

Calvin Commentary

John Calvin Presbyterian Church
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NOVEMBER 2015

Stewardship 2016 – “Catch the Joy”

My name is Mike Isham and I serve on this year's Stewardship Committee. I would like to let everyone know that we're kicking off our annual stewardship pledge drive for your support in the coming year and the theme that we've chosen for this year's campaign is “Catch the Joy”. The implications being of course that we should find joy in supporting the place that we call our spiritual home. In the coming weeks you will be hearing more from other committee members about the What, When, and How of this year's campaign.

However, I would like to take a few minutes this morning to talk with you about the “Why”, at least from my perspective. John Calvin is my home and it's your home, and you take care of your home, it's just that simple. But maybe, just maybe, even more importantly, John Calvin has become synonymous with touching lives. Many of you have heard me address the congregation previously about the wonderful things that John Calvin is associated with and about that help to define who we are. From the countless individuals suffering from addiction who've come up through the support groups that we sponsor, to the vast numbers of children who've come up through our ranks in the playschool, to the untold number of individuals who have been helped through our participation in various mission outreach programs and organizations. Our own Christian Education Ministry, Our Music Ministry, Our Fellowship Activities and Organizations, and my personal favorite, Our Prayer Team, just to name a few. And let me not fail to mention, some of you may not be

aware that John Calvin will be celebrating its 50th year anniversary in 2016, which is a blessing in and of itself. But let us make no mistake folds. These are ALL Blessings!! Not just meant for our own enjoyment and satisfaction, but entrusted to our care and meant for us to nurture, grow, develop and pay forward if you will.

One of the things that I've not touched upon in previous year's campaigns, is the giving of one's time and talent. They are just as important as your financial support is, maybe even so because your support makes us who we are, People of God. Everybody, everybody has something that God wants them to do. You may not know it yet, maybe, you don't acknowledge it yet, perhaps, it's just a whisper in your heart, perhaps, all you need is a nudge, to listen for that still small voice. For as we all know God doesn't call the equipped, he equips those that he calls. What I can tell you is that over the years I have learned, rather reluctantly I might add, that when I give of myself. I am really giving to myself.

Every Sunday morning, when we gather, We sing “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”. Are we listening? Because if we are, we should be reminded that worship, is giving God the best that he has given us, so we need to be careful what we do with the best that we have. I'm also reminded of my own family's journey here at John Calvin over the course of the last 18 years. You know one of the most important things my two sons learned growing up in this church is that you should never look down upon anyone, unless, you are bending over, to extend a hand, to lift them up. And with that I

am very pleased. Finally, my personal journey here at John Calvin, this church has given me hope and grace during difficult and trying times as well as gratitude and humility during the many joyous occasions in my life. So I'm left with just wanting to ask everyone here this morning a couple of questions, if I may. What has this church given you? And does it justify giving back in return? I hope so, for you see, we have many more lives to touch. And if we can trust the Lord with our own external salvation, than let us in the here and now trust Him with our time, our talents and our tithes.

- *From the Stewardship Kickoff Address given to the congregation on Sunday, October 11, 2015.*

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The Study Window

First Things First

In a clergy gathering a few months ago a fellow pastor told of a woman who came to him in his church and said, "Pastor I really love this time of year". "You mean the fall colors and the crisp autumn air", he replied. "No, that's not what I mean at all," she said. "I mean the stewardship campaign." He replied very honestly, "you've got to be kidding, you actually like this time of year?" "Yes, and I'll tell you why. This time of year makes me take stock of my life. It makes me think deeply about my priorities. It makes me ask if I am living the way God is calling me to live."

This is something that needs to happen at least once each year. We need to think deeply about our priorities. Am I living in accordance with the way of the kingdom? Stewardship season is a time to center ourselves anew upon God and the kingdom of God. Stewardship is about our faith long before it's about our money. It is not enough to just skim the surface and simply deciding to give what we gave last year. We need to prayerfully reflect on the richness of God's gifts to us and ask what, as your disciple, do you want me to give to support your work during the next year?

