

ECBC QUARTERLY

The Jesus Place

WINTER 2023 | ISSUE 2

• MERRY • Christmas

- *The New Heating System*
- *Educating Children*
- *Member Testimony*
- *Deacons' Corner*



Electric City Baptist Church

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

By Anthony Stafford

Within the heart of man, he desires to regularly reinvent himself. I

understand the sentiment of the New Year's statement "New year, new you." Everywhere you look during this time of year, self-help services and marketing schemes offer quick turnarounds to achieving change.

You can get a 30-day fix. You can have a 90-day lifestyle change. You can go on a 7-day diet. While many of these programs, I'm sure, have their benefits, their sales pitch is that every year you can have a new you.

We should never belittle people for seeking to better themselves, but Scripture offers a better solution to the challenge of man's deep desire for change. We must first address the condition of man.

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world" (Eph. 2:2), "also he hath set the world in their heart" (Ecc. 3:11).

So, men in their humanity, have a great desire to change and grow, but they are

controlled by the course of this world. They need to seek new devices to solve their inner need for purpose and to satisfy their desire to be valued.

Now, we must recognize that many men have done great things: hiked Mount Everest, conquered battlefields, invented helpful resources, and led great numbers of people. But none of these accomplishments made them a new person.

Let me introduce you to a man, the man, the greatest man who ever lived: the Son of Man. He came with a purpose.

John 18:37 says, *"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth."* Jesus came to tell you the truth of who He is, who you are, and who you can be.

This Son of Man came for you. *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).*

You who are lost in your desires and needs can be found in Him. He offers a solution to the worldly problem of needing a continual new you.

Romans 5:8 says, *"But God*

commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He laid his life down for you so that you could be made who you are in Christ.

So, do you want real change, valuable and meaningful change? It can only be found in the Savior of all men, the name of above all names: Jesus.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

All real change and transformation is based on changing and transforming the actual person. Jesus gives to you the opportunity to experience real valuable meaningful change. No other answer to this problem exists in humanity. There is no other solution to this issue in an individual's heart. A man must place his faith and have his life be found in Jesus Christ, *"in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3).*

New year, new you? Maybe. In Christ, new you? Definitely.

Jesus offers a solution to the worldly problem of needing a continual new you.



The Staffords (from left): Penny, Lincoln, Moses, Bethany, Finley, and Anthony.

TRAINING THEM UP

Sending our children to public school

By Tammy Ditton

Photo by Priscilla du Preez on Unsplash



Trust is a huge step in the process of bringing up your children to do well in the public school system.

education of our two daughters in public school, and then we used Christian school for their middle school grades. For high school, we brought them back to public school.

We live in the Guilderland Cental School District, which provides a higher value of education

in their willingness to go to church, and seeing them grow in their faith — these were the next steps.

Finally, trust was a huge step in the process of bringing up our children to do well in the public school system.

Consider this: God is faithful. Do you believe that? God will protect. Do you believe that? Are your children showing their faith?

And if they are, do you trust the object of their faith?

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

Many parents, or soon-to-be parents, must consider the question: “How will we educate our children in this ungodly world?” The obvious choice has traditionally been our public schools, which we pay big bucks for in New York state taxes.

Today, as Christian parents, we have a bigger challenge: Should we send our vulnerable children to these traditional institutions? The public school system has failed us in many ways. In upstate New York, we are still getting value from the education system, but it comes along with a liberal or ungodly point of view that is integrated into the classrooms and spreads through the school hallways.

As parents who went through public primary education (K-12), my husband and I chose to start the

than some other local school districts.

Our decisions to move our girls from public to Christian and then back to public school came through much prayer. We built a Godly foundation in their lives, and we made sure we were actively engaged in the most important part: their relationship with, love for, and growth in Jesus as their Savior.

Our primary step involved making sure they had accepted their salvation in Jesus and were growing in their understanding of who God is as their Savior.

Watching their growth as young Christians in relationship with their friends and family, and

IN THE NEXT PAGES...

