

JOHN CALVIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER



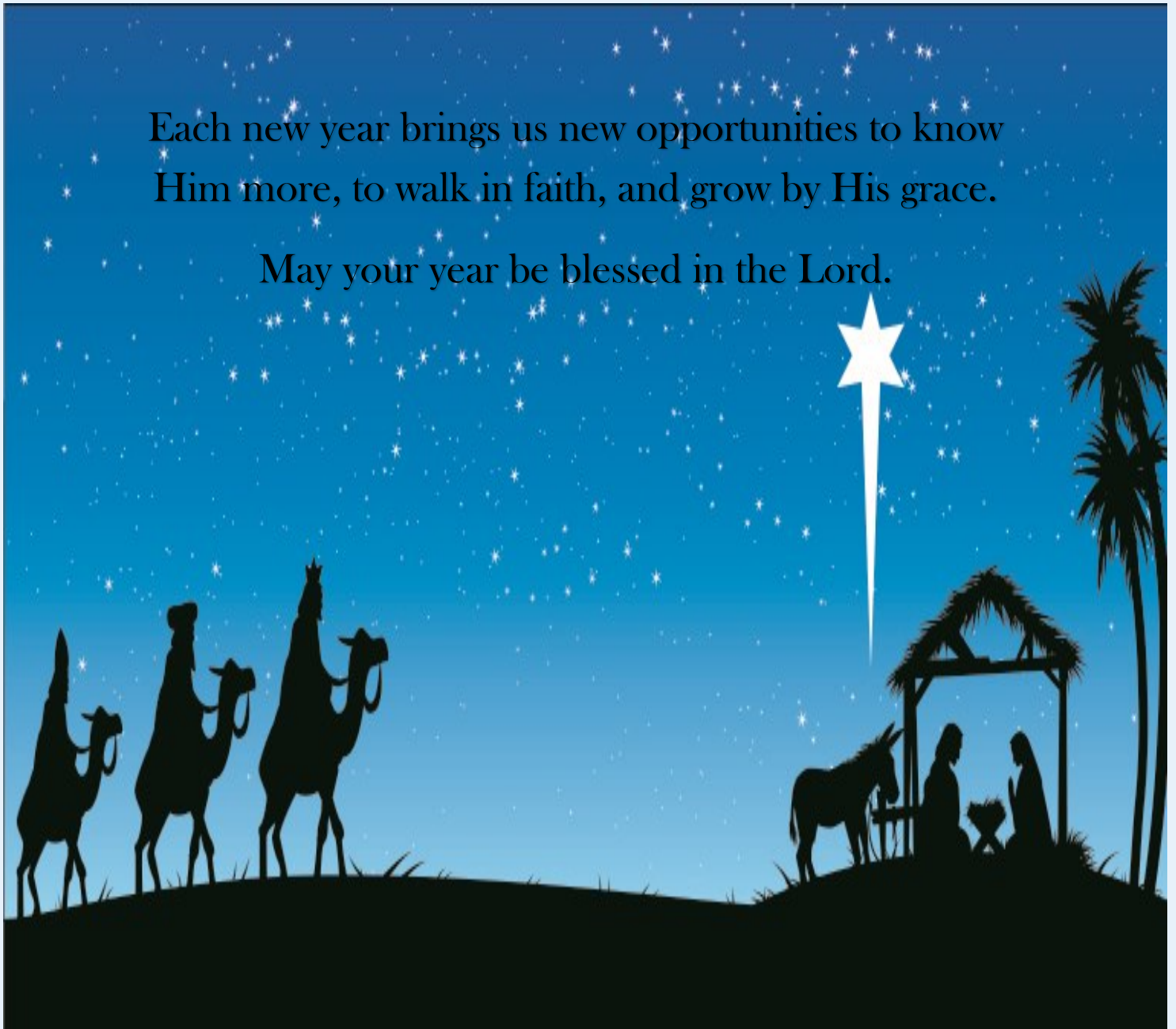
JOHN CALVIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

January 2021

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Each new year brings us new opportunities to know
Him more, to walk in faith, and grow by His grace.

May your year be blessed in the Lord.



January Newsletter

From Reverend Ochart

On January 6, 2021, armed insurgents invaded the Capital Building in Washington DC. As the Nation watched in shock, an angry mob forced their way into the 'People's House' while the Senate and House of Representatives were meeting to certify the results of the 2020 presidential election. Several of the invaders carried loaded weapons and zip ties with the apparent intent to hold members of Congress hostage. At this point, five people have lost their lives as a result of this appalling act and countless others were injured. Several of those involved in the mob have been arrested or lost their jobs as a result of taking part in the "protest". Several within and outside the government are calling for a second Impeachment of President Donald Trump for his calling and inciting the mob at a political rally beforehand, and a handful of staffers have stepped down over his actions during or since. The President has since conceded the election, pledged a peaceful transition of power, and condemned those who took part in the assault.

