



2508 Washington Ave SW
Bemidji, MN 56601

"Do not be afraid..." Luke 2.10

Loved ones of Christ,

Car loaded, suitcases and boxes, a bicycle, calls in to multiple vet clinics to secure just a little half-tablet of anxiety meds for the cat. Anticipating 4 hours in a car on the eve of Thanksgiving? Absolutely necessary. Sermon prep, newsletter articles to complete, thank yous out to the congregation, pie crusts are thawing, care calls, anticipation of Advent and Christmas, look up "mincemeat pie" on google because the recipe on the label is gone, oh yes, don't forget to follow up with my primary care physician about...and pack. Maybe this was your life too a few days ago. This is what it looks like from here, writing a December newsletter article just hours before Thanksgiving.

So peeking ahead to the song of the angels, the song we will hear in the wee hours of Christmas day is exactly the playlist this pastor needs to hear. "Do not be afraid; for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people." Do not be afraid. I was a new Senior Pastor at a large metropolitan church, just months into the call. This congregation celebrated its birth date in mid-December every year with great pomp and circumstance. Usually it included a Children's Christmas program followed by a congregational feast. It was time for me to welcome, to inspire and pray. The section leaders in the choir were paid, the organist/choir director had a doctorate from Eastman School of Music and had at one time been a Cobber. What else do you do? "Let's stand and sing Be Present at our Table Lord." I imagined 4-part harmony, enough to make the angels sing along, weep with joy. Within seconds I realized it was one of the bigger mistakes of my life. No one sang, my cheeks flushed and I looked for the nearest escape route—forever. A former professor with a PhD in German signaled for me while the tables got up to eat. His comment to me was clear, "We don't sing that here." It was the beginning of years of learning "What we do here" and even more important "What we don't."

For the past year, Bemidji has been my home, Calvary my congregation, a place where I have experienced first-hand this verse from Romans 15.7 "Welcome one another just as Christ has welcomed you." You welcomed me into the pulpit and the shoes of your beloved Pr. Netland and let me try to fill them and reshape them a bit for your next Senior Pastor. Not once did I hear "We don't do that here." Rather I have experienced you as living in the presence of the heavenly host, "Do not be afraid." There is a fearlessness and boldness in your generosity and hospitality. My prayer for you is that this fearlessness, spirit of generosity and bold hospitality continue to shape your witness and communal life. "For I am bringing you good news of great joy, a Savior." Oh how the world longs to hear this.

Do not be afraid loved ones...

- Continue and grow in your stewardship of love and generosity. You have an incredible mission. Underwrite it and then declare it to the mountaintops! Make sure every open spot in the pre-school is filled. The waiting list must return. Families hunger to have their little ones loved and safe.
- "Love at 50 or 55." Put Jesus out there on Highway 71. Hide it under a bushel? NO! This little light's gonna shine. Thank you, Pr. Ron Gladen for your gift and generosity which makes this a possibility! Do drive by around 5:00 pm on Wednesday, November 30. Bring your friends, drive slowly back and forth, pick up the speed, then come on in to CalvaryAlive, stay for worship and look again at the lighted sign.
- And imagine how to be stewards of the land! An amazing building and location, a cemetery with a columbarium, and 40 acres. How can the space, the basketball court be a place of healing and joy for more of the community? Possibilities endless.
- Oh yes, love on one another. Weep with those who mourn, laugh lots, and anticipate the arrival of a new Senior Pastor who will love you too as I have had the privilege of doing. This one will remind you again and again of the inbreaking of God's kingdom right here, right now.
- Loved ones, "Do not be afraid for the dawn from on high is breaking among you..."

In the coming weeks, please take a moment to thank Len Ochowicz for his diligent and graceful work (not to mention his jokes!) among us as our daytime custodian. His last day was/is November 29. Well done good and faithful servant! And incredible thanks goes to Lizzy Wadena who remains on the Pre-school Staff, is an adult leader in Club but will complete her leadership with Kingdom Kids December 21. She singlehandedly tended to our children Sunday mornings as Sunday School teacher until we changed the Sunday morning schedule this fall and led Kingdom Kids with grace, creativity and her deep faith. Thank you Len; thank you Lizzy.

How grateful I am to have had the privilege to serve you as your Interim Senior Pastor! I will complete my work among you, God willing, by the end of December. Our home in St. Paul awaits you! In the meantime, we await the birth of a Savior and the song of the angels, Pastor Susan Tjornehoj

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BEMIDJI | DECEMBER 2022



Do the holidays feel meaningless this year? Do you wonder how you'll make it through without your loved one by your side?

There are others who understand what you're going through, and you can find them

at our GriefShare Surviving the Holidays seminar. During this 2-hour event, you'll be welcomed into a nurturing space where you can hear from counselors, pastors, and others who have survived the holidays without their loved one. You'll also learn practical tips for navigating this season and leave with a workbook to continue your healing at home.