4

LET THERE BE HEAT

By Anthony Stafford and Cheryl Hulseapple

6

DEACONS' CORNER

Getting to Know Them

7

SET AT LIBERTY

By Dave Storm

8

THE GOSPEL

And Recent Baptisms



A 3-unit system replaced the old 2-unit one. The new units all work together, each at 33% capacity. If any one fails, the redundancy enables the other two to take over and continue to heat the whole building. Replacing a single unit at a time, as needed, will be much cheaper than having to replace one giant system. The setup makes it less likely that the church will be without heat again in the future.

For about a month, we held services in a cold auditorium. Electric heaters were brought in and people wore coats. We handed out hand warmers, beanies, and gloves. We continued to have church because Stewart's was still open, so we were too. We knew that, even if we didn't have heat and the temperature in the building went down to 20°, we would have church.

"Isn't it like God to lead us into a situation where we have to fully rely on him?" Anthony said.

We all knew that God would have to do something big to help us fix the situation, after He had done something big last year when He gave us a 12,000-sq. ft. building minus any debt. We began to pray as a church about what we could do. We had a little leeway with God's heating coming in the summer months, but we knew the cold doom of New York winter would return in October. We had several big events planned to serve our community and preach the gospel, and we prayed that God would come through for us once again.

One Sunday morning before a service, Anthony and several others prayed over the heating system and it just started working until the service was over.

One Sunday in May, we opened the doors to a church building that was 43°. Last year, God had blessed us at Electric City Baptist Church with our very own building in Schenectady, and He enabled us to purchase it in cash.

The building had a damaged heating system, and we knew when we bought it that we were going to have to replace it soon. But we had hoped to get at least two years of working heat before we had to find the funds for a new system.

Pastor Anthony and some of the men in the church who knew heating and cooling began to fiddle with the broken system. They considered making a bunch of little campfires in the church. Instead, they brought in several repairmen to come and look at the system.

The repairmen said the cost of the parts alone would be nearly \$20,000. But each said it could not be repaired and that it had to be replaced, which could cost as much as \$40,000.

Soon, another local pastor called Anthony. He said he knew of a unique Texas-based organization, called Oldham Little Church Foundation, that helps churches in need, specifically young church plants like ECBC that have buildings that are at least 60 years old.

We continued to pray, and we asked God to provide. We had already begun internally saving and working toward the goal of getting a new system. Up to 100 churches at a time might apply to receive the grants from the foundation, so we had no idea what would become of approaching them. They knew little about our church or our background. Why would distant people help out a little church like ours?

The summer months crept into fall. We held events such as Vacation Bible School and the Man Up Conference, and we filled the church each week. We knew that the Lord would take care of us by the time winter arrived. The leadership team continued to pray, and each Sunday we took a moment as a church to pray to God to provide.

We were about halfway to reaching our financial goal when the organization called. They said they were interested in helping us, but they wanted more information about our church, our needs and goals, and the next steps they might take if they were to help us. They asked us to come up with a portion of the needed funds, and they said they would help with the rest, with no strings attached.

When they told Anthony the amount they would be able

to give, it turned out to be the rest of the cost beyond what we had already saved for the new unit, which itself had ended up costing a bit more than half of the original \$40,000 estimate. We were one of three churches to receive the grant.

The Oldham Little Church Foundation supports small, evangelical churches in making improvements to their facilities so that they can be a witness and win souls for Christ.

*‘Isn’t it like God
to lead us into a
situation where we
have to fully rely
on him?’*

The organization was founded in 1949 by Morris Calvin Oldham, who grew a business that was once the largest milk delivery service in the U.S. His success enabled him to start the private foundation almost 75 years ago with an initial trust of \$3 million. Since then the organization has given more than 17,000

grants, totaling more than \$50 million, to help small churches continue to serve Jesus in the U.S.

By the time we knew we had been selected to receive the grant, it was mid-October. We still had to schedule the repairman, receive the funds from the foundation, and get the system installed before temperatures dropped to freezing. Just before a Sunday when temperatures fell to 48°, it was installed and pumping heat, which allowed God’s work to continue at ECBC.

According to Anthony, “Three things happened for us to be provided for.” One, we obeyed and followed in our mission. Two, we prayed and asked God to help. And three, He sent help in the form of other believers who were willing to sacrifice so that we could continue what we’re doing here in upstate New York.

The outdoors are approaching 8°, but it feels like 80° in our building. God gave us our building, and now He has filled it with heat.

