



747 Broad Street  
Providence, RI 02907  
401.461.7507 Phone  
401.785.8275 Fax  
[www.calbaptist.org](http://www.calbaptist.org)  
[info@calbaptist.org](mailto:info@calbaptist.org)

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**December 2015 Issue**

**Current Resident or:**

## **RETIRED MINISTERS AND MISSIONARIES OFFERING**

The Grace of Giving ~ Grace turns our souls to Christ and stirs within us the fervent desire to be gracious to others. As we remember the powerful witness and care of devoted ministers and missionaries who have helped us to grow in our faith, stood by us in the face of adversity, and rejoiced with us in moments of triumph, we give thanks that they served as instruments of God's Grace in the ministry to the people of God.

During the month of December we will have the opportunity to give back to those who have given so much by receiving the Retired Ministers and missionaries Offering. Our goal is \$200. Special envelopes are available at the church. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

## From the Pastor to You



Hello Calvary Family! I pray that your Thanksgiving was wonderful. Although it may be hard to see sometimes, we all have a lot for which to be thankful. Now as we approach the most holy of all days, Christmas, the birth of Jesus as our Savior, we continue to pause in awe of God's great love. Well at least most of us do. My son and I were in a store back in October and everyone seemed to be eagerly anticipating celebrating Halloween but this particular store was playing Christmas music. I asked my son if he heard the music and he said, "They are playing Christmas music already?" We had a comical discussion about the commercialization of Christmas and the loss of the significance of its meaning by the world. However, it's not just the world who has lost the awe and excitement of Christmas. Christians have been sucked into the vortex of belligerent emotions and actions surrounding the best Christmas deals.

The lines at various stores snaking around the parking lot for almost a mile on "Black Friday," rival those of a general admission rock concerts. Some people camp out for days in advance for a chance to be the first to get that item they neither can afford nor really want/need. They stay awake all night, don't eat, and will do anything to stay ahead of the next shopper. Some even have impromptu title fights to see who will win their place in the shopper's "hall of shame." I feel for them as they chase after material things that will not last. After all, this is supposed to be a time of happiness, great cheer and good will toward everyone. There is nothing wrong with buying gifts and celebrating Christmas with loved ones but the celebration and anticipation should always be couched in the premise of honoring Jesus' birth.

Yet, I am reminded that regardless of how much we all have been consumed with things that have nothing to do with the birth of Christ, it's not too late to snap out of it. As Christmas approaches, we look forward to remembering the birth of Jesus Christ and what that means. St. John 3:16-17 (KJV), says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world not to condemn the world; but that through Him might be saved." God gave us Jesus so we would not perish, have everlasting life, and be saved. God could have given up on all of us a long time ago but He did not. He wants us to have the most out of the life He gave us on Earth and in Heaven. But we will never know the joy that comes from living in Jesus chasing after empty relationships, self-fulfillment, or material things.

We are in the season of Advent which celebrates the coming of Jesus at His birth and the coming again that we anticipate in the future. When He comes again, He is coming to bring us home to live with Him forever (St. John 14:1-3). Jesus made preparations for us to on the ultimate "Black Friday" when He came to die on the cross and rose on the third day for you me. Still, before He went to the cross, Jesus was born in a lowly manger. There may not have been room for Him at the Inn but we must make room for Him in our hearts. (St. Luke 2:7; Romans 10:9-10). I pray that this Christmas Season you and I remember and anticipate the real meaning of Christmas--Jesus Christ. For it was by His Grace and Mercy that we live today. Merry Christmas!!

Pastor Jabulani McCalister  
Senior Pastor

## **FAMILY CELEBRATIONS**

### **Anniversaries**

We celebrated 118th Church Anniversary On Sunday, November 15, 2015. We thank God for blessing Calvary to continue our ministry all these years! Let's move forward continuing to let our light shine for Jesus Christ in our community and world!!

