



CALVIN CRC'S CONGREGATIONAL LIFE NEWSLETTER

Editor: Pastor Ron Hosmar - youthpastor@calvincrc.ca
613-225-2889 Ext #3

AUTUMN 2011

Fall is in the air and with it comes the start of another ministry season here at Calvin CRC. In this edition of Calvin's Newsletter you will discover some of the ministries that have started up again, an update on who is going to Peru in March of 2012, other ministry events that have take place over the past month, and two testimonies of faith and life from congregational members. As you read I trust you will celebrate the ways God is working among his people in the good, and trying times. Pastor Ron Hosmar

DONNA LEE'S TESTAMENT OF FAITH

As Written by Donna Lee:

2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

All of my life I have wanted a soft life. The family that I grew up in was highly functional. Physical, emotional, spiritual abuses were the normal day-to-day occurrences.

On January 13th, 2004, my ex-boyfriend assaulted me. The most significant consequence of this assault was an acquired brain injury that left me unable to function in many areas of my life. It was like someone threw all the pieces of my identity into the air and I became a scrambled human being.

PLEASE SEND ANY COMMENTS ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER TO PASTOR RON. 613-225-2889 Ext# 3 youthpastor@calvincrc.ca

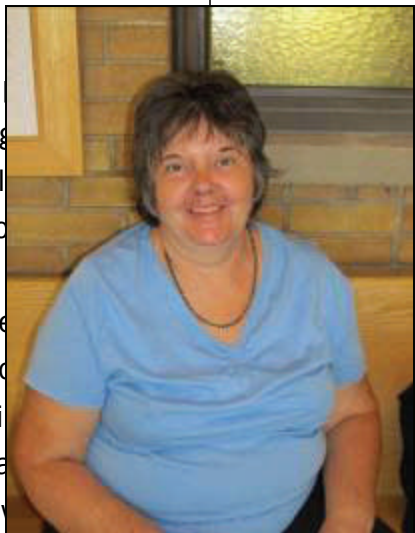
went from having a reasonably good income to a

poverty income overnight. After paying my rent, buying a bus pass and paying other bills, I was left with \$80.00 per month for groceries, clothing, and recreation. To say that this was stressful is an understatement! There did not appear to be any tangible relief from my financial stress.

After I started coming to Calvin Christian Re- church, the deacons provided me with bus and grocery coupons on a regular basis and finally feel some relief from the personal stress.

Christine introduced me to this church community. Thank you Christine for all your love, and patience with me.

But what they said and followed up with compassionate actions. People prayed for me (intercessory prayer) and with me. During hospital stays for severe depression, loving, caring people visited me and provided comfort with gifts of food, herbal tea and Bible readings. Thank you Pastor Ken, Gus and Margaret, Ineke, Wilma, and Joanne. You have each taught me how to rest in God's grace and that I am loveable and worthy. I was encouraged to grieve my losses as I tried to rebuild my identity.



(Continued on page 2 - See "Donna Lee")

("Donna Lee")

Christine encouraged me to join Coffeebreak where I met some wise women and began to do a structured Bible study. For the past three years, I have journeyed with the group of women under the capable leadership of Sharon. Sharon is a very thorough facilitator and for two years, I constantly asked, "What question are we on?" I learned to relax and enjoy the journey, without worrying about what question we were on.

There is a running joke that although we spent two years in the book of Exodus, it is still a lot less than the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the desert! Suffice to say that our study was extremely thorough and, as a group, we were proud to move on to the book of Hebrews.

Wilma invited me to the Soaking Prayer group. I started to attend on a regular basis. This gave me the opportunity to be ministered to and taught me how to rest in God's grace with the knowledge that whatever feelings come up could be offered up to our Lord Jesus Christ. Annette and Linda facilitated the Soaking Prayer group at that time and I am thankful for their gifts of ministering to others. I would also like to thank the regular members of the Soaking Prayer group for their encouragement, affirmation of the Scriptures, etc.

I went through a process of feeling anxiety and fear to trusting the process and the people ministering to me. My thanks go to Wilma, Joanne, Yvonne, Annette, Linda and Annette.

I volunteered to teach Sunday school. It is truly a blessing to work with your young children. For the past two years, I have worked with the three and

four year olds. Being with young children does something to fill my spirit. I love their sense of awe and wonder! I am quite impressed that at ages three and four, the children know their Bible stories. Allie the alligator asks questions after each lesson to make sure the children understand the main concepts of the story.

I had to get ready to move to a new apartment in one month during a period of severe depression. Small teams of people came to my apartment to help me pack. I could not have completed the packing on my own. Thank you to each and every one of you who helped me during this process.

