

Chapters

A Journal of God's Reign at Calvary Baptist Church



WALKING **WITH**
SURE **FOOTING**

IS HAPPINESS LIFE'S GREATEST GOAL?

by Fredric A. Carlson

Chapters

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Chapters

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Calvary Baptist Church exists to represent the reign of God as:

**Community
Servant
Messenger**

I disagree with the majority of people—philosophers and common people—about a key belief that apparently is held by most. I believe they are dead wrong in their common belief that everyone's purpose in life is to achieve personal happiness.

If that sounds cocky, or even arrogant, please give me a chance to explain. If your happiness and mine is life's primary object, then we are takers, receivers. We are driven to get. To acquire. To accumulate. Life's biggest winners are those guarding the highest piles. The way to happiness is to get.

The apostle Paul quoted Jesus as observing, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) The NEB translates that as, "Happiness lies more in giving than in receiving." Goodspeed translates it: "It makes one happier to give than to be given to." Why is that? Because one of God's chief loves is to give. He is the original Giver, the Mother of All Givers. Everything he does is sprinkled liberally with generosity. Perhaps that is why one of the most significant changes God makes in the heart of his reborn child is to fill it with his own love to give. In this light, isn't happiness a better thermometer than a thermostat? Isn't our level of happiness a better reading of how well we are achieving our true life values and pursuits than it is a thermostat setting of pursuit for happiness itself? To say it another way, happiness is a byproduct, not the product itself. Happiness measures the degree to which we are fulfilling God's reason for creating us. Many of you know my wife, Maxine, as the recently retired coordinator of our church's outstanding Missions Festivals for a number of years. She loved to organize them for you. Many others, especially our grandchildren, know her for her

delight in making people feel good with her cooking, baking, and entertaining. Maxine's mind is constantly planning gifts for her family and friends. She was recently sad for an entire day when she realized that she had missed recognizing a friend's birthday. One of her major tasks at the beginning of each year is to fill a new calendar with all the birth-dates and anniversaries of people she intends to remember. That includes our 24 grandchildren along with their ten parents, and her remaining 11 siblings and mates, along with a host of friends.

Maxine prepares her Christmas shopping list for those grandchildren in January, and spends the rest of the year—and a good portion of her grocery and clothing budget supplementing her Christmas gift budget—gathering those gifts.

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chapters of his story.*

Recently, I asked Maxine if she could remember when she started to enjoy giving. She reflected for a few minutes, then replied, "I can't remember any time in my life when I didn't enjoy giving. Both my father and my mother were generous givers." In fact, her parents gave up their life of successful farming to answer God's call into home missionary work in the UP. In that ministry, they so filled their home with orphans that they were invited to become the founding directors of the Michigan Regular Baptist Children's Home in St. Louis. That's where Maxine learned how to make large numbers of people feel good with her cooking.



Maxine Carlson

She was preserved from the typical destiny of last born children—she is the youngest of seven—of being spoiled. All that to say that Maxine has no memory of ever being depressed. Oh, she's known lots of sadnesses, just like all of us. But no depression.

That is the point of Arthur C. Brooks' survey of happiness in America, that appeared in the July, 2008, Reader's Digest. He found that "the more people give, the happier they get." He found the same to be generally true of people's exercise of religious faith, and of their sense of effectiveness in work and marriage: "... the key to happiness, and the difference between happy and unhappy Americans, is a life that reflects values and practices like faith, hard work, marriage, charity, and freedom." You'll notice that all these are gifts we give as well as enjoy receiving.

We might ask, then, what real difference does it make whether life's goal is happiness itself, or whether happiness only measures our relative achievement of higher goals, goals in giving. If no god higher than ourselves exists, that might be a worthy question.

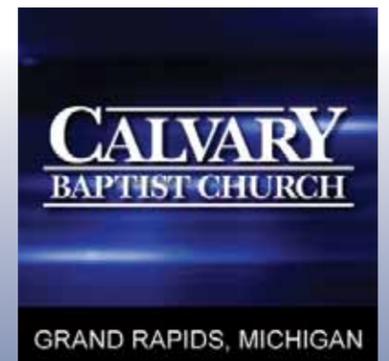
However, the fact is, our lives are scenes lived on the stage of God's drama, chapters of his story. He who created us had a design in mind, a purpose for us to fulfill. God created us to be givers. Givers of joyful worship and friendship to him who gave us the gift of life. Givers of care of his beautiful world. Reflectors of his glory, especially including the glory of giving.