We will be meeting on December 4 from 2-4:00 pm at Calvary Lutheran followed immediately by the Blue Christmas service as a first stepping stone to sitting with the pain and loss. The cost for the materials will be \$15 per person. Scholarships are available. For questions, contact Erin at 813-417-7678



Advent/Christmas Decorating

Thanks to the wonderful volunteers that helped us beautify our church spaces for the Advent season. Great fun, fellowship and food!

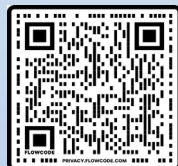
December Call Committee Update

The call committee continues to meet weekly and we continue to progress in this process. We plan to meet with a candidate for a second in person interview in the upcoming weeks to review additional questions that we have as a group and have the candidate meet with staff as well as the church council. References are also in the process of being checked. We will continue to discern and pray through these next steps. Thank you for your ongoing support and prayer. We greatly appreciate the congregation's support and questions.

Online Church Directory!

Calvary's church directory is online, and it's not complete without YOU! Check it out at members.instantchurchdirectory.com and create a login using the email address the church office has on file for you (if you don't know what that is or need to update it, contact the church office). The contact information we have on file for you is pre-loaded, which you can edit and add a family picture! [Click HERE](#) or scan the QR code to check out the blockbuster tutorial video featuring Pr. Jeremiah for step by step instructions.

This directory is available through any web browser, or the app (search for Instant Church Directory). Have your church family with you everywhere you go on your phone or other mobile device!



December Worship schedule

All are welcome to come and worship! Our Sunday morning traditional worship is at 8:30 am, and our contemporary service is at 10:45 am. We will be worshipping with the Holden Evening Prayer service on Wednesdays at 6:15 pm.

On Christmas Eve we will have three worshipping opportunities: 3:30 pm Family Friendly service with a Baptismal Festival (have any interested families contact us); 5:30 pm Candlelight Service with Holy Communion; 8:00 pm Candlelight Service with Holy Communion.

On December 18, we hear the good news in song with the "Season of Praise" choir cantata at both services. Celebrate Pr. Sue's ministry here with us with a piece of cake between services this day.

We will have one traditional worship service on both Christmas Day and New Years Day, at 10:00 am both days.

There will be no worship on Wednesday, December 28.

May you and yours have a blessed Christmas!

Christmas Office Hours

Calvary's office will be closed the week between Christmas and New Years, December 26-30, so we can give the building and our staff some well deserved rest after a very busy month. Emergency pastoral contact can be made by reaching out to 218-308-6654.

Thank you for SHOWING YOUR LOVE!

The Stewardship of Love Committee gives thanks to all the members of Calvary who pledged during our Stewardship of Love Campaign. It has been a long time since our congregation has done a stewardship campaign, with a focus on mission, service, and the impact our Church makes on the people we serve. We feel so blessed as a committee to have felt such a generous response from 84 families and 51 youth who committed their love with a pledge showing their support of Calvary & God's work.

We are so excited to report back a few highlights from the campaign.

- 84 individuals/families pledged to the campaign. This is 20% of our annual givers
- 51 Youth Pledged to our Youth Campaign
- Over \$260,000 pledged
- Average gift per giver grew from 2021-22 to 2022-2023 from \$1,400 to \$3,100
- We received 3 pledges over \$10,000

The good news is that 70% of those who give over \$500 in years past still have a chance to make a pledge. If the Church continues to see the growth in gifts amounts in future gifts and pledges, we will be able to continue to serve our congregation and community with the wonderful programs we have at Calvary.

If you haven't pledged or if you just figured you are a sustaining giver through RebelGive and didn't think to fill a pledge card out, it is not too late! Your pledge card shows your commitment, courage, and consideration in supporting and continuing the mission and work of Calvary.

Let's continue to bless this congregation and community with our LOVE, showing all through our actions, our generous spirits and caring hearts, that we are the hands, feet, and hugs of God.

Thank you, committee members for your service: Sara Moran, Ron Gladen, Paul Iverson, Sandy Hennum, Pastor Sue Tjornehoj, Larry Kent.

[Click here to download a pledge card.](#) You can pick one up on the usher tables or in the office as well.

MONTHLY MINISTRY PARTNER ~ VILLAGE OF HOPE

Calvary cares about homelessness and families, so Village of Hope is a natural partner, especially in these cold winter months. Village of Hope, a family shelter located in downtown Bemidji, "promotes self-worth and independence through the provision of temporary shelter and supportive services for families experiencing homelessness." The team of advocates there provides a spectrum of essential services to children and families. We're grateful for the work of this organization in our region, and we welcome the chance to support them. Remember: Our partnerships are about more than just money. The Bemidji community needs your voices, ideas, and support as we work together to consider the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors. You can get involved by talking to Sandy Hennum at Village of Hope, 751-0722.