In Matthew 6 Jesus says to us, "do not worry about your life what you will eat or what you will drink or about your body as to what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing"? Then he invites us to look at the birds of the air how they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns yet God feeds them and they have enough. He asks rhetorically, "are you not of more value than they"? Then he invites us to consider the lilies of the field how they grow, they neither toil nor spin yet not even Solomon, one of Israel's greatest and richest kings, was not clothed like they are. He pointedly tells us that "if God so clothes the lilies of the field which are alive today and are thrown in the oven tomorrow will he not much more clothe you, you of little faith. Do not worry about these things your heavenly father knows that you need them. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well".

When Jesus says "strive first for the kingdom of God and all these things will be given to you as well"; what does he mean? He doesn't mean that our giving will guarantee that we get into heaven. Neither does he mean that we will have money dumped into our bank account. The prophet Malachi says that when we give, God will open the windows of heaven for us and pour down an overflowing blessing. And Jesus says that when we exercise a giving lifestyle we receive good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over. But neither promise has to do with winning some kind of divine lottery.

Rather if we give, there will be enough. If we are disciples in our giving, there will always be enough. No excess is promised, no fattened church coffers, no overflowing balances in the general fund but rather an abundance of enough. We will have enough for ourselves and enough for every good work.

In Christ's Service,
Rev. Harry Brown



MUSIC NOTES

By: William R. Memmott



Premiere Performance of Memmott's oratorio "For Such a Time as This" (the life of Queen Esther) at the Recital Hall of the Performing Arts Center at the University of New Orleans - Sunday evening, November 15 at 7:00 pm. This original composition has been composed by William R. Memmott and will be performed by the JCPC Choir, soloists and an LPO orchestra. Mr. Memmott composed this work in fulfillment of requirements for a Master's Degree in Composition under Dr. Yotam Haber.

The life of Esther is one of the most stirring epochs in scripture. It relates how she moved from orphan to queen with King Xerxes; how her adoptive uncle Mordecai thwarted an assassination plot against the king; how the evil Haman plotted to destroy the Jewish people; and how Esther successfully exhorted the king to save her people (still celebrated as Purim).

The Recital Hall is on the UNO Campus, up-river side of the Performing Arts Center. Travel north on Elysian Fields Ave. Turn left on Leon C. Simon Dr. for two blocks. Turn right on St. Anthony Ave. to parking lot behind the Recital Hall.

All are invited to this free concert.

Soli Deo Gloria

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

November 14th @ 10:00am – Dress Rehearsal at UNO “For Such a Time as This”

November 15th @ 7:00pm – Performance at UNO “For Such a Time as This”

November 22nd @ 5:00pm – Hanging of the Greens Service

December 9th @ 7:00pm – Christmas Concert dress rehearsal

December 13th @ 10:30am – Christmas Concert @ JCPC “A New Generation Sings Christmas”

December 24th @ 5:00pm - Christmas Eve Family Service

December 24th @ 7:00pm – Festival of Lessons and Carols

I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify Him with thanksgiving. ~ Psalm 69:30

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

from the October 19, 2015 meeting

- Ordered stained glass windows for the center panels of the sanctuary windows. The windows should be ready by next Easter.
- Approved the 2015-2016 Playschool budget.
- Buddy Haw, Bill Bottomley, and Harry Brown attended the fall meeting of the Presbytery of South Louisiana, October 16-17.
- The church ended September, 2015, with revenues totaling \$284,965.25, and expenses totaling \$309,692.18, for a net deficit of \$24,726.93.



Saturday, November 21st

8:00am – 1:00pm

JCPC FELLOWSHIP HALL

**Program of Hope
Fundraiser**

CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE – CRAFT FAIR – BAKE SALE – ANTIQUES – NEARLY NEW

*If you or anyone you know would like to rent a booth,
please contact Sue Crawford.*

P.W. Circle Meetings – All Women Are Welcome!!

Lydia Circle meets Tuesday, November 10th @ 7:00pm

Grace Circle meets Tuesday, November 17th @ 9:30pm

Both Circle Meetings are in the JCPC Library.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

- We were delighted to have Miss Alex Pappas, youth coordinator for the Presbytery of South Louisiana, speak to our youth about a retreat at Mo Ranch in Texas for the summer of 2016.
- Trunk or Treat continues to be a solid tradition for the Playschool and Church. This year was no exception. Thanks to all of our volunteers.
- Sunday School classes are still open for study and reflection.
- Christmas Plans are being finalized and we look forward to a joyous season of celebration.

