



## Calvin Presbyterian Church

where faith, compassion, and authenticity meet



### THE STANDISH INKWELL

Last month I opened my inkwell with some questions: *What are the grounding principles of your life? Do you have any? If you do, do you know what they are?*

Did you think about these questions? This month I want to take these questions a step further. One of the things that we in the program staff of Calvin Church—those most involved in the active ministry of the church (Toni Schlemmer, Connie Frierson, Steve Polley, Bruce Smith, and me)—did was to get together on two evenings to talk about what our principles should be as a staff. It was one of the great times I've spent as a pastor because of the

dynamic of the meeting. We sat down each time at Panera's, and over dinner discussed the ministry of Calvin Church, our own ministries, and what we thought was important about what we do.

We spent time the first evening talking about the struggles of ministry and of how to lead a growing church. Through this we began asking a simple question: what guides us in our work? After laying out all the issues of leadership the first evening, we sat down in the second meeting and began to talk about our shared principles. Most of what I did was to ask questions of the others, and then to write down responses. I also shared insights, but the

amazing thing about the statement we came up with was how much we were all on the same page with it all.

So, this month I want to share with you our staff vision and standards statement:

#### Vision Statement:

*As staff members of Calvin Presbyterian Church we are committed to leading people to become aware of God's active and constant presence in the church and their lives, while leading them away from the cultural tendency to work in functional, self-focused, and unspiritual ways. In pursuit of this vision,*

- We are committed to forming a set of regular
- (Continued on page 2)

### Did You Know?

#### "Christian Apocrypha: Peter versus Simon Magus" by Brendon Wahlberg

The Old Testament has its Apocrypha, books that were important and popular, but did not make it into the canonical Bible, such as the "Books of the Maccabees" and "Judith". The New Testament has its Apocrypha as well, books which were so popular and so often copied in the early days of

Christianity that they survive to this day, even though they did not make it into the Bible. Although they could not compare with inspired scripture like the Gospels, these books were written to teach Christian ideas and to entertain readers at the same time. One of these books, the "Acts of Peter", is a

direct sequel to a story found in the Acts of the Apostles, the encounter between Peter and Simon the Magician.

Simon was an infamous sorcerer from the Samaritan town of Gitta. Acts 8:4-24 describes how Simon met with Peter in Samaria

(Continued on page 6)

# Calvin's News & Notes

November 2008

This month I want to share with you our staff vision and standards statement

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## THE STANDISH INKWELL

**We strive to be genuine and authentic with each other, and the congregation at all times.**

personal spiritual practices that will keep us grounded in our personal mission to discern Christ's will and serve God through everything we do.

- We will set aside regular times for discussion, study, prayer, and camaraderie with each other.
- We strive to be genuine and authentic with each other, and the congregation, at all times.
- We will prayerfully seek the Spirit's guidance and will for us, and the church, in our leadership, decision-making, and actions.
- While still striving for excellence in our ministries, we will make healthy relationships with each other and the members of the congregation a priority over efficiency, effectiveness, and end results.
- We will lead the congrega-

tion to be rooted in our Christian traditions while also being culturally relevant.

- Recognizing how pervasive the secular worldview, and how accustomed people are to thinking in a functional, non-spiritual way, we will always encourage members to adopt a more spiritual worldview that leads them to a deeper faith and awareness of God's presence in their lives.

**Standards:** *The following is a basic standard of practice that we strive to bring into every ministry and mission effort of the church, to the extent to which it is practical, helpful, and possible:*

- As the Calvin Church staff, we will strive to start every ministry and meeting with a time of

prayer and/or study that centers us in Christ, and opens us to the guidance and work of the Holy Spirit by:

- Leading the session, committees, task forces, and teams to start and end all open-ended meetings and activities with a time of prayer and study.
- Starting ministry activities such as small groups, choir rehearsals, drama rehearsals, staff meetings, and other such ventures with a time of sharing and prayer.
- Encourage, train, and guide lay leaders of the church to bring prayer and prayerful practice into all of their leadership ventures.

I hope you find these helpful.

With God's Blessings,

*Dr. N. Graham Standish*

## Are You Having a Hard Time Finding Parking on Sundays?

We are aware that periodically it can be difficult for people to find parking for the 11 a.m. worship service as those leaving the church from the education hour meet those coming for the 11 a.m. worship service. With our new construction, we also created more parking, but in areas you may not be aware of. We now have a small parking lot around the back of the church. To get to it, just follow the small alley between the church building and the garage. There is a new entrance to the church from that lot. Also, you can park on Division Street and access the church through that back entrance. Finally, we are allowed to use the parking lot in front of Glory Days Photography.



