

August 2024

Calvin Commentary

Newsletter for John Calvin Presbyterian Church, Metairie, LA



A Fresh Start

Briana Mayfield, Church Office Assistant

I swear I blinked, and just like that, the summer is starting to leave us. I'm sure most are thankful to get the cool weather back, but who are we kidding? Southern heat tends to linger past October. The support and love I have gotten since stepping into my role here at John Calvin could not fill all the oceans in the world. Thank you all, and I can't wait to see what we do in the future.

There have been mixed emotions since the leaving of Aaron and Louise Ochart. We can become disheartened, but this is an opportunity for a fresh start. The worship committee did a phenomenal job getting the pulpit supply booked so there was no disruption in our services. Session and deacons have been working together to discern what the role of JCPC looks like in the Mission of Christ. If you have not completed your mission study survey please the information on page 3. We want to hear from you. The good, the bad, and everything in between. Didn't read *Sailboat Church*? Let me know, and I will lend you my copy.

As Paul would say, "be anxious about nothing, but in everything, pray." My brothers and sisters in Christ, if God is for us, then who can stand against us? I pray that we start to heal the hurt that has happened in our congregation, and that we lean on each other to get past this trial. Peace and blessings always!

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Evelyn Tobey



A longtime member of the congregation at John Calvin, Evelyn Tobey first came to our church in 1976. She grew up in New Orleans and was a member of Gentilly Presbyterian Church. Evelyn met her husband at LSU and they married shortly after graduation. After graduation, the Tobeyes lived in Georgia where Evelyn taught junior high math then moved to Texas where she taught in high school until their first child was born. “I have always been involved in volunteering-- in church, with educational institutions and philanthropic groups,” Evelyn says of her passion for using her talents to help others.

Evelyn was attracted to JCPC because it was the closest Presbyterian church to her at the time and stayed because of the friendliness of the members and the many programs offered by the church. Evelyn is an active member of the Worship Committee and Presbyterian Women and volunteers in the Finance Office, where she catalogs and deposits the weekly offerings. When asked about the future of our church, Evelyn said that while the situation is currently not ideal, she has hope for the future with some of the recent proposed changes.

Programs at John Calvin have had a great impact on Evelyn’s spiritual journey. She states: “I have been involved in numerous Bible studies and Sunday School classes through the years. Each has increased my knowledge and understanding of my journey with Christ.” Evelyn lists Presbyterian Women studies and missions, choir, and congregational fellowship as some of her favorite activities and programs within the church.

Evelyn Tobey is a treasured part of our church community. Her volunteer work is invaluable in the smooth operation of the church and finances, and her willingness to give of herself and her talents inspires all of us. When you see Evelyn, please make sure to give her a big “Thank You!”

PROJECT REGENERATION MISSION STUDY 2024

In late January of this year, John Calvin embarked on a mission to answer two questions: Who are we? What is God calling us to do? After months and days of praying, we are still trying to figure it all out. The departure of Rev. Aaron left us feeling like sheep without a shepherd, but the leaders of JCPC held strong to the hope that we will once again overcome.

At the June 17, 2024 Session meeting, Chris Currie (the moderator of Session) selected Ragina Isham and Cameron Mayfield to lead a Mission Study with support from the session and deacons. The Mission Study is crucial as JCPC begins the process of discerning what is next in the life of our church. It is our hope that through this intentional discernment process, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will have greater clarity on the call and vision of John Calvin Presbyterian Church. The Study will also inform potential Pastoral candidates of who we are, who we want to become, and our vision for the future.

Now that the survey has been completed, we will have a luncheon on August 11th after service in the fellowship hall to discuss the findings of the survey and chart a way forward as a congregation. Please attend if you are able and take part in this crucial next step for our Church.

If you have not been able to fill out the survey, there is still time! You can fill out the online survey at the link below or contact:

Ragina Isham rpisham@gmail.com

Cameron Mayfield cmaydrilldesigns@gmail.com

Mission Study Link (you can also scan the QR code here)

<https://forms.gle/nqhoSauLekAtXSDc9>



Session Updates!

The Session would like to extend warm greetings & blessings to our fellow congregants and friends of JCPC. We hope all is well with everyone as we navigate these tough & uncertain times in the life of our Church and Country. We want to ensure you that we are working diligently on your behalf and in service of our Lord, Jesus Christ! Before we get into some of the things that we are currently working on, and those that we plan to embark on in the near future, we want to share this devotional that one of our Session members shared with us.

2 Chronicles 20:20 (GNT): “Put your trust in the Lord your God and you will stand your ground. Believe what his prophets tell you, and you will succeed”.

When we focus on the problems instead of trusting God, we’re going to end up exhausted and defeated - because God didn’t design us to fight our battles alone. We don’t have the power we need to face every problem in our own strength. God’s the power source. We can’t focus on our many problems and focus on God at the same time. When we focus on him, we’re standing strong with an attitude of quiet confidence in the character and in the promises of our God.

