

JOHN CALVIN NEWS

PASTOR NOTES

We are, with this writing, at the eve of a new year. In a few short days the joys and blessings of Christmas day, with all of its festive atmosphere, food, presents, family, and the recalling of God's presence into our lives, will once again fade into memory. Children will still be playing with that new game or doll. All of the torn wrapping paper will be burned in the fireplace or trashed. The ornaments from the beautifully decorated Christmas tree will be lovingly wrapped from harm's way and stored for the annual ritual next year. And then comes the New Year.

According to research, New Year's Day was a way for the ancients "to keep track of the year's end and mark the beginning of a new year. Usually it marked the end of harvest and the beginning of a new season." The Romans were the first to observe January 1 as the beginning of the new year in 153 B.C.

This tradition was favored down through the years until the Julian calendar was established in 45 B.C. and officially the date was established. This celebration was favored by the masses. People really got into the swing of things and celebrated this day with bells, whistles, fireworks, and sirens, hugs and kisses, and shouts of Happy New Year. I think these traditions made it into the modern day world because they gave a sense of celebration that all past was going out of focus and they gave hope that the New Year would bring new life.

Happy New Year, Jesus! You are barely seven days old. Yet your birth brought about the loudest shouts and songs from heaven on high. And talk about fireworks – I wonder what it would have been like to see first-hand the brightness of that star in the east. When it came to settle over the manger it must have been a sight to behold for people searching for hope in a dark world. That night never faded from the memories of those people. Its image will not fade from the minds and hearts of the modern world. How could it? Light brightens a dark room

Now we are at the "New" beginning of life established with Christ's coming. Isn't it interesting that Christmas comes at the end of the year that we might celebrate "new" beginnings at the start of a new year?

People have always longed to see God. Those long ago lived in a dark world and longed for assurance that God really was present with them in some tangible form. It seems we are no different. We want the touch of God's hand on our shoulder and the warmth of His voice in our ear. And God gave them (and us) their (and our) deepest desire. But most missed it and most miss God's presence today. The Light did not live up to their expectations even though it was in front of them, face-to-face, and day-by-day. Maybe that is the problem – we long to see God/Christ from our perspective, from our world view, or our short-sightedness and not from God's vision.

I believe the work, love, caring and healing of God/Christ is stymied the world over because world perceptions limit (and even block) the flow of Light into our lives. I think and wonder in awe about how the world would be a different place if we allowed the free-flowing Light to turn around our hearts and our thinking. And I think how different the church would be if it were so. I get goose bumps thinking of a world healed and living in God's peace.

Maybe each of us should make only one resolution for this New Year in the form of a prayer for the New Year of 2006 – "Let there be peace in the world, O Lord. Let me truly see the world through your eyes and heart. Then let the peace begin with my actions. Amen."

Happy New Year to all of you!
Pastor Paul



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Session News—December 19

Session received committee reports and routine communications. Two replacement committee moderators were approved: Betty Anne Smith for Christian Education and Ginger Odom for Worship and Music. The moderator for Building and Grounds remains open.

Session affirmed plans to hold a retreat for session and committee moderators on Saturday, January 21, to complete program plans and activities calendar for the remainder of 2006. Session also affirmed plans for the annual dinner for all elders who have served John Calvin PC to be held on Monday, January 30.

In a November 27 called meeting, session approved a recommendation of the Evangelism and Outreach Committee to place an advertisement in the *Morning News* Pee Dee Worship Directory for 2006. This directory will be an insert in an upcoming *Morning News* and made available to area newcomers through the Chamber of Commerce and local realtors.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

	November	Year to Date
Envelopes	\$19,805	\$244,585
Other Income	\$2215	\$17,108
Income Received	\$22,020	\$261,693
Operating Expense.	\$20,846	\$192,095
Benevolences	\$4409	\$57,721
Total- Budgeted Ex.	\$25,255	\$261,034
Unused Sep/Oct Pastor Compensation		\$11, 218

The last entry are funds that are reserved for pastor search expenses and other contingencies.

THANK YOU!