I came to Calvin Christian Reformed Church as a broken person with a great sense of desperation. Today I trust God in the journeys that I travel and I feel more whole. I wish to thank my church family for their prayers, actions, and for modeling Christ's love and compassion. Thank you for a soft place to fall!

Over the past couple of years we have been talking about Growing Together Groups. These groups have met on Sunday evenings for Bible Study on topics of interest and fellowship. The Discipleship Committee has come to realize that all the groups that are active in Calvin should really be called Growing Together Groups, because in reality, the goal of each group is to grow together in relationship with each other and our God. Hence, you will now start to hear us talking about all our groups as “Growing Together Groups.” We trust that you will see this makes sense. In the short articles that follow, you will read about the beginnings of some of our GTG’s this ministry season. Enjoy!

COFFEE BREAK



A couple of weeks ago our Coffee Break group began meeting once again. Under the leadership of Laura Ott and a few other ladies, things are off to a great start. They have grown in numbers from 20 ish to 30 ish and are trying new and innovative ways to connect the women of Calvin, and others from our community, with each other.

They desire deeper relationships, and as such have started “Spiritual Sisters” as well. If you are female and are free on Wednesday mornings from 9:30–11:00 am the Coffee Break group would love to have you join them.

GEMS

GEMS began a couple of weeks ago. Christine Admiral is heading up the ministry this year, with Lena, Jackie, Mouy, Cheryl, Leanne and Wilma (occasionally doing crafts) helping out.

We have around 20 energetic girls meeting every other Thursday evening from 7–8:30 pm. They really enjoy coming out for games, crafts, Bible discussions and yes, snacks.

If you know of any girls in your neighbourhood who are in grades 2–6 and who would like to come out and join them, contact Christine.



BOYS CLUB

Calvin has been blessed with a growth in our Boys Club attendance this year. We have 10 boys coming out, which we thank God for. Nathan has taken over the leadership of this group, as Shawn is away from us for a time. Nathan is helped by Michael, Patrick, Mike, and Gerry.

These boys are a bundle of energy and as one boy



put it to his mom after the first night, “This group is awesome Mom!” When asked why, “Because we are all boys and we all hang out and do boy stuff. No girls allowed. It’s awesome!”

I don’t think his mom has broken it to him that there could be a manly cooking session this year...not sure how this kid is going to react to that! :)

Boys Club meets every other Thursday from 7–8:30 pm. If you have a boy who’s in grades 2–6, or know of other boys who would benefit from Christian male mentors in their life invite them to come out.

MEN’S LIFE

Men’s Life has been meeting for many years at Calvin. They meet at the same time as GEMS and Boys Club, to allow for some of the guys to bring their children and then stick around.

Leo heads up this group. He always brings donuts (I know because I’ve been offered some on occasion) and there is coffee and juice too. If you wish to meet a great group of men that desire to challenge each other in their walk with God, their families, and their lives, then come out every other Thursday evening.



Church Bulletin Bloopers

These sentences actually appeared in a church bulletin or announced at a service!

- ⇒ Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa will be speaking tonight at Calvary Memorial Church in Racine. Come tonight and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.
- ⇒ "Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands."
- ⇒ The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.

You've probably been hearing in the news lately stories of depression and suicide. It seems there is a desire to become more aware of issues of mental health and begin talking about it in the public sphere. Church communities are not immune to mental health issues either. Here at Calvin we have many who struggle with depression of various kinds; often doing so alone and in silence. When I heard that Angela Gehrels took the time to share her struggles with Postpartum Depression at the opening session of Coffee Break I asked her if she'd be willing to share that testimony with the rest of you. She agreed, and I thank her for being open about her struggles in life. We hope that her story (and that of Donna Lee as well) will help others to know that they are not alone in their struggle with depression, and that help is available through a listening ear and professional help.

Angela began her testimony time with two Bible passages, explaining what they meant to her.

Phillippians 3:13,14

Brothers and sister, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

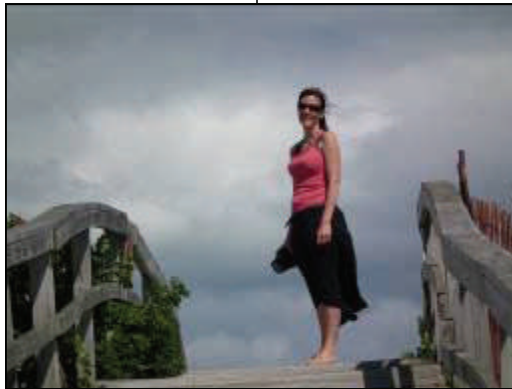
I like this passage because it tells me that there is hope and freedom found by letting go of the things that could keep me down and it encourages the act of letting go of things that are not mine to worry about and that I can't control or micro manage anyway.