God doesn’t want us to back down from difficult situations. He doesn’t want you to sacrifice your integrity. God wants us to trust him through the challenges, and learn from them instead of waving the flag in defeat. Let us stand strong as we rely on his word and the winds of the Holy Spirit as he leads us into our future together.

During the months of June and July, the Session, the Deacons, the Committees & Church Staff members have worked on many important and worthwhile endeavors. The deacons hosted a reception for Aaron, Louise, and Asher Ochart in June as the congregation wished them well on their new journey. The deacons have made themselves available to the congregation for any “Pastoral” care needs during this time of transition.

The Worship Committee has successfully supplied us with a wonderful pulpit supply for all of 2024 and possibly into 2025. Starting in August, we will have 2 rotating pulpit supply members (Elder Ford Deith and Rev. Martha Robson) so we can build some familiarity with just 2 individuals going forward. The Outreach Committee served the Program of Hope in June, and is coordinating the rental of our Fellowship Hall for recent graduations & other celebrations. The Outreach Committee is also planning congregational life activities in the upcoming months to facilitate a sense of community with Table Cloth dinners, hymns & beers/Theology on Tap, Pot Luck with the Saints on Sundays, and is actively exploring other opportunities. The Facilities Committee is working hard to coordinate the repairs of the awning & replacement of gutters around the Fellowship Hall and maintenance for the upcoming Playschool year. The Staff Committee worked to hire our new Office Assistant, Briana Mayfield. Briana is helping to keep the “light” on in the office while we work to secure our next permanent Pastor.

Session Updates Cont.

In staff news, Kelly Cuppett, continues to provide us with uplifting music during worship service while the choir is on summer break. The Sundays at Six music series is fully in swing with funding from generous congregation members with an average attendance number of 35-40 people at each event. Briana has recently requested support from the Session to pursue studies as a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) /Commissioned Pastor (CP). Briana will also be leading the Christian Education Committee with many ideas on how to engage the youth and adults this coming fall. Going forward, the Newsletter will feature congregation members so we can learn more about each other. Interested congregation members will fill out a short form with general questions about themselves, and key summary points with a picture of them will be featured in future newsletters.

The Session is currently working on many key actions to stabilize the normal operations of our Church as well as planning for a sustainable ministry future through the kick-off of Mission Study 2024.

The Mission Study Committee leads have outlined and communicated a plan that combines the effort of Project Regeneration that started in November of 2023 along with the recent engagement of the congregation through an anonymous survey and an upcoming luncheon in August where we plan to present the survey results and gather additional feedback.

The Session and the Mission Committee is focusing on the state of our finances. We voted in July to form a new Finance Committee (with 2 new members) that will provide stewardship over both the Church and Playschool finances. We have successfully worked with the Playschool Treasurer to negotiate a new method of how shared direct expenses are paid to the church, and are currently reviewing the Church financial forecast for 2024 and 2025. To address our budget deficit, a multi-year plan of possible income sources will be developed including input from the anonymous survey. This will be no small task to develop & execute as there will be many discussions and difficult decisions ahead. Finally, the Session is beginning its work on selecting our next slate of elders and commencing a crucial Stewardship campaign for 2025.

Let's love and serve the Lord enthusiastically with all of our hearts, souls & minds and with our combined strength, and let's love each other through these tough & uncertain times. Please prayerfully consider volunteering for any of the important activities in the life of our church.

In Christ's Service,
JCPC Session

Joan Albright, Sandy Cranfill, Sue Crawford, Beverly Kennedy, Briana Mayfield, Cameron Mayfield, Jeremy Moore, and Andrew Nolan



Monthly Food Pantry Donations



EACH MONTH WE ARE ASKING YOU TO DONATE ONE OR TWO ITEMS TO THE FOOD PANTRY. IF YOU PREFER TO DONATE A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY JUST MARK IT FOR THE FOOD PANTRY AND WE WILL SHOP FOR YOU.

This month we are asking for
Shelf Stable Veggie Items
,Canned Meat, and baby
diapers!



A HUGE thank you to everyone who supported the Sundays at Six concerts! The turnout has been amazing.

Kelly was able to develop some lessons from Montreat this past summer on how to navigate the music program in a small church. Other local Church leaders at Montreat want to be included in future Hymns & Beer events! The fundraising at the May event was not as successful compared to other occasions.

Weekly choir is not possible right now due to the number of people in the choir, members not always present in service due to other responsibilities, some moving, others expressed doubts about returning, some out due to illness, and we no longer have scholarship singers. Kelly has rotating options for each Sunday which she plans to discuss with Worship Committee.

