Neighbors

WG5 was commissioned with the task of discerning how Third Church can love our neighbors and more closely reflect the cultural diversity we see in our community. To catch a glimpse of this diversity, visit places such as Walmart on Parham.

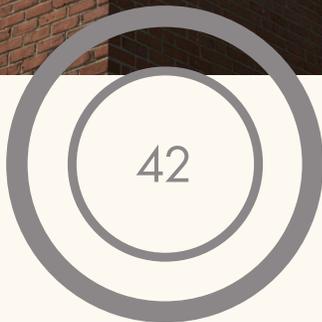
The revelation came when we remembered our brothers and sisters of the Christian Arabic Church (CAC) who have been meeting in our building for many years. Yet we've rarely been intentional about joint events and partnering with them aside from the tutoring program, an end of summer picnic and financially supporting their ministry in our mission giving.

In the hope of loving our neighbors and better reflecting the community around us, we decided to intentionally partner more closely with our sister church, the Christian Arabic Church.

Introducing Sawa اوس Together: WG5 initiated the forming of a group of individuals from both churches to meet and dream together. How can we partner more in ministry? What can we do together? Could we hold joint services? The group named itself Sawa اوس Together (which means, together, together). This group came up with multiple ideas that we could implement almost immediately, and others to work toward over time. A short-term and long-term strategies outline has been submitted to WG5 and will go to session as well.

Some ideas that came from Sawa اوس Together:

- Match a Third family with a CAC family and a newly arrived immigrant family
- Dinner groups – match two families from Third with two families from CAC for dinner and social times
- Sunday night youth groups join together
- Arabic Class – offered by CAC to teach Third and others Arabic



NUMBER OF CHILDREN FROM THE CAC WHO JOINED US FOR OUR VBS THIS YEAR. REPRESENTED 21% OF ALL THE CHILDREN THAT ATTENDED!



NUMBER OF CHILDREN FROM THE CAC WHO REGULARLY ATTEND OUR WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES



STUDENTS FROM THE CAC LOOKING FOR TUTORING ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

Forecasting into 2018

This year has clearly been one for the record books. We've built new partnerships, taken on new mission partners, and continued to squeeze into our pews and classrooms to make room for many new faces. We rejoice in God's goodness to us for these many gifts. And now, as we turn to 2018, we ask: **what do you have for us next, Lord?**

Initial plans for next year's budget anticipate a \$3,871,000 budget, 13% higher than 2017. This represents a large challenge for us. Significant elements making up the increase are:

- **\$250,000 increase** in the personnel budget to allow for **3 new staff positions** (two who support Parish Ministry! and some salary increases)
- **\$70,000 in mortgage payments** for the office building (**74% increase over 2017** as part of a three year incremental addition of the mortgage into our operating budget from the completed Capital Campaign)
- **\$138,000 mission giving** will take our total planned giving to mission to nearly **\$1,150,000 (30% of the increase** in the budget to go to mission)
- **New dollars** to support the launch of Parish ministry

Missions in 2018

\$1,148,428

Budgeted for Missions

13.71%

Percentage of increase
in funds to Missions
from 2017

\$241,000

Funds committed to
unreached peoples





Potential Partnerships with the CAC in 2018

As we deepen our relationship with the CAC, here are just two of the ideas we hope to explore further in 2018:

- Joint events, programs, and ministry opportunities, perhaps even worship services
- Search and discern a sister church for us to partner with in Egypt

New Hire: Derek Mondeau

By 2018, our new Pastor of Discipleship, Derek Mondeau, will be in place and kicking off the Parish Model. This means we'll have someone committed— along with our ministerial staff— to Parishes, spiritual formation, and teaching and discipling our congregation.

THIRD CHURCH
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Faith Commitment Sunday

How will you respond to God's grace?

Sunday, November 5, 2017

Our challenge now is significant as we seek to meet the high call set before us. So first, pray. Pray that we deeply experience God's grace for us. Pray about how we can respond to this grace we've received. And second, remember. Remember God's faithfulness this past year, and the many years before, as we look forward to this next year.

Lastly, pray for the Lord's leading as to how you will support Third's ministry in 2018. Our prayer is that each gift—no matter the size—will sustain and increase Third's ministry and mission.

On November 5, we'll make our financial commitments to the church for the year to come. Making a commitment helps ensure that we can invest and participate in the work of grace the Lord is doing. Pray with us, and join us in celebrating God's great grace as we bring our enclosed Faith Commitment cards on November 5.

