



Calvary
Lutheran Church ELCA
2508 Washington Ave SW
Bemidji, MN 56601

A Journey of Illumination

A REFLECTION ON EPIPHANY, BY PASTOR SUSAN

Loved ones of Christ at Calvary,

Just a few days ago, I read a fascinating article about a man and his red canoe. 50-years-old with “no fixed abode,” he launched his canoe in the Columbia River in Oregon 22 months ago. This man paddled 7500 miles from coast to coast, touched 22 states and as many rivers. Imagine the last days, navigating the Hudson River as it emerges and guides you to the base of the Statue of Liberty! The 50-year-old guy in a red canoe says, “I felt like I followed a light shining all the way across the country. My journey was one of illumination.”

This is the month the people of God launch their canoes too! In the season of Epiphany, we hear the story of the magi, the three kings, the three wise men as they follow a star much like this crazy guy who left Astoria, Oregon for the Statue of Liberty by canoe. They had heard of a child who had been born King, a star in the East and a little town named Bethlehem. We here at Calvary, who live in or near a town named Bemidji, will leave home and follow the star in this year of our Lord 2022. Where might the God made known in this Bethlehem-born child be leading us? Like the guy in a red canoe, our journey will be one of illumination, will have a few obstacles, maybe some turbulence, but we are confident that it is God that is making all things new. God has provided us with all of the treasures we need for the mission before us. Scripture says that when the star stopped over the place where Jesus was, the wise men from the East were overwhelmed with joy.

With the star guiding our way, we too will be overwhelmed with joy as the Christ child reveals the mission of Calvary in the coming years. 40 acres, a growing community, an intersection, a commitment to children and amazing leaders, what a recipe for joy! And after they left their gifts, they left for home by another way. The persistence of a global pandemic and pastoral changes have made this story our own. Our way home will be by another way. But that Star, the Light will be illuminating our path every step of the way.

I simply can't wait to work with Staff and Council and all of you as we follow the Star. And remember, I am always up for a chat and a cup of coffee, a visit over the phone, a home visit!

In hope and illumination,
Pastor Susan Tjornehoj, Interim Senior Pastor

Making All Things NEW – 2021-22 Theme

The 2021-22 Calvary theme comes from the book of Revelation 21:5. *And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.”* Typically in January we would be announcing our new theme for the year. Since we have changed our fiscal year to match our program year we will be announcing a new theme in August.



Paper or No Paper?

That is the (Newsletter) Question!

Since Covid began and our in-person gatherings were drastically changed, Calvary wanted to keep congregation members well-informed of our ministry happenings. And Calvary wants to continue and expand the ways that it communicates its mission and ministry in the coming years. Many individuals and households have changed the way they communicate and are more comfortable with an electronic format. That is why we ask the question paper? no paper? other?

Already there are many ways to access the newsletter. Paper copies are available to pick up at church at the welcome desk and usher tables in the sanctuary. We include the newsletter in our end of the month weekly enews (please see article on page 3 to learn more about the enews), on our website and on Facebook.

We also know that others of you value receiving the newsletter in the mail. Please take a minute to fill out the **form here** or on the website (www.calvarybemidji.org) to let us know how you want to 'stay in the know' about Calvary happenings. We would like to minimize our resource costs by the March newsletter printing, so appreciate your helpful responses. If you prefer, you can call the office (751-1893) or email Kim (kwarren@calvarybemidji.org) to let us know your preferences.

Vicar's Viewpoints

Hey everybody, Vicar Jami here! As I am writing this update, I am working on my next sermon in which I will be preaching about the ways God can surprise us even in the familiar. This especially rings true for me as I approach the fourth month of my internship at Calvary. I am over ¼ done with my internship year, and it both feels like I've been here a long time and the time has passed in the blink of an eye. A lot of my work and learning at Calvary has begun to feel familiar and routine, with occasional peeks of newness – in Pastor Sue's arrival or my work in planning the high school mission trip, for example. But through it all, I approach every service, Club night, and even planning meeting with gratitude, as you all continue to make Calvary feel like home to me. And God continues to inspire and amaze me in this wild call to ministry I am pursuing.

