



Connections

DECEMBER 2015

CALVIN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Forming Community, Transforming Lives, Reforming Our World

A reflection on how we celebrate

The Good Gift

By Matt Carpenter

It is getting to be that time of year again.

Usually around this time of year I feel two conflicting feelings welling up inside of me. One is something like wonder and amazement. Christmas for me has always been a magical capstone to a season of waiting and anticipation. I come from a religious tradition that doesn't necessarily celebrate Advent, but somewhere in my heart there has always been an Advent journey that I embark on each year.

And yet, as the years pass, I also experience a feeling of loathing which seems to be connected to the crushing materialism which is assumed in our culture. I hate it and cannot escape it, for so many of my own desires are tied to material things.

I have tried to change things. I started by trying to change how gifts are purchased and exchanged in my family system, but this change really never seemed to find traction. Perhaps it is because I am trying to change an entire culture with the latest of my anti-materialist rants. I am coming now to believe that "anti" movements have very little lasting effects. Real change has little to do with what we are *against*, but what, and perhaps even more poignantly, who, we are *for*.

So, with this little essay, I would like to put out there a who I am *for* this Advent season. The answer you might expect would be Jesus, and certainly I believe that the encounter with the risen Christ is the most worthy of all pursuits. However, to say that I am *for Jesus* is easily interpreted in our culture as an affiliation

Rather than saying that I am *for Jesus* and therefore I am against somebody else, I am *for people* and a ruthless discovery of why God would give me this beautiful gift of self.

with a particular religious and political establishment. Making a "bold" statement for Jesus often has the implication and emphasis that there are many things and people I am *not for*. Rather than saying that I am *for Jesus* and therefore I am against somebody else, I am *for people* and a ruthless discovery of why God would give me this beautiful gift of self.

In Scripture there is a word that literally translates *good gift*; it is *eucharist*. We should not find it odd that when Jesus offered us the greatest gift, it was the gift of himself. At the eve of his crucifixion Jesus sat down at a meal, picked up bread and wine, and said "this is my body, broken for you ... as often as you eat this, do it in remembrance of me." What he was inviting us to remember was that if anything, the greatest gift ever offered to humanity was intimately personal. The author of creation and giver of all good things chose not some exquisite panorama or priceless treasure to offer his creation, he chose to give himself.

As I reflect at the beginning of this Advent season and I begin to think about the gifts that should be constructed, purchased, and collaborated on, I wonder how much of *myself* I am giving. In short,

SPECIAL TIMES FOR SPECIAL SERVICES

Sundays, December 20 & 27
One Service Only at 10:00 am

December Special Events
See color insert page

does my gift reflect myself, my humanity? Jesus' gift to us was so tangible, so visceral, and yet so much of the essence of who Jesus was and is. It was and will always remain *the good gift*. In it is contained a seed of goodness that grows in the hearts of those who have been buried and resurrected with Jesus.

The author of creation and giver of all good things chose not some exquisite panorama or priceless treasure to offer his creation, he chose to give himself.

This is the gift I wish to give this Advent season. I wish to give my time, my attention, my effort, and my energy for the blessing and the healing of this world. I want to give this because it was Jesus who first gave the good gift to me. This gift fundamentally changes the nature of who I am. It is an invitation that if I give anything to the blessing and healing of my world, it must be myself. And the world begins with my family, my friends, my neighbors, coworkers, and those who belong to my parish. In the giving of this gift there is fullness of joy.

May you be blessed this Advent as you give, may you lead with your heart, and may you find the fullness that comes from the giving and receiving of the good gift.

Embracing the Milestones of Faith

By Pastor Neil Trainer

Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts. Psalm 145:4

If you think back over your life and your journey with Jesus, what are some of the “milestone moments”? What are the events and experiences that deepened your faith and marked your progress toward spiritual maturity? Was it being baptized? How about a mentor or small group that challenged you to grow in Christ? Maybe it was a mission trip where you put your faith into action like never before?

