



Connections

CALVIN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2016

Forming Community, Transforming Lives, Reforming Our World

My Milestone of Communion

Karen Kirkman, Director of Family Ministries

The first time I participated in communion – well, I don't actually remember the first time I participated in communion.

I remember the first time I *couldn't* participate in communion--in my grandmother's small Baptist church in Cairo, Georgia. Our family was excited to attend church with Grandmother as part of our summer visit. We donned our Easter best and joined in worship with prayer, song, and scripture (and a big bathtub up front). When communion plates were passed, my mother gave me "the eye" and shook her head – my heart and spirit were broken. I wasn't old enough, was all I was told. I was in first grade.

Years later as a "born again" Christian I was passed the communion plate and I partook – at 18 I was surely old enough, and had accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Looking at that tiny piece of bread, and cup of juice, then the large cross on the stage, I knew this was something big, really big. Something I didn't understand, but wanted to. I prayed. I don't know if this was the first time I took communion, but it's the first time I remember.

Years passed and I began regularly attending Catholic mass with my new husband. Eucharist was offered to all who were of the Catholic faith. I sat quietly in the pews while everyone around me stood and went forward to partake in this

sacrament. I felt isolated, sad, and confused.

The first time I attended Calvin was on communion Sunday. It was an extremely powerful and emotional experience, to say the least. To be welcomed back to the Lord's table after being away for so long was a profound turning point for me in my faith.

As our children began asking questions about communion, I knew I wanted their first experience to be intentional, marked, celebrated and remembered. As the Children's Director, I wanted this for all the children and families at Calvin, and that is how our communion milestone started. We began offering classes for families and talking about communion past, present, and future, and then celebrating this sacrament as a community.

Communion is one of nine milestones we've chosen to integrate into our rhythm at Calvin. We desire our children, youth, families, and congregation to look at them with intentionality—marking, celebrating, and remembering.

We believe God has something profound and powerful to offer our congregation through these rites of passage. I'd love to hear stories of your own milestones and how God used these special times to draw you near to him and his church. More on Milestones,

Note to our Readers

You will notice that the *Connections* has a new look—a colorful new look—with a new format for its new focus!

Although the frequency has changed to every other month, it is still a print publication that will be available on the website as well.

We want to feature more personal stories of God at work in our lives, our community and in our world. Even with our busyness and shortened attention spans, we feel there is still a place for the "long form". Just not too long.

We want to help you share your stories! Contact a staff member for assistance in preparing something for *Connections*. Photo submissions of people serving or reaching out are invited as well. Send us your selected best, by email, with descriptive file names. Photo credit given.

Calendar and event information will be most complete on the website, www.calvinpc.org, with announcements continuing in the weekly bulletin, as space and staff time allow.

Lenten Calendar

Ash Wednesday, Feb 10, 7 pm service
Passion Sunday, March 20, 3 services
Maundy Thursday, March 24
Good Friday, March 25
Neighborhood Easter Egg Hunt,
Saturday, March 26
Easter Sunday, March 27,
2 services, 9:15 and 11:00 am

Check the website, www.calvinpc.org and weekly bulletin for further details.

Session Addresses Sunday Morning Schedule

Greg Terman, Elder for Nurture

As many of you may remember, late last summer the Session distributed a questionnaire asking for your thoughts on the worship services at Calvin - including impressions of the single “Life Together” Services at 10 AM each week last summer. Those questionnaires were NOT forgotten, but instead were placed in a large binder for the Session to peruse and ultimately summarized in a document by Rick Jackson, Dan Coppin and Tony Reynolds. We discussed the responses (most of which were extremely positive about the summer’s experiences) in detail at a fall Session meeting and formed a Task Force to make recommendations for our Sunday AM schedule. This “Calvin Worship Task Force”, Tony Reynolds, Art Nelson, Karen Kirkman, Valerie Grissom, Jerry Erickson, Chris Jackson and pastor Neil, took the job (and the name of their Task Force) very seriously and took a step back to examine the purpose of worship before simply setting a schedule.

