

This year Lent begins on March 6 with Ash Wednesday. Every year, the global and historic church sets aside this 40 day period to remember and reflect again on the most important events in the history of the world. In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has acted to reconcile humanity to himself and to secure the ultimate renewal of all things.

Lent is a season in which we especially focus on examining our hearts, confessing our sin, and reflecting on the significance of Jesus' death for us. Think of it as sort of "spring cleaning" of the soul. Of course you need to sweep and clean all year round, but you might have a concentrated focus on deep cleaning in different seasons. Alternatively, the Lenten season is the spiritual equivalent of an annual physical exam; it's a time to take stock of our lives, and the spiritual health of our hearts.

It's fitting that throughout the season of Lent we'll continue to look together at the questions Jesus asks. James Ryan writes, "Questions are like keys. The right question, asked at the right time, will open a door to something you don't yet know, something you haven't yet realized, or something you haven't even considered- about others and about yourself." With his questions, Jesus is wielding a spiritual key to open our hearts, bringing us into a deeper awareness of our need for grace and the all-sufficiency of his love.

## HERE ARE A FEW WAYS YOU MIGHT ENGAGE WITH THE LORD DURING THIS LENTEN SEASON:

### OUR SERMON SERIES

Don't just come and listen on Sunday – do something with the message! Every Sunday we are including a prayer and meditation guide in the bulletin to accompany the Question of Jesus that we are looking that Sunday. Set aside some time each week to engage personally and prayerfully with the question of Jesus. Let him ask it to you. And if you missed the sermon, you can still participate. The reflection guide will be posted on that week's sermon post: [thirdrva.org/sermons](http://thirdrva.org/sermons).

### A SPIRITUAL RETREAT

Setting aside time for solitude and prayer is a vital way we can listen to God and hear his voice. This Lent we are offering a spiritual retreat led by Brad and Marmi Houff on Saturday, March 30 at the Christian Arabic Church's property in Crozier. The retreat is open to anyone but space is limited so please sign up soon at [thirdrva.org/events](http://thirdrva.org/events).

### PERSONAL DISCIPLINES

After a great February Term on habits, we've learned the power of spiritual habits to shape our lives. Resolve to work on one new habit this Lent that can help you connect with God in a fresh way. Perhaps mid-day prayer, a weekly fast, a weekly time of solitude, or learning to journal? Try something new and invite God to speak to you freshly.

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*(More details on our Ash Wednesday service on page 4)*

# 2018 FINANCIAL YEAR REPORT

Now that we're well into 2019, we want to report to our church family how we ended the 2018 financial year. Because we're stewarding our financial resources in mission together, we are committed to transparency about our budget and finances. Any time you have a question or want to see the budget in detail, please reach out. We have an amazing financial staff who are always happy to answer your questions.

## LOOKING BACK

The general giving budget for 2018 was \$3,796,783. This was a 13.2% increase over our 2017 budget, a stretch we believe was prudent, given strong 2017 giving levels, growing numbers of new covenant partners, and expanded ministry programming. We tracked well with our giving throughout the first half of the year, but anticipated giving was not as consistent in the second part of the year, resulting in our general giving coming in at 4.8% lower than planned, a shortfall of \$187,025.

The good news is that our total general giving for 2018 was still 6% higher than 2017. We are so thankful that our congregation continues to grow both in membership and giving. We also were able to manage our expenses well throughout the year, such that we ended the year with basically a balanced budget – a difference of only \$6,058. We are so grateful to God that we were able to end the year strong, not dip into our reserve funds, or use Third's available line of credit. We can enter 2019 in a stable financial position for a fresh year of ministry!

## LOOKING AHEAD

In December our Session approved a 2019 budget of \$4,070,655. This proposed budget is a 5% increase over the 2018 budget. However, given that our actual giving was 4.8% lower than the 2018 budget plan, we are concerned about proceeding with a 2019 budget which represents nearly a 10% increase over 2018 actual giving. So in our most recent Session meeting, the elders approved a motion to proceed with the 2019 approved budget but plan to defer spending \$169,857 of that budget until we see pledges and income demonstrating support for expending these costs.