## Substitute Teachers Needed

Have you ever considered helping with the children and youth ministries of our congregation but are not able to commit to teaching on a regular basis? Our teachers work in teams and teach on a rotating schedule, but there are occasions when circumstances require the need for a substitute. We would like to compile a list of substitute teachers who are willing to fill in should a need arise. All curriculum and materials are provided, so there is very little preparation time required. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Shaney Mitchell at [shaney@zoominternet.net](mailto:shaney@zoominternet.net) or (724) 779-6479. Also, if you have a special talent or interest that you might like to share with the children, please let Shaney know.

### WE'RE CELEBRATING THE ADVENT SEASON WITH GINGERBREAD CHURCHES!

**B**aking and decorating a gingerbread church is a wonderful experience for both individuals and families – creating long-lasting memories and maybe even starting a new tradition.

#### Here's How it Works:

1. You'll receive recipes, directions and templates through email for everything you need to make the church. Or you can use your own recipes and church templates if you have them.
2. Bake gingerbread cookies for the house and cut the cookies from the templates given to you.
3. We'll meet **Tuesday, December 2nd** at 7:00 pm at **Fellowship Hall** to put together the gingerbread churches.
4. We'll meet **Wednesday, December 3rd** at 7:00 pm at **Fellowship Hall** to decorate your gingerbread churches.
5. Keep your gingerbread church at Fellowship hall for display **Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>**, and you can take your house home after the 2nd service.



Email Denise Shank at [calvinevents@zoominternet.net](mailto:calvinevents@zoominternet.net) if you would like to join in on the fun or if you have any questions.

## Green Fair

**O**n **November 23** in Fellowship Hall, we will be having a Green Fair in between services. We are still planning this, but expect to have tables to include:

- Fair Trade Products—such as Equal Exchange Coffee
- Composting—how to do it and what the benefits are
- Energy Efficiency—we could all use lower energy bills!
- Renewable Energy—another important energy area
- Children's Table—lots of fun for our kids!
- Recycling—let's build on what we've started!
- Letter writing—how we can use our influence to move things forward

*Contributed by Nancy Mead*



## Capital Campaign Update Sessions

**A**s we come to the close of our three-year, Forward in Faith Capital Campaign, and as we look forward to embarking on a new campaign in the spring, we invite all members to update sessions that will let you know where we are in terms of our debt, and our plans for the future. Please contact the church office at [mshepler@zoominternet.net](mailto:mshepler@zoominternet.net) to let us know if you are planning to attend a session. This helps us ensure we have enough material for everyone. The sessions are:

- Thursday, November 6<sup>th</sup> in the church conference room—7:30 to 9:00 p.m.
- Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, church conference room (light lunch provided)—12:30 to 2:00 p.m.
- Session TBA

## Calvin's News & Notes

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### Wish Tree Project



The Food Cupboard will again be asking the participating churches to be involved in the annual "Wish Tree" project. This involves taking a "Wish Tag" that expresses a Christmas wish of one of the children of a food cupboard client. These tags will be available from Arby Shenesky in church beginning the 23rd of November. It's very easy to participate.....choose your tag, buy the gift requested, wrap it and return to Arby. I will then deliver them to the Youth Group at Grace Church who will distribute the gifts to the families at the Dec.16th evening food distribution. If you have questions or would like to reserve a Gift Tag for yourself, family or Sunday School Class, etc., please call me at 724-452-9755 or E-Mail me at [arby@zbzoom.net](mailto:arby@zbzoom.net)

Thanks, in advance , for your continued support— Arby Shenesky

### Food Cupboard

Food Dedication - **November 9** (the second Sunday of each month)

Needs:

Baked Beans, Baking mixes (muffins & cookies), Cereal

Boxed potatoes (mashed & scalloped), Canned vegetables, Canned fruit

Applesauce, Spaghetti Sauce, Soup, Tuna, Macaroni & Cheese

Egg Noodles, Pasta, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Helper meals, Ensure

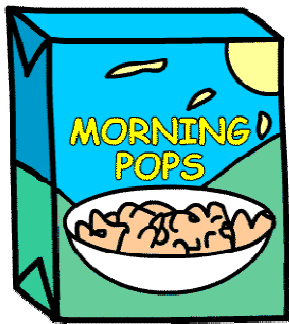
Boxes, Xerox paper size, are also needed. These are best for filling and carrying. Baby food and formula are not needed, as these are supplied by the WIC (Women Infants & Children) program. Diapers and wipes, however, are needed.

**\*Please supply only the items on this list. Most other items are hard to dispose of.**

**Your monetary contributions are most welcome.**

Please make checks payable to **Calvin Church** and mark "Food Cupboard."

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call Arby Shenesky at 724-452-9755.



