

Calvin Commentary

John Calvin Presbyterian Church
4201 Transcontinental Drive
Metairie, LA 70006
504.888.1378

www.johncalvinchurch.org

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The Study Window

By: Reverend Harry A. Brown

Advent

Advent marks the beginning of the Church Year. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, which is the Sunday nearest November 30, and ends on Christmas Eve. The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival." The focus of the entire season is on preparation to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in his First Advent, and the anticipation of his return as Christ the King in his Second Advent. Advent is far more than simply remembering a 2,000 year old event in history. It is the celebration of God's self-revelation in Christ whereby all creation is reconciled to God.

This double focus on past and future symbolizes the spiritual journey of individuals and congregations, as they affirm that Christ has come, that He is present in the world today, and that He will come again in power. This acknowledgment provides a basis for Kingdom ethics, for holy living arising from a profound sense that we live "between the times" and are called to be faithful stewards of what is entrusted to us as God's people. As we celebrate God's inbreaking into history in the Incarnation, and anticipate the future consummation of that history we confess our responsibility to be a people commissioned to "love the Lord your God with all your heart" and to "love your neighbor as ourselves."

Advent is marked by a spirit of expectation, of anticipation, of preparation, of longing. There is a yearning for deliverance from the evils of the world, first expressed by Israelite slaves in Egypt as they cried out in their bitter oppression. It is the cry of those who have experienced the tyranny of injustice in a world under the curse of sin, and yet who have the hope of deliverance by a God who has heard the cries of oppressed slaves and brought deliverance! Part of this expectation



*“I bring good news
to you—wonderful,
joyous news for all
people.” – Luke 2:10*

anticipates judgment on sin and the calling of the world to accountability before God. We long for God to come and set the world right! Yet, as the prophet Amos warns, the expectation of a coming judgment at the "Day of the Lord" may not be the day of light that we long for, because the penetrating light of God's judgment on sin will shine just as brightly on God's people.

The Advent wreath is a popular symbol of the season. The circle of the wreath reminds us of God Himself, His eternity and endless mercy, which has no beginning or end. The green of the wreath speaks of the hope that we have in God, the hope of newness, of renewal, of eternal life. The candles symbolize the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His son. The four outer candles represent the period of waiting during the four Sundays of Advent, which themselves symbolize the four centuries of waiting between the prophet Malachi and the birth of Christ. The Center Candle is the Christ candle and symbolizes his coming into the world. The light of the candles is an important symbol of the season. The light reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world that comes into the darkness of our lives to bring newness, life, and hope. It also reminds us that we are called to be a light to the world as we reflect the light of God's grace to others (Isa 42:6). The progression in the lighting of the candles symbolizes the various aspects of our waiting experience. As the candles are lighted over the four week period, it also symbolizes the darkness of fear and hopelessness receding and the shadows of sin falling away as more and more light is shed into the world. The flame of each new candle reminds us that something is happening, and that more is yet to come. Finally, the light that has come into the world is plainly visible as the Christ candle is lighted at Christmas, and worshippers rejoice over the fact that the hope and promise of long ago have been realized.

In Christ's Service,

Rev. Harry Brown



*“Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord.”
– Luke 2:11*

MUSIC NOTES

By: William R. Memmott

It is good to remember: our newest addition, the combined Thanksgiving and Hanging of the Greens Service (with pizza) on Sunday, November 22, at 5:00 p.m. Now we're all thanked out and hung out! A good time! So, prepare for Advent/Christmas!

Sunday, December 13 at 10:30 a.m., we gather for the annual Christmas Concert. This year we celebrate with "A New Generation Sings Christmas," a collection of more recent Christmas works, with orchestra, soloists and chorus. Featured music includes "Sir Christèmas" by William Mathias (with hand chimes), "Mary, Did You Know" by Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene, a new arrangement of "O Holy Night" by Adolphe Adam (Memmott), "Hallelujah" by Leonard Cohen, "Jesus Child" by John Rutter, "Gloria" by Francis Poulenc, and several other wonderful contemporary Christmas songs. We will be joined by David Bloom, tenor, as well as our own roster of

soloists. You could call it a Christmas Musical Smogasbord! Of course, followed by the Christmas Luncheon.

The season rounds out with Christmas Eve on December 24: the Children's Service at 5:00 p.m. and the traditional Lessons and Carols at 7:00 p.m. A new feature this year will be our talented keyboard artists playing several pianos, the harpsichord and the pipe organ, in exciting arrangements of the carols (don't forget to sing!).

Be Thankful and Merry!