As you've probably figured out, my main point is not to defend my assertion about happiness being a better thermometer than a thermostat. My real aim is to help all of us realize that the amount of happiness we enjoy during Christmas season will measure the warmth and generosity of our giving better than the number of gifts under the tree with our names on them.

Such giving also will help us understand, and pass on, the joy that God must have felt as he gave us his greatest gift of all, the Son. If we can't grasp the stupendous love behind that Gift, we can't give God the joy of our thanks, demonstrated in receiving him in all his grace. And the added joy of introducing some of our friends to him.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you miss "The Wire" this past Sunday? Want to know what the dates for summer camps? Calvary Baptist Church and Camp Calvary have their own official Facebook groups. If you are a member of Facebook be sure to join the groups for CBC and camp then stay up to date on what is happening around church and connect with other individuals who are a part of our online Facebook groups.





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CHARACTER DURING 2009.

LIVING THE “GOOD” LIFE IN 2009

by Pastor Jeff Halsted

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” (Exodus 20:2) I can only imagine the initial response of God’s people as they were reminded by God of the grace that he had given to them in freeing them from slavery in order to lead them to the promise of shalom (peace, well-being). God then graciously gives his people commands that are marked with his character. He shows that his grace leads to governance. This is a gracious rule where God offers a clear description of the “good” life. Within the commands, there is great freedom of life and expression. In other words, you are freed to live life but there is one way that you should not express your freedom because it will destroy the very freedom of life that God has intended.

God governs with grace and truth. He knows what is best and calls us to live life at its best. He provides commands marked with his character for our provision and protection. Living life within God’s intended boundaries provides all that is necessary for joyous and faithful engagement with God, one another and the cosmos. Living life within God’s intended boundaries also protects us from our own sinful inclinations that destroy both us and others. God desires to protect us from faulty family relationships, destructive societal relationships, and wrong perceptions of and responses to his revelation of himself.

We settle for cheap substitutes! We

tend to spend time crafting a god after our image and likeness rather than joyously celebrating our being created in the image and likeness of the One, True, Living God. It seems that there is a general sense of malaise when it comes to being morally and ethically conformed to Jesus the Christ. We can read God’s revelation of his intended desire for us and then internally respond by saying “Hath God really said...?” It is as if we think that God is either withholding something good from us or that he is not powerful enough to enable us to faithfully obey his revealed will. Neither of those thoughts is consistent with scripture.

I am convinced that it is our falsely imaging God that causes the downward trajectory of our moral and ethical decision making. In other words, we do not necessarily believe what God has said about himself and his plan for the world so we do not have a sense of urgency in obeying him. This can only change as we give ourselves to pray along with the psalmist “Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your word. Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.” (Psalm 119:17-18)

With joy and resolve, we give ourselves to study and apply God’s ethical commands and transformative principles that are marked with his character during 2009. This study will lead us to better know God and, in turn, his provision for and protection of his people.

Through faithful, joyous obedience we glorify God and enjoy him forever.

A New Testament text that reflects the character of Exodus 20:2 written above is found in Ephesians 2:8-10. “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Once again, God extends his grace to us and then calls us to live under his governing authority that both provides and protects. We should be motivated by gratitude to God for his gracious provision and protection. We ought to celebrate God’s gift of salvation that allows for moral and ethical union with Christ. We need to rejoice that we have been set free from the bondage of sin which has caused us to settle for cheap substitutes of God’s gift of the “good” life in himself. We are called to live holy lives and express the character of the God who redeemed us through joyous and faithful obedience to his commands that are marked with his character.

2009 is a year of hope, joy and gratitude. Our lives should exhibit these characteristics as we grow together into a community that delights in expressing the moral character of our risen Lord and Savior through faithful obedience to the only God who could and has set us free to live life as he intended!