Many of the findings of the Task Force would be familiar to you if you heard Neil’s recent sermon on the Worship Milestone. Worship should be a chance for participating rather than focusing on what we get out of it (or, perhaps worse, watching others perform). We should leave asking how we, individually, worshipped rather than looking for someone to complain to about failings of the staff, fellow worshippers or technology.

The Task Force sought to suggest a Sunday morning schedule that would:

- Promote God’s desire for unity in our community of faith
- Allow for and promote creativity while maintaining rhythm (engendering reassurance rather than confusion)
- Enable Neil to truly be the pastor he desires to be: a shepherd of the flock
- To equip the congregation to engage the world rather than retreat from it
- Allow opportunities for us, as a congregation, to follow Christ’s command to minister to each other in love

In its report, the Task Force recommended moving to one worship service on Sunday morning to meet these goals. The Session then prayed about these issues at length at three separate meetings in November and December – asking God to speak to us about His will for this – His - church. With each passing meeting more and more Session members - including myself – became dissuaded from our previous positions and convinced that, for the present, the current three worship service format is currently serving well to reach the goals defined by the Task Force. Or as Neil would say, the three services,

each in their own way, help various members and friends of Calvin worship like children – the way God intends -- “giving fully” and “receiving freely”.

So, what does the future hold? Well, we will continue to have occasional all-church services as before – complete with Life Together fellowship opportunities to remind us of our unity. We hope to invigorate the small group ministry at Calvin for further fellowship and adult discipleship opportunities. And who knows, there may come a season when the three-service Sunday morning schedule will transition to something else.

But in the meantime, we would appreciate your prayers for your Session that learned again that, unlike a Board of Directors, we are never really in control of anything—but we serve a God who is.

Meet Calvin!

Wednesday, February 3, 6:15 pm, Fellowship Hall

New to Calvin Church? Interested in learning more about our congregation? Want to find ways to connect with others?

Join Pastor Neil Trainer and other church leaders for an informal “get to know you” time. We’ll begin with dinner at a reserved table at our weekly Life Together Dinner with a question-and-answer time to follow.

“Get Connected” - A Morning to Explore Membership

Saturday, March 5, 9 am to Noon, Fireside Room

Interested in Membership?

Pastor and writer Henry Blackaby has said, “God doesn’t add members to the body accidentally.” In other words, when God builds a local church as the body of Christ, God brings people to match the work it is called to do.

If you’ve been regularly participating in Calvin’s worship and ministry, God has a purpose and a reason for you to be with us. If you haven’t yet taken the step of becoming an active member of our congregation, consider doing so by attending our **“Get Connected” New Members Class**, Saturday, March 5, 9:00 am to noon.

We will address questions like *What does the church believe? Why join the church? How can I make a difference at Calvin? How will I benefit from membership, and what will be expected of me?*

To help us plan spaces and prepare materials, please let us know you are coming. You can call the church office or email info@calvinpc.org.

Holy Days - The Story of St. Patrick

Matt Carpenter, Minister of Congregational Care

Each year my wife Lea and I are building a somewhat unorthodox tradition in our home. We have gradually begun celebrating the life of Saint Patrick of Ireland. I'm not sure what celebrating St. Patrick's day means to you, but as an American, I am familiar with people wearing some kind of tacky green shamrock in an effort to not have their neighbor inflict injury to their body. We drink copious amounts of beer until we fall down drunk in the streets, and pour dye into our rivers in an attempt to pay a strange sort of homage to the emerald isle. What this has to do with the actual Patrick who lived in Britain and Ireland in fifth century AD is absolutely nothing. It simply is a reflection of our own self indulgence.

Saint Patrick's story is about tragedy, courage, and ultimately the triumph of the gospel across cultural lines. Patrick was an unlikely missionary to a people who he had caused him great personal pain. Patrick was certainly not the poster boy for the church, but his methods of evangelizing the Irish developed a whole new stream of theology and worship as he contextualized what he knew of the gospel into the land where he was called. The resulting Christian community in Ireland was so powerful that Celtic theology and spiritual practice continues to influence many in the West today. This is to say nothing of the influence of the monasteries in Ireland during the time of the time of the barbarian destructive raids. More can be read about Celtic Christian legacy in Cahill's *How the Irish Saved Civilization*. I won't give the whole story away, but would recommend *St. Patrick of Ireland* by Philip Freeman as a short biography based on the historical documents if you are interested.

