

# Calvin Commentary

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**JANUARY 2016 EDITION**

## Join Us for Worship in 2016!

A New Year is a time for resolutions and new beginnings. We hope one of yours will be to make Sunday School (9:15 a.m.) and Worship (8:30 & 10:30 a.m.) each Sunday morning a standing commitment. By living this discipline in your family's life you open the door to countless ways by which God wants to bless you, refueling your heart and life, by giving you the strength and resources to meet life's challenges.

## Happy New Year!

### *Highlights*

- Jan 1 – Office Closed
- Jan 4 – P.S. Fundraiser
- Jan 10 – Ordination Installation
- Jan 12 – 7 pm Resource Mtg.
- Jan 14 – P.S. Open House
- Jan 18 – Office Closed
- Jan 18 – 7pm Session Mtg.
- Jan 19-20 – P.S. Parent/Teacher Conf.
- Jan 24 – Congregation Mtg.

## From the Study Window

A little girl went to bed one night with all her clothes on. When her mom came to tuck her in she said, "what are you doing honey you've never done this before." The girl said, "it's what our teacher said. What was that mom asked." Our teacher said, "things are changing so fast now that there isn't any time to get ready for them. I thought if I kept my clothes on I would be ready."

As we enter a new year it's natural to think about changes that have occurred. There are changes in our families. Some of us have added members to our families some of us have lost members of our families. In light of world and national events security has become more of a concern. As we look back a bit further we find computers and smart phone replacing television as the primary means of entertainment and communication. It wasn't very long ago that we had no understanding of DNA that remarkable little string of cells that determines who we are and has tremendous potential to eliminate things like cancer, Alzheimer's and other diseases.

Likewise change is occurring at a rapid pace in the church. Several church consultants have pointed out that there is more change going on in the church now than at any time since the reformation. In light of this it's not surprising that we long for the church we knew in our childhood. The little church in the wildwood was a very comforting institution and old first church on the corner wasn't bad either. Today churches are being whiplashed by different translations of the bible, the metamorphosis of doctrinal and social issues, the breakup of community, the disintegration of the traditional family, and horrendous economic pressures. Darwin's emphasis on the survival of the fittest that many Christians find contrary to the teaching of scripture can now be aptly applied to churches.

We don't know what the future church will look like how it will define its space needs or what kind of architecture it will develop, what kind of music it will finally settle on, what kind of social and theological issues it will struggle with, what kind of posture it will assume in the world. But we do know what its agenda ought to be. That agenda has been there from the beginning in the words Jesus spoke to his disciples before his death. Biblical scholars speak of John 14-16 as Jesus farewell speech. These words are what Jesus wanted the disciples to remember and focus on as they moved into the future.

The crux of what Jesus told the disciples appears in chapter fifteen and includes three emphasizes that in all times and places need to characterize the church.

First Jesus used the analogy of the branch remaining in the vine to receive its nutrition and bear fruit. He told the disciples abide in me as I abide in you. That is continue to turn to me for all your understanding nourishment and direction and I will continue to bless you and make your ministry bear fruit. In all times and all situations we need to prayerfully discuss and discern what it means to follow Christ in the light of the events that are going on around us.

The second thing Jesus told the disciples is love one another as I have loved you. I don't think he means love just those who are like you in dress or social status or beliefs. I don't think he means that we should impose tests and restrictions on those we intend to love. I don't think he means that we should get rid of those that don't agree with our ideas about life politics education or religion. What Jesus is call us to do is to love each person we come in contact with and help them become what god intends.

Third Jesus says go and bear fruit that will last. Jesus is not calling for ordinary fruit that will parish in a few days he is calling us to share the good news of his grace and how that shapes our lives. As we abide in him and loved others and tell others what he means to us and what it means to believe in him they and we will be changed and these changed lives will produce fruit that will last into eternity.

As we enter the New Year we are to abide in Christ, love others, and bear fruit that lasts. As we do so we will faithfully be the church in the midst of the chances and changes we encounter.

In Christ's Service

Rev. Harry Brown



# Music Notes

By William R Memmott



## A NEW YEAR FOR THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Our thanks to the Music Corner for a wonderful Christmas Concert on December 13: "A New Generation Sings Christmas," topped off by chicken. What could be better?

The Christmas Eve performance of the Family/Children's Service at 5:00 pm. Followed by the 7:00 pm service of the Festival of Lessons and Carols. A new feature this year (since we have so many talented performers): players joined the choir and in-house orchestra with multiple keyboards playing the carols. In addition to the pipe organ and grand piano we had the studio upright from Fellowship Hall, the electronic piano from the Choir Room, and the harpsichord. What a way to sing carols!

Now, don't go away. There's more! The Season of Epiphany is a Christian festival, observed on January 6<sup>th</sup>, commemorating the manifestation of Christ to the gentiles in the persons of the Magi (The Wise Men). Otherwise known as Twelfth Night (from Christmas) it begins a "down" season, not celebrated with any fanfare. In my family the date was known as Little Christmas, a time for exchanges (size) and "little" gifts to mark the Magi coming (a dictionary or socks).