ART THAT TELLS THE STORY

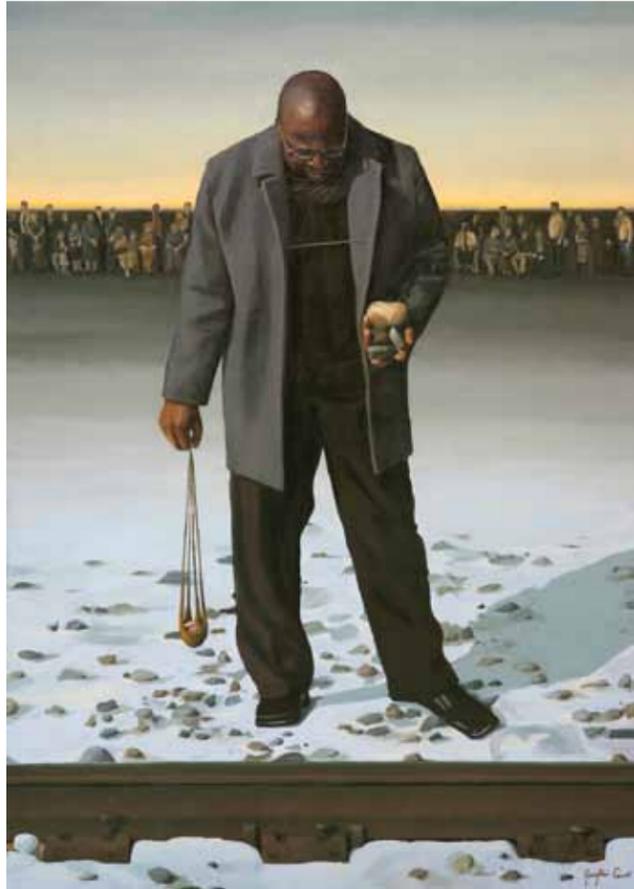
by Chris Brewer

In an effort to enable our church body to see through someone else's eyes, and thereby be taught and equipped, we have been collecting art that tells the Story

Have you ever wished you could see the world through someone else's eyes? If so, you're in good company. In his book *An Experiment in Criticism*, C.S. Lewis explains: "We want to be more than ourselves. Each of us by nature sees the whole world from one point of view with a perspective and a selectiveness peculiar to himself." (137) He exclaims: "My own eyes are not enough for me, I will see through those of others."

But how does Lewis suggest that we go about seeing through the eyes of others? He suggests literature, arguing that it "...heals the wound, without undermining the privilege, of individuality." (140) It's true isn't it? Literature has the ability to lift us out of our own individual experience and perspective, to see the world through someone else's eyes, and so too art. Art is a window through which we can see the world from another perspective.

Artists have something unique. Not everyone sees the world the way they do. For some, this is reason enough to dismiss art. After staring at a piece of abstract art you might say, "I just don't get it!" But that's just it, even though we may not, they do, and so contrary to what seems natural we step up to see again, but this time through their eyes. Lewis goes so far as to say: "Very gladly would I learn what face things present



Preparation - by Jonathan Quist

to a mouse or a bee; more gladly still would I perceive the olfactory world charged with all the information and emotion it carries for a dog." (140)

In an effort to enable our church body to see through someone else's eyes, and thereby be taught and equipped, we have been collecting art that tells the Story, and more recently, we have been showing the work of other Christian artists.

During the month of October Jonathan Quist's *Preparation* was prominently displayed in the main foyer. Here's what some of our church family and friends had to say in response to this piece:

"Praise God for bringing this tragic issue so tastefully and artistically into the church foyer. May we join hands and hearts to slay this giant together across all racial and cultural boundaries."
- Bill Commons

"Impressive and insightful - a mixture of contemplative action, prayer, and apathy - a real picture of where we are, and challenge of where we should go."
- Cheryl Elmer

"A wonderful image that grips my heart. Lord, help me in the battle. May I be a soldier in your army for your cause."
- Colleen Smith

Have you taken the opportunity to see through the eyes of others? Please do, and be sure to respond in the black journal in the Resource Center so we can pass it along to the artists, and affirm their giftedness in thanksgiving to the One who created all things!

Please review the back page for a calendar of past and current art exhibitions at CBC.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS CLASS

by Scott Teesdale

We are happy to introduce The Young Professionals Class (YPC), started in the fall by some very motivated members at CBC. The YPC is made up of post-college men and women who have left the High School and College groups, moved away from home, entered the workforce and are beginning their careers.



Mike & Chris Caterino

One of the challenges in building community in our church is offering Adult Bible Fellowships that help meet the needs of members during all stages of life. Having personal connections with other believers who share similar experiences helps build solid friendships. These relationships are vital for ministry and showing Jesus' love during good and tough times.

The class is taught and led by Mike and Chris Caterino, who have been attending Calvary since 2006. (Mike's Mom is Jimmie Nusca.) The Caterinos have been married 37 years and have five children whom they have home schooled. Chris fulfills the role as homemaker and Mike is a prin-



Aaron and Daniel (Bob) engaging the Bible

cipal at Covell Elementary School. It is the desire of the Caterinos that the members of the YPC grow in their faith and Christian walk. Mike is committed to teaching God's truth from the Bible and is currently working through the Book of Romans. Future plans include studies of the Book of James as well as lessons on finances. Class time includes sharing, prayer, reflection and sound Biblical teaching and study. There is great input and lively discussion from the class members during the teaching time.