Telling the story of a holy day

The root of our word holiday is the compound of the words holy and day, and carries the idea of those days which are sacred and set apart. We are in desperate need of holy days in our culture. There is an idea prevalent that every day should be holy, but if there is no particular way that we are setting each day apart then we are simply making every day common. To make every day holy we need to discover that which makes each day peculiar, unique, and sacred in its own **rite**. We have chosen to make the celebration of St. Patrick a holy day because we feel his story compels telling and retelling.

Stories are what give our life its meaning. An experience of suffering is transformed into an experience that shapes when we understand that God is redeeming all aspects of who we are. It



bears repeating that in the story of redemption and reconciliation, God wastes nothing. Patrick's story reminds us that

regardless of our middle class privilege background or our background as poor and uneducated, when Jesus saves, he makes all things new and "... there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female" Gal. 3:28. As Christians, our holy days should be marked with the best of these kinds of stories.

Our St. Patrick celebration involves amazing food, good beer (Patrick himself is rumored to have founded a brewery in Ireland), friends old and new, and a retelling of the story. Each year we invite different members of our community to tell the story of Patrick in a new way. Last year my good friend dressed up in character as the ghost of St. Patrick and both entertained and educated us with the story of his life. (He even darkened the room and had mood music!)

Perhaps, if you are anything like me, you may have spent time listening to some of the best stories told poorly. We are mistaken to think that the content of the story should be enough to compel. How we tell the story, and more importantly how we live the story, matters much more. My hope for us is that we begin to redeem holy days within our culture—one that may have little understanding of the holy.

Here is where we start. Find a story that moves your heart, breaks your heart, or sets your heart ablaze. Think of exactly the best way you would want to spend an evening with the people who matter most, and make sure good food is in the mix. When our hearts are full of friendships and our stomachs full of the best of what the good Lord provides, overflow us with a story we will never want to forget. We shall be grateful, inspired, and if only for a moment, we will remember that we serve and follow our Lord who makes all things new.



Embracing the Milestones of Faith

Karen Kirkman, Director of Family Ministries

Passing on the Christian faith from generation to generation is at the heart of the life and work of the church. Creating rhythms through rites of passage, milestones are a tangible expression of a child's spiritual maturity and an incredible way for us as a church family to celebrate, commission, and make commitments with one another. Milestones can bring clarity and intentionality to the process of discipleship by resourcing in phases along the way, and celebrating each one.

Instead of having various ministries (children, youth, adults, worship, music, small groups, facilities, outreach, etc.) functioning separately, Calvin's Family Ministry envisions working in collaboration. Faith development requires the entire church; therefore, we are discovering how each ministry can partner with the families at Calvin and in our community. As Dr. Chap Clark states, we want to turn the 5 to 1 ratio (5 kids to one adult) on its head. We're creating ways to equip parents to spiritually parent their children and have designated times and ways to invite others to "love on" each child in our community. What do you imagine it looks like to be equipped and involved in the faith development of families? Each milestone offers a time to gather, share, and learn about God, faith, and each other.

Our desire is to see children, students, families, and our congregation trust Christ for salvation, walk in obedience, and grow in love of the gospel. Ministries and programs are not the goal. Helping each other to know, accept, love and trust God is the goal. Ministries are simply the platform for communicating and contextualizing God's message, the gospel, to different types of people including children and families by connecting families to each other and to the congregation and recognizing and learning about God's presence throughout the different stages of life.

Most families aren't looking for more programming. Most families are looking for intergenerational community where children belong and have opportunity to serve and can wrestle with others who are seeking the same thing. We want to help parents feel connected and noticed and to see the church as a safe place where their children find the same.