This past month, I have greatly enjoyed our Advent services. Preaching on the ways God makes our world new while saying goodbye to Pastor Genelle was so poignant and meaningful for me. Writing the candle lighting litany has also been a wonderful way to reflect on the very practical ways God is at work at Calvary and in the world, transforming us in ways we could not even begin to imagine. I have also adored participating in, and leading, Holden Evening Prayer on Wednesday nights, as well as hearing inspiring statements of faith from congregation members. And Club has continued to be a highlight of my week, with this month giving us opportunities to talk about taking care of our mental health and planning for what 2022 will look like for activities, discussions, and service opportunities! I look forward to celebrating Christmas Eve with 3(!) services and then taking a week off to spend time with my family! And I can't wait to see what the new year will bring. Until next time, blessings to you all and Merry Christmas!

Vicar Jami

January Worship Opportunities

We are privileged to gather together to worship a newborn King! We continue to meet for traditional worship at 8:30 am on Sundays (both livestream and in person) and contemporary worship at 10:00 am (in person). We continue hearing from the Gospel of John each Sunday (see below for the schedule of scriptures), celebrate a Baptismal Festival on January 9 (Baptism of Our Lord) and welcome new members on January 23.

On Wednesdays, we continue to offer contemporary worship in person and on livestream at 6:30 pm. We will be hearing scriptures and preaching from the New Testament in alignment with our confirmation lessons. On Wednesday, January 19, we will be celebrating with Holden Evening Prayer service.

We pray that you can worship God in many of these blessed opportunities.

Gospel texts through January

- Jan. 2 ~ John 1:35-51
- Jan. 9 ~ John 2:1-11
- Jan. 16 ~ John 2:13-25
- Jan. 23 ~ John 3:1-21
- Jan. 30 ~ John 4:1-42

Thank You Calvary!

Decorating: Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers that helped decorate our beautiful church. All the spaces looked Christmassy, but the Sanctuary was especially lovely and welcoming. Thanks to Cheryl Harms who applied for and received a Thrivent Action grant (basically free money) to provide us with boxed lunches when we finished.



Worship servants: Thanks to all who have volunteered as worship servants to help make our space welcoming. We, as staff, are so appreciative as we just can't cover all the bases without you. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please reach out to kwarren@calvarybemidji.org.

Angel Tree: Thanks to all who participated by supplying gifts to less fortunate area youth. Your gifts brought so many smiles and shared the Love of Christ by letting these children know that they are loved. Thanks to our organizers as well! So many blessings abound!

Choir: Thanks to our amazing Calvary Choir! Thanks for rehearsing, singing in masks, and recording for our services to share the gift of Christ's birth through song. This was such a blessing!

Altar Guild: Thanks to all our behind the scenes helpers. Advent & Christmas are especially busy times of year for them. You are so appreciated.

Blue Christmas: A huge thank you to Erin Kossivi and her team of amazing volunteers in putting together a wonderful service to support the grieving in our community! What a beautiful night!

Statement of Faith Sharers - Mitch Eickman, Curt Peterson & Tony Kerr: You lead by example, sharing God's love with your actions AND your words. Such a blessing!

2ND OFFERING MINISTRY PARTNER ~ CHURCHES UNITED



Calvary's Second Offering partner for January is Churches United! All of us have both spiritual and physical needs, and Churches United is one place where God is working to provide especially for the physical needs of our neighbors. Located in the old Lincoln School on 4th Street in Nymore, Churches United is a place where people can go to receive material and financial assistance in the name of Jesus. Around twenty area churches work together through this ministry to provide gas and food vouchers, bus and laundry tokens, and other gifts for community members in need. This is vital work, especially during COVID! To support Churches United (or any of our other Second Offering partners), you can donate online through RebelGive choosing "second offering partner," or by mailing a check to Calvary with "Churches United" in the memo line. In order to facilitate record keeping, we ask that ALL checks be made out to Calvary Lutheran.

CALVARY'S 2ND OFFERING TREASURE CHEST

For God's Treasure Chest in January, we are looking for both men and women's adult gloves, adult backpacks, toothpaste, shaving cream, size 5 diapers, dish soap or laundry soap (small sizes).

New Member Welcome

Being a member of Calvary is a good way to stay up to date on everything that's happening around the church, as well as provide opportunities to participate in the life of the congregation. We're always looking to expand our church community! If you or someone you know is interested in membership at Calvary, please contact Kim Warren in the church office.

New Member Orientation - If you are interested in membership, join us Wednesday, January 19 at 5:00 pm. You'll see other folks joining Calvary, learn more about Calvary and how to get involved, and more!

