



THIRD PRESS

May 2017



LETTER FROM COREY

One of the most surprising things that Jesus ever says is that “it is better for you that I go away” (John 16:7). How could that possibly be true? How many of us have wished that we could have more personal access to Jesus like the disciples did? How many of us have wished that we could be near him, ask him questions, see him face to face? How could it be true that after Jesus rises from the dead, it is better for us that he leave?

The answer is: the Holy Spirit. “I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7, ESV).

Imagine if Jesus hadn’t gone away. Imagine a world of 2.2 billion Christians, all clamoring for the attention of a single divine-human being. Everyone hoping they can get a few minutes of his time. People groups from different languages and cultures vying for his consideration. Competitive jostling. Bidding wars. Hurt feelings.

Yes, it was definitely better that Jesus go away. In doing so, rather than take away his Presence, Jesus actually intensified his Presence. In ascending into heaven and sending the Holy Spirit, Jesus made it possible that his powerful Presence can be among us and within us! Every Christian has access to Jesus at any time, in any place, through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

As we move into Eastertide toward Pentecost on June 4, we will begin a new sermon series together on the Person of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the Holy Spirit is described as the least understood member of the Trinity. Sometimes Presbyterians are even teased as being “binitarian”! So we want to spend five weeks exploring who the Spirit is and how he makes the person and work of Jesus powerful and effectual in our everyday lives.

Thank goodness Jesus left! In doing so, he has given us the greatest gift: his own intimate Presence.

OUR STAFF

Rev. Corey Widmer
Lead Pastor

Rev. Ed Satterfield
*Associate Pastor for Congregational
Care & Administration*

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

Laurie Jaworski
Mission Pastor

Andrea Woie
Student Ministry Associate

Alan Ware
*Director of Finance
& Administration*

Tom Barila
Director of Christian Education

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

Mark Sprinkle
*Director of Arts &
Cultural Engagement*

Alex Sawyer
Technical Director

Tim Latham
Director of Young Adult Ministries

Rev. Richard Haney
Parish Associate

Rev. Nan Clarke
Parish Associate, Care Ministries

RECAPS, UPDATES & NEWS

HELP FOR ONE OF OUR MISSION PARTNERS

Want to help a mission partner? Lyle and Diana Thomas, who minister in St. Petersburg, Russia, and their three children (pre-teen and teen) will be spending the summer in the Richmond area. They need:

- **Housing** for five from late July through September 2017. A three-bedroom apartment, carriage house, or house would be ideal, but separate living quarters are certainly not necessary.
- **A five-passenger car** for getting around Richmond and perhaps some longer trips as well.
- **Editorial assistance** with the book Lyle is translating.

Learn more about the Thomases at <https://orphan-dreams.com/about/lyle-thomas-3/>. Contact the Thomases directly for questions and more information. Email Lyle at lyle.thomas@crmleaders.org.

MISSION SCHOLARSHIP & TRAINING FUND

Join us to raise \$25,000 for missions trips and missions training this year!

“God desires that we be like living signs of the kingdom, to provide visual aids of what life will look like one day when the kingdom is here fully. We will not bring the kingdom or build the kingdom, but our privilege is to live out previews of ‘coming attractions,’ revealing what this Kingdom will look like.”

- Tim A. Dearborn, *Beyond Duty: A Passion For Christ, A Heart For Mission*

HAITI MISSION TRIP: JULY 15-22

“Third’s ongoing partnership with Haiti Outreach Ministries is deep and fruitful. Each year we work alongside our friends to treat patients, build homes



for families, and teach 180 sweet children about Jesus. Our medical staff sees hundreds of patients in the poorest city in the poorest country in the western hemisphere. Many of the patients receive life-saving treatment in an area where no medical care exists. In addition, through your offering, Third has helped to fund the Haitian staffed portion of the clinic in Cite Soleil which was at risk of closing.”

-Billy and Jen Martin

HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP

“In Leech Lake, Minnesota, the high school ministry will meet a host of different community friends with unique backgrounds and rich stories about the area. We will assist with home improvement projects, children’s programs and community gardens. In the evenings we will visit Norway Beach in the Chippewa National Forest, learn about culture and spirituality from an Ojibwa perspective, participate in a scavenger hunt around Cass Lake and experience a community cookout which sometimes includes drummers and dancers. We’ll see that the Gospel speaks into all communities and all cultures as it calls people to life in Christ.”