Milestones are a form of Christian education that subtly and gently involves parents and other caring adults with the ongoing Christian education of children and students, while simultaneously engaging them in their own adult faith formation. Parents and caregivers are motivated by the delight they experience in seeing their children receive recognition, the blessings they receive in the form of prayers and love offered from the congregation, receiving gifts (a visible and physical reminder of the

milestone and a resource for faith nurture in their own homes), and connections made with other families and wise elders who form a community of support. (Linda Staats – Lifelong Faith).

The extraordinary grace of God is hidden in the ordinary happenings of each day. It's in the stories of families and friends that we receive our meaning, identity and purpose. We invite you to join us in this journey of faith through these Milestones.



Baptism
Welcome to Worship
The Lord's Prayer
First Communion
Bible
Identity in Imago Dei
Membership Covenant
Missional Engagement
Commissioning

"In the future, when your children ask you,
'What do these stones mean?' Tell them... "
Joshua 4:6-7

Happier Holidays at Vision House through your many gifts

Calvin Church was generous in December 2015 in its support for Vision House, a transitional housing project for previously homeless families in Shoreline. We contributed \$1045 in gift cards and approximately \$450 in gifts purchased from the wish list. This meant that each of the twelve families received more than \$100 in gifts which they selected and, in some cases, purchased. Those attending the December 6 Christmas Concert contributed an additional \$1025 which was sent to Vision House to support ongoing and developing programs.

The Vision House Action Team continues to seek ways for Calvin to support this local Outreach ministry.



We would be happy to talk with individuals or small groups about opportunities to become involved on either an ongoing basis such as weekly homework help, or a one-time project such as a group meal and activity for all the families. Members of the Action Team are Dorothy Lindstrom, Chris Narkevitz, Darlene Miller, and Donna Miller-Parker. Thanks to all for generously sharing the gifts which God has provided us!

February Outreach Focus

Bridge Disability Ministries

Dan Coppin, Board Chair, Bridge Disability Ministries

Improve **Mobility** 
Promote **Inclusion** 
Enrich **Community** 

During the month of February, Calvin's mission focus will be on Bridge Disability Ministries. Bridge and Calvin have partnered in serving those living with disabilities for nearly 20 years. Founded by Henk Wapstra, a Presbyterian minister, in 1987, Bridge has had the same core mission since its founding:

Because Bridge Disability Ministries honors the God-given dignity and giftedness of people with disabilities, we build relationships to alleviate isolation and enrich our churches and community.

Bridge fulfills this mission through three ministries: First, we are a **bridge to physical access** in the world. We accept donations of new and used durable medical equipment (wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes, etc.), refurbish it, and then give it away to those in need. Our **Medical Equipment Ministry** gave away nearly \$3 million in durable medical equipment to over 2,000 individuals in 2015 alone. We see people from all walks of life come through our doors – children and adults recovering from physical illness, injury, or who have disabilities, the elderly, our military men and women. The need is great and we remain committed to offering durable medical equipment to those who need it regardless of ability to pay.

Second, we are a **bridge to protection** for those who need a legal guardian to represent them in areas of finance, health care, and shelter. Our **Guardianship Ministry** now serves as legal guardian for about 40 individuals with developmental disabilities. Many of the people we serve have little family support and few financial resources.

Third, we are a **bridge to inclusion and belonging** in area churches and faith communities. Our **Spiritual Connections Ministry** connects hundreds of persons with disabilities to area churches. Calvin has been a welcoming congregation for those with disabilities for years. Each year in September, Calvin participates in this ministry by hosting a Sunday Evening Celebration, a time of fellowship, food and fun that connects our congregants with people Bridge serves. (See the adjoining article by Denise Aanenson, our Spiritual Connections Coordinator.) Bridge hosts these events every month at different churches throughout the Puget Sound area.

Bridge Disability Ministries thanks Calvin for its support over so many years and looks forward to many more years of partnering with Calvin in serving and embracing people living with disabilities.

How Can You Participate in Bridge's Ministries?