The role of the class is to represent God's reign as Community, Servant and Messenger. Members will do this as community

by making personal connections and networking with other Christians. As servant, they will have ministry opportunities as a class and individually. Some of the class members are currently involved with Camp Calvary, Choir, Children's Ministry and Maintenance here at CBC. As messenger, they wish to live the life God intends, and demonstrate that not only at church, but also in their work and recreation.

Please pray for the Young Professionals ABF as a whole, and for each individual member. We are thankful for Mike and Chris who are willing to lead this class and leave their own ABF to join this group. Stop by room 62 and say hello. Encourage and be encouraged by their love for Christ.

CBC ON THE GO!

Pass the word along to your friends that CBC is now mobile. Well, not the church building, but our new mobile web site. Visit m.cbcgr.org on your smart phone to view service times, get directions, and contact information. Give the address to your friends so they can know how to get here at the right time!



THE FULLNESS OF TIME: ONE SINGER'S PERSPECTIVE

by Sara Sisco

"View the manger through the lens of the cross." This phrase and others like it have rung through most of my past Christmases, and have come out of my own mouth as I've taught children and young people. I know the danger of worshipping the Baby whom Christmas honors, while ignoring the Lordship His sacrifice demands. I know that His birth is only one part of the Story. I know, I know, I know . . . but can a Christmas program cover all of that? What's more, should it?

When Pastor Vitarelli rolled out "The Fullness of Time" theme at our first Christmas Choir rehearsal, I was not surprised to find it laden with the "Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation" message. However, I have to admit I was skeptical. A Christmas program that starts with Creation? Music bemoaning sin in a holiday concert? Narration about Abraham and Isaac taking up more time than the Bethlehem story? This was going to be an interesting experience, indeed.

So, we began with *This is My Father's World*. Not very Christmasy, but score one point for a familiar song that cov-

ered the "Creation" angle. Next came *Kyrie Eleison*. Key-ree-ay WHAT? Not having been a Music or Latin major, this one was lost on me. The a cappella, minor-key piece screamed "Fall," but what did it mean? Between Craig York and Pastor Chad, we eventually mastered the correct (or at least nearly correct) pronunciation, and learned that it means "Lord, Have Mercy." Number two non-Christmas piece accomplished, but my doubts remained. Though I was enjoying the music and the choir fellowship, and despite the fact that Pastor Chad discussed each song's place in the



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program, the overall flow was still very unclear to me.

Next came the four piece *Manger Suite*. At last, something with familiar Gospel themes and joy-filled chords! *The Promise* started off the set with prophetic redemption messages, and *Son of God* presented Jesus's birth in near-lullaby fashion. *Sing Noel, Sing Hallelujah* and *Christmas Angels* rounded out the first half of the program in celebratory shepherds-and-angels fashion. Now THIS was some Christmas music! However, the narration continued to confuse me. Much of it centered around Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. Though I understand their roles as the founding family of the Jews, and I know that Isaac is an Old Testament picture of Jesus, their story is not the focus in my mind; the manger is.

Why muddy the waters?

A Savior is Born Medley started the second half off blending some familiar carols with a praise-and-worship piece. Now this was interesting. I would never have thought of combining *Silent Night's* "sleep in heavenly peace" language with the command, "Hallelujah, fall on your knees!" Was

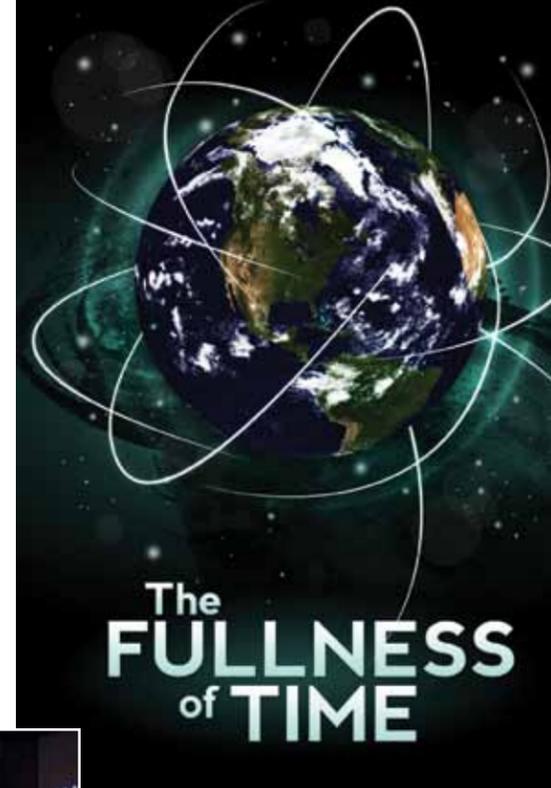
I guilty of what I have warned others against: separating the manger scene from the Lord who inhabited it? Though I still didn't get the Abraham and Isaac focus, some of the other pieces of the puzzle were slowly falling into place.