-Rick Hutton, Associate Pastor for Student Ministries

Won’t you join us in giving generously so these two teams become living signs to the people in Haiti and Leech Lake?

Use the envelopes found around the church or give online: thirdrva.org/generosity.



COLLEGE MINISTRY

THIRD COLLEGE MINISTRY FOR DISCIPLESHIP & EVANGELISM!

Q: What's the common link between more than 60 college-age students who are members of Third... the 2,990 U of R undergraduates located just 1.1 miles from our Forest Ave campus...and Third's commitment to deeply-relational parish ministry?

A: Our vibrant and growing College Ministry.

Students who grow up in the church and leave for college can often feel forgotten by their church family. They are not forgotten! As a church, it is vitally important that we walk alongside our students during college as they transition from being in a family of faith to owning their own faith.

Meanwhile, students at U of R are often longing for connection to God, and for Christian men and women to reach out to them while they are away from home.

All of these students need our prayers—will you please pray regularly for our college students, near and far?

GOD'S PLAN FOR CONNECTION THROUGH COLLEGE MINISTRY

As students leave home, church and everything familiar, they are immersed in a world full of peers, parties and secular worldviews. Many students decide to “table” their faith during these important years in which they are making long-term decisions regarding friends, spouses, majors and careers. At a time when it is most important to be walking closely with the Lord, many choose not to include him in their lives in a meaningful way.

The good news is that this is not God's plan! He longs for his people to stay near to him during all stages of life, and longs for ALL to know him. Thriving campus ministries and churches are reaching out to our students, and Third is standing in the gap as well.

CALLING ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS & THOSE WHO LOVE THEM

If you are interested in learning more about College Ministry, please get in touch with us! Contact **Andi Redmond** or **Karen Hayes** for more information. Also, let us know if you are new to Third and have a college student who may not be on our mailing list—we'd love to connect with them.

THIRD'S COLLEGE MINISTRY...

- Connects each one of “our” college students with a caring adult from Third to reach out to them and pray for them during their college years.
- Offers Bible study, fellowship, and service opportunities over the Christmas and summer breaks.
- Develops relationships with U of R students. We offer career shadowing opportunities, rides to church and invitations to Third events.
- Involves Corey speaking to Christian groups at U of R.
- Includes two summer college interns who will serve the Student Ministry and College Ministry!

SUMMER FUN



2017 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

SEARCHING THE VISIBLE, DISCOVERING THE INVISIBLE

Calling all starveyors! This summer at Galactic Starveyors Vacation Bible School (VBS), we will search the skies and God's word to uncover God's truth that is etched in his glorious handiwork!

WHO: Children ages 4* to rising 5th grade

WHEN: June 26-30, 9 a.m.-noon

WHERE: Third Church

SIGN UP: Registration is open for Third and CAC families and guests at: thirdrva.org/events.

VOLUNTEER: This year we need over 100 adult and youth volunteers. There are many different jobs to do and all are listed online. Click [HERE](#) for descriptions.

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him. -Colossians 1:15-16”

*Children must be age 4 by September 30, 2017 to stay at VBS without a parent volunteering that week.

SPORTS SKILLS CAMP 2017

Combine fun and excitement with the great news of the Gospel. Sponsored by Third, Community West, and the Christian Arabic Church, this week encourages children to build sports skills and to learn about Christian character-building, thanks to college athletes from the Sports Outreach Institute and RVA.

WHO: Children and youth, rising 1st to 12th grades

WHEN: July 10-14, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

WHERE: 2340 Pump Rd.

COST: \$80 provides a space for each camper (a second child: \$70, a third child: \$60). (\$20 of the fee is tax deductible.) Scholarships available.

HOW CAN I SIGN UP? Visit thirdrva.org/events

Learn more about this awesome week at thirdrva.org/sports-skills-camp.

QUESTIONS? Contact Tom Barila.




SUMMER 2017 COLLEGE MINISTRY OFFERINGS @ THIRD

“This summer is packed with opportunities for our students to connect to the body of Christ, and to grow in their faith and share their gifts with the church and the community. Please encourage your college student to join the fellowship!”