*Snowy church photo and cover
photo courtesy of Bud Maurer.*



DEACONS

CORNER

Getting to know them



A. J. STAFFORD

"The deacons are the ones carrying the throne of the bride to her husband. It is my mission to have a strong back, a servant's heart, and focused eyes on the physical needs of the church bringing the bride one step at a time closer to Christ."



CODY VANDERWERKER

"It is my desire as a deacon of this church to promote unity, to seek opportunities to push others toward love, one for another, and to encourage good works unto God, so that, through this, the church might grow and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ ever further."



SCOTT HULSEAPPLE

"It is my mission as deacon to have a giving heart and to help those in need. I strive to be an example to the young men of the congregation. I am ready to help out wherever needed to keep the church running smoothly so that Pastor Anthony and the elders can continue their mission of teaching and preparing the members of the congregation to go out and spread the gospel."



HANNAH ROBERTS

"As a servant here at ECBC, my desire is to serve with humility and grace. I'm here to help in the background so that Jesus can be brought to the forefront and the congregation can go out and spread the gospel."

SET AT LIBERTY

By Dave Storm

"Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee" (Luke 8:39).

Jesus commanded this to a man He had freed from many chains and demons. This man was the Bible character that I could most relate to after being saved and freed from the chains I was bound in.

I had a pretty normal childhood for coming from a broken home. I was not abused, and my family said they knew Jesus, but I wasn't taught about God and a better way of life. I felt either unloved or misunderstood as a child. I carried resentments toward my parents. But we get older, experience life, and realize that, without having God, our parents are doing their best with their circumstances and just repeating what they know.

I began using drugs and alcohol in my early teens because it temporarily masked the pain I was going through. And I thought it was the cool thing to do. Drugs helped me fill the void within me for a little while, which can truly only be filled by a reconciled relationship to Jesus. Doing drugs started causing issues in my life almost immediately, and as my addiction progressed so did the consequences. I was slowly killing myself and hurting the people that loved me the most.

"For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

The wages started with minor arrests as a teen and young adult and progressed to spending time in prison. Just as Jesus did so many good things that the world could not contain all the books if they were written, there are too many terrible things I did to fit in this article, and I will not glorify my past deeds. I will glorify Him for saving me from them and for how He did it.

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen" (John 21:25).

So I will restart the story where He started to pull me out of that lifestyle. By that time, I was 36 and sitting in Saratoga County Jail. I was ready to try a different way because my way and the world's way had not been effective. I had tried AA, rehab, and psychology. These things really did nothing to help me.



Dave and his children, Isaiah and Teagan.

By this time, I had children and had made broken families of my own.

I started attending church services in the jail. There I met a few men who are still very dear friends and brothers to me to this day. I am very grateful to them and their ministry of coming to the jail to preach the truth and truly release the captives.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-

hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18).

I'm also thankful this ministry has expanded to almost every jail in the area and is a part of ECBC.

So I was saved in jail, and it was the best decision I have ever made in my life. Things have not been perfect or easy, but Jesus never promised it would be.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Yes, I still had to complete a 2.5-year prison sentence, where I believe He protected me from any danger.

"Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (Psalm 105:15).

But I now know it was for my own good.

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6).

I have now been home for over three years and have built a better life with Jesus as the foundation. He has restored so many things to me. He has even entrusted me to have custody of my two youngest children. We have our own residence and I have employment. He has restored me to sanity. I belong to a strong church in ECBC and follow a strong Savior.

1 Corinthians 6:20 says you were bought with a price and that price is Jesus's blood and sacrifice.

After all He has done for me, what else could I do but serve Him?



The gospel is found in the Word of God.

God provides the answer to reconciling
your relationship with Him.

1

RECOGNIZE YOUR CONDITION

Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23

2

RELIGION AND GOOD WORKS ARE NOT THE ANSWER

Ephesians 2:8–9, Titus 2:5

3

JESUS PROVIDES THE WAY

John 14:6, Romans 5:8

4

BELIEVE AND RECEIVE JESUS

John 3:16, Romans 10:13, John 1:12



THE GOSPEL

Electric City Baptist Church

2350 Hamburg Street, Schenectady, NY 12303

thejesusplace@outlook.com



Sign up to receive the digital version of *ECBC Quarterly* at electriccitybaptist.com.