

Crosspoints

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH



CALVARY
BAPTIST CHURCH

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MISSING FACES

Over the past several months, we have been talking about reaching out to folks who have been missing in our congregation. One of those folks could have been you at some point. When you have been out sick, had surgery or been with a loved one because they were sick, has anyone called, sent a card, or visited? Christ wants us to be the hands and feet to those who are **missing**.

How is it going in reaching out to the **missing faces**? One of our members I visited recently shared that he had no family except Calvary folks. He shared how he used to ride the church van for many years helping to pick up folks who had no ride. He said, "I still love my church and will always depend on them to visit me." Another member, who recently turned 99 years young, shared with me one day, "I love my church and love it when I get cards and visits from my Calvary friends." These are only a few of the comments I have gotten. Thank you for your contacts!

Let us always be alert and aware of those **missing faces**, knowing at times it could be one of us.

Keep being the extended hand of Christ to those **missing**.

Proverbs 17:17 says, "A friend loves at all times".

Dates to Remember

Sunday, June 2

9:30 Sunday School
11:00 Worship
Faith Dynamics: Focus and Celebrate
Hebrews 12:1-3

Wednesday, June 5

6:00 PM Bible Study and Prayer Group
7:15 Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, June 9

9:30 Sunday School
11:00 Worship
Pentecost
The Spirit of Community
Acts 2:1-21

Monday, June 10

6:30 Leadership Team Meeting

Wednesday, June 12

7:15 Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, June 16

9:30 Sunday School
11:00 Worship
The Everyday Trinity
John 16:12-15

Monday, June 17

6:00 Deacons Meeting

Wednesday, June 19

7:15 Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, June 23

9:30 Sunday School
11:00 Worship
Communion
The Grace of Freedom
Galatians 1:1-10

Wednesday, June 26

7:15 Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, June 30

9:30 Sunday School
11:00 Worship

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

"Simple Gifts" is a lovely and profound Shaker Hymn. The words of the first stanza are familiar to us:

'Tis a gift to be simple,
'tis a gift to be free,
'tis a gift to come down where you ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
It will be in the valley of love and delight.

The hymn affirms an easy-to-overlook truth: simplicity and freedom go hand in hand. Together, they lead us to love and delight.

Life often feels frustratingly complex, doesn't it? Navigating the healthcare system. Learning and keeping-pace with changes in technology. Balancing responsibilities to our elders and to our children and grandchildren. Trying to make sense of current political and cultural upheavals. Holding on to life-giving traditions while letting-go of stifling traditionalism. Cherishing the best of the past, while remaining open to growth in the present and future. These things are complicated, to say the least.

As we deal with inevitable complexities, it's crucial—and it's a gift—to remember what matters most. Some religious leaders once asked Jesus what he thought mattered most: "Which commandment is first?" What should be our highest priority and central concern? Affirming his Jewish heritage, Jesus drew his answer from Deuteronomy and Leviticus. He said: "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:29-31).

Jesus' answer is a guide to the freedom of simplicity: as we make our way life's demands and opportunities, love matters most of all. What ways of thinking and living make it more likely that we will experience God's love for us? What decisions and actions help us to listen more closely for God's voice and guidance; to sing, pray, and praise; to care about the things God cares about; and to join God in the work of justice and mercy, of grace and peace? How can we demonstrate to our neighbors that God is as good and loving as Jesus said and showed? We will know that we've arrived at the place of simple freedom when our love for God and our love for the world are expanding.

The best gifts in life are the simplest, I think. To name only a few: the joy of sharing a meal, stories, laughter, and tears with each other; a walk in the woods or by a river or along the streets of our town; the smile of a child; cool water on a hot day; deep breaths; a well-written novel or poem; a bud flowering into its temporary glory; birdsong at dawn; and a note from a friend. We think of these things as "ordinary," but they are ordinary only at first glance. As we experience them, we realize how extraordinary they actually are; they sustain, enrich, delight, and liberate us. They make our lives possible, meaningful, and joyful.

All these gifts are expressions, ultimately, of God's love: "Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17). To remember that we live in a world that belongs to such a gracious God is to "find ourselves in the place just right."