

John Calvin (Part 2) A Job or a Calling?

By Rev. Dr. Johanna McCune Wagner, with Lisa Justice



This is the second installment in a series by Pastor Johanna on one of her favorite theologians—John Calvin, the founder of Presbyterianism, and on his instruction manual on the fundamentals of the faith—[Institutes of the Christian Religion](#).

What's the difference between a job and a calling? Is there a difference? In our contemporary 24/7 work world, we are obsessed with achievement, keep working after hours and on vacation, and measure our personal worth by how much we can get done.

What can a 16th-century theologian possibly have to say to help us navigate the frenetic pace of our modern lives? In the case of John Calvin, quite a bit. Calvin would tell us to pay attention to our vocations.

When we think of the word “vocation,” we may think about a person’s profession—the job to which their education, training, and aptitudes have fit them. But for Calvin this word means something more. It’s the work God has given a person to focus on as a means of controlling the human appetite to have a hand in every pie, to quote an old adage.

Calvin writes, “God knows the boiling restlessness of the human mind, the fickleness with which it is borne hither and thither, its eagerness to hold opposites at one time in its grasp, its ambition. Therefore, lest all things should be thrown into confusion by our folly and rashness, he has assigned distinct duties to each in the different modes of life.”

God knows that trying to do it all is an inherent part of being human. So Calvin says God has given each one of us “distinct duties,” a calling, a vocation. God has set us up not for scattered chaos, but for focused success.

Calvin is not primarily concerned with the modern idea of finding fulfillment through work. He’s more interested in the way our work can function to slow us down, to relieve our anxieties, to prevent us from being “always driven about at random.”

Sound unfamiliar? We typically think of work as a source of stress, something that’s hard. But for Calvin, if we are employing our God-given vocation, work should be the opposite, a source of peace and assurance.

Calvin would have us remember that we live in a world full of other people, each with their own efforts to make on behalf of their fellow human beings. We don’t have to do everything!

Calvin would also have us remember that this world is ultimately God’s responsibility. More often than we realize, it’s more needful that we get out of His way than that we take on that one extra thing.



Bellow for Bellows

Update by Ron Potts – Worship & Music Committee Chair

Bellow Talk

by Beth Byrne

Our masterful organ is showing its age.
The pipes stand in majesty, manuals lie staged.

But bellows are leaking, a band-aid won't do.
Replacement is crucial or silence is due.

The bellows are lungs that gather the air,
which flows through the pipes with pressurized care.

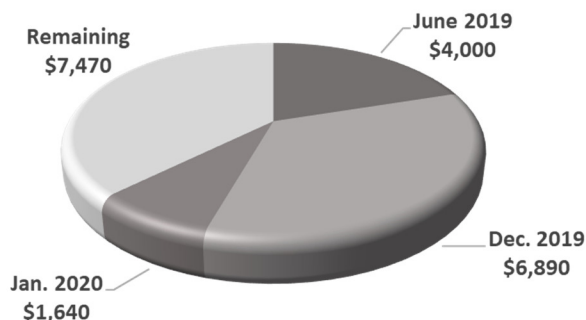
Producing the sounds, in glorious array,
that brighten our worship on each Sabbath Day.

But bellows are leaking, their future is bleak,
and bellows are pricey, the budget is weak.

So, **Bellow for Bellows! The organ is dear!**
And save up your dollars to bring it some cheer.

Our "Bellow for Bellows" campaign to replace the aging organ bellows continues. To recap, the leather bellows are the originals, and the two wind reservoirs have withstood the heat and cold in the pipe chambers for almost 70 years. They are now rapidly deteriorating and are leaking pressurized air that gives the organ its voice; they are on the verge of failure due to the aging leather. The pressure is now on us to replace them, which will ensure the winding system remains in good condition for many decades. The total cost of repair is \$28,750. The Worship and Music Committee set a fundraising goal at \$20,000 to complete these repairs.