Now, what if you could lay out a path for children and adolescents to follow in order for them to know and follow Christ for a lifetime? What would they need to learn and do and be a part of? What would their parents and families provide for them? And how would our community of faith support them each step of the way?

Introducing Milestones of Faith

As we pursue Calvin’s 2020 Vision, we’re eagerly partnering with families to raise generations for Christ. This is *not* just a program or a mission strategy. It is a theological conviction that this is exactly what the church is called to be. The whole church family is called to actively support each of our families nurturing and discipling children and adolescents as followers of Jesus.

Over the coming months, you will be introduced to a series of faith milestones we are creating that correspond to the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual development of children. Each will include a “rite of passage” that involves the child or student, his or her parent(s), *and* the church community. In other words, there’s a part for *everyone* to play.

- **Baptism** (Birth to 2 years old) –
Marking the covenant with child, parents, and the Church
- **Welcome to Worship** (Preschool to Grade 2) –
Celebrating joining corporate worship
- **The Lord’s Prayer** (Grades 1 to 3) –
Learning about prayer
- **First Communion** (Grades 2 to 4) –
Receiving the Lord’s Supper
- **Bible** (Grades 4 to 6) –
Encountering God through Scriptures
- **Identity in Imago Dei** (Grades 6 to 8) –
Finding core identity as child of God
- **Membership Covenant** (Grades 7 to 9) –
Belonging to church through mutual commitment
- **Missional Engagement** (Grades 9 to 12) –
Serving the world in Christ’s name
- **Commissioning** (Grade 12) –
Exploring vocation and calling in life

For some, it might be easy to say, “This isn’t for me. My kids are grown.” But regardless of our life stage, these are elements of Christian faith we never grow beyond and must always stay rooted in. So, beginning in January, we will explore together these foundational elements of our faith through our worship services and small groups.

What’s more, disciple-making is truly the call of God for all of us, especially with the children in our midst. I appreciate the conviction of the psalmist: “Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come” (Psalm 71:18). May we all share that passion!

Get to Know Calvin

Wednesday, December 2, at 6:30 pm

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

If you are among the many who have begun participating in Calvin’s worship and ministries in recent months, please 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 and have a question-and-answer time following dinner. Children and youth can stay for Wednesday ministries.

Christmas Eve Worship Services

Two Candlelight Services Thursday, December 24

7:00 pm

A Classical Service with music by the Sanctuary Choir and Handbell Choir as well as a special message for children. *Childcare for children age 2 and under.*

10:30pm

A Contemplative Service to welcome the Christ Child with contemporary and traditional carols and the sacrament of communion. *No childcare provided.*

Calvin and ESC Partners Have Impact in Cambodia

Submitted by Judy Runions

As you receive this newsletter, the Calvin vision team will have recently returned from two weeks in Cambodia with our Cambodian partner, DOVE. DOVE sponsors the Onyx Program that prepares emerging Christian leaders for Cambodia. The program is having a profound, rich impact across Cambodia. While in Cambodia, we will have had the privilege of attending the 2015 graduation retreat of Onyx students. We will share that experience with you soon.

In the meantime, I want to share the article below by Lynn Ogata, a Calvin-supported missionary working in Cambodia with DOVE/Onyx, a program Calvin also supports. Lynn illustrates, through Chanty's story, why we value ministries like Onyx as a powerful means of bringing healing and witness of God's grace to Cambodia.

For more information about the work of the ESC Partnership in Cambodia, see:

<http://www.westminster.org/global-impact/projects/cambodia/> and <http://www.missiondove.org/index.php>

Mathematics of Mentoring

A blogpost by Lynn Ogata, September 2015

As a mentor for the staff of the Cambodian organization DOVE (Develop Our Village Economy), I continue to see how mentoring impacts the lives of leaders and builds God's Kingdom. Mentoring involves investing significant time in building a relationship; some may wonder how investing in one person could impact a whole community. However, God's math is different than ours!