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## **BIBLE INSTITUTE**

### **NEW COURSE: Living the Debt-Free Life**

We will be offering a specialty course on Sundays after worship called "Debt-Free Living" on January 3, 10 & 17 2016. This 3 week class will be a great foundation to help all of us get out of debt and be financially free to faithfully invest in our ministry to the church and the world.

Contact the church office to sign-up at [info@calbaptist.org](mailto:info@calbaptist.org) or phone (401) 461-7507. This small group class has only 12 openings and is filling up quickly. So, sign up right away. Note: The class is based on the book "*Debt-Free Living*" by Larry Burkett. You will also need your Bible as well as the book is based on Biblical concepts of debt-freedom.

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## **CHRISTIAN BUSINESS DIRECTORY**

We would like to create a Christian Business Directory for Calvary. If you own a small business, please send your information to the church office so we may help promote your business for others members who may need your services.

## **Christmas Eve Worship/Hymn Sing**

We will be having our Annual Christmas Eve Worship at Thursday, December 24, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Come join us as we sing some great Christmas Hymns that remind of that Jesus is the Reason for the Season!

If you would like to participate in the worship through singing a solo, instrumentation, prayer, audio/visual, etc., please contact the church office.

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## **Outreach**

Calvary and Iglesia Bautista Hispana El Calvario (IBHEC) are working together to create a Care Package Ministry for our college students who are away. We also want to provide this outreach to out-of-state students and international students attending college in our area.

If you are interested in working on this ministry these are the areas in which you can help: working with local college representative to identify students who would benefit from receiving letters/cards, providing care packages with snacks and supplies, inviting students to dinner, etc. Please keep this in prayer as this may be the only opportunity we have to witness to these students with the practical love of Jesus Christ. Who knows, they just might want to attend our church as a result!

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## **Prayer Requests**

Please be in prayer for the Askie Family who recently lost the last Patriotic/Elder in their family out of state.

Please pray with and for Trobel Bloe, Sr. and family in the loss his mother and nephew in Liberia.

Please pray about becoming a tither to help support the ministries of our church. If you tithe already we are grateful for your faithful investment in the Kingdom of God for His purposes.

## **Children, Youth and Young Adult Corner**

### **UPDATE: 2015 Ministers Alliance of Rhode Island Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Breakfast**

The Ministers Alliance of Rhode Island 2015 Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Breakfast will be held at the Rhodes on the Pawtucket 60 Rhodes Pl, Cranston, RI 02905, (401) 785-4333, January 17, 2016. Doors open at 7:00 a.m. Breakfast begins at 8:00 a.m. If you are interested in attending, tickets at the Calvary table are \$35.00 per person. Please contact the church office for more details.

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*Thank  
You*

We thank all those who have pledged their tithes for 2016. This will help us continue to serve the Lord in mighty ways.

We are very thankful to God and the members of Calvary for helping us collect boxes full of JOY and GOOD NEWS for the needy children around the world through Operation Christmas Child. We met our goal and more, 350 boxes for the glory to God. 36 of those boxes were from the Calvary members! Also very thankful for the extra monetary donations to help cover shipping. Extra thanks to Rosa and Rose Delgado for their efforts in getting Calvary excited about this great and amazing cause, also for being part of the volunteer group on collection week. Muchas Gracias!

God will not forget the work you did.... Hebrews 10:6

Thank you!  
Iglesia Bautista Hispana El Calvario

## **YOU'RE INVITED**

Rev. Dr. Alvin Johnson, Senior Pastor and Second Free Will Baptist Church, 75 Chester Avenue, Providence, RI (401) 331-4681, will be hosting a Memorial Vigil for victims of Gun Violence in collaboration with the Religious Coalition for a Violence-Free Rhode Island and the National Gun Sabbath Memorial Weekend, (a project of Faiths United and the Washington National Cathedral), Thursday, December 10, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

In addition, they will be hosting a special 185th Church Anniversary Weekend. Rev. Dr. Marvin McMickle, President and Professor of Church Leadership at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School will be the guest preacher at the Saturday, Dec. 12th at 6 p.m. banquet at the Providence, Marriott (1Orms st.) and Sunday, Dec. 13th 11 a.m. at the church. Contact Second Free Will for details.