-Karen Hayes

Please join us for these events and bring friends!

Like and Follow us!

  @thirdrvacollege

WELCOME BACK/CELEBRATE SUMMER COOKOUT

WHO: All college students and high school seniors

WHEN: Tuesday, May 30, 6:30 p.m.

Enjoy dinner, reconnect with old friends and make new ones as we celebrate the start of summer!

SUNDAY LUNCHES @ SHORE DOG

WHO: All college students and high school seniors

WHERE: Shore Dog restaurant, across the street from church

WHEN: Every Sunday, May 21-July 30, 12:30 p.m. (after last service)

Enjoy lunch and sermon chat with fellow college students and other Third members.

CHAT & CHEW: BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL – YOUR FAITH IN COLLEGE

WHO: High school juniors and seniors AND college freshmen and sophomores

WHEN: Sundays from June 25-July 30 (excluding July 2), 5-6:30 p.m.

Join your student ministry/college interns for dinner and discussion about faith and college.

Wrap up in time for youth group.

SPORTS OUTREACH INTERNATIONAL SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

WHO: All college students (younger students may also volunteer)

WHERE: Community West on Pump Road (near Godwin)

WHEN: Week of July 10-14 from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Join Tom Barila and the SOI team to help run a sports camp for children from the local immigrant population, Christian Arabic Church and Third. Serve one day or serve all five! Sign-up required, but no advance training needed. Service hours available.

WOMEN'S SUMMER SESSION BIBLE STUDY

WHO: College-age women and older

WHERE: Third Church Fellowship Hall

WHEN: Wednesday nights, July 12-August 6 (6 sessions), 7-8:45 p.m.

Join 200 women from Third to study the Bible together and socialize! Register online at thirdrva.org under “Events.”

BON VOYAGE – COLLEGE SEND-OFF PARTY

WHO: All college students

WHEN: Sunday, August 13, 7 p.m.

Gather for food, fun, encouragement and prayer before heading to school or starting your job.



ELDER SHEPHERD MINISTRY UPDATE

You have expressed a desire for closer relationships with pastoral staff and greater access to them. While we can't clone Corey and Ed, we have many gifted pastors/shepherds among our elders, and you can have great access to them. Thanks to our recent congregational meeting, Third now has a small governing board of Elders for strategic and administrative purposes, freeing up the much larger group of elders to serve the congregation directly. These are our "Elder Shepherds."

These Elder Shepherds also allow all of us at Third to enhance our biblical faithfulness. As we look at the biblical concept of elders, we see that they are primarily to be shepherds and disciplers. Therefore, going forward you will find elders to be more accessible to you, and more engaged in meeting your needs and equipping you for your own ministry.

HERE'S THE INFORMATION COREY SENT OUT RECENTLY TO ENLIST ELDERS INTO THIS NEW ROLE:

PURPOSE: The Elder Shepherd seeks to actively provide oversight and care for a number of Third's members, assisting and encouraging in their spiritual growth, connection with the body of Christ and use of their gifts in serving Christ's kingdom mission.

KEY FOCUS AS DISCIPLES: In any of the above roles, we commit ourselves as shepherds to helping specific people to whom God has led us to take one step forward toward Jesus and his kingdom.

- **Engaging:** forming relationships outside the church, exemplifying Christ, sharing the good news, inviting them to follow Jesus.
- **Establishing:** helping a believer connect in community, develop deeper relationships, grow in the faith, taking steps to serve and give.
- **Equipping:** training and teaching believers to disciple others.
- **Pray regularly** for the people God has led you to care for and disciple.

OPTIONAL ROLES:

- **Parish Elder Shepherd:** being part of a Parish leadership team, connecting with a small number of people in the parish regularly to provide oversight and care.
- **Parish Group Leader:** serve on a Parish Group Team, giving oversight and care to its members
- **Teacher or Small Group Leader:** regularly teaching a class or small group, giving oversight and care to its members.
- **Ministry Leader:** helping lead a ministry in or beyond the church, recruiting others to join the work, supporting and equipping leaders, focused on accomplishing kingdom purpose.