Cambodia lost an entire generation of leaders when the Khmer Rouge regime executed anyone with an education. Today, the population's median age is 24. Through the Onyx program, DOVE is developing young leaders who are transforming their churches and communities. Leaders, ages 17-35 and from different local churches, gather each Saturday morning for one year to learn through self-discovery and from each other's experiences and then apply what they've learned during fieldwork. Topics include leadership, spiritual formation, leader's timeline, peace and justice issues, men's/women's Issues, the five love languages, forgiveness, world view, and missional church. Each student also meets with a volunteer mentor once a month and with peer mentoring groups each week. The program is offered in four locations around Cambodia; Calvin Church helps support one of these locations.

In July, I traveled to Kampong Leaeng District in Kampong Chhnang Province with DOVE students and a Canadian impact team. We were met there by Chanty, a young Christian leader who graduated from the Onyx Program last year. She'd been a follower of Jesus for just four months when she started the program. God transformed her. Chanty says, "The angry heart that I used to have was changed; I love, serve, forgive others, and I have patience! The lessons kept me walking on track and changed me week by week. Because of this program, I have a lot of friends that care and pray for me. I learned from my friends'



life experiences. They have love and unity even though we are from different churches. The 'Forgiveness' and 'Five Love Languages' lessons really healed my past."

"In God's mathematics, the impact of a few mentoring relationships is multiplied to touch many people!"

Onyx also encouraged Chanty to be brave enough to start more home churches. Now she's responsible for four. Each Sunday she gets up early and travels to the four villages over rough dirt roads by motorbike, a 26-mile round trip, from which she doesn't get home until evening. She buys snacks for the children with her own money. Chanty is mentoring two other Christian leaders from Kampong Leaeng District who are participating in Onyx this year. Together, the three of them are responsible for at least 240 children and 30-40 youth in the churches. The youth are becoming mentors themselves through DOVE's Alongsiders program. Each youth is trained to come alongside a vulnerable child in their own community. In God's mathematics, the impact of a few mentoring relationships is multiplied to touch many people!

Emphasizing Calvin's Outreach Ministries Throughout the year

By Pastor Neil Trainer

Part of Calvin's 2020 Vision is **Reforming Our World**—strategically showing and sharing the Gospel, both around our community and around the world.

To help us all stay aware and engaged with our outreach partners, we have scheduled the individual ministries to be emphasized and highlighted over the coming months:

- **December = Vision House**
Providing housing, support services, and child care for homeless families with children
- **January = Project Mercy**
A Christian relief agency providing holistic community development in Ethiopia
- **February = Bridge Disability Ministries**
Helping people with disabilities live full and meaningful lives
- **March = Jeremy & Maria Chase**
Calvin members serving in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, through *Act Beyond* church planting movements
- **April = Tall Timber Ranch**
Christian camping ministry in the Glacier Peak Wilderness Area.
- **May = Backpack Kids**
Calvin's homegrown ministry to local school kids facing food insecurity at home on weekends

Want to get involved or just learn more about these and other ministries?

Contact the **Outreach Ministry Team** through elders **Alison Neubauer**, alison@freelancecontracts.net, and **Rick Jackson**, rjackson@spu.edu.

You can share Christmas Blessings with families at Vision House!

By Donna Miller-Parker



For many, or even most, families at Vision House, this will be the first Christmas in some time when they are no longer dealing with the challenge of homelessness. We want to celebrate with them and make this a special holiday!

This year we will work with a wish list that reflects specific items requested by children and families. There are three ways for you to participate:

- shopping online through Amazon and having the gift delivered to Vision House,
- shopping at a local store and bringing the gift to Calvin for delivery, or
- purchasing a gift card for parents to use in their own shopping and bringing to Calvin for delivery.

Please visit the desk in the Welcome Center on Sunday mornings for specific instructions. Gifts and gift certificates must be received by Sunday, December 13.

Calvin's Vision House Action Team will continue to seek ways to support this ministry. If you have questions, ideas, or would like to join us we'd love to hear from you!