*Blessings to all,
Jon O'Regan – C.E. Committee Chairman*

Wednesday Night Live series continues and the focus is on the Great Ends of the Church. These six statements have provided guidance for the church as faithful expressions of Christian gospel and what the God calls the church to do and be. The Great Ends of the Church are:

- ***The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind***
- ***The shelter, nurture and spiritual fellowship of the children of God***
- ***The maintenance of divine worship***
- ***The preservation of the truth***
- ***The promotion of social righteousness***
- ***The exhibition of the Kingdom of heaven to the world***

The Great Ends are one of the treasures of the Church. They challenge us to live out the fullness of the gospel. We will examine them in helpful pairings which will help us to see the emphases and balances which the church needs to reflect as it lives out the purposes for which the triune God establishes it. The great ends are to be taken and understood as a whole. The fullness of the gospel is expressed as the church witnesses to the different dimensions the great ends point us toward.



NOV. 2 - ANN PRINCE
NOV. 4 - LORRAINE HICKS
NOV. 5 – SHARON KIRK
NOV. 6 – JOHN LAPORTE JR.
NOV. 7 – BRADLEY MUNDELL
NOV. 12 – GEORGE MCLEAN
NOV. 13 – REV. HARRY BROWN
NOV. 15 – ROBIN BUSH
NOV. 16 – CAROLINE RUSSO
NOV. 17 – ARTIS MOORE
NOV. 18 – BUDDY HAW
NOV. 20 – LANCE MCHAN
NOV. 24 – CYNTHIA PALMISANO
NOV. 26 – NANCY DAVIS

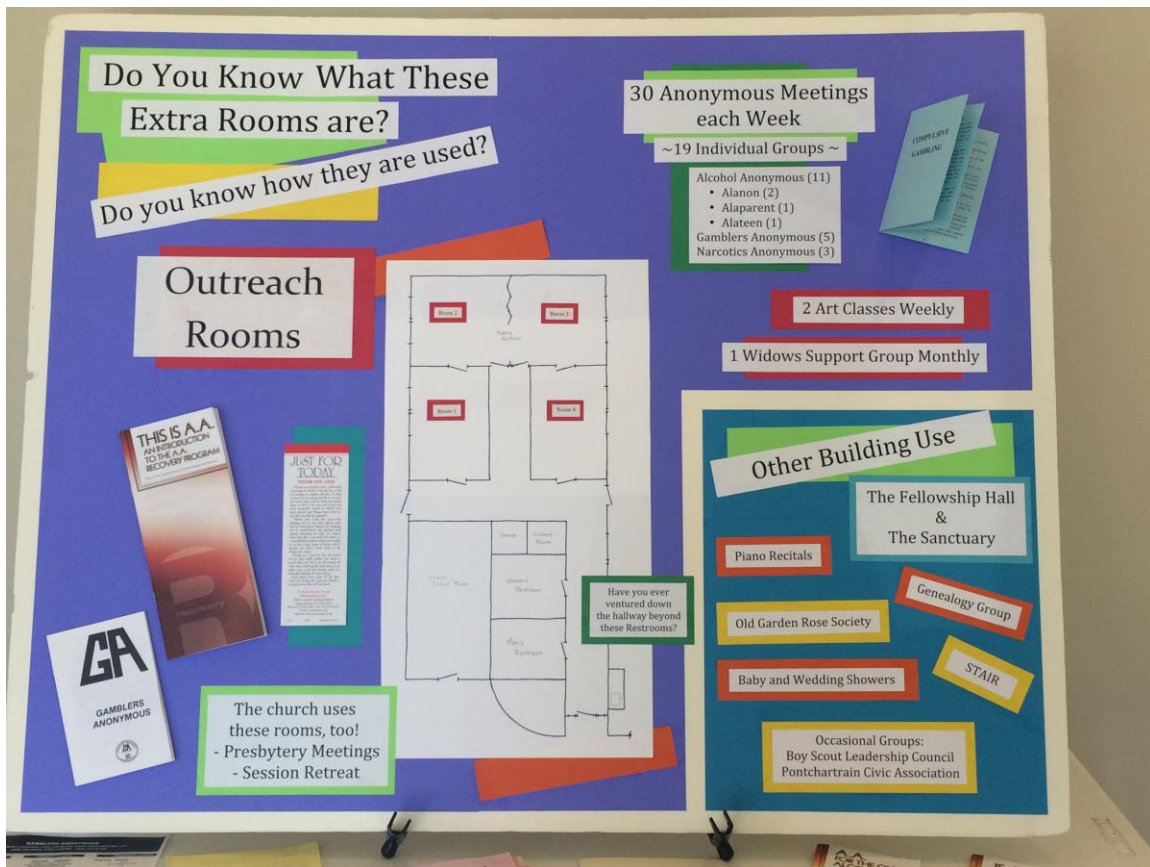
NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