**2018 BUDGET: \$3,796,783**

**2019 BUDGET: \$4,070,655**

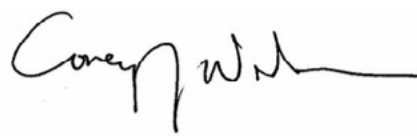
The \$169,857 includes four distinct expenses: HVAC replacement (\$28,450), extra debt repayment on our principle for our 500 Forest Ave office building (\$28,450), salary increases for staff (\$62,000), and 30% of the total from planned missions spending (\$50,957).

Other than the deferral of planned mission spending, which simply reflects potentially lower general giving levels (since we dedicate 30% of all general giving to missions), Session especially regrets holding back the spending on staff salary increases, which are well deserved. We hope that by the end of the first quarter, we will see pledges and giving that demonstrates support for releasing these deferred expenditures.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Please keep our church in your prayers, including our financial stewardship. Pray that the Lord continues to faithfully provide for all of our needs. If you have not yet made a pledge for 2019 but plan to give this year, please do make a pledge, as it will help us determine if we can include the increases named above. You can still do that at [thirdrva.org/give](http://thirdrva.org/give) or by calling Lynley at the office: 804-282-4645.

Thank you church family, for your incredible generosity, not just financially, but in all the ways that you steward what God has given you. You give so much of your time, treasure and talent not just to Third but to God's kingdom work in our city and world. Rarely have I seen a more generous congregation, and I am deeply grateful and humbled to be serving among you. With much joy and anticipation for the year to come,



Corey Widmer

# YEAR-END MISSION GIVING

Throughout the year we have requests for one-time gifts for special projects by our mission partners and those affiliated with Third. The funds available for the mission team to disperse totaled **\$144,760**.

Below are a few of the local and global mission partners that have been impacted by your generous giving: (*Note! Some names are withheld for the safety of those serving in closed access countries.*)

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**Joseph and Marie Kishore in Hyderabad, India:** to assist in building a new orthopedic wing to the hospital that caters to the poor.

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**CHAT (Church Hill Academy and Tutoring):** to assist in the purchase of a much needed school bus.

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**Steve and Janice Quakenbush, SIL Bible Translators:** to help with financial need.

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**World Christian Research Encyclopedia:** to assist with updates.

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**Frontier Fellowship:** provide for salaries for hundreds of pastors in North India under the leadership of native church planters and trainers.

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**Brad & Marmi Houff:** to assist with their local ministry, Compass Center

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**Our missionaries serving in Jordan:** support as they develop their new ministry.

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**Our missionaries serving in Uzbekistan:** who are beginning an orchard project in that will provide employment and Gospel witness.

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**The Himalayan Center for Biblical and Missional Studies in Kathmandu, Nepal:** for training and teaching.

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**Youth for Christ leaders in Central Asia:** to help raise up more leaders in Russia.

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**Dogan & Ozlem in Turkey:** to assist with furnishing a church building.

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**PARS Theological Center:** to equip and mobilize the Iranian church through training.

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**The Outreach Foundation:** to provide resources for building a retreat center in Syria.

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**Jonas Kinda with World Horizons in Uganda:** to assist with financial need.

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**Hillside Ministries through World Horizons:** to assist with financial need.

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**Selvi with Youth with a Mission:** to support projects reaching the Rabaris in India.

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**Christian Arabic Church:** to assist with funds for sports outreach.

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**Set Free:** to assist specific financial needs for their general operations.

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**Alan DeCerff with Navigators:** to assist with financial need.

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**Crossover Healthcare Ministry:** to assist with the hiring of Dr. Danielle Avula as a part-time Family Physician at the Henrico Clinic.

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*Covenant Partner Dr. Danielle Avula is joining our mission partner CrossOver as a part-time Family Physician at their Henrico Clinic.*

During medical school and residency, Danielle spent several months rotating at CrossOver and went on mission trips with the Christian Medical and Dental Association. She will be overseeing CrossOver's Pediatrics Program and her oversight will be vital to meeting the needs of CrossOver's younger patients. Danielle and her husband Jon and their three kids live in the City East parish and help to lead their Sunday evening parish group.