SOLI DEO GLORIA



Joyous  News

Announcements



DECEMBER EVENTS

- December 4 - White Elephant Christmas Party
@ Larry & Sheryl Wise home
- December 12 - Angel Breakfast - Fellowship Hall
9:00am & 10:30am
- December 12- Memorial Service for Terri Levet
2:00pm Service (visitation begins
@ 12:00pm)
- DECEMBER 9 - LAST DAY TO ORDER POINSETTIAS
- Decemeber 13 - Christmas Concert @ 10:30am
Luncheon following service
- December 15 - Playschool Play - Angel, Angel
@ 10:30am in the sanctuary
- December 15- Resource Meeting @ 7:00pm in
the Cry Room
- December 21 - Session Meeting @ 7:00pm in the
Library
- December 24- Christmas Eve Services
5:00pm - Childrens Service
7:00pm - Lessons and Carols

December 25 - 28 - CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

****PROGRAM OF HOPE - Every Tuesday and Wednesday we will be making/distributing sandwiches to the homeless. See Richard Briston or Sharon Fortin for more details.**

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/1 - Travis Corley
12/1 - Emilie Reeks
12/3 - Nell Weiderspahn
12/4 - Caroline Fernandez
12/5 - Ray Cox
12/9 - Maggie Walker
12/10 - David Russo
12/11 - Alexandria Schaefer
12/15 - Suzie Craig
12/15 - Linda Lowry
12/17 - Julie Hebert
12/19 - Judy Tracy
12/19 - Wayne Tracy
12/28 - Ben Fank
12/29 - Margaret Corcoran
12/31 - Maureen Nelson

For unto you is
born this day in the
city of David a
Savior, who is
Christ the Lord. ~
Luke 2:11

Christmas Concert

“A New Generation Sings Christmas”

Sunday, December 13, 2015 10:30 a.m.



Join us as we celebrate with
“A New Generation Sings Christmas”

A collection of recent Christmas works with orchestra, soloists and chorus.

We invite you to stay for our annual
Christmas Luncheon hosted by our
Presbyterian Women
immediately following the concert.
Please bring a dessert to share.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SCHEDULE

5:00pm – Family Service

7:00pm – Lessons and Carols

S.S. Children’s Bell Choir
Children participate in worship

Communion and Candlelight

Invite friends and family to share an evening of celebrating the birth of Christ this Christmas Eve.



PROGRAM OF HOPE

How fortunate we are to resume our monthly participation with Program of Hope during the special month of December! If you can help in our Fellowship Hall on Tuesday afternoons, or at First Presbyterian on Wednesday mornings, please sign up with Richard Britson or Sharon Fortin. For other meaningful ways that you may contribute, please check out the poster display in the Narthex.

Thank you for your continuing, generous support!

THANKSGIVING UPDATE

Thank You !!

To everyone who participated in the Thanksgiving food drive. We collected over 600 pounds of food which we delivered to Second Harvest Food Bank, in addition to preparing several baskets for local families. Our contributions will help many families.

SESSION SNAPSHOT

The November meeting was held on Monday, November 16, 2015 at 7:00pm in the Church Library.

- Thanks go to ALL who assisted with the annual "Trunk or Treat"
- A "Butterfly Garden" is planned
- The Angel Breakfast is scheduled for December 12th
- JCPC will lead Program of Hope in December
- Fundraising for the new stained glass window panels will begin after the "Catch the Joy" stewardship campaign is finished
- Communion is available for our "shut-ins". Contact the church office if you would like to receive the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper



*This Advent and Christmas season,
we'll adorn the sanctuary with poinsettias.*

*If you'd like to order one in memory
or honor of a loved one, complete the form
and place it with your check for **\$13.75** in
the offering plate or submit it to the church office.*

*Memorials/honorariums will be
acknowledged in the
Christmas Eve bulletins.*

The order deadline is Dec. 9

Please make checks payable to JCPC. Write "Poinsettia" on the memo line.





You are cordially invited to attend
The John Calvin Presbyterian Church

CHRISTMAS ANGEL BREAKFAST

Saturday, December 12th

Fellowship Hall

(Dress in your Christmas attire!)

9:00-10:00 am or 10:30- 11:30 am

Pancakes, sausage, fruit salad.

Chocolate milk and fruit juice.

Christmas carols and crafts

Hear a special reading of the Christmas Story.

Photos with the Christmas Angel by the Christmas Tree

Bring your young children and /or grandchildren for a memorable Christmas event.

Today is the last day to signup for this event. Please see Laurie after worship or drop a note in the offering plate listing number in your party and seating time.

Please bring a donation of travel size toiletry items for
First Presbyterian Church Program of Hope for the homeless.



You are invited...
to the John Calvin White Elephant Party!

Friday, December 4 at 7:00 pm

This year's hosts are Larry and Sheryl Wise
5317 Toby Lane, Kenner



Please bring an appetizer or dessert and your wrapped gift.
one gift per person – adults only

Come enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship!

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. We just had a Chuck E. Cheese fundraiser and Chuck E. visited the kids at school.

A COUPLE IMPORTANT PLAYSCHOOL DATES TO NOTE:

November 1- 21: Food Drive

November 9-20: Coat Drive

November 16: Charleston Wrap Pick-up

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 16- January 3: Christmas Holidays