Vision House Action Team: Dorothy Lindstrom, Darlene Miller, Donna Miller-Parker, Chris Narkevitz

S*P*A*R*K*S

**Senior Presbyterians, Active, Radiant,
Kicking Still**

**Wednesday, December 16
12:30 pm**

Lunch and program \$9

A Christmas Music Celebration

Vocalist Kathryn Burke and Matt Carpenter
Valerie Grissom, Accompanist

Invite your friends and reserve your spot
by contacting John or Karen Claus (206-200-7099).
Transportation also may be arranged in advance
by calling John or Karen.



CHRISTMAS JOY

Keeping the promise of the Advent season

During this Advent season, we reflect on the influence a promise can have on our lives. God promised each of us salvation, and kept that promise with the birth of Jesus. That promise sustains and uplifts us, during good times and challenging ones.

When we understand this deeper meaning of a promise, we also understand each of us has a special responsibility to make, and keep, faithful promises of our own. The Christmas Joy Offering is one way to do that. Each gift received equally supports two vital promises for our faith.

Supporting our past and present Leaders

Through the **Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions**, the Christmas Joy Offering assists church workers and their families during times of need, giving back to those who have spent their lives in the service of the church. The program provides grants for housing supplements, income assistance, and pastoral vocational leadership needs.

Paving the way for future leaders

The Christmas Joy Offering also supports the education and development of our future leaders at **Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges**. These schools are dedicated to nurturing opportunity and creating environments where diverse students can succeed from a foundation of Christian values. The Offering benefits **Menaul School** and **Presbyterian Pan American School**, two secondary schools that ready students for a path of higher learning, as well as **Stillman College**, where graduates are prepared for lives of leadership and service.

When you give to the Christmas Joy Offering, you help sustain these promises and uplift our brothers and sisters in Christ by reducing their burdens and opening new paths of opportunity.

Please give generously:

- Through your congregation (special envelopes in the pew racks)
- Text JOY to 20222 to give \$10
- presbyterianmission.org/give/christmasjoy

“We are a connectional church and sometimes those connections save lives. We need to make people more aware what the Christmas Joy Offering does for people, people like me.”

Sharon Liberty, Missouri

First Presbyterian Church | Retired church worker and recipient of an income supplement grant

A Greener Calvin

By Christi Nixon, Hospitality,
Facilities Director

Since coming to work for Calvin as the Hospitality/Facilities Director, I am finding ways to help Calvin to be a more environmentally-friendly church.

Our goal for Calvin is to be good stewards of both our earth and our financial resources AND to make the disposal system simpler and more consistent so it is easier for all users to understand.

Changes already implemented:

- Signs are posted near all disposal bins to help you figure out what is Garbage, Compost, and Recycle.
- There are stickers on all bins to help you see what each bin holds.
- Compost bins have changed from Yellow to Green.
- Container *bags* have changed too:
Garbage bags are Black.
Compost bags are Green, and
Recycle bags are Clear.

Changes coming soon:

- All plastic tableware will be changing to compostable. When the plastic tableware is brown you will know it is to be placed in Compost (Green).
- Paper coffee cups will be compostable.
- Plastic cup lids are recyclable.
- Paper bowls/cups/plates will all be compostable.

If you have any questions or ideas about how we can continue becoming a “greener” facility, please feel free to contact me: christi@calvinpc.org.

To learn more about the promises of the Christmas Joy Offering, please visit:

- Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions: www.pensions.org, click on Plans & Programs
- Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges: www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/resc/
From this page, you can also link to the individual institutions supported.

Backpack Kids Ministry Needs Your Help

By Polly Terman

We are well underway into another school year of loving and caring for hungry kids in our community! Due to growing needs we will be delivering 70 packs per week, spread across our three schools! This is up from 50 last year!



School staff have told us what a far reaching difference this food has made in kids' lives. Things like better attendance, brighter attitude, courage to advocate in other ways for themselves (hope for future) and a sense of self worth, as they are able to bring home a bag of food that might be the only household food for the weekend.

We will be packing food monthly on Mondays for the rest of this school year on January 4, February 1, March 7, April 4, May 9, and June 6, 2016. You are welcome to come join the packing team!