You can give to our monthly ministry partners through RebelGive or by check. In order to help with record keeping, we ask that ALL checks be made out to Calvary Lutheran, with the name of the mission partner (example: "Village of Hope") written in the memo line.

Angel Tree - Return Gifts by Noon Dec. 16 *Sunday School Update*

It's that time of year again when we are planning our Christmas lists! Unfortunately, there are many people in our community that are struggling to survive. You can help families in our community by participating in our virtual Angel Tree gift program. You can go to calvarybemidji.org and click on the Angel Tree button where you will be able to select someone to give a gift to from a list of kids aged K-2nd grade. Select one or more children to gift from the list and go shopping. You can also contact the office if you would like help signing up to provide gift(s).

All gifts must be put in gift bag, unwrapped, clearly labeled with the assigned number code, and turned into the church office by NOON on December 16 so we can make sure to get gifts to the schools before Christmas break. Thanks for blessing young ones that otherwise might not receive any gifts this season.

Daytime Custodian Needed

Please make sure to thank Len Ochowicz for his service to Calvary over the past year. He has decided to take another try at retirement, which is great for him! We will miss you, Len! But, thankfully, we still get to see him as he continues to be involved in many other aspects of Calvary life.

Please check out our website or contact Garrett in the office if you or someone you know would be interested in working in this great place called Calvary!

Salvation Army Bell Ringers Needed!

Calvary is scheduling bell ringers again this year at Lueken's South. This has become an annual opportunity to bless others. Last year, the bell ringers at Lueken's South collected \$9,146 which was used to help people in need in our local community. Bell ringers are allowed to stand or sit inside where it is warm. Bell ringers can write their names and times on the sign up board at Calvary or you can call Glen Anderson to schedule a time: 218.444.8620; 218.556.0181. The bell and apron can be picked up at the service counter.

Adult Education Opportunities!

This Advent, come and explore some of the common themes of this season of waiting – hope, love, joy, and peace. As we pause and consider the meaning of this transitory time, Adult Education will involve Bible Study of these themes in Room 12 starting at 9:40 each Sunday morning. No adult ed December 25 or January 1, we'll begin again January 8.

Meal Schedule for Calvary Alive

- December 7 – Chili
- December 14 – No Meal
- December 21 – Spaghetti
- December 28 – No Meal - No worship

Sunday School has been rotating through cooking, games, and art since starting this fall. Thanks to all the teachers and shepherds who have made it possible to study some great Bible stories in fun ways. Kids learned that Jesus offered them a special blessing that helps them to this day. Everyone heard and recited the Lord's Prayer, and most recently, rainbows have filled the activities to tell the story of God's promise to protect all of us forever. A special thanks to Shar for kicking things off each week with a little music, and to all the parents for understanding the importance of learning God's stories. We'll be looking for more helpers going forward to make it easier when people need a week off. Let Brett know if you are interested in sharing your faith and the Bible's great stories with our kids preschool to 5th grade.

Sunday School Christmas Program

Our "Sunday School Program" this year will be a Pop-Up Nativity during worship on Sunday, December 11th and Wednesday, December 21st and you are in the cast! Everyone in attendance will be part of the storytelling, some will even act it out, and of course, the heavenly chorus is the whole congregation. It's a simple, fun retelling of the Christmas story as one more reminder of the reason for the season. Brett could use a helper who can collect and organize some costumes and props. Let him know if you have time to help.

See Calvary's December Birthdays Here!

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

FINANCIAL REPORT

12 MONTH FISCAL YEAR – AUGUST-JULY

General Fund – October

<u>Income</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Income</u>
\$81,706	\$102,036	\$262,988
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Expenses</u>
\$100,085	\$106,263	\$269,069

(General Income Y-T-D Includes Grants of \$6,357)

Cash, Receivables, & Savings: \$248,266

October Ministry Partner: ELCA Disaster Response - \$2,196.80

Calvary Foundation Balance: \$51,364

Our fiscal year's first quarter income includes deferred revenue totaling about \$25,000. This money shows as income now but is designated to be paid out for a specific purpose in the future. Taking this into account, Calvary has around \$30,000 more in expenses than revenue so far this year. We wanted to take this opportunity to explain where Calvary stands financially through our fiscal year's first quarter and encourage any remaining households that have not yet donated to Calvary to do so. Every little bit helps!

Getting to Know Calvary Council Member ~ Mitch Eickman

Greetings Calvary! My name is Mitch Eickman, and I am the vice president of the council. I have been having a great time this year co-teaching the Middle School Sunday School Program. As typically happens with teaching a youth program or being an adult leader on a mission trip, I feel I get more out of it than the kids. I am grateful to have our Sunday morning education hour this year which I think is a great opportunity for all ages to continue their own faith journey. I am proud to be a part of our community and our church. The past year of leadership from Pastor Sue has been an immense blessing. Please join us in worship during this season of waiting. And as always, please keep our call process in your thoughts and prayers.