New Member Welcome - Join us in worship Sunday, January 23 or Wednesday, January 26 to meet our new members!

Please contact Kim (kwarren@calvarybemidji.org) or Pastor Jeremiah (revholst@calvarybemidji.org) for more information.

Did You Know?

Did you know that Calvary sends a weekly Enews with events, a devotion, and much much more? If your answer is anything but an enthusiastic YES, please visit our website (www.calvarybemidji.org), click on the Resources tab, and select **Calvary News**. On the page you will see a link to sign up for the weekly enews, click on the link, fill out the form, and you are set to receive the weekly enews! Be sure to enter an email that you check regularly and anyone with an email in your household can and should sign up to receive their own copy of the enews so we can all stay 'in the loop'. There is so much good stuff happening in our ministry together!

Theology Book Club

Calvary's Theology book club continues reading and discussing *Where God Meets Man* by Gerhard Forde. We gather on Zoom the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month from 7-8:30 pm. All are welcome, let's explore our faith together! Contact Becky Berquist for more information at bergquistbecky@gmail.com.

Church Undecorating

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9

Please plan to come and 'undecorate' our sanctuary and church spaces. It's time to put all the lovely Advent/Christmas decorations away for another year. There will be a group that starts right after the 8:30 service, so come and be part of the fun tradition! Many hands really do make light work!

Grief Share

If you or someone you know is dealing with grief, GriefShare may be helpful for you! Erin Kossivi leads a GriefShare group at Calvary Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm in Room 1. If you have questions or would like more information, you can contact Erin at 813-417-7678. No preregistration is necessary, all are welcome to join in the conversation as we journey together.

2021 Giving Statements

Your 2021 giving statements will be emailed by the end of January. Please contact us with any questions, if you did not receive your giving statement, or you do not have an email address and need a paper copy printed and or mailed. We thank you for your generous donations to God's mission at Calvary!

FINANCIAL REPORT

12 MONTH FISCAL YEAR – AUGUST 2021-JULY 2022

General Fund – November 2021

| <u>Income</u> | <u>Budgeted</u> | <u>YTD</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| \$78,461 | \$102,368 | \$456,239 |
| <u>Expenses</u> | <u>Budgeted</u> | <u>YTD</u> |
| \$75,861 | \$103,459 | \$300,685 |

(General Income YTD Includes Grants of \$125,847)

Cash, Receivables, & Savings \$368,823

November Ministry Partner: Lutheran World Relief \$1,230.30

Calvary Foundation Balance: \$52,789

Offering needed each week to support the budget is \$15,000.

See Calvary's January Birthdays Here!

[View this newsletter on the web and follow this link to see who to wish a happy birthday this month!](#)

Getting to Know Council Member at Large ~ Ashley Brue

Happy New Year Church,

I am Calvary Council at Large member Ashley Brue. This is my third year serving on the council. My husband Titus and I have two children, Bo who is in Kindergarten, and Webb who is in his second year at Calvary Lutheran Christian Preschool. Webb has been enjoying getting to know his new preschool director, Mr. Tony. We are so thankful to have him leading our preschool!

Throughout 2021 we celebrated God making all things new, and in December we went out with a bang by officially dropping below one million dollars on our church mortgage! Yea God!



A Thank You Message From Pastor Genelle and Joan

Dear Calvary Family!

'Thank you' doesn't seem to capture all the feelings involved in the absolute privilege it was to serve with you over the last 20 years. So many great memories, stories, and faith experienced together - your notes of gratitude and thanks captured so many of these! Joan and I want to leave you with a word of encouragement - we heard many times it won't be the same without you. And as true as that is, we want you to expect that God is going to do even greater things in this next chapter. Honor us by getting involved, engaging deeper, dreaming bigger, volunteering more, and continuing to make it a place of wide welcome, important conversations, and meaningful faith formation. God depends on you and trusts in you. So, give God your best as you strived to do over the years working with you and indeed, God is going to make ALL THINGS NEW! As much as we want to sit down and write a thank you note to each and every family, we will just say it to all of you here, THANK YOU Calvary Lutheran and Calvary Lutheran Christian Preschool for making our worlds a better place. We are both forever grateful! See you around town!

In deep gratitude, Joan Meulebroeck and Pastor Genelle



Visit our website at calvarybemidji.org for online worship, events/calendar, information and more...