



2508 Washington Ave SW  
Bemidji, MN 56601

## "Moving 'Out-of-the-Box' and into God's Future..."

...and beyond the best of our past. A new church is being born. It may not be the church we expect or want...God's promises always arrive with surprises in them. The form of the new world and the new church is not in our hands. What is in our hands is the chance to respond to God's call. We put our skills and our wills to the task of discerning the opportunity points, the places and times for change effort, and to add our gifts to God's church in this time of change. How God uses our gifts we cannot predict." (*The Once and Future Church*, Loren Mead)

In a recent article by former Alban writer Jeffrey D. Jones, he writes: "It's time to start asking new questions. Better answers to the same old questions about the church will not get us through the tumultuous times in which we live. This is a time for out-of-the-box thinking. Old questions keep us in the box. New questions invite us to move outside." In her book, *The Great Emergence*, the late Phyllis Tickle talked about the need for today's church to have a rummage sale so we can rid ourselves of all those practices, beliefs and ways of being and doing church that are no longer effective and rather get in the way of being the church we are called to be for this new and too chaotic world. "Many centuries old questions in the church need to be put in that rummage sale" Jones writes, "and they need to be replaced with new questions that lead us into new ways of being, and doing – ways that are attuned to the time in which we live."

And so I ask, can we, in faith, in these particular transition times, ask anything less than the most culturally-sensitive, historically-informed, socially aware, and theologically authentic and future-sensitive questions than our Lutheran Confessions demand? No, we cannot...not if we would be true to our faith and the core values that this faith (Luther) reflects. As St. Paul proclaimed, we "live and move and have our being" in Him whose holy name our baptism has blessed into and upon us...forever. Our daily reality must reflect our core values if we are to be counted among the truly faithful.

It is true. Many of the old questions were valid at one time. Some yet have a place in the new church that is being born. But if there are also new questions that are offered to form our approach to ministry in these times, then they will be those that lead us to new insights and new learning. New insights fail to get put into practice because they conflict with deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting. That is why the discipline of managing mental models – surfacing, testing, and improving our internal pictures of how the world works – promises to be a major breakthrough for building learning (congregations) organizations. (*The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge). Welcoming God's future at Calvary presumes that we embrace new learning, new questions, new insights. Let's do it together!

Here's a menu for our thoughtful perusal: Over the years, in many congregations, and yet even more so in these days of declining church membership, the question has been, "How do we bring them in?" Wouldn't it be better for us to ask, "How do we send them out?" With roles and responsibilities of pastors changing, many wonder "What should the pastor do?" Might it be more important to ask, "What is our shared ministry?" At Calvary, the forthcoming emergence of our five defined ministry teams supports this awareness.

When we at Calvary now focus on strategic planning, we are inclined to ask, "What is our vision and how do we implement it?" I have presumed that some of the discussions through the listening sessions and explore team work that preceded my ministry with you were determined to look forward with some form of the question, "What's God up to and how do we get on board?" As we and other congregations in this changing church respond to financial challenges, we are inclined to ask some form of "How do we survive?" Might we instead ask "How do we serve?" How do we acknowledge and honor our members total giving that occurs in their ministry in daily life? How do we recognize and honor the value and the blessing of each person's unique gifts for ministry and the freedom they have to use those gifts as their faith guides them?

When we and other congregations think about God's mission that as a church, our first response is likely some version of, "How do we help people?" A better question might be "How do we make the reign of God more present in this time and place?"

While there are no right answers, these questions can be applied to Calvary. Like other congregations with their own unique issues, we too need to live with these questions. It is only in living the questions that new ways of doing and being the Church of Jesus Christ do emerge. We can be part of what Phyllis Tickle, founding editor of the Religion Department of "Publishers Weekly", called *The Great Emergence*. So dear friends, Why Not Emerge Together at Calvary?