There are many additional ways YOU can join in this ministry! Each of the tasks below involve one hour or less of your time per month, but will help so much, as many hands make light work!

- **Be a shopper** for one of the food items needed every month. (You will be reimbursed.) Be an on-all shopper for rebate items at Costco that have a limit per customer. (Reimbursed)
- **On Packing days-**
9am - help move food from storage shed to church gym. (muscles and strong back)
10am and/or 4pm - arrange food on tables in assembly line formation. (counting skills)
2pm and/or 7:30pm - pack foodpacks in organized fashion. (follow directions)
- One day per week - **Deliver boxes** of foodpacks to one of three schools (muscles and strong back and large car)
- Other important things - **Prepare** 280 double plastic bags for packing each month (bags supplied)
- **Pray** that these children will feel God's love via our hearts and hands!
- **Pray** that God would be glorified in all we do.
- **Pray** that the community would see Jesus through us wherever they join in.
- **Pray** that God would provide for all the food needed this year!

If you have a small group or know of a community group that would like to join us for a packing, please let Polly Terman know. All are welcome.

For further information or to join us in any of the activities listed above, please contact Polly Terman at 425-776-1536 or pollyterman@gmail.com.

Thank you so much for all your support! Polly Terman

community college outreach

Community College Outreach Annual Benefit Dinner Supports Campus Ministry



October 24, 2015 - Pastor Milad Nakhla and Everett Community College student, Hannah, speak to dinner attendees about the ministry that spans four community college campuses. Over \$11,000 was raised in donations and pledges that night!

Donating and Decorating with Poinsettias for Advent



If you would like to purchase poinsettias to help beautify the sanctuary and foyer for the Advent Season, please fill out one of the forms at the welcome center.

In the church office, you'll find envelopes on the blue counter by the secure drop box. Put your completed form and payment in an envelope and drop it in the drop box by **Sunday, November 29.**

Flowers may be given in honor of someone or in memory of loved ones.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

If we have misprinted or just missed your birthday, please call the church office so a correction can be made.

1	17
Eric Hartsfield	Jasmine Smith
2	18
3	19
Arden Snyder	Margaret Riese
4	20
Greta Juengel	John Claus
5	21
6	22
Kirsten Ostgard	Kristi Trainer
Nicholas Wright	23
7	24
Jim Hoeksema	Jonas Chase
8	25
9	26
Lela Jamieson	Linda Elton
10	27
11	28
12	29
Andrew Bowerman	Michael Erickson
Mary Rohrback	Connie Ingersoll
13	30
14	31
Charlotte Haines	Josh Logan
Mary Hayward	Barb Farden
Promise Rose	Anita Venema
Juengel	29
Kelley Neubauer	Lucille Korpi
16	30
Connie Graebner	Rosanne Davis
Steve Mitchell	Michael Johnson
	Eric Ofori

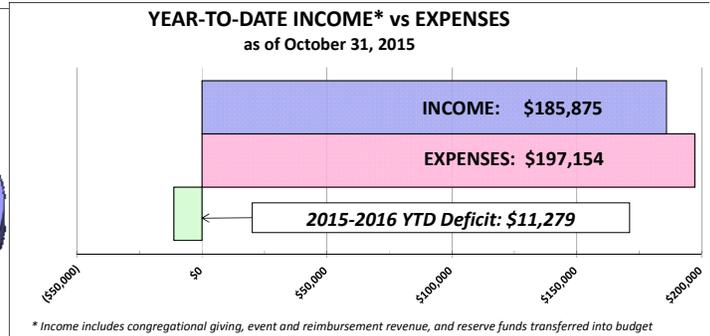
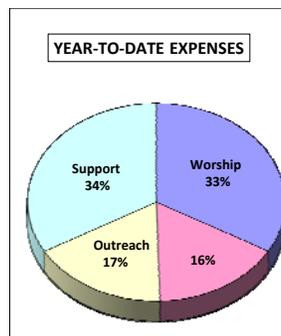
December 2015 Financial Report