### Morning Circle Schedule

Morning Circle has started—if you are between the age of 60 and 100 we invite you to join us the 2nd Thursday of each month at 10 AM. Do call Florence Towers or Irene Bortmess for more information.

*Contributed by Flo Towers*



### Open Circle Schedule

- November 25- Peg Hart-hostess. Jill Bell - lesson.
- December- Christmas party- 6 PM-at the Lodge in Sherwood Oaks.

More info to follow.

We meet on the 4th Tuesday each month. If you would like to join in but Tuesday is bad, we are flexible and try to accommodate. Give one of us a call.

*Contributed by Kathy Efaw*

November 2008

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Calvin Presbyterian Church Youth Groups

present



Based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew, and featuring a sparkling score by Stephen Schwartz, "Godspell" boasts a string of well-loved songs, led by the international hit, "Day By Day." As the cast performs "Prepare Ye The Way Of The Lord," "Learn Your Lessons Well," "All For The Best," "All Good Gifts," "Turn Back, O Man" and "By My Side," the parables of Jesus Christ come humanly and hearteningly to life.

**November 14, 15, 20, 21, 22 at 7:30pm**

**November 16 at 2:00pm**

Suggested donation:

Adults \$8 / Students \$4

Calvin Presbyterian Church

415 East Grandview Avenue, Zelienople

Reservations 724-452-7560 ext 17

or online [www.calvinchurchzelie.org](http://www.calvinchurchzelie.org)

proceeds benefit Calvin Youth Groups Mission Projects

### “Christian Apocrypha: Peter versus Simon Magus ” (continued)

and tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit. *“Now a certain man named Simon had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he was someone great. All of them, from the least to the greatest, listened to him eagerly, saying, ‘This man is the power of God that is called Great.’ And they listened eagerly to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. But when they believed Philip, who was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Even Simon himself believed. After being baptized, he stayed constantly with Philip and was amazed when he saw the signs and great miracles that took place.*

*“Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me also this power so that any-*

*one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain God’s gift with money! You have no part or share in this, for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and the chains of wickedness.’ Simon answered, ‘Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may happen to me.”*

Simon’s act gave rise to the term “Simony”, which means the crime of paying money in exchange for holy authority or a position in the church. After he is rebuked for his crime, Simon is not mentioned again in the New Testament. But his story was not over. Early Christian writers condemned him as the founder of a second century group of Gnostics, heretics who claimed that only complex secret knowledge brought salvation. Simon’s followers claimed that he was the power of the true God in human form. Their belief system was in direct conflict and competition with the spread of early Christianity in the Roman Empire. In fighting for the hearts and minds of the people, Christian writers saw the need to attack the heresy where it began, with the magician Simon. The story

of Simon in Acts is unfinished; Simon is rebuffed but not defeated. And so the apocryphal book, the “Acts of Peter” was written to continue the story and show its readers the final defeat and death of Simon Magus.

The “Acts of Peter” was written between 150 and 200 CE, to denounce and discredit the founder of the rival Gnostics. It tells of a public miracle contest between Peter and Simon Magus. The story begins when Simon miraculously flies through the air into Rome. There, he works more wonders and begins to preach that he, not Jesus, is the Messiah and the power of God. Simon is so convincing that large groups of the Christian faithful begin to worship him instead, and leaders like Paul are not there to stop them. This is an emergency; it seems the power of Satan is working through Simon to cause all the simple and weak believers in Rome to fall.

God sends a vision to Peter, summoning him to go to Rome to fight Simon. Upon his arrival, Peter speaks to a large crowd of the brethren, and warns them that Satan is tricking them into leaving their faith. The people repent, but the danger of Simon remains, and they ask Peter to remove the threat once and for all. The magician is staying at the house of a senator, whom he has converted,

so Peter takes the crowd to his door. From this point on, the story becomes a duel of miracles between Simon and Peter. The contest is reminiscent of the duel between Moses and Aaron, and Pharaoh’s sorcerers (Exodus 7:8-13), in that Simon ultimately shows that he has some powers, but he cannot match or resist the power of God.

Peter’s first miracle is to give a dog the power of speech. Peter sends the dog in to tell Simon to come out. Simon instructs the dog to tell Peter he is not there. The dog curses Simon and exits to tell Peter that it is time for *“a great contest with the enemy of Christ and his servants, and many that have been deceived by him shalt thou turn unto the faith; wherefore thou shalt receive from God the reward of thy work. And when the dog had said this he fell down at the apostle Peter’s feet and gave up the ghost. And when the great multitude saw with amazement the dog speaking, they began then, some to throw themselves down at Peter’s feet, and some said: Show us another sign, that we may believe in thee as the minister of the living God, for Simon also did many signs in our presence and therefore did we follow him.”*

Peter’s second miracle is to bring a dead fish back to life and set it swimming for all to see. Restored to his faith by these signs, the senator has Simon beaten and thrown out of his house. Simon comes to him out, saying, *“Lo, here am I, Simon: come thou down, Peter, and I will convict thee*

that thou hast believed on a man which is a Jew and a carpenter's son." Peter sends down a woman and her nursing baby. In this third miracle, the baby curses Simon with an adult voice, announcing that Peter will meet him in the Roman forum on the Sabbath, there to decide the contest.