It is a shocking and humbling end (hopefully) to the craziness of the last several months. I think what is so challenging about it is that it reveals just how deeply divided we are as a country. These insurgents were not from another country, but American Citizens. The fact that we are divided as a country should not be news to any of us, but just how deeply those divisions go is. The hard truth is that we did not get here overnight, and the inauguration of a new President or the charging of a few criminals will not magically make everything better. Those who perpetrated this attack, and those who sympathize with it are our friends, our family, our neighbors, maybe even we ourselves.

Our history as the Church, including the Reformed Tradition, has at many times been a deeply divided one. The early church saw divisions between Jewish believers and Gentile believers, and divisions within those groups. The history of the Protestant Reformation was the playing out of deep theological divisions between the Medieval Roman Catholic Church and the emerging protestant bodies; and also between Lutherans, Reformed folks, Ana-Baptists, etc. Our own history of the Presbyterian movement in the United States has also seen divisions and splits. In 1837, decades before the American Civil War, Presbyterians separated over theological differences around the slavery question, creating the "Old School" and "New School" within the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. When the Civil War started, the southern Old School Presbyterians created a new and separate body, the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. After the war, the northern Presbyterians (Presbyterian Church in the United States of America) and southern Presbyterians (now called the Presbyterian Church in the United States) did not reunite, but operated as two separate bodies for one hundred and twenty years.

However, The Christian and Presbyterian story is one of redemption and reconciliation as well. In 1983, after a long process of conversation and overtures from each General Assembly, the northern and southern bodies came back together under the Plan of Union to form the Presbyterian Church (USA). They sighted that "We see this union as one step toward fulfillment of our Lord's prayer that his followers "may be perfectly one, so that the world may know..." (John 17:23)." While the creation of the PC(USA) was by no means perfect, and we certainly still deal with theological and political disagreements as Presbyterians, the message remains that reconciliation is possible between people and organizations.

Additionally, the most recent addition to our Book of Confession, the Confession of Belhar, makes the bold statement that "unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the Church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually build up to attain." A statement made bolder upon reflecting that it was written during and in response to Apartheid in South Africa.

Yes, we are deeply divided as a country. There are so many things that we differ on, and it feels like less and less that we have in common. Social Media companies and other Media organizations thrive off of our hate for one another and profit from our radicalization; Political, corporate, and cultural leaders manipulate us for their own power and purposes; and our own sense of belonging and desire for control feeds into our clinging to one side and refuting the other.

Continued from Reverend Ochart

But the unity of the Spirit of Christ is far more powerful than anything else that the powers of this world can throw at us. In the words of Paul, “I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39) This is not something that we can face on our own, but it is something that God can do in and through us. Pain and violence is not the answer to pain and violence; love is, faith is, hope is. We do need to hold one another, and especially our leaders, to account for their actions, but the purpose of discipline should always be growth and reconciliation.

I do not know where these events will lead. I pray that it will be to a peaceful end (but I know enough about history to know that is not the only option, at least in the short-term). I do know, however, that our call as the disciples of and the body of Christ has not changed. Our sacred duty to earnestly seek and pursue unity remains.

Oh God of grace and truth. Give us your peace that passes all understanding, and the courage to be your hands and feet. Be with our nation, her leaders, and her people in these trying times. May your Spirit work through us all to know and to do your will for our lives. Amen.

What have I:

Read: “The Psychology of Zelda” Edited by Anthony M Bean, PHD

Listened to: Christmas Music (my own mix including: Bing Crosby’s “White Christmas”, Amy Grant’s “A Christmas Album,” and “Handel’s Messiah: a Soulful Celebration”)

Watched: Vikings Season 6.1

Played: The Legend of Zelda: a Link to the Past (1991)

**No
In-person
Worship**

**Online
Service
only**

In light of the global pandemic of the novel Coronavirus, COVID-19, we're making every effort to consider the health of our congregation and to contribute to the national support and safety of our citizens. We are asking you to stream our worship services online. We hope to be able to meet for in person worship starting January 31.



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHZgLWT8D0tR3YKaNRit2OA>

Member Spotlight



January Member Spotlight

Bill Bottomley

Where Were You Born?