Since it is a "down" season, we have decided to change it to an "up" one, singing carols particularly suited to the titled season. Here's the list:

3 January – "Coventry Carol"

10 January – "We Three Kings"

17 January – "Three Kings in Great Glory"

24 January – "Down to Earth (Personent Hodie)"

31 January – "O Morning Star"

Then comes Ash Wednesday and the well-celebrated seasons of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter.

This is an especially good time to join the choir. For our Palm Sunday Concert we will be singing Felix Mendelssohn's seldom heard oratorio: "Christus." Although marked as unfinished, it sets forth the Christ story in beautiful music. And we'll have an orchestra again.

***Soli Deo Gloria***



# SESSION 2016

The Session approved the following elders to lead and serve on the ministry teams in the New Year. They, with volunteers from the congregation, will be planning and leading the church's ministries in 2016.

## Clerk of Session/Moderator ProTem

Bill Bottomley

## Christian Education

Greg Freudenthal, Chair  
Jeremy Moore  
Barbara Taylor  
Wayne Tracy

## Facilities

Mike Isham

## Outreach

Sharon Fortin, Chair  
Sandy Cranfill

## Playschool

Sheryl Wise

## Financial Volunteer

David Garland

## Worship

Danny Cain, Chair  
Ron Palmisano  
Ray Weindell  
Beverly Ross  
Jeanette Spiess



1 Danny Cain  
6 Edye Trail  
9 David Garland  
9 Sharon Fortin  
10 Jeff Fernandez  
11 Ed Magri  
11 Walter Janoe  
14 Eva Mace  
15 Jeanette Spiess  
16 Dennis Cali II  
22 Robin Bone  
23 Claire Russo  
24 Sheryl Wise  
24 Valerie Corcoran  
26 Jon O'Regan  
27 Scott Crawford  
29 Madison Prince  
31 Joseph Hebert

## P.W. Meetings:

Coordinating Team meets on Tuesday, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> @  
10am in the Library

Lydia – Tuesday, Jan. 12 @ 7pm in the Library

Grace – Tuesday, Jan 19. @ 9:30am in the Library

# OUTREACH COMMITTEE NEWS!

## The Season for White Elephants

November and December seem to have abounded with White Elephants...and all were a resounding success!

**On November 21** the Outreach-Congregational Life Committee held the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual White Elephant Sale to raise funds in support of Program of Hope. The Program of Hope is a mission through First Presbyterian Church New Orleans to provide comfort to the homeless. Each Wednesday, homeless people gather at First Pres for a time of quiet worship and prayer along with lunch, a few toiletries, a few pieces of clothing, and a chance for and voucher for an overnight stay at the local shelter or bus tokens to get to a possible job opportunity.



John Calvin provides the lunches for a month every 5 months and we collect toiletries and clothing throughout the year. The overnight vouchers cost \$10 each and bus tokens \$2.50 each. Last year we held the first White Elephant Sale to raise funds to purchase these vouchers and tokens, raising approximately \$600! Money is raised in three ways: by renting a 10 x 10 space to vendors with items to sell; through Sue Crawford's Tupperware booth; and by the double booth the Presbyterian Women's Circles rent to sell upscale "White Elephant" items. This year we raised over \$1700!!

An added bonus was the addition of 2 booths from other Presbyterian Churches in the area. First Presbyterian NO and Faith Presbyterian (West Bank) both brought people and goods to sell in support of Program of Hope. How wonderful for our churches to work together for this meaningful cause.

**On December 4**, Larry and Sheryl Wise hosted the annual White Elephant Party. This is a joyous Christmas Party full of fun and fellowship. Everyone brings an appetizer and or dessert (which makes for some for some very good eating!), and a gift to exchange. We sneak our White Elephant gifts under the tree hoping no one sees, and then take a number to find our place in the selection of gifts. Hope for a high number! In turn each one chooses a gift, opens it, then has a chance to steal a better gift from the person who went before! The laughs are endless!!

The gifts are fun, but the food is serious...seriously wonderful! Everyone goes all out to bring their favorite treats for all to enjoy. Crab dip! Meatballs! Chewy bars! Glorious cookies! Don't eat dinner before to arrive! Plus, since we are Presbyterian, a moderate amount of wine and beer keep everyone in good cheer. Can you wait for next year at the Trapani's?

Tremendous thanks go out to Larry and Sheryl for their hospitality. Their lovely home proved a great place for our festivities.

# Playschool News

We are WILD about learning through PLAY at John Calvin Presbyterian Playschool. In January we are learning about winter and trying to stay warm!

## A COUPLE IMPORTANT PLAYSCHOOL DATES TO NOTE:

January 4: School Resumes

January 4-15: Little Caesar's Pizza and Dessert Fundraiser

January 14: Open House at 6:30 pm

January 19-20: Parent/Teacher Conferences