This note of thanks goes out to those who volunteered to help with the lighting of the Advent Candles for this Christmas season. You are wonderful to share your lives in this way. Many thanks to Robert and Sylvia Perkins, Daniel and Claire McNeill, Marilyn and Richard Chapman, Arden, Elizabeth, and Caroline Gatchell, Burnie, Cherry, Holly, and Heather Gerrald, and Mike, Kim, Leah, and Dakota Hawkins.

We also want to thank those who volunteered to participate on Christmas Eve as readers, liturgists, and musicians for our Candlelight and Communion Service. It was a lovely service and your part helped make it so. Thank to Julia Krebs, Skip Bishop, Jane Moss, Tom Hawkins, Rhonda Dickerson, Joe Stukes, Karen Pattillo, Steve McElveen, Scot Carnell, and G.F. Handel.

Lest we be remiss, thank you to our ushers and elders who helped prepare for and participate in the Christmas Eve service also. We thank all of you for your willingness to be a part of this Holy time.

In Christ's name,

The Worship and Music Committee and Pastor Paul



NEWS FROM CARING AND FELLOWSHIP

We are happy to announce that on Sunday January 22, 5:30 to 8:30, we are offering a **GOOD GRIEF Seminar**. This seminar, developed and taught by Georgann O'Quinn, was designed to help understand the grief process that can occur with any loss. This is open to the entire congregation and the public and we encourage you to attend if you are grieving a loss or if you desire to know more about the grief process in order to help others. We ask that you call the church office to register so that sufficient material will be available for all in attendance.



NEWS FROM THE MISSION COMMITTEE

On December 5th, Betsy Johnson mailed 36 Love Pacs to South Dakota.

Ron Rogers received \$600 for the Choices stocking stuffers. He needed help from the Walmart staff to take all of his purchases to his car. It seems we are the only church providing for the stockings so all the goodies were appreciated.

The Angel Tree gifts have been delivered along with a children's Bible. Thank you all for helping to improve the relationship between an inmate and his/her child.

WORSHIP

Worship Is in the Spirit

"God is Spirit, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)

The Spirit in scripture is always life-giving and activity producing. The Spirit was breathed into clay and humanity received life. Joel prophesied about a time when God's Spirit would pour out on all people: male and female, old and young, free and oppressed.

True worship will be spirited. Even as the eternal word became flesh and expressed God's purpose in human form, so our worship must take wings. Or at least it must take hands, feet, and voice. Worship in spirit and truth will be active and in accord with Christ, who is the truth.

Worship Follows a Rhythm

As a function of the body, worship has a rhythm. First of all, there is an annual rhythm that focuses on the Easter feast. Second, there is a rhythm of the week, which moves from Sunday to Sunday. Each week we gather together to reaffirm that we are a resurrection community, remembering that Christ arose from the dead on the first day of the week.

These rhythms are bound together in the rhythm of gathering and scattering, of coming together to worship and going out to serve. The Church must gather to be nourished and scatter to serve. To be the Church, we must have two kinds of services. Gathered together we participate in the service of worship. Then we depart in the service of love to the world. Each kind of service is completed in the other.

This material originally appeared in "Praise God, Worship Through the Year", a supplement to 2005-2006 Horizons Bible Study, "For Everything a Season."

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Dear Friends at John Calvin,

A good friend of mine sent me the following message. I was struck by its arrow-to-the-heart of the matter. It is intended to be a Holiday Message and it certainly tugs at the heartstrings of our busy lives. I loved it, so I wanted to share it with you. I hope you enjoy it too.

Peace and blessings for the New Year

Pastor Paul

The initiator of the story works for and is President and CEO of AAHSA out of Washington D.C., William L. (Larry) Minnix Jr.

Golden Retrievers and the Sabbath: A Holiday Message

My wife, Kathleen, and I have a golden retriever puppy. Right before Christmas two years ago, Kathy told me she needed something to nurture besides me. I'm a bit "over nurtured" anyway, if you know what I mean. She gave me a choice of adopting a child or getting a golden retriever. So now we have Leo, a 90 pound lap dog, which we successfully trained as a puppy to relieve himself 100% of the time *inside* the house. Kathy and I had to regroup. We began to realize we were going about the training part the wrong way. Actually, it was a good parable about two important life truths:

- One, humans are very good at training the wrong behaviors until kids and animals are doing just the opposite of what we want them to do.
- Two, we don't train kinds, animals, or spouses– they train us!