Wreaths and Youth Mission Trips

Thanks so much to all who participated in this year's wreath sale. Proceeds will support kids traveling to Milwaukee and Nashville for mission trips this summer. You purchased more than 150 wreaths to help these kids grow in faith. Wreaths have been delivered, so please come in to pick up your orders. Mission trip registration deadline is December 15! Middle and High School kids are going to Milwaukee and Nashville this summer. These will be life-changing, faith-growing, memory-making experiences that so many kids before them have already had. Now is the time to register. There are forms in the office, but talk to Brett for the details (if you're already fundraising, you really should register!). Check out youthworks.com to find out more information about what the trips are like, or ask around - Lots of Calvary folks have experiences they'd be happy to share - and register now! Our next mission trip meeting is Sunday, December 11 at 7:00 pm. Parents and kids are invited so we can get real with registration and finalize our numbers of youth and adult leaders. We have space for 10 on the Milwaukee trip and 20 on the Nashville (high school) trip.

Preschool Update from Tony Kerr, Director

The school year has had a great start. We could use more students, specifically our youngest starting at 33 months (about 3 years). We hosted a wonderful preschool Family Fun Night where we had a pumpkin patch, hot cider, and hayrides. Rumor has it, Santa may be visiting us December 15! Stay tuned on that. We are really focusing on recruiting some students and would like any help you might be able to offer via personal Facebook posts about openings, word of mouth, or any other ways you might think of. We are also always in need of snack supplies for the children. Although school families are encouraged to donate, we would not turn down gifts from our congregation. I want to publicly thank the Preschool staff as they are the kindest, most fun-loving group I have come to work with. Thank you all for the work you do serving our children.

2022 Year-End Giving

With the end of the year approaching, it's time to consider any year-end donations you wish to make. To receive credit for your 2022 taxes, please ensure that your donation is provided to Calvary by the end of December. Mail in offerings are recorded by the postdate on the mailing envelope, not the date on the check. Please ensure the post office has your year-end donation no later than December 31. Online donations through RebelGive must be made by December 31.

Thank you for financially supporting Calvary's ministry. We are the church, together!

Following in Lydia's Footsteps

Have you ever dreamed of a trip to Turkey and Greece? Wondered what the world looked like for the first followers of Jesus? Maybe like me, you have been fascinated by this obscure woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth who was baptized by Paul outside the walls of the Roman city of Philippi. If so, I am leading a pilgrimage to walk in Lydia's footsteps (the Apostle Paul's too) with a lifelong friend who just retired from the faculty of St. Olaf! The dates are August 10-19, 2023. The journey begins in Istanbul, then to Izmir on the Turkish coast of the Aegean Sea. We will stop at Ephesus and Thyatira, take a ferry to Kavala in Greece (ancient Neapolis) and pause at Lydia's baptismal spot, quiet and soothing. Flights home will leave from Athens. Please contact me, Pastor Sue, if you are interested or have questions and I can send you a flyer.

A Little Child Shall Lead Them...

"The wolf shall live with the lamb, the cow, and bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together. They will not hurt or destroy. And a little child shall lead them." (Isaiah 11.6-9, adapted)

Calvary knows the power children have to lead. Children occupy the east end of the building Monday through Friday. They infect this holy space with energy and wisdom, with laughter and learning and tears. Without even knowing it, they lead this community with their vulnerability and faith. These children grow up into Kingdom Kids, then confirmation-age where their faith takes on a public form in Statements of Faith shared in worship. By the time they are in high school, this faith now maturing helps them navigate a complicated world filled with questions. Yes, Calvary knows the leadership of children.

And they did it again as part of the GiveBoldly: A Stewardship of Love campaign! 51 of these young people completed pledge cards. 42 made the commitment to take some time everyday to talk to God. 32 committed to ask for help from the Spirit (and a trusted adult) when facing difficult choices and decisions. 37 pledged to remember to take some time each week (like Wednesday and/or Sunday) to say thanks in worship.

Thank you for leading this congregation children and young people! And thanks to the little child Savior, Jesus Christ for leading us all.



Following in the Footsteps of Luther ~ Germany Trip Deadline Dec. 15

Join us for a group trip to Germany in fall 2023 while following the footsteps of Martin Luther. Find more information in the itinerary and agreement, available on the Calvary Adult Ed webpage. Limited seats available. Deadline to register, Dec. 15, 2022. Contact local organizers Martin Graefe, Lisa Christensen-Graefe and Becky Bergquist at luthertour2023@gmail.com for more information.