Calvin Ministries and Operations

Fiscal Year July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015

2015-2016 Actual compared to Budget

	Sep-Oct	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance	%
Income (Unrestricted)					
Contributions	87,558	185,831	188,000	(2,169)	-1.2%
Investments	10	44	80	(36)	
Bequest Income		-	-	-	
Total Income {a}	87,568	185,875	188,080	(2,205)	-1.2%
Ministry Prg & Operating Expense {b}	(109,016)	(197,154)	(197,395)	241	0.1%
Surplus / (Deficit) {c}	(21,448)	(11,279)	(9,315)	(1,964)	



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

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



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

If we have misprinted or just missed your birthday, please call the church office so a correction can be made.

1	6
Alo Isahak	Allen Clark
Evan Liu	7
JJ Portes	Ronald Boyce
2	8
3	Hilda Packard
4	9
David Bartholomew	Christine Stime
Kai Marsland	Anita Tanner
5	
Peggy Baldwin	

10	18
James Archer	Kathie Sutherland
Rob Freeborn	19
Lynn Reding	Joanne Green
Neysa Stanton	Arlene Tilson
11	21
Cheryl Minnig	22
12	23
Andrew Kline	Sophie Kirkman
13	Jim Thomas
14	24
15	25
16	Linda Erickson
Alex Kerr	26
17	Dean Jamieson
Ruth Rankin	Jeanie Marinella
Dick Scheumann	

27	30
Patsy Thiemens	31
28	John Marker
Kara Mitchell	
29	
Jan Gregersen	
Geri Johns	
Mary Ellen Paulson	
Ron Wirtz	

Schedule Clarity

ALL meetings and events at Calvin need to be booked in advance through the church office. Email info@calvinpc.org with new requests changes. Thank you!

Fun at Trunk or Treat 2015

Identities revealed and concealed



CONDOLENCES

To **Gloria Smith** on the loss of her husband **Jack Smith** on September 30, 2015. The Smiths have been active at Calvin for 20 years. A memorial service was held at Calvin on October 9, 2015.

To **Cindy Darling** on the loss of her husband **Olin Darling** on October 14, 2015. Olin was an enthusiastic gardener at Calvin and volunteered at Bridge Disability Ministries in Bellevue. A memorial service was held at Calvin on October 23, 2015.

To the family of **Glenn Ranton** who passed away on October 26, 2015. Glenn was an elder and he and his wife Janet (deceased, 2013) were members at Calvin over 30 years. A memorial service is scheduled for Sunday, January 3, 2015.

To the family of **Elinor Brydges** who passed away on October 26, 2015. Elinor was a long-time former member of Calvin moved to Bend, OR, to live near her son and daughter-in-law **Bob and Lori Brydges**.

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Ryan Bumcrot & Brooke Sahlstrom
1166 N 90th St
Seattle WA 98103

Bertie Clowers
350 N 190th #B511
Seattle WA 98133

Cathy Holden
8600 18th Ave W C302
Everett WA 98204

Billy Wayne McManus
2515 Oakview Rd Apt 10
Fort Smith AR 72908-8670

Bruce and Patsy Thiemens
15426 W Big Sky Drive
Surprise AZ 85374

Frank and June Wallace
22832 N Dusty Trail Blvd
Sun City West AZ 85375-2044
(permanent new address)

December 2015



www.calvinpc.org

18826 Third Avenue NW
Shoreline WA 98177

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

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

CONNECTIONS DUE DATES

Issue	Due Date
JANUARY	Wed, ?
FEBRUARY	Wed, ?

Please email all material to:
barbara@calvinpc.org.
Calvin Connections Editor reserves the right to edit materials to fit the space available.



CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER TEAM

Elinore Bisnett	John & Sue Kropf
Margaret Didenhover	Barbara Rood
Geoff Dickson	

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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Milad Nakhla, Campus Minister
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Christi Nixon, Hospitality/Facilities
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Barbara Rood, Administrator
barbara@calvinpc.org

Christmas Eve Worship Services

Two Candlelight Services

Thursday, December 24

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