Please pray for our previously ordained elders as they discern the focus and role they will commit to in the coming year. Pray also for the formation of Parish Leadership teams, made up of Shepherding Elders and Deacons.

EVENTS CALENDAR: MAY & JUNE



MAY 5

WOMEN'S FIRST FRIDAY FELLOWSHIP

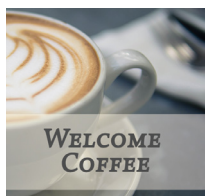
7 p.m. | Emily Henley's Home

703 Sawdust Dr., Manakin-Sabot

We're opening our homes to host monthly First Friday Fellowships for all the women of Third.

Join us for a simple way to meet other women, enjoy some light drinks and snacks, and start your weekend off right. We'll meet at a different home around Richmond each month.

For questions or to RSVP, contact [Erin Holbrook](#).



MAY 21

WELCOME COFFEE

9:45 a.m., Parlor

If you're new to Third, come to this monthly gathering to meet a few people, learn about Third's vision, what we believe and how to get involved.

QUESTIONS? Contact [Beth Nichols](#).

JUNE 19



ANNUAL SAM JACKSON MEMORIAL CHARITY GOLF OUTING

Join us for the Annual Sam Jackson Charity Golf Outing. It's a great opportunity to invite friends and family. Registration includes everything you need for this day of golfing, plus prizes!

WHEN: Check-in begins at 8 a.m., with a shotgun start at 8:45 a.m. Lunch to follow at 1 p.m.

WHERE: Richmond Country Club

WHO: This Captain's Choice is suited for all levels of golfers and non-golfers, and is open to all: men, women, and teens. Sign up as individuals or pairs, and you'll be placed on teams.

COST: \$80; covers greens fees, golf cart, range balls, practice balls set up one hour before start; lunch after the golf round; short inspirational message. Also includes a \$25 donation.

REGISTER TODAY: thirdrva.org/events

QUESTIONS? Contact [Bob Tatti](#).



TRIP OPPORTUNITY: EXPERIENCE ISRAEL TOUR 2017

UPDATE: This "trip of a lifetime" is now from September 30 to October 10 of this year.

You'll enjoy the beauty of the land, Israel's wonderful food, and her open and safe hospitality every step of the way.

WHEN: September 30–October 10, 2017

WHERE: You'll stay in first class hotels in the following places: 1 night on the Mediterranean,

3 nights on the shore of Galilee, 1 night at the Dead Sea, and 4 nights in Jerusalem.

TOURING: You'll tour the sites of Israel in a comfortable tour bus, with a biblically knowledgeable tour guide.

FULL ITINERARY: thirdrva.org/news-events/experience-israel-tour-2017

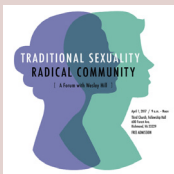
COST: \$4,295

DEADLINE: June 19, 2017.

QUESTIONS? Concerns? Want to know who else is signed up to go? Get in touch with [Tom Barila](#).



Third Church
500 Forest Ave.
Richmond, Virginia 23229
(804) 282-4645



THOUGHTS ON RADICAL COMMUNITY

Many Third members participated in the “Traditional Sexuality, Radical Community” forum on April 3. During the forum, noted author Wesley Hill also provided a road map we can use to discuss other issues that can so easily divide people of good will.

He explained that Jesus has given us a framework for thinking about our entire lives: God’s good creation; sin’s distortion of that creation, leaving humanity hard-hearted; and Christ’s redemption of all creation, offering a radical new way of living in community.

In light of this framework, ask these questions when exploring divisive issues:

- How is this issue pointing to some fundamental good of creation?
- How is this issue marked by brokenness and sin and hard-heartedness?
- How is this issue witnessing to the new reality of Christ’s reign?

A Christian who is gay and celibate, author and Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at Trinity School of Ministry, Wesley Hill has been on the front lines of many of the debates about sexuality in and out of the church.

During the forum, Wesley explained why the historic Christian sexual ethic still holds even in our current context, and also how this ethic can actually be lived through the power of Christian community and spiritual friendship.

Audio files of the forum can be found [HERE](#).

THIRD PRESS DEADLINE FOR JUNE: Friday, May 5. Submit to: kjeffer@recreativeinc.com