Throughout all of the rehearsals, *This is Our God* had been my resounding favorite. As Hayley Vitarelli said at one practice, "If I ever wrote a song, I'd want to use words like this." The song begins with *What Child is This?*, then proceeds to describe Him with phrases such as an "intimate stranger" who is "recklessly, wildly loving a dangerous world." He is "courageous, relentless, and brave" as He "embraces our weakness, overcomes all death, and frees us to live." As with the medley, the juxtaposition of the manger images with redemption praise was striking. Perhaps Pastor Chad's ambitious plan might work after all. Though I had been enjoying and medi-

tating on these songs (*This is Our God*, in particular) for nearly two months, my "Aha!" moment didn't come until the night of dress rehearsal. (I was a little slow, to say the least.) Watching Dave Gavette's images flash on the screens as we sang made the lyrics much more powerful (I know – that's the point.) One picture, however, has remained in my mind since that night. As the choir began *What Child is This?*, a shadowed view of Mount Calvary came up on the screen. Never had I actually envisioned the cross while singing about the babe. Never had I contemplated crucifixion, stable, shepherds, and angels, all at the same time. The last piece finally fell into place, and I truly viewed the manger through the lens of the cross for the first time.



That connection made all of the difference in how I viewed the program. Starting with Creation and including the Fall became mandatory; that's what made the manger and the cross necessary. Using Abraham and Isaac's story connected the Old Testament to the New, bridging the gap with characters who exemplify the father-son relationship, and who experienced God's provision and redemption. Again, they pointed to the manger and the cross.



The Christmas pieces, which had seemed under-emphasized, now fit in their proper place, and I even sang the congregational carols with new awareness. Ending the program with *Rejoice*, which celebrates Christ as Creator, Redeemer, and returning King, brought the Story to consummation and a fitting conclusion.

Some of you are reading this and seriously doubting my grasp of Scripture (and my qualifications to teach your children). Others are simply

thinking, "Well duh, of course that's the point!" Hopefully, though, some of you are remembering parts of the Story and connecting them in fresh ways along with me. Though none of these were new concepts to me, God used *The Fullness of Time* to renew my mind. The lens of the cross brought the manger into sharper focus, and my worship of Jesus as Creator, Babe, Savior, and King, is now deeper and more interconnected. Please join me in asking Him to continue that work in 2009.

2009 IS A GREAT YEAR TO BE INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S & YOUTH MINISTRIES

by Kathy Clawson

Hey, Kids and Teens! (Parents may listen in too!) Have you enjoyed the past few months in your Sunday morning classes? You can look forward to more teaching about God and His plan for our world. Here is the schedule for the upcoming months.

2's & 3's

You will continue to hear stories from the Bible that highlight God's character by using *Children Desiring God: A Sure Foundation, His Praiseworthy Deeds*.

4's & 5's

You will finish your journey through the Old Testament by hearing Bible stories that communicate truths about God's character.

Kindergarten

You will learn New Testament stories that tell about who Jesus is.

1st & 2nd Grade

You will be using the book, *Jesus What a Savior: Christ's Work Through History*.

3rd, 4th, & 5th Grade

You will study the Biblical records from the exodus to the reigns of David and Solomon in order to better understand God's plan for Jesus' death and resurrection. You will continue to use the book, *In the Beginning...Jesus*.

Middle School Girls

You will be studying and discussing the book, *Lies Young Women Believe*, in your small groups.

Middle School Boys

You will finish up your small group studies of Psalms and Proverbs, then begin a study on finances and stewardship using *Generation Change* by Dave Ramsey.



Pastor Doug speaking

High School

You will finish up the teachings and discussions about our church's Articles of Faith, then begin a study on finances and stewardship by using *Generation Change* by Dave Ramsey.

This year is full of opportunities to learn more about God, His Word, and His plan for our lives. Whether you have recently begun attending CBC or whether you have been coming for many years, attend the Sunday morning class designed for you and prepare to grow and be encouraged!