As a runner "pressing onwards towards a goal" totally resonates with me. There is no feeling quite like the joy, exhaustion and satisfaction you experience crossing over the finish line after having completed a race. You know that the training and discipline pays off and you often receive a medal or a prize that symbolizes all your hard work. As Christians we have the hope of looking forward to heaven and dreaming about what it will be like.

1 John 3:1-3:

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, now

we are children of God: and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is. All who have this hope in Him purify themselves, just as He is pure.



This passages tells me that we have an identity, a calling in Jesus and we are his. We belong to Him. My/our goal is to find comfort and security in that and once we have, our life has a purpose and is full of meaning.

Now that I've shared with you some of the hope I have within me, let me tell you a bit about myself. I joined Calvin in 2004. Before this time, I can say with confidence that I've been a Christian all my life. My family (parents and grandparents) displayed to me a steady, quiet, simple faith.

In elementary and high school I received more rich teaching and understanding of how God influences all aspects of life. I learned from my church community that faith isn't just about "showing up on Sundays" but building community and finding opportunities for acts of service locally and globally.

During high school I attended camp and it was there that I first decided to live for Christ. I took the step of owning my faith and my relationship with Jesus. Along the way there have been many

(See "Angela" on page 10)

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Friendship Club has been going on at Calvin for several years now. It is done in collaboration with volunteers from other churches as well. Once again Steve is heading up this ministry and doing an excellent job. The numbers of participants in this group steadily grows each year. The evenings begin with a time of song, then a Bible study time, craft time, and of course, snack time.

As with the increase in participants, the need for volunteer mentors also grows. If you love working with people with special needs, or are just curious as to what goes on and if you might be suited for this type of ministry, Steve invites you to come out on a Tuesday evening from 7–8:30 pm. As one who works with our Special Needs SERVE project each year, I can attest to the fact that you are blessed as much, if not more, through this type of ministry.

CIA / ETM

As you can see from this picture, our youth group has grown. Last year we had a bunch of youth in grade 8, who have now moved into grade 9. We have also welcomed Kanata's Youth Group to our meetings due to a small number of youth there. That has added another four. One youth has also come into our group from the neighborhood, for which we thank God. Our CIA meetings are now about 32 youth with 5 leaders. When ETM joins us, that increases our size by about 5 more.

We have broken down the larger group into smaller groups so we can still have that personal touch. CIA meets every other Tuesday with ETM joining us every other Tuesday. On our CIA/ETM evenings we are planning to start with a praise and worship time. We are thankful for the growth we have experienced in the past years, and I am thankful for Jeannine, Janine, Melanie, Ken, Kevin and Andrea who help make this ministry succeed.

On March 9, 2012, forty people will board a Continental flight in Ottawa to begin their journey to Gamaliel Church in Pachacutec, Peru. In reality their journey has already begun, with information to digest and orientation sessions to come to. The group is of mixed age and gender; it will be a nice intergenerational group going this time around. To the left is a listing of all those who will be going, so you have an idea of who to pray for in the months to come.

There will be a couple of fundraisers [see right side bar] to which we hope you will show your support as this group raises the funds needed to go on this Learning Opportunity.

As we continue to prepare for our time in Peru, we will be updating you on our progress. If you have any questions about the trip, etc., please contact Peter, Anna, Nick, Ruth, Hannah, Rosalynn, or Pastor Ron Hosmar.

- Fundraisers up and coming**
- ⇒ Nov 4th, we will have a coffee and concert social with **Fred**. See the poster in your mail slot for more information.
 - ⇒ **Mission-a-thon**: December 10th. This event will have the group go to different places in the city and serve, while getting sponsors to support them as they do.
 - ⇒ **Quilting session** offered by Jackie's mom on November 26th. See last page.
 - ⇒ **Pancake breakfast** fundraiser in January 2012
 - ⇒ **Sub sale** in the new year.
 - ⇒ **Bread making**: We hope many of you have been putting orders in for healthy, fresh bread baked by the loving hands of two of our member families. I hear they are thinking of making this into a business. :)



A small team building exercise during our orientation session. I tied a rope around the group and they had to negotiate walking around the church. Neat to see who the leaders and followers were in the group.

On Saturday, October 1st, several members of Calvin CRC gathered in the cold and helped clean up Gilbey Park and surrounding walkways. As a church, we use the park on many Sunday's, so the Ministry Board thought it would be good to "adopt" the park. That means that twice a year we will be asked to come and clean up the garbage there.



