

Calvary Listening Sessions Executive Summary

The Two Big Questions/The Book End Questions

What three things do you value most about Calvary?

What do people Value about Calvary? Why did they pick to come to Calvary, why do they keep coming to Calvary? The discussion through the listening sessions really highlighted areas in which congregational members truly value Calvary Lutheran Church. The one thread that was consistently heard throughout responses was that people most valued Calvary for its welcoming place. People feel welcome, included, and they feel a strong sense of family and fellowship in this Church. Comments include things like *"Everyone has a place, everyone is welcome".." The community, the minute you walk in the door someone is greeting you with a smile and following up with a conversation."*

Being part of a welcoming community that is created and sustained by strong pastoral leadership is also very evident in so many of the responses. Answers and comments related to pastors that care, that preach good sermons, that teach and spend time with the youth, that are compassionate, were very common throughout the listening sessions. The continual recognition of our pastoral team, both past and present is such a huge reason why our members value Calvary.

Finally, the last big area of common focus and response when asking "what do you value most about Calvary?" was the opportunities and programs that focus on faith formation. The responses indicate programs that form faith in youth, teens and adults, as well as family and small groups are important and valued. Connected with faith formation was community formation and service. Serving the community through mission work, ministry partners and direct services was also something commonly heard through the listening session.

What is your greatest Hope for Calvary?

The biggest hope for Calvary is to grow back to the numbers of members being active in our Church to pre-Covid, pre-pastoral changes. That the Church grow in program, and possibilities to engage both the Church and Un-churched. Participation and attendance really rang through in the listening sessions but so did the culture of our welcoming Church. This thread was present through hopeful statements, hope for growth together, hope that we stick together, hope that we remain welcoming and become more inclusive. *"That Calvary becomes the place of worship for all...all are welcome & you will feel welcomed when you walk through our doors."*

As we listen further, the hope for the Church and its Ministry to grow. Ministry to serve others, to service the community and to serve the Church. To create a place that we use more of the congregation as ministers through volunteering, through service, through utilizing gifts in the congregation. *"To live out our calling to love God and lover others as we take our own responsibility for being part of the body of Christ."* *" Grow together in Christ".*

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The Feedback- 3 questions asked- “what can we do more of, less of, and keep doing?”

Questions focused on Worship, Faith Formation, and Community Service.

Worship – *Diversity of Worship- Music- Prayer- Pastors*

Calvary is valued and appreciated for its worship, the different formats, times and opportunities both in person and virtually this was shared and threaded throughout all three areas. Music- music style, talent, involvement, volume and variety all were also a large focal area under Worship. Further consideration in this area should be considered and discussed as both little changes and bigger changes.

One specific area that was mentioned in all three areas in the Worship question was concerning the Lord’s Prayer. It should be noted that a large number of congregation members responded to the desire not to change the Lords Prayer, keep it the traditional prayer, allowing people to pray it instead of read which one it is or get confused in the process. This can either be addressed by Worship format or education as maybe members don’t understand why we go back and forth?

The other area of consideration to note is the sermons. The preaching of our pastors is highly valued and appreciated, to continue and do more, and even longer sermons was heard. Again this shows an appreciation for the high level and quality of our pastoral team.

Faith Formation - *Youth- Adult-*

Faith formation is the one question where we received the most feedback. The biggest area of more growth and more programs is with our Sunday School. A large portion of respondents want more opportunities for all age kids to have faith formation, including Sunday school, youth groups, bible camps, mission trips, community service, mentoring and more confirmation. To expand offerings for all ages on Wednesday’s so all ages are having opportunities along with the family engagements and meals was mentioned as well. As far as one area with the largest response in this question youth faith formation at all levels rang the loudest.

Adult educational opportunities focused on having or keeping the bible studies, wanting more adult ed options led by pastors, specifically noted on Sundays, and during times working adults can attend. Also noted was the opportunity for more of and continuing small group offerings, to have more opportunities for small groups to form and engage.

Service to the Community – *Mission Trips-Service to Key Groups-Engagement & Awareness*

Service to the community had some really strong feedback on the direction and awareness of the members to the service we provide. Strong desire to keep the focus on three areas, Mission Trips, Community partners and outreach and service to elderly. A lot of feedback on keeping, and expanding opportunities for mission trips for both youth, adult and intergenerational. The focus on our second offering partners and community partners was also a common area of focus, specifically the food shelf, and the homeless. Getting and providing more opportunities for the church to serve whether that be with confirmation or faith in action Sundays, it is evident that people want the opportunity to serve our community. Not only to be provided the opportunity but more communication and marketing around the opportunities.