- ⇒ Do you need durable medical equipment? If so, we'd be happy to provide it.
- ⇒ Do you have unused durable medical equipment? If so, donate it to Bridge and we'll see that someone in need gets it.
- ⇒ Become a Bridge volunteer. A number of people from Calvin have volunteered at Bridge in a variety of capacities. Join us!
- ⇒ In September, participate in our Sunday Evening Celebration event.
- ⇒ Donate to Bridge by going to www.bridgemin.org.

For additional information, contact Dan Coppin at 206-542-6247 or go to www.bridgemin.org.

Angel by My Side

Denise Aanenson, Spiritual Connections Coordinator
Bridge Disability Ministries

At last September's Sunday Evening Celebration hosted by Calvin Presbyterian Church, I was touched as I witnessed the convergence of compassion, love, and hospitality throughout the evening. There was one moment in particular that was especially impactful and represented well the vision behind Bridge's Celebrations, which is to work together with our church partners to build communities of belonging and inclusivity for people living with disabilities. The moment came as the vocalist Kathryn Claus sang the chorus to the song, Angel by My Side. Here are the words to the chorus:

*Could it be that I have found an angel,
I can see heaven in your eyes
In my soul I never will be lonely
For there will be an angel by my side.*

In the moment that I heard these words I looked up and saw one of the volunteers from Calvin sitting beside one of our friends who lives with disabilities. The image in my mind captured what it is to come alongside someone and be a heavenly presence as Jesus commanded, by loving others as we are loved, loving our neighbors, loving those who are on the margins of society. Jesus' commandment to love is at the core of our Spiritual Connections ministry and our partner churches. That is why we continue our work with, and for, people living with disabilities. May God bless you with "angels" by your side, people who live out what it is to love as Jesus commanded.

Led by our families, we Journeyed to Bethlehem to worship the newborn King

Sunday, December 20, 2015

Billed as a “rehearsal-less” inter-generational Christmas service, most worshipers did not know what to expect.

They found themselves right in the middle of the crowd of people and animals journeying to Bethlehem. As the story was narrated, angels appeared to the shepherds and Wise Persons following the star came to worship the Christ Child.

This Calvin Family Christmas was so delightful and meaningful that requests were heard for it to be repeated next year.



UNITE - 15 from Calvin, students and adults, attend largest youth retreat at Tall Timber Ranch



All photos by Christi Nixon



THANK YOU...

I sincerely appreciate the prayers, cards and concern expressed to me by the staff and friends at Calvin during my recent illness. They truly meant a lot to me and will always be remembered.

Sincerely, **Art Repp**

Thank You from Photo Album Team

Thank You to the nearly 170 families who were photographed for the new Calvin photo album!

We are so grateful for your cooperation and enthusiasm. Many of you commented on how important the new photo album will be in connecting those our congregation to each other. We'll keep you informed on when the new directory will be available. If you didn't have your pictures mailed directly to you, they will be available at the Calvin office.

Photo Album Team: Geri Bodine, Dan Coppin, Cindy Darling, Lela and Dean Jamieson, Geri Johns, Jean Johnson, Bernice Kent, Brooke Sahlstrom, Ruth Van Dyke.

Forming Community, Transforming Lives, Reforming Our World

February/March 2016

CONNECTIONS

THE CONNECTIONS TEAM

Jim & Carol Archer John & Sue Kropf
Elinore Bisnett Barbara Rood
Geoff Dickson

CONNECTIONS FUTURE DATES

Issue	Submit Info By
APRIL/MAY	Wed, Mar 16
JUNE/JULY	Wed, May 18

Email all material to:

barbara@calvinpc.org.

Calvin Connections Editor reserves the right to edit materials to fit the space available.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

8:00 am	One Message,
9:15 am	Three Styles
11:00 am	

See website for occasional changes in service times, www.calvinpc.org.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

To subscribe or unsubscribe to Calvin Connections, contact the church office at info@calvinpc.org or 206-542-6181.

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neil@calvinpc.org

STAFF:

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care@calvinpc.org

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Karen Kirkman, Family Ministries
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Calvin's Biggest Outreach of the Year

Neighborhood Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, March 26, 10:00—11:30 am

Hillwood Park, across the street from Calvin Church

Children of all ages! Bring your parents! Invite your friends!