The park doesn't look that big, but in reality it is. There are walkways and treed areas that collect debris. It took us about 1 hour to complete the task. We were treated to coffee and donuts afterwards.

You can see from the top picture, that Adele had a great time helping her dad collect all the scrap metal and garbage from a small sheltered corner of the park.



The bottom right picture shows that we rested in the warmth of the church, on the steps, so as not to make a mess of the fellowship hall. Thanks to all those who came out to help make Gilbey park a clean and safe place for all families who use it.

WORKSHOP ON LISTENING AND PASTORAL SKILLS



As was advertised in the last newsletter, on Saturday, September 17 Calvin's Council offered a workshop on Listening and pastoral skills. Lucy came and shared with us for the day through questions, reflections, and role playing what it means to listen, and give and receive pastoral care. Several congregational members attended the workshop.

For more commentary on this event, take a look at my blog www.ronhosmar.blogspot.com. A blog entry will be up soon.





Sunday, October 2nd at 5:00 pm found a large group of Calvinites filling the fellowship hall for another Fellowship Meal.

It proved to be a great time with great singing, great food, and a great game that Jason came up with. For more on the game and the fellowship dinner itself,

check out my blog at www.ronhosmar.blogspot.com A posting will be up soon.



THANKSGIVING POTLUCK LUNCH



Not everyone has family to go to on the Thanksgiving weekend. As such, Calvin offered another potluck lunch after church on the Thanksgiving weekend. We had about 25 people come out this time. We enjoyed lots of great food and wonderful fellowship together. We took some time to share with each other what we were thankful for too. We hope those who came enjoyed some time with other Calvinites.

TWO TROUBLE MAKERS

A couple had two little mischievous boys, ages 8 and 10. They were always getting into trouble, and their parents knew that if any mischief occurred in their town, their sons would get the blame. The boys' mother heard that a clergyman in town had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys. The clergyman agreed and asked to see them individually. So, the mother sent her 8-year-old first, in the morning, and the older boy was to see the clergyman in the afternoon.

The clergyman, a huge man with a booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly, "Where is God?" The boy's mouth dropped open, but he gave no response, sitting there with his mouth hanging open. The clergyman repeated the question, "Where is God?" Again the boy made no attempt to answer. So, the clergyman raised his voice some more and shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed, "Where is God!?" The boy screamed and bolted from the room. He ran directly home and dove into his closet, slamming the door behind him.

When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked, "What happened?" The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied, "This time we are in real BIG trouble! God is missing and they think we did it!"

(“Angela”)

twists, turns and learning curves, but I've begun to understand that life is composed of seasons that are ever changing, and don't last forever.

University was a very formative time for me. I attended Queen's University and was just far enough away that for the first time I felt outside of my Christian bubble. There were many new things that I experienced when it came to church: untraditional services, art used in powerful ways, and music. I related with those who were often on the periphery and joined a Christian campus group. I experienced hospitality with many great Sunday soup suppers that offered connection points for me. I learned about different ways to study the Bible as well as began to look at life with a wider perspective.

I made new friends who helped me put what I was learning into practice in practical, tangible ways, and simply loved me during a time when I felt uncertain about many things.

Fast forward several years now; we come to 2007. Jason and I took some time to Travel in Latin America, Cambodia and Vietnam. During this time we experienced God through his constant guidance and supervision. We were safe in almost every circumstance and place that we found ourselves. Our needs were cared for at just the right time in unexpected ways by strangers. We learned that we lived not on our own strength, but lifted up on the prayers of many from back home we were able to rest in God's grace and goodness to us. Through this experience I gained a whole new appreciation for God's creation and the people in it. I've seen the diversity of His world and have come to ap-

preciate God's creativity.

Our return home after almost a year and a half brought adjustments that I wasn't necessarily ready for. We returned to a church and community that didn't have the same experiences and renewed Worldview that Jason and I now had. It was hard to share our newfound selves at times. Soon after this we were blessed with a son, Simon.

About six months after Simon's birth, I realized that things weren't quite right for me. I was experiencing intense anger, foggy thoughts, poor communication with others and felt a sense of huge disappointment. I had this nagging sense that I was not good enough. After some research, and meeting with a doctor and counsellor, I discovered that I was suffering from Postpartum depression (PPD). I found this surprising, especially because I was a Health Care Professional (a nurse), but came to realize that even though I was trained in the medical field I knew very little about “mental health.”