- 11-1 Daylight Savings Time Ends – Set your clocks back 1 hour
- 11-8 Stewardship Sunday
- 11-3 PW Council Meeting @ 10:00am in the Library
- 11-4 Wednesday Night Live @ 6:00pm
- 11-8 Stewardship Sunday
- 11-8 C.E. and Worship Committee Meetings @ 12:00pm
- 11-9 White Linen Tablecloth Event @ The Maple Leaf Café starting @ 6:30pm
- 11-10 Resource Committee Meeting @ 7:00pm in the Cry Room
- 11-10 Lydia Circle Meeting @ 7:00pm in the Library
- 11-15 Choir Performance “For Such a Time as This” – UNO @ 7:00pm
- 11-17 Grace Circle Meeting @ 9:30am in the Library
- 11-18 Wednesday Night Live @ 6:00pm (last one of the year)
- 11-21 White Elephant Sale – 8:00am – 1:00pm
- 11-22 Hanging of the Greens Service @ 5:00pm
- 11-26 & 11-27 – CHUCH OFFICE CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
- 11-29 First Sunday of Advent

Thank You!!

Thank you for the great feedback the Outreach Committee received from the posters we put up to highlight many of John Calvin's Outreach Activities. We wanted to showcase that we are involved in many different and interesting activities, and you responded. Our "Outreach Fair", originally scheduled to be shown for one Sunday, ended up staying up for all of September! We received multiple comments that you enjoyed reading one or two each week through the month.

Many comments were received on the "Building Use" poster, highlighting how our Community Rooms are being used (as well as the rest of the buildings). The office received several enquiries about these meetings and getting involved. Wonderful!



Did you check this poster out? Did you know how these meeting rooms were being used to benefit our community?

The Wonders of God's Creation

This fall Mike and I were lucky enough to need to take a road trip to California to help out my Mom. Yes, we drove the whole way. To make it fun we visited as many National Parks and Monuments as we could fit in, including fulfilling Mike's lifelong wish to take a mule trip down into the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back, including an overnight stay.



Those of you that have taken the trip into the Grand Canyon, either by mule or on foot will remember the overwhelming majesty of this beautiful “crack” in the ground. The layers of history uncovered in such a beautiful manner surely speaks to the wonders God has caused to be created in this world of ours.

From the starkly beautiful depths of Death Valley (190 feet below sea level) to the grandeur of Tioga Pass above Yosemite (9940 feet above sea level), our great country surely exhibits the variety of beauty that is God's Creation. What a wonderful opportunity we were given to see and experience so much of it.

Sharon Fortin

Playschool News

We are WILD about learning through PLAY at John Calvin Presbyterian Playschool. This month we are celebrating Thanksgiving and teaching our students about being thankful and the importance of sharing with others. We are showing the kids how to take care of those that are less fortunate by having a food drive and a coat drive. Please see the attached coat drive flyer.

A COUPLE IMPORTANT PLAYSCHOOL DATES TO NOTE:

November 1- 24: Food Drive

November 9- 20: Coat Drive

November 18: Pre-K and Pre-K+ Pow-Wow in Fellowship Hall (11:00 am)

November 23-27: Thanksgiving Holidays

December 4: Santa Pictures

December 15: Angel, Angel! Christmas Program in the Sanctuary (10:30 am)

December 17- January 3: Christmas Holidays

COAT DRIVE

NOVEMBER 9- 20

Benefitting Program of Hope, First Presbyterian Church

Please bring us your gently used or new coats/ jackets and help keep someone warm and cozy this winter!!



Children & Adult Sizes Welcomed

**Please place in the box by the
playschool office.**