At night, Jesus appears to Peter and says, "Already is much people of the brotherhood returned through me and through the signs which thou hast wrought in my name. But thou shalt have a contest of the faith upon the sabbath that cometh, and many more of the Gentiles and of the Jews shall be converted in my name unto me who was reproached and mocked and spat upon. For I will be present with thee when thou askest for signs and wonders, and thou shalt convert many: but thou shalt have Simon opposing thee by the works of his father; yet all his works shall be shown to be charms and contrivances of sorcery."

When the Sabbath arrives, such a large crowd gathers, that people are charged for their seats. Christian brethren and Roman pagans alike fill the forum. Even senators and prefects are in attendance. The crowd demands that Peter and Simon each give proof of their claims so that the people may choose who to believe. Peter promises proof, and mocks Simon for his attempts to buy the power of the Holy Spirit, as described in Acts. Simon then mocks Jesus as a mere man who lived and died. The Roman prefect then issues the first challenge for both men. He calls one of his servants and commands that Simon should kill the slave, and that

Peter should bring him back to life. Simon speaks a word, and the man dies. Peter says God is not to be tempted or proved, but that God will love and hear those that are worthy. At Peter's prayer, the man is brought back to life.

For the second challenge, the mother of a dead senator brings her son's body to the forum. Peter shouts, "Ye men of Rome, let there now be a just judgment betwixt me and Simon; and judge ye whether of us two believeth in the living God, he or I. Let him raise up the body that lieth here, and believe in him as the angel of God. But if he be not able, and I call upon my God and restore the son alive unto his mother, then believe ye that this man is a sorcerer and a deceiver". Simon retorts, "Ye men of Rome, if ye behold the dead man arise, will ye cast Peter out of the city? And all the people said: We will not only cast him out, but on the very instant will we burn him with fire."

Simon proceeds to trick the crowd, by moving the dead body like a puppet. Peter, threatened with burning, reveals the deception to the onlookers: the man is still dead. Peter then genuinely brings the senator back to life. When the crowd threatens to burn Simon instead, Peter reminds them to love their enemies. Simon is spared so that he might repent, but a few days later, the defeated magician proclaims that everyone has been deceived by Peter. Simon Magus announces that he will fly up to God his father. Amazingly, he begins to fly over Rome. Peter calls out to Jesus to make Simon fall, not to die, but to fail in con-

verting any more people. Simon plummets, breaks his leg, and is finally abandoned by the Romans, who believe in Peter henceforth. Later, however, he dies during surgery.

So ends this apocryphal tale. The Gnostic followers of Simon eventually fell to the advance of Catholic Christianity, just as Simon fell before Peter. Rome, after several centuries, surrendered to Peter's faith. This book may once have influenced the outcome of that struggle, but that victory did not come quickly enough for the apostle. Another section of the "Acts of Peter" gives the earliest known description of Peter's death – he was crucified upside down in Rome. The "Acts of Peter", with its whimsical miracles, like a talking dog and baby, was never destined to stand alongside canonical, inspired scripture. But it does entertain while teaching that it is important to help fellow Christian believers along when others try to lead them astray. In this story, Peter is an outstanding servant of God when he answers God's call to go and speak the truth in answer to the lies of a deceiver, trusting in God to work through him and bring both new and fallen believers to the faith.

### Staff

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Pastor

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Pastor of Pastoral Care

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Director of Music/  
Youth Director

Toni Schlemmer,  
Director of Drama/  
Associate Director of Music

Connie Frierson  
Program Director/  
Seminary Intern

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Nancy Mead  
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**Calvin Presbyterian Church** is a spiritual family sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and discerning God's purpose and will through sincere commitment to worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching and mission.

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|                   |                                |                 |   |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|---|
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| Jim Willard       | <i>Building &amp; Grounds</i>  | Karen Albert    | <i>Spiritual Nurture &amp; Outreach</i> |
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| Mark Sebring      | <i>Personnel &amp; Finance</i> |                 |   |

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[www.Calvinchurchezele.org](http://www.Calvinchurchezele.org)

We're on the web!

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*where faith, compassion, and authenticity meet*

**Calvin Presbyterian Church**



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