Kids!

Do you know what a New Year's Resolution is? A New Year's Resolution is a goal a person makes at the beginning of the year that he or she will work on throughout the year. Some kids make the New Year's Resolution to get better grades at school or to do all their chores at home. Some Christian kids decide to read their Bible and talk to God every day.

Why should you make a New Year's resolution? If you make a resolution, you will be a better person when you reach your goal. For example, if you decide to get better grades at school, you will be a better student. Or, if you decide to read your Bible every day, you will know God better and love Him more. Setting goals is hard because sometimes we mess up, but that's okay. You can always start again. God forgives us many times and gives us many chances, so you should do the same thing for yourself. Just because you don't keep your resolution one day, don't give up! Setting and sticking with New Year's Resolutions will always bring positive results.

As a kid, what New Year's Resolutions will you make? Below are some of the goals your friends at CBC have made for 2009.

Luke Sallee

I want to get an "A" by the end of the year.

Rebekah Sisco

I want to sing more songs and read more books. I want to listen and pay attention to my teachers more. I want to argue less with Chase and my friends.

Chase Sisco

I want to build more Legos. I will do my homework and chores when I have time, and not play around. I want to be more kind and not argue with my friends. I will not whine and complain about memorizing my Team Kid verses. I will spend more time with God by talking to Him and reading my Bible (after I find it . . .).

Luke Walsh

I'm gonna try to control my anger better

and to watch football more. Actually, I'm going to work on forgiving people more, too.

Calling all parents...

do you make New Year's Resolutions for yourself and encourage the children in your life to do the same thing? Or have you failed in the past, so you think, "Why bother"?

Setting and achieving goals is healthy for all age groups and is an especially important discipline to instill in children. The New Year gives us an opportunity to reflect on the joys, disappointments, successes, and failures of the past year and to look forward with anticipation to the coming year. What a great time to decide to make positive changes in our lives and encourage those around us to do the same!

This year, have a discussion with your family about New Year's Resolutions and set family resolutions together. You may resolve to have family devotions regularly or to have a family night once a week or to memorize a passage from the Bible together. The possibilities are endless. You may also want to encourage each family member to set a personal goal they will be working on this year.

Many people are afraid of failing, so they do not even make a New Year's Resolution. Instead of allowing your failures to cripple you, determine to keep on working toward your goal. Write down your resolutions and post them in your house. Then you will be more likely to remember them and continue working on them. Setting resolutions as a family will keep you accountable and will draw you closer together as a family. As your children see you working toward your own personal resolutions, they will be more motivated to set their own goals and keep them.

Do not allow New Year's Resolutions to become one more thing to do or one more chore for your kids. Rather make them a positive, healthy part of your family's life. Every person needs to be continually pursuing Christ-likeness, so let's join Paul in saying, "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).



Luke Sallee



Rebekah Sisco



Chase Sisco



Luke Walsh



CALENDAR OF ART EXHIBITIONS AT CBC

Preparation

Jonathan Quist
October 5 - 26

Songs of Advent & Reckoning

Peter Gordon & Julie Quinn
November 30 - December 21

Winter Blues

Peter Gordon
January 18 - February 22

Vessels for Honor

John Marquardt
February 1-22

Repentance & Faith

Sacred Duties – Inseparable Graces
Wayne Forte & Julie Quinn
March 1 - April 5

Gateway to Spring

Chris Stoffel Overvoorde
April 12 - May 3

The Prodigal Son I

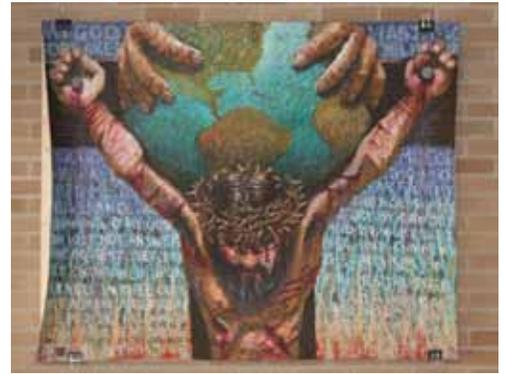
Rembrandt van Rijn & Edward Riojas
June 7 - 21

The Prodigal Son II

Steve Prince
July 5 - 26

The Prodigal Son III

John August Swanson & Carol McCrady
August 2 - 23



Sacred Duties - Wayne Forte



Inseparable Graces- Julie Quinn

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