Fundraising Campaign - \$20,000 Goal



Update:

We started with \$10,680 in the Worship and Music Dedicated Organ Rebuilding Fund Account before we started the campaign.

So far the campaign has raised a total of \$12,530 as follows:

- June 2019 \$4,000
- Dec. 2019 \$6,890
- Jan. 2020 \$1,640

We need an additional \$7,470 to reach our fundraising goal of \$20,000. If generosity surprises us all, any additional contributions would go to replace the Cathedral Chimes, which is a \$4,000 expense.

We cannot thank you enough for your generosity.



Choir News

by Andrew Cardiasmenos

We are so happy to welcome 2 new choir members, Pamela Hester (Soprano) and Rich Nunley (Tenor).

We are always looking for new members for our Cathedral Choir and the Sanctuary Praise Band. If you are interested please talk to Andrew.

Holy Week:

We are planning the following services for Holy Week:

- Maundy Thursday Service at 7 pm on April 9th.
- Good Friday, April 10th open prayer in chapel
- Holy Saturday Service, April 11th at 7 pm.
- We will be adding a Brass ensemble for a special Easter Sunday Service.



Missions

by the Great Commission Team

FPCC's New Supported Mission:

Starting this year, FPCC Mission Team will be sponsoring PC(USA) Mental Health Ministry, a mission agency established by the 2018 PC(USA) General Assembly to promote mental health ministries. Rev. Dan Milford, its steering committee's moderator, shares that "Our mission is to educate and equip the church to walk compassionately alongside people living with mental health issues, recognize neurodiversity and encourage mental well-being." To educate, equip and empower churches, Presbyterian Mental Health Ministry will be providing resources such as a toolkit to help pastors and congregations to realize that mental illness can happen to anybody with one-in-five U.S. adults having a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year, as well as supporting people living with mental health challenges.

Some Ideas to Consider for 2020:

Love God, Love People ... Serve is FPCC's mission statement, but how can you really help? First and always, you can pray. In addition, listed below, are the organizations and how you might serve. For questions, contact **Susan Koester**.

| Organization | Focus | How to Serve |
|---|---|--|
| Bay Area Rescue Mission (BARM) | Provide food and shelter to homeless people and provide life transformation programs. https://www.bayarearescue.org/ | Schedule a visit as to determine how you can help (Richmond) |
| Contra Costa County Homeless Shelter | Provide food and shelter to adult homeless people. https://cchealth.org/h3/emergency-shelter.php | On 5 th Saturday of the month, cook and/or serve dinner to 100-120 men and women (Concord) |
| Contra Costa Interfaith Housing | Ending homelessness one family at a time. https://ccinterfaithhousing.org/ | Tutoring (Concord & Pleasant Hill) |
| Humanity Way, Inc. | We aspire to restore humanity by providing for people's basic needs (i.e., housing, employment, food, clothing, mental health services, etc.), whether disadvantaged, in a crisis, or in need of emotional or psychological healing. https://humanityway.org/ | Contact DeVonn Powers for how you can assist. (Concord) |
| Monument Crisis Center (MCC) | Monument Crisis Center serves low-income families and individuals in Contra Costa County by providing nutritious food, education, general assistance and referrals. https://www.monumentcrisiscenter.org/ | Tutoring, Bingo helper, Food Preparation, Administration Assistance, and other opportunities. (Concord) |
| SHARE | Working with other food pantries, providing food to low-income families https://www.foodpantries.org/li/ca-share_food_pantry | Provide food and/or help at the premise (Concord) |
| Mt. View Family Shelter (Shelter, Inc.) | Get homeless families with children off the streets and into a safe temporary home. The shelter accommodates 7 to 10 families (up to 30 people) https://shelterinc.org/programs/endhomelessness.html | Several times a year, cook and/or serve dinner up to 30 family members (Martinez) |
| Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) | Focuses on the long term recovery of disaster impacted communities. https://pda.pcusa.org/ | Assist financially (Globally) |
| Winter Nights | Winter Nights Family Shelter in Contra Costa County, CA provides homeless families with children (capacity = 30 people) a clean, safe, and warm shelter with bedding at night and a daytime services center https://cccwinternights.org/ | Cook and/or serve dinner up to 30 people including children, as well as tutoring, and being Night Watch person or games coordinator. (Pleasant Hill) |
| 211 | For food, shelter and assistance referrals, call 211 | Phone Operator |