Come have fun! Hear the True Meaning of Easter!

Activities include games, crafts, snacks, Easter Egg Hunt & Story!

Many helping hands make the Egg Hunt possible, both in advance and on the day itself. Monetary donations toward expenses are appreciated. Watch for more info and opportunities to sign up at the Welcome Center to help.

Before Egg Hunt

- Stuff eggs
- Pray for the Good News to fall on eager ears and softened hearts
- Invite friends and canvas our neighborhood with invitations
- Donate financially to help offset the cost of event

Day of Egg Hunt

- Set up/Clean up
- Hide eggs
- Lead games (games and materials provided)
- Help with crafts (provided)
- Mingle with Crowd!
- Prepare and/or host snack table

Contact Karen Kirkman at 206-542-6181 or families@calvinpc.org for more information or visit the Welcome Center in March.

February/March 2016

Featured Events

More details at www.calvinpc.org

ASH WEDNESDAY SELAH SERVICE WITH JEFF JOHNSON

Wednesday, February 10, 7:00 pm

An evening for the whole family.
In partnership with Renewal Ministries NW and other congregations in our presbytery.

Children will have their own special time of worship and be included in the imposition of ashes at the end of the service.
Nursery provided for ages 0-3 with RSVP to renewalministries@live.com.

Preceded by Soup Supper at 6:15 pm.

SUPPORT TEAM FORMING FOR LIFE TOGETHER MEALS & EVENTS

Would you like to be part of a team that helps to strengthen our Life Together at Calvin?

Our staff team has recognized the need to have support for church-wide events—a volunteer team to organize volunteers, plan logistics and menus, shop, and more. If this is something that interests you, please contact one of our Nurture Elders – Greg Terman or Linda Erickson.

OUTREACH EMPHASIS SCHEDULE

February	Bridge Disability Ministries
March	Jeremy & Maria Chase, Khmer in Cambodia
April	Tall Timber Ranch
May	Backpack Kids

FAMILY BLESSINGS

Born October 28, 2015, to Laura and Jon Gehrke, a son,
Charles Lee Gehrke.
Danny and Lynn Reding are the proud and happy grandparents.

Current address
Danny and Lynn Reding
2363 Stonecrest Drive
Fayetteville AR 72701

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Irv Meyers 6520 196th St SW #343 Lynnwood WA 98036	Milad Nakhla & Suzan Anwar 12731 15th Ave W Everett WA 98024
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OFFICE VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Half day shifts (or shorter), Tuesday through Friday. Light duty!
Computer experience helpful but not necessary.
Contact our Administrator Barbara Rood, barbara@calvinpc.org.

December 2015 Financial Report

Calvin Ministries and Operations
Fiscal Year July 1, 2015- June 30, 2016

2015-2016 Actual compared to Budget

	Dec	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance	%
Income (Unrestricted)					
Contributions	93,860	321,373	323,000	(1,627)	-0.5%
Investments	5	265	200	65	
Bequest Income	1,264	1,264	-	1,264	
Total Income {a}	95,129	322,902	323,200	(298)	-0.1%
Ministry Prg & Operating Expense {b}	(48,974)	(297,524)	(303,724)	6,200	2.0%
Surplus / (Deficit) {c}	46,155	25,378	19,476	5,902	

For more information about Calvin's finances, please contact John Claus, Finance Coordinator, or Dan Coppin, Ministry Team Leader for Finance.

Note to contributors:

Counters do not have access to your pledge information. If you split your contribution, please always indicate the split amounts and categories on both the check and the envelope if you use one.

2015 Year-End Summary God's People are Faithful!

The simple story told by the chart at left is that December giving totaled \$93,806, including one bequest and several larger gifts.

Even without the usual November stewardship emphasis, Calvin's congregation contributed generously in December and erased the previous year-to-date deficit. This puts us in good position to begin 2016.

Praise God, and Thank you!

For current month calendar, go to www.calvinpc.org/Events, Calendar.