I was born and spent the first 32 years of my life in Birmingham, Alabama. I moved to Metairie in March of 1986.

When Did You Join John Calvin?

I joined in the spring of 1986. I visited four PCUSA congregations in the area. JCPC had, by far, the best choir of the four churches. I joined the choir before I became an official member of the congregation.

What Are You Involved in at the Church?

I have served in a variety of church ministries. My most important commitment is to the choir. Presenting God's word through music, and leading the congregation in singing are vital to the life and ministry of our congregation, and something I enjoy.

What Is Your Favorite Memory at John Calvin?

My favorite memory is the people who are and have been here. We have shared and are sharing God's love with each other and with the community. We freely help where there is need. We have been a blessing to so many, both inside and outside the church. I am confident that we will continue to let our God-light shine for many years to come.

Playschool January Activities

1/5-15: Little Caesars Pizza & Cookie Dough Fundraiser- Order forms will be coming home as soon as FedEx delivers them (they are on a truck somewhere), but we will send home a flyer with the online link as well. This is a very popular fundraiser because the kids love making pizzas and the pizza actually tastes like Little Caesar's from the store. The cookies are really good too! Just keep in mind that the items come frozen so you need to clear out freezer space and use grandma's freezer to hold some too. This is a great babysitter activity and dinner as well. The last day we can receive orders is Monday morning (Jan 18) because our final order is due by 10 am. Here is the info if you want to be ahead of the game. Orders are set to be delivered the week of February 1 so you will have your pizza in time for a Saints Superbowl Party (we hope)!!

Place your orders online and pay by credit card.



- Go to PizzaKit.com
- Click on **Products, then Shop**
- Select **Ship My Order to the Group** (no shipping charge if shipped to the group)
- Enter **Fundraiser ID # 388527**
- **Pay for your order**

Week of January 11: Registration forms will be sent home for families that are interested in returning next year. ****TUITION PRICES FOR NEXT YEAR WILL BE THE SAME AS THIS YEAR BECAUSE WE KNOW SOME FAMILIES ARE EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL STRAIN AND IT IS JUST OUR WAY OF SAYING WE UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE YOU BEING A PART OF OUR PLAYSCHOOL FAMILY!****

1/15 Fri: Spirit shirt Day - Backwards Day

1/16 (Saturday) Open House – 9 am- 12 pm: I decided to cancel our typical Open House on Thursday evening because we have worked really hard to keep outsiders out of the classrooms and I didn't want people walking through rooms and then having teachers and kids in them the next day. This Saturday Open House will have all classroom doors open and you can walk through and see the rooms and examples of student work, but then we have 4 days to disinfect the rooms before they are used again. There will not be a formal presentation so people do not need to gather. Feel free to stop by if you're curious about other classrooms, but please do us a favor and spread the word about our Playschool and this Open House. You are our greatest form of advertisement!

1/18 Mon: HOLIDAY - MLK Jr. Day

1/19 Tues: No School for ALL classes - PT Conferences via Zoom or facetime (teachers will get more info out to you about this)

1/20 Wed: REGULAR SCHOOL DAY

1/21 Thurs: TK registration begins

1/25 Mon: Church member registration

1/27 Wed: Current students & siblings registration (PLEASE NOTE THIS DATE IF YOU ARE REGISTERING A CURRENT STUDENT TO RETURN FOR NEXT YEAR OR IF YOU ARE REGISTERING A SIBLING IN ANOTHER CLASS- this is your big advantage to get spots before former families and outside families)

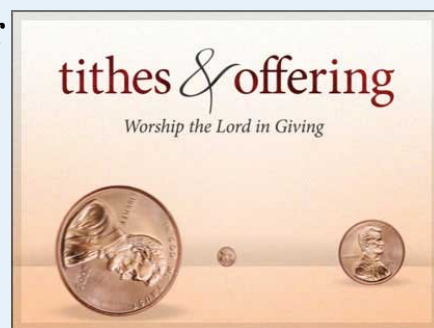


FLOWER CHART 2021:

The Flower sign-up chart for 2021 is hanging on the Narthex Bulletin Board. You can celebrate an important date, a special person, a celebration, in memory of someone, and always to the Glory of God. Of course, you can bring your flowers home or share them with those who are not able to join us on Sunday mornings. The cost of the arrangement is \$38. Make your check payable to JCPC. It's just a lovely way to share God's love!

2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES:

Offering envelopes for 2021 are available for pick up on the table in the Narthex.



John Calvin Presbyterian Church



“Freed by the Fire, Renewed by the Flood, and Empowered by the Spirit”