From the Desk of Rebecca Chase

Director of Community Care

Guests, Regular Attenders, Members, and Connecting

I am taking on a new kind of challenge. I am now the "go-to" person for helping guests become members of our community. We had 137 people walk in the door on Sundays (and sign in!) during 2019. Of those, at least 36 came back again! Eight people became members, and 6 are regular attenders. Pastor Johanna and I are working on data systems to keep better track of new (and current) friends so no one is overlooked. Here's a reminder of ways you can be helpful:

- Guests come in every door.
- Be ready to greet anyone you don't recognize.
- Remember why you're here, and you may get a chance to share your story!
- Ushers have a gift for guests! Make sure they know (or tell an usher).
- We need contact information so I can send a Welcome note:
 - o point out the Welcome Card in the pews, or
 - o pass them the Friendship Pad (with your information already in it as a sample)
 - o Even if all they write is a name and an email or phone number, that's fine!
- Invite guests to join you for coffee in the Fellowship Hall.
 - o Commonalities are easy to find when you ask questions!

Just remember that Jesus asks us to love one another. Try to challenge yourself to say more than "Welcome". And if our guest is asking about what ways they

can be involved with a group, here is the list again...! Thank you, my friends!

**Weekly Groups:

Clayton Small Group (2nd & 4th Monday 7pm)

- *Joshua: All God's Good Promises (until 2/19 then cont. after Easter)*
 - *Lenten Study - Becoming a Beloved Community: A Matthew 25 journey to the cross (3/4 - 4/8)*
- Jim W & Marilyn W (672-2250)

Wed Night Small Group (6:30pm) Fireside Room

- *Joshua: All God's Good Promises (til 2/19 then cont. after Easter)*
 - *Lenten Study - Becoming a Beloved Community: A Matthew 25 journey to the cross (3/4 - 4/8)*
- Rebecca Chase (858-805-5874)
RSVP for dinner

Theology on Tap (Wed 6:30pm) The Old Spaghetti Factory

- Barhopping with Bonhoeffer (thru 2/19)
 - The Cross and the Lynching Tree, by James Cone (start 3/4)
- Pastor Johanna (Text 925-233-0022 or call office to RSVP)

Men's Bible Study (Tues 6:45am) Digger's Diner, 1895 Farm Bureau Rd

The Book of James
David Dowell (914-0429)

Bible Study (Wed 1:00pm-2:30pm) Fireside Room

The Attributes of God
LaVerne Herren (682-3882)

Mission Sewing Group (Thurs 10am-2pm) Fellowship Hall

Bring a lunch! Ladies service seamstresses & quilting group. Beginning sewers welcome. Valerie Gardner (689-1455)

Community Bible Study (CBS)

Joshua, Christian Leadership, Christian Living

- (Wednesdays 9:15am-11:15am) Women, Children, Youth - Lynn Menegus lmenegus@comcast.net
- (Thursdays 7:30pm - 9:30pm) - Men, Women, Youth Diana Riveness aundi5@comcast.net

**Monthly Groups:

Circle IV - Women's Bible Study and Lunch (1st Thurs 11am-2pm)

Location Varies
Angels: Standing Guard
Anna Belle Horgan (685-5595) & Joanne Myers (825-9684)

First Fridays (1st Friday 6pm-10pm):

Harvey's House, Concord
Young Adults Art/Culture discussion
Eric & Kristin (617) 584-8919

Merry Macs (Monthly Saturdays or Sundays - Location Varies)

Christian fellowship group, with ministries
Bill Selb (925) 672-6393

**Children's Worship

New Curriculum! Growing in Grace and Gratitude

During January, the children heard stories about Jesus - when he was young, and later when John the Baptist baptized him. Through the rest of January and all February, the children are hearing important lessons Jesus gave to his disciples from the gospel of Matthew, chapters 3-7. Thank you Diana Stearns and Marilyn Wollenweber for your leadership!