I knew just enough that I was completely uncomfortable with anything related to it. In my mind it was a convenient label that distanced me from what I could not understand. Through this experience I think I've gained an appreciation for what it was like for the untouchables of the Bible times. I say this because as I quietly shared my “illness” with those close to me and some in our church community, I discovered we don't handle mental illness well. People just didn't know what to do or say. It was uncomfortable and in awkward moments we passed by each other but never really connected. Asking for help was hard and knowing what you need is tricky at times. Some tried to

(See “Angela” on page 11)

ANGELA'S STORY CONT'D

(*"Angela"*)

understand and acknowledge that I had an illness. There were a small few who have been a great help to us, but in general I feel that many who knew about my illness, family included, struggled with how to deal with me, respond, or even help.

They say that "the darkest hour is just before dawn," These words resonate with me. My experience with PPD has proven to be a lonely, dark place to be. I couldn't understand what I was going through or why I was feeling certain emotions, nor could I summon up the courage or energy to rise above the feelings of inadequacy. Thankfully time and changes in my body have been an ally. With much patience, grace, and counselling you find ways to get through. My life is still full of many ups and downs but I understand myself better now and that helps.

So, this is my story, my journey! What is yours? I have learned many lessons about learning to care for ourselves and others, and to truly see ourselves as God does. I know now that it's important to live our lives in the fullness and richness of God's will and to share our visions, dreams and struggles with others. The challenge is to dig deep, find peace, and wrestle with ways to make sense of those times in our life when things are difficult. It's not good enough simply to exist, or experience the ups and downs of the daily grind; we need to share it. Our lives are richer and deeper when we make connections with others. We need meaningful relationships in our lives because they give our lives colour and substance. I hope sharing my story will let you all know that we are never alone; God loves each of us so much and He is bigger than we can ever imagine.

PARTY TIME

Page 11

Turning 16 seems to be an important time in the life of a teenager, for many reasons. Our older CIA members held a surprise party some time ago for several of their friends at Fontana's home. Jacob's mom liked the idea, so she planned a party for him. He had no idea what was coming,. Joycegina and I drove the group to Carleton Place in two vehicles and we snuck downstairs and waited for Jacob to finish showering. He was quite surprised to see me sitting on his basement couch with a suit on and then hearing 'surprise' from the group hiding in the corner.

Joycegina and I visited with Jonathan and George and Tammy, while the group of friends socialized in the basement. It's neat to see this group continue to grow in relationship with each other.



So Far, So Good

So far today, God, I've done all right. I haven't gossiped, haven't lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or over-indulgent. I'm really glad about that.

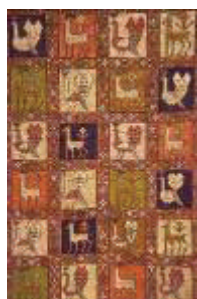
But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed and from then on I'm probably going to need a lot more help. Thank you. In Jesus name. Amen



Friday, November 4 - Coffee & Dessert Concert with Fred Lacroix at Calvin,
7–9:30 pm. Funds to support our Peru 2012 Team.
See the poster in your mail slot for more information.



Saturday, November 26 - Calvin Christmas Party. Starts at 6:30 pm. All those 14 and up are invited to come out. More information coming soon.



Quilting session offered by Martha. **On Friday, November 25th at 7:00 pm** enjoy a quilting show sponsored by Jackie's mom. Admission is \$5.00. Martha will be doing a trunk show featuring approximately 30 of her 80 quilts. During the presentation you will be taken on a journey of all of Martha's noteworthy quilts in chronological order. Included in the presentation will be her collection of miniature quilts and a brief demonstration outlining her technique of quilting full size bed quilts on a regular household machine

On Saturday, November 26th from 9:30–4:00 pm Martha will offer a "Quilting in Sections" Workshop. Fee \$60.00 (lunch included). In this work shop you will be learning the technique of quilting in sections by trying it yourself. This amazing technique will allow you to quilt large quilts on a regular household sewing machine. Three variations will be taught. Two of these techniques are done so that the finished quilt has no visible sign of being quilted in sections. Various quilts that have been quilted with these methods will be available to see. Other places that these applications could be used will also be explored. A free handout will be given out for further reference. It is Martha's hope that this workshop will be both fun and informative for you. Knowledge of machine quilting is a pre-requisite.

All funds raised will help support our Peru 2012 Team.



Saturday, December 10 – **Mission-a-thon** to be held by Peru 2012 Team. We will fan out into the community and serve at various places, gathering sponsors to help support us as we offer our support to the Ottawa Community.



Bread making: Tired of eating processed bread? Wish you had a steady supply of fresh, healthy alternatives? Peter and John are offering you the chance to eat healthy and support a good cause at the same time. Order a loaf a week, or more, from now until March 9, 2012. All profits from the bread go to help them reach their fundraising goals for Peru 2012.