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## **TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE**

Calvary needs your help. We've spoken on Treasure on multiple occasions, and elsewhere in this newsletter. We'll speak to Talent in a moment. First, let me talk about time. If you have neither talent nor treasure, and only a few spare minutes of time, you can still help. For example, some of you may have noticed a lack of pencils in the prayer request pencil holders. There are pencils in the church office. A few more pencils can be recovered from under the sanctuary air grates. See Rick Robison for tools and instructions. Another example: Those of you who've had occasion to look under the pews may have noticed deposits of a certain foreign substance. It shouldn't be there, and what is there needs to be removed. Some of the youth and perhaps a few adults will know what substance I have in mind, and how it got there. You know who you are. Again, please see Rick Robison for tools and instructions. There are many more such projects around the church building and grounds, quite a few of which can be completed in a manner of minutes.

For those of you with talent, don't hide them! There's a full page listing elsewhere in this newsletter titled 'Ongoing Opportunities to Serve'. That list is not all-inclusive. If you have a particular gift and would like to show it in service to Calvary, please speak with Pastor Jabulani or any member of the Servant Leader Team.

## **A Day in the Treasurer's Duties**

Mid-month is always a challenging time for your treasurer. That's when most of the bills have come in, I know what bills have to be paid by month's end, and I'm waiting to see what we get in revenue. On November 19<sup>th</sup>, our outstanding liabilities through the first week of December totaled roughly eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000). Anticipated revenues included Tithes and Offerings through two more Sundays, Thanksgiving offerings, and outstanding rent payments from our various tenants. What happened next was a matter of faith, as I proceeded to write checks for over seven thousand dollars (\$7,000) more than we had cash in the bank. My hope was that deposits would come in faster than the checks were paid out. Thankfully, some very timely (and even early) rent payments came in. Along with the Tithes and Offerings, there was more than enough to cover what had already been paid out. Although fortuitous, this situation is obviously not ideal.

Here's the optimal situation: To start with, we'd have a zero net budget, meaning we'd pay out exactly what we take in. (As many of you are aware, that was not the case for 2015, and the 2016 budget features a much larger deficit.) Next, we'd have a reliable and consistent revenue stream. Businesses love long-term contracts, memberships, subscriptions, etc. for this very reason: reliable revenue, even if at a discount. The closest thing Calvary has to such arrangements are your pledge cards. As of Sunday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, twenty-seven (27) families had pledged a total of \$54,848. That's well short of the \$122,000 in the proposed 2016 budget, but it's a reasonable start. We recognize that many in the congregation pledge what they're comfortable providing guaranteed, and then contribute more as their financial circumstances allow. Still, it's nice to know how much revenue we can count on monthly. If you haven't yet sent in your pledge cards, please do so.

Speaking of long-term contracts and subscriptions, many businesses also provide incentives to sign up for automatic bank drafts. Did you know you can also do that with Calvary? Here's how it works: Virtually all banks that provide online banking (that is, virtually all banks) also provide electronic bill paying. Citizens Bank, for example, provides a 'Pay Bills & People' feature. Under their 'Payment Center', you can go to 'Add a Company or Person' and add Calvary. Where the form asks for an account number, use your envelope number. A few clicks further, and you can select 'Auto Pay' to set up an automatic monthly or weekly contribution.

God loves a cheerful giver, and your Treasurer loves a consistent revenue stream. Your pledges and a little automation will go a long way towards curbing the anxiety of meeting Calvary's financial obligations. Please get those pledge cards in if you haven't already, and please feel free to contact me if you'd like help setting up automatic contributions.





## HOMEBOUND LIST

Our Homebound Members love to hear from you! Why not give them a call or send a card? Cards are available on the bookshelf in the church office.