The Spring Quarter begins on March 1st, when we will hear more teachings from Jesus from

Continued next page

(Continued from previous page)

Matthew, and then start walking through Lent. Palm Sunday is April 5th, which is always an active and exciting day, with palm branches to process in with. Make sure to be here for Easter on April 12th!! We'll have a special Egg Hunt!

We have a very important LEADERSHIP CHANGE happening – Darryl McCollum, CLP will be the one Worship Leader, and our many assistants will be working alongside him, rotating in weekly.

We are SO grateful for this new ministry change with such a talented spiritual leader for the young ones. They'll be moving on to the Youth Group (The Crew!) before we know it.

Children who choose to stay in the worship service, and those who are older, may enjoy a special bulletin just for them. They will find puzzles, games, and activities to do based on the theme of the Sunday reading.

****Commissioned Lay Pastor Update:**

I am DONE with my classes!! It's hard to believe it's been a year. Pastor Johanna and I, and the other CLP candidates, will meet with Presbytery leadership to determine our next steps in the coming weeks. Check in on DeVonn Powers, Carlos Flores and Ruth Mejia to see how they're doing! Keep your eyes open for the Commissioning service date.

*Peace be with you
Rebecca Chase*



2020 Elders, Deacons and Trustees

During our worship service on January 12th we gratefully installed our new Session Elders and Deacons.

Thank you to Elder Vern Hance, who completed his term on Session and as Chair of Finance. Meanwhile Susan Koester, Ruth Stevenson, Ruth Mejia and Carlos Flores extended their terms, and new elder Josh Maitland came on.

For the Board of Deacons, Terry Jones is serving as Moderator. We say a great big thank you to outgoing deacons Carol Hance, Diane Nickerson, Carrie Smith and Diana Stearns. New incoming deacons include LaVerne Herren, Harold Lund, Trudy Meigs, Judith Snider, and Carolyn Thornton.

Session

- Moderator – Rev. Dr. Johanna McCune Wagner
- Clerk of Session – DeVonn Powers
- Administration
 - DeVonn Powers, (Personnel / Communications)
 - Susan Koester (Finance)
 - David Stearns (Property)
- Connections
 - Ruth Stevenson (Outreach)
 - Ruth Mejia, CLP in training (Congregational Care)
- Great Commission
 - Ruth Mejia, CLP in training (Missions Team)
 - Lee Borden (Worship and Music)
- Spiritual Growth
 - Josh Maitland (Children / Adults)
 - Jeremy Martin (Youth)
 - Carlos Flores, CLP in training (Leadership Development)

Board of Deacons

- Moderator – Terry Jones
- Beth Byrne
- Kaffy Cecil
- Charmaine Ferrera
- Abby Ford
- LaVerne Herren
- Don Horgan
- Harold Lund
- Bev McHale
- Trudy Meigs
- Judith Snider
- Carolyn Thornton

Trustees

- Frank Fribley
- Allen Nickerson
- Bill Selb
- Session Representative (TBD)

FPCC Leadership Retreat

by David Dowell



San Damiano Retreat - Danville

Each year in January Elders and Deacons get away for weekend retreat. This year was very special because it provided an opportunity for Pastor Johanna to work with the leadership of the church in planning her first full year at FPCC. This special getaway always provides a great opportunity for spiritual insights, spiritual growth and important interactions among all the leadership groups – Elders, Deacons and permanent staff.