From Dr. Avula: *"My early experiences at CrossOver and with mission work solidified my desire to live out my faith in Christ through providing high quality healthcare to low income populations. I feel the chance to work at CrossOver is the fulfillment of a calling I have felt for years."*

**Congratulations, Dr. Avula!**



## JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT NEWCOMERS CLASS

*Sunday morning, March 17 | 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. in the Parlor*

*Friday evening, March 22 | 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. with dinner*

*Saturday, March 23 | 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.*

*Sunday, March 24 for those deciding to join as Covenant Partners*

This is an opportunity for you to go deep into Third's vision for worship, discipleship, community, serving and outreach, and for us to get to know you. At the end of the class, you can choose to become a covenant partner of our church family. *Childcare provided with a reservation by March 15 with Kathy White ([kathyw@thirdrva.org](mailto:kathyw@thirdrva.org))*

**Sign up:** [thirdrva.org/newcomers](http://thirdrva.org/newcomers)



## ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

**When:** Wednesday, March 6, 7:00 p.m.

**Where:** Sanctuary

Ash Wednesday is a day that marks the first day of Lent, the time of reflection and penitence leading up to Easter Sunday. This service is a time for us to repent and worship as a community.

*Childcare for 3 years old and younger available with a reservation by emailing Kathy White ([kathyw@thirdrva.org](mailto:kathyw@thirdrva.org)).*

## SILENT ALLELUIA: A LENTEN OBSERVATION

Lent is a 40-day period of preparation and repentance, a time in which we anticipate the joy of Easter and the celebration of Christ's resurrection. Because of the contemplative nature of Lent, singing or saying the word "alleluia" has historically been suspended during Lent's forty days, a practice that goes back to at least the fifth century in the Western church.

This year we'll practice again a period of "silent alleluia," suspending the use of the word alleluia in our worship services from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday. On Easter Sunday, April 21, the alleluias will return and we will sing and say alleluia with great joy and celebration, including the ringing of bells! We hope this will be a meaningful time of contemplation for our community and a joyous celebration on the first!

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# Common Good RVA 2019

## Habits for the Common Good

### Saturday, March 16, 2019

## COMMON GOOD RVA CONFERENCE

**When:** Saturday, March 16, 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**Where:** Union Presbyterian Seminary

CommonGoodRVA exists to help equip Christians to steward their vocations for the common good of Richmond. At their annual conference this March, our Covenant Partner, **Justin Earley**, author of *The Common Rule: Habits of Purpose for an Age of Distraction*, will serve as the keynote speaker.

### TOGETHER, WE WILL LOOK TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

1. *How is the structure of modern life in Richmond shaping our habits in positive and negative ways?*
2. *What habits must change in your life, your work, and our city for the sake of the common good?*

We'll also hear insight on our topic from local speakers: **Erin Rose**, our Pastoral Intern, and the Worship Director and Teaching Pastor at East End Fellowship and vocalist with Urban Doxology, and **Alex Brito**, Partner at CURE and member at City Church.

The morning will conclude with a Q&A moderated by **Becca Payne**, Third's Communications Director.

Early registration is \$15 and runs through February 28th

Regular registration and door tickets are \$20. Your conference registration fee includes a \$5 voucher to be used for lunch at a local restaurant (TBA) where we'll have the chance to continue our conversations inspired by the morning's discussion.

Childcare available for ages 2 and up for \$10 per child but must be registered by the early registration deadline.

**Buy tickets:** [commongoodrva.com](http://commongoodrva.com).



## COMMUNION CLASS

**When:** Sunday, March 24, 10:15 a.m.

**Where:** Parlor

Is your child ready to take communion? Pastor Rick Hutton will talk to parents and their children about the meaning of communion and how to know when your child is ready. This class is for parents and their children to attend together.

**RSVP:** Email Tracie Meadows ([traciem@thirdrva.org](mailto:traciem@thirdrva.org))



## GUIDED TOUR OF THE BIBLE

A Guided Tour of the Bible is a short 5-week study focusing on one section of the Bible. We dig into that one section, looking at a different book each week, so we can better understand and be impacted by its message. We read on our own in-between classes, so then time in class together is an opportunity to explore things you want to know more about, ask questions about what you've read, and learn from each other.

There are 10 studies in all, five for the Old Testament and five for the New. You can join the tour for just 5 weeks and take any study in any order but our hope is that at some point you will take them all. Ed Satterfield authored this special Guided Tour and will lead our time together.