Back to golden retrievers. I believe that, next to nuns I have come to know through AAHSA, golden retrievers are the closest living manifestation of the love of God I've personally ever experienced. Regardless of what we may be facing on any given day, Leo is always ready to love us. No questions asked. Just pure love. Same with the nuns. Which gets me to Simone, the golden retriever pet of Saint Simeon's, an AAHSA member in Oklahoma.

Simone, the golden retriever, has a special affection for Alzheimer's patients who have behavioral problems. Simone gravitates to them when they are in obvious angst. You know those sounds. There is nothing quite as haunting or desperate or frustrating as an Alzheimer's resident who makes those sounds that wrench at our hearts, and at times, our patience. Those sounds are part of what causes some of our friends or visitors to say, "I don't know how you can do this kind of work all day! Those sounds..."

But for some mystical reason, Simone seeks out these people and brings them comfort. The sounds often subside. Simone can do something perhaps only God can do in this world for tortured souls afflicted with one of nature's worst diseases. Simone lives in the facility at Saint Simeon's. She is on call 24/7, frequently seeking out those in agony in the middle of the night.

One day, the staff began to notice a change in Simone's behavior– more withdrawn, a bit snarly and ill-tempered. Quite uncharacteristic of a golden retriever. To observe more closely, a nurse began taking Simone home at night. Simone returned to her loving, gentle, and responsive self! Yes, even golden retrievers need rest from the work we all do.

This past summer, Ann Gillespie, AAHSA's Senior Vice President for Leadership Development, gave me a book called *Sabbath* by Wayne Muller, and Peggy Mullan recommended it to the AAHSA Board. It is about the need for rest. Our bodies, minds, and spirits need rest! Muller recants in many ways how we actually do violence to ourselves and those we love because we don't rest. We train ourselves and those around us to do the opposite of what we should do. Muller takes the issue to the spiritual plane when he quotes from several major religious traditions about the importance of a "Sabbath"- a time to rest in our everyday lives, a time for "sanctuary," a time where we seek inner peace and a time where we find our grounding in what's *really* important to us. He reminds us that the Old Testament says that it was not Israel that kept the Sabbath, but that the Sabbath kept Israel. The Sabbath is essential to the divine cycles of life– cycles we train ourselves out of because we get too busy. Muller quotes familiar spiritual leaders: Gandhi- "There is more to life than merely increasing its speed.", Jesus- "Come to me all who toil and are heavy laden, and I will give you comfort.", Isaiah- "Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with winds like eagles. They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

This holiday time symbolizes rest and peace. Take time for your Sabbath. Gandhi, Jesus, Isaiah, and Simone remind us to remember our personal Sabbath and keep it holy. The people we serve and those friends and family we care about need for us to be rested and most important, at peace.

Big Mud Puddles and Sunny Yellow Dandelions

Author Unknown

When I look at a patch of dandelions, I see a bunch of weeds that are going to take over my yard.

My kids see flowers for Mom and blowing white fluff you can wish on.

When I look at an old drunk and he smiles at me, I see a smelly, dirty person who probably wants money and I look away.

My kids see someone smiling at them and they smile back.

When I hear music I love, I know I can't carry a tune and don't have much rhythm, so I sit self-consciously and listen.

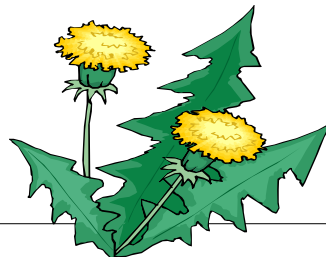
My kids feel the beat and move to it. They sing out the words. If they don't know them, they make up their own.

When I feel the wind on my face, I brace myself against it. I feel it messing up my hair and pulling me back when I walk.

My kids close their eyes, spread their arms and fly with it, until they fall to the ground laughing.