This year's retreat was again held at San Damiano Retreat, the beautiful hilltop retreat in the hills above Danville. The general purpose of the annual Leadership Retreat is to plan and prepare for the upcoming year. It is also a time for Deacons and Elders to meet in unity.

This year's Leadership Retreat was held on January 17-19, (Friday evening through Sunday noon). The theme was "Becoming a Community Spiritual Hub". It began on Friday evening with Pastor Johanna expressing her vision for the Church. She stressed the importance of

building on the strengths that we already have, including our great history and experience of working with the community, our Church's strong music program, our exceptional unity of spirit, and our mutual passion for support to each other and service to others.

Much of the weekend was spent in reviewing those strengths in terms of how they fit into important spiritual disciplines that are necessary to truly become a spiritual center for our community.

First, Andrew Cardiasmenos spoke on role of music in our spiritual discipline. Next, Rebecca Chase addressed the importance of liturgy in the church. Then, Susan Koester provided insights into service opportunities. David Dowell provided a devotional handout that challenged everyone to heed Jesus' call to share our faith with others, to understand our roles and capabilities, and to recognize (and create) opportunities to spread the Word of God.

One of the best things about a retreat is having the opportunity

for everyone to brainstorm together. There were several opportunities for brainstorming throughout the weekend, and Pastor Johanna demonstrated her unique skills by stimulating participation and eliciting ideas. Care was taken to record those ideas so that they can be recalled and pursued later.

Additional highlights:

- Lee Borden's wonderful piano accompaniment to the singing on Friday and Saturday and that of Beth Byrne, who provided the accompaniment on Sunday
- Multiple opportunities to see God at work throughout the weekend and to pray to Him.
- Occasions for Elders and Deacons to meet together to fellowship and to mutually contribute to the planning and goal-setting processes, as well as time to hold their separate training sessions.

In closing, we are grateful to Pastor Johanna for planning and directing the program. We also thank everyone who served as speakers, as well as many others who contributed in various ways to make this a successful weekend. We also thank the attendees, who gave of their time to spend valuable time together in the service of our Church and our Lord.

To hear a discussion about what went on at the retreat, tune in to our podcast at <https://1stcast.org/leadership-retreat/>





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
C O N C O R D

1965 Colfax St., Concord, CA 94520

Change Service Requested

First Press

Deadline for Apr/May 2020 Issue:
Friday March 27, 2020

*Thank you for your contribution.
Submit all news in writing. Digital
photos are also welcome as long as
we may use them on our website.
Please contact the church office
with address changes!*

Office Hours!

Open Weekdays
10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Mission Vision & Values

Our Mission:

Love God, Love People ... Serve

Vision:

*As a community hub, connect
with the needs of people, joyfully
sharing Jesus and serving where
God calls.*

Values:

*Guided by Scripture and prayer,
we are a welcoming place
where people, service,
and God's love meet.*

*Focused on hospitality,
inclusiveness, and spiritual gifts,
we worship God with delight.*

*Unified in Jesus Christ,
we are led by the Holy Spirit
to invite, engage, and share
God's Truth with each other,
our community and the world.*

Annual Meeting of the Congregation – Feb. 9

Join us for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, after church on Sunday February 9th in the Fellowship Hall. A light lunch will be served. All members and regular supporters of FPCC are urged to attend. This will be an opportunity to review the 2019 Annual Report, hear about the current "State of the Church" and explore the future of FPCC. We hope to see you there!

First Press Distribution

The primary distribution of First Press is electronic via e-mail. If you did not receive this and would like to be added to the electronic distribution please email FirstPress@fpccconcord.org. A pdf copy is also available on the FPCCConcord.org website, and a limited number of paper copies will be available in the Narthex and office. We can also mail copies to those who do not have access electronically and who cannot make it to church. Please call the office to request this service.