June Allen  
57 Taplow Street  
Warwick, RI 02889  
739-6208

Bert Smith  
Brookdale Independent Living Center - Apt. F-8  
2783 West Shore Road  
Warwick, RI 02889  
921-6838

Trobel Bloe, Sr.  
14 Maclaine Drive  
North Providence, RI 02904  
353-3095

Wilbur Workman  
Gateway Healthcare Cortland House  
25 Cedar Swamp Road  
Smithfield, RI 02917  
231-7762 or 861-8655

Geneveive Hansford  
25 Yarmouth Street  
Providence, RI 02907  
461-0862

Gabriel Zarwea  
507 Prairie Avenue  
Providence, RI 02905  
837-1929

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### Health Care

If you don't have health insurance, the Rhode Island Free Clinic offers top quality medical treatment for free <http://www.rifreeclinic.org>.

## **Consumerism Threatens Generous Stewardship**

Modern North American culture promotes harmful messages about wealth and possessions that directly compete with the biblical story. It is hard to be generous stewards in a culture that believes more is always better, we are what we own, and that security is found in possessions.

When we succumb to these beliefs, we develop harmful habits that interfere with our call to be generous stewards. These habits have led many to take on substantial consumer debt by purchasing unnecessary products, often with little thought for who made them, under what conditions, and at what cost to creation. These habits also promote a sense of entitlement that ensnares both rich and poor alike, fostering selfishness, greed, and fear, while many in our world struggle to access basics like clean water and daily food. Consumerism runs so deep that sometimes even humans are seen as commodities, evidenced by a pervasive human trafficking industry.

Christians are not immune from the influence of consumerism. We recognize many who would like to be financially generous are not able to because of the weight of debt. We may also be tempted to approach God for our own selfish gain, treat prayer like an ATM, or view church as a marketplace where we pick and choose religious services that meet our desires. When we in the church fail to reorient our lives from these disordered relationships with wealth and possessions, we decrease our capacity to live counter-culturally, be radically generous, and share the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed to a broken world.

### **Our Call: Stewardship and Generosity**

God calls us to live as generous stewards in response to God's abundance and sustenance. Christ's life, death, and resurrection free us to see wealth and possessions differently, to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness (Matthew 6:33). The Holy Spirit reminds us that our identity is secure because of our relationship with God in Christ, not from what we own and control (Romans 8:16).

God calls the church to be the primary formational community that shapes disciples for lives of stewardship and generosity. Whether we have much or little, we are all called to put our hope and trust in God, be content and thankful, and to give abundantly and cheerfully (Luke 12:16-21; 16:10-13; Philippians 4:11-13; 2 Corinthians 9:7). Scripture also contains a specific and emphatic call to those who have much: "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life" (1 Timothy 6:17-19, TNIV).

(Continued on Page 9)

## **(Consumerism Threatens Generous Stewardship Article Continued)**

The church is also called to be the place where we continually retell and hear the good news of God's grace and abundance. The church provides the context to confess that we all fail to live out our call to be generous stewards. We are each invited to participate in the learning community of the church in order to re-form and reframe our lives. We are salt and light for a world that desperately needs a hope-filled alternative for how to view wealth and possessions.

### **Our Response**

Living into our call to be stewards who depend on God's gracious giving and character is no doubt a lifelong journey. We commit ourselves to depend on God's abundant provisions to sustain us in our daily walk individually and together.

Calvary brothers and sisters in Christ recently completed a six-week stewardship campaign, we recited scripture, told our personal stories, shared the budget shortfalls of the church, heard from the Pastor about God's command to give generously and cheerfully. We prayed together and asked the church members to be in prayer individually as we prepared our commitment cards to support the work of the church and to continue to build God's kingdom of believers.

Let's create a culture of generosity in our congregation through tithing and the giving of our time, talents, and service so that the church becomes a radical example of sacrifice and self-giving to the world. Amen!

In His Service,

Carol Hall-Walker  
Stewardship Ministry Chair