**When:** Thursday evenings, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

**Dates:** March 21 – April 4, May 2 & 9: *The Prophets After the Exile* (Daniel, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Joel, Malachi)

**Where:** Room 217, 600 Forest Avenue

Let us know you want to come so we can prepare materials for you!

**Contact Sterling:** [sterlingl@thirdrva.org](mailto:sterlingl@thirdrva.org).



## TOWN HALL MEETING

**When:** Sunday, March 24, 12:15 – 1:00 p.m.

**Where:** Sanctuary

All are invited to this town hall meeting, where we'll discuss some important (and exciting!) updates for our church family.

We'll discuss the latest in our facilities planning and architectural design process, and hear an update on the rollout of an online directory.

## A NOTE OF THANKS

*Dear Third Members,*

*Thank you so much for all of the visits, cards, calls and prayers that you have sent me during my recent hospitalizations and times in rehab. They are so appreciated and have made me feel so loved!*

*Love, Elva White*



## REFLECTION FROM THE MEN'S CONFERENCE

At the beginning of February, the men of Third gathered for a weekend together to explore what cross-shaped masculinity really looked like. It was a meaningful weekend together. If you missed it and want to hear what was shared, visit: [thirdrva.org/recordings](http://thirdrva.org/recordings).

"The life events that Derek and Bill shared and wove into the framework of the Five Stages of a Man's Life resonated deeply within my being. Frankly, it was soul jarring once I opened up my eyes, mind and heart. My experience? Last weekend essentially turned into God's directing a deep, exploratory drill into my heart for me to see some of what's really in there. This week following has become a deep excavation of decades of walls and debris that I didn't realize were still there.

I'll say it this way...when I looked into the mirror when I got home, I didn't like the collage of the thing staring back at me...sometimes I forget that's who I am without God's love and grace. At the end of the day, it's true of pretty much everyone who's honest with themselves.

I'm quite thankful for my "Men's Retreat awakening" to have happened because it's when I've asked God to recalibrate my heart that He's enabled me to take another step or two in His will."

- Craig Truitt

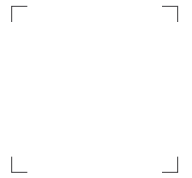
## COMMUNITY POSTING

### HOST A SPANISH OR FRENCH STUDENT THIS SUMMER

Share your heart and home this summer! Host a student from Spain or France (ages 13-17) in your home for 3-4 weeks. Learn about their culture while he or she learns about living in an American family just being a part of what you regularly do. We have a variety of programs to suit your family's work or non-working schedule. Families receive stipends to help out with expenses. We can help work out transportation or vacation concerns. This will be a treasured memory for your family! Contact Debbie Hardy at [debbiehardy2003@yahoo.com](mailto:debbiehardy2003@yahoo.com) or 804-909-3190.



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

## OUR MINISTRY STAFF

**REV. COREY WIDMER**

Lead Pastor

**REV. ED SATTERFIELD**

Executive Pastor

**REV. DEREK MONDEAU**

Pastor of Discipleship & Parish Ministry

**REV. LAURIE JAWORSKI**

Mission Pastor

**REV. RICK HUTTON**

Associate Pastor for Students (grades 6–12)

**ANDREA WOIE**

Student Ministry Associate

**ALAN WARE**

Director of Finance & Administration

**TRACIE MEADOWS**

Associate Dir. of Family Ministry

**KATHY WHITE**

Associate Dir. of Family Ministry

**DR. JOHN WHITE**

Pastor for Worship and Pastoral Care

**KIM TAULBEE**

Associate Music Director

**BETH MARRIOTT**

Director of Connection Ministries

**BECCA PAYNE**

Director of Communications

**ALEX SAWYER**

Technical Director

**DREW CLEVELAND**

Director of Young Adult & College Ministries

**REV. RICHARD HANEY**

Theologian and Missiologist in Residence

**REV. NAN CLARKE**

Pastor for Care Ministries

**THIRD PRESS DEADLINE FOR APRIL: FRIDAY, MARCH 8. SUBMIT TO: [BECCAP@THIRDVA.ORG](mailto:BECCAP@THIRDVA.ORG)**