When I pray, I say thee and thou and grant me this, give me that.

My kids say , "Hi, God! Thanks for my toys and my friends. Please keep the bad dreams away tonight. Sorry, I don't want to go to Heaven yet. I would miss my Mommy and Daddy."



When I see a mud puddle, I step around it. I see muddy shoes and dirty carpets.

My kids sit in it. They see dams to build, rivers to cross and worms to play with.

I wonder if we are given kids to teach or to learn from? Enjoy the little things in life, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.

I wish you Big Mud Puddles and Sunny Yellow Dandelions for the New Year!



Memorials for November

Mrs. M.B. Lawrence by Jason Rogers

Billy Moore by Mr. and Mrs. Laddie Hiller

Jane Karnuth and Mr. and Mrs. Muncie Matthews, Sr.
by Sue and Muncie Matthews

Bradley Gage by Barbara and James Gage

Dave Caraker by Elizabeth Caraker

Warren Hague (Judy Feimster's father) by Judy and Gwyn Voss

In honor of

Susan Burley and Betsey Moore by Sue and Muncie Matthews

Lila Moore, Lt. Col. Warren Lloyd, Betty Hirst, and Nora Polk
by Lucille Hunter Circle

CHILDREN'S WORKERS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY



If you are unable to meet your commitment, please contact the next person on the list.
Parents, label your baby items. Thanks for your help.

Myra Horton is in charge of the nursery in January.

Many thanks to our December newsletter folders:

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|-----------------|-----------------|
| Claire McNeill | Betsy Johnson |
| Courtney Stukes | Mary Holmes |
| Doris Stubbs | Leona Tomlinson |
| Romona Smith | Virginia Jordan |

INFANTS

- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| January 1 | Pam Morgan |
| January 8 | Kay Garren |
| January 15 | Debbie Filyaw |
| January 22 | Mike Robb |
| January 29 | Leona Tomlinson |

**February schedule is unavailable

2 and 3 Year Olds

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| January 1 | Claire McNeill |
| January 8 | Betsy Johnson |
| January 15 | Kelly Hewitt |
| January 22 | Jane Thrower |
| January 29 | Tom Hawkins |

**February schedule is unavailable.

Children's Church

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| January 1 | Rhonda and Tim Dickerson |
| January 8 | Karen Pattillo/Nola Marshall |
| January 15 | Celeste/Michael McCutcheon |
| January 22 | Annie and Bill Bigham |
| January 29 | Myra and Rachel Horton |
| February 5 | Martha and Ronnie Houser' |
| February 12 | Mike Hawkins/Lee Carroll |
| February 19 | Robin and Roger Harris |
| February 26 | James and Ginger Odom |

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|------------|----------------------------|
| January 15 | JoAnn and George Reaves |
| January 18 | Dee and Sam Smith |
| January 27 | Betty Anne and Henry Smith |



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| January 1 | Laura Harrell | January 21 | Laurie Nokland |
| January 2 | Mike Morgan | January 22 | Elva Stay |
| | Eddie Touchberry | | Randal Voss |
| January 3 | Nora Polk | January 23 | Sue Matthews |
| | Carl Robb | January 24 | Arianna Barrow |
| January 5 | Cathy Collar | | Chris Clark |
| | Elizabeth Gatchell | January 25 | Lisa Ard |
| January 9 | Harry Hipps | January 26 | Talley Garren |
| January 10 | Larry Thow | January 27 | Whit Morehouse |
| January 15 | Eddie Ard | January 30 | Alice Baker |
| | Fran Nelson | | Kandace Rosser |
| January 17 | Morgan Clark | January 31 | Allison Barrow |
| | Robin Voss | | Wilda Gray |
| | Henry Revell | | |
| January 19 | Margaret Rogers | | |



January 1- Guest Pastor	January 15- Scripture Reading 1 Samuel 3:1-10; Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18 John 1: 43-51
January 8- Scripture Reading Mark 1: 4-11	January 22- Scripture Reading Jonah 3:1-5; Mark 1: 14-20
January 29- Scripture Reading Deuteronomy 18: 15-20; Psalm 111 Mark 1: 21-28	