Make sure to be on the look out for future choir announcements. If you have any ideas for how you would like to share your musical talent, let Kelly know at kelly.cuppett@johncalvinchurch.org.

Presbyterian Women



The PW Council Meeting will pick back up this month. The first meeting is August 1, 2024, at 10a in the library. They will have their annual PW School Supply Offering later this month on August 18th and August 25th. Details to come.

Outreach



Are there things you want to see more of when it comes to Outreach? Do you have a cool idea for our next Hymns and Beer? Let us know! Thank you for all the support for the Program of Hope ministry. We received a letter in the Narthex thanking JCPC for the support and donations.

Christian Education

Adult Sunday school will resume in September with another “Off the Deep End” series with Briana Mayfield. More details will come during service in the following weeks. We are also looking for volunteers to help lead children’s church and/or lead a bible study during the week. Any and all ideas are welcome!

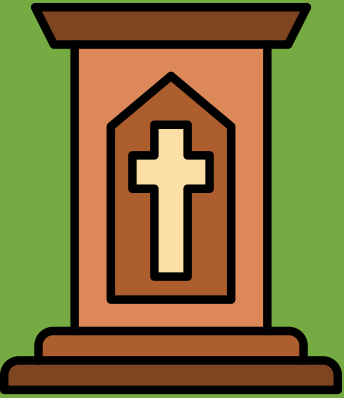


Elder Nominating Committee!

The above committee will meet in the cry room after the August 4, service. If anyone would like to serve on the committee or be nominated to serve on the Session, please call (504-885-0128), text (504-371-2113) or e-mail (bobejoan@yahoo.com).

Thank you for prayerfully considering this invitation to serve our Lord, our church and their mission. -Joan Albright

Worship Committee



Starting this month, we will be rotating who is preaching. CP Ford Dieth of the Presbytery of South Louisiana will lead service every 1st and 4th of the month. Rev. Dr. Marth J. Robson will lead on the 2nd and 3rd. Worship committee will now do communion every 2nd Sunday with her.



A Note from the Deacons

IF ANYONE IS IN NEED OF PASTORAL CARE OR HAS A PRAYER REQUEST, PLEASE TEXT, CALL OR EMAIL ONE OF THE DEACONS.

BILL BOTTOMLEY - 504-296-9710 - PSCLERK@EARTHLINK.NET

MARY ANTILL- 504-247-5720 -

BUZZ2MOOSETACO@GMAIL.COM

LAURIE HILL - 504-344-9079- LA.TRES@YAHOO.COM

TONY HILL - 504-214-8095 -

ROLANDOHILL2003@YAHOO.COM



PRAYER LIST

These are the prayer requests that we have had over the last month, please continue to pray for these various needs.

July 28

- *Easow Thomas (brother of Raju Thomas) who lives in NJ and is having cardiac issues.*
- *Safe travels for Briana to Miami to visit her friend Erica, who has a major surgery.*
- *Prayers for Kelly Cuppett and her family.*

July 21

- *Praise Report: Linda LaPorte is on the road to recovery. She is staying and being treated for her ankle at Ochsner Rehab West Campus Skilled Nursing Facility.*
- *Hector Hill (Tony's Dad) is in the hospital. He is doing better, but still very weak. The family is still waiting for answers.*
- *Franchelle Howes (Jananne's sister) is having a procedure on her back.*

July 14

- *Safe travels for Kelly Cuppett, who is in Minneapolis performing with the New Orleans Gay Men's Chorus.*
- *Prayers for healing for Briana's friend Lauren whose grandpa is in the hospital.*
- *Denise Black, Briana's coworker, whose husband is battling health issues.*

July 7

- *Linda Laporte who fell and broke has a broken ankle.*

June 30

- *David Garland who is home from surgery and is doing better.*
- *Ray Cox, Jan's Husband, who has been diagnosed with cancer.*
- *An unspoken request from Margaret Lawson and Willie Richie.*

June 23

- *Kelly Cuppett. She is in Montreat, NC this week for the Presbyterian Association of Musicians conference.*
- *Sharon Fortin- prayers for a speedy recovery following surgery.*

June 16

- *Ashley Marler's Aunt Debra and Uncle Bob as Bob is encountering significant health issues.*
- *James, a special friend of Andrew and Sue, passed away on Wednesday, 6/12.*

CONTINUING PRAYERS FOR THOSE
STRUGGLING WITH HEALTH ISSUES: Zoe Gurdy,
Teddy Brock, Ernest and Patricia Ellis, Neil
Freudenthal, Buddy Haw, Tom Moore, Wayne
Tracy, David Russo, and others struggling
with health issues

Bible Joke of the Month:

What kind of man was Boaz before he got married?

Ruth-less.



John Calvin Presbyterian Church
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Our Father,

Who art in Heaven,
hallowed be Thy name;
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done
on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil

Amen.