Pr. Paul N. Svingen, Interim Lead Pastor

**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BEMIDJI | MARCH 2023**

## Special Congregational Meeting Update

On February 12, our congregation gathered to hear the recommendation from the Call Committee and Council to call Pastor Chris Leach as our next Lead Pastor. Our congregation voted, and with a vote of YES:213 NO: 2, approved to call Pastor Chris. Council is very happy to report that Pastor Chris and his family have accepted our call. (See Pr. Chris's acceptance letter in this newsletter). Pastor Chris will begin his ministry here in June.



Pastor Chris grew up in Thief River Falls, MN. His background is in bible camp ministry as a youth and later a camp counselor. Camp ministry continues to be dear to his heart. He was a youth director in East Grand Forks and an Intern Pastor/Visitation Pastor/Care Coordinator in Owatonna, MN. He is currently serving in Barnesville, MN (near Fargo/Moorhead). Pastor Chris and wife Sarah have three children, Norah, Nicholas, and Nolan. We look forward to welcoming them in our ministry at Calvary.

## Call Acceptance Letter from Pr. Chris

Dear Calvary Lutheran Church,

Greetings from our family to yours as these winter days continue. Last Sunday, after our morning activities had concluded, my wife and I sat by my phone eagerly waiting and hoping for the call that would soon come. Our hearts leapt for joy as it rang and Nicholle began sharing the wonderful news and all the excitement that she experienced during your morning together. I was ecstatic, honored, and overjoyed to hear that you had called me as your next lead pastor and it is with joy and great excitement that my family and I can eagerly say 'yes' to this invitation to be church together!

We are so thankful for this opportunity to join the Calvary family. It has been a joy to walk with the call committee and council, and we are excited to get to know you and to discover what God has in store for us together. While we still have some time before our paths officially converge, I am eagerly anticipating that first moment of standing among you in worship and saying those words 'Good Morning Calvary!' Until then, my prayers will be with you and my heart will be singing for life in faith we are about to share. Cheers to the journey ahead!

Peace, Pr. Chris Leach

## Adult Education Opportunities!

Adult Education topics are discussed and decided by a small working committee of lay persons (thank you for your work!), along with Pastor Jeremiah. Adult Education happens each Sunday at 9:40 in room 5 (right off the Fellowship Hall), so bring a cup of coffee and join us for some great learning and conversation!

- March 5: "Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor" part 3
- March 12: Time with a Food Shelf representative
- March 19: Why we do what we do; Lutheran worship part 1
- March 26: Why we do what we do; Lutheran worship part 2

## March 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 continue worshiping in a contemporary style on Wednesdays at 6:15 pm.

Our Wednesday services during Lent will be centered around "Overheard Conversations By the Cross," in which we will encounter possible interactions among those actually experiencing the happenings during Jesus' last days. Come and ponder with these intriguing scenarios, both at the noon and the 6:15 pm services.

Mark your calendars for April 2, Palm Sunday, where we, as a congregation, will go from Palms to Passion, through procession, Word, song, sacrament, and stark realization. We will also share this worship experience on Wednesday, April 5 for our Holy Week Experience service.

April 6 we celebrate Maundy Thursday, marking the anniversary of the Lord's Last Supper. We will have a noon service, and then at 6:30 pm will celebrate with those taking their First Communion.

April 7 marks Good Friday. We will be presenting "Journey to the Cross" a dramatic stations of the cross presentation at 6:30 pm.

Our Gospel texts for the month are:

- March 5 ~ John 3:1-17
- March 12 ~ John 4:5-42
- March 19 ~ John 9:1-41
- March 26 ~ John 11:1-45

## See Calvary's March Birthdays Here!

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



## First Communion Opportunity

A First Communion Orientation will be held between worship services (9:40-10:30 am) on March 12 in the lounge. First Communion will be celebrated during worship on Maundy Thursday, April 6, during the 6:30 pm worship. If you're interested in signing up for this class (or would like to schedule a meeting at a different time), please contact Pr. Jeremiah at [revholst@calvarybemidji.org](mailto:revholst@calvarybemidji.org).

## Calvary Happenings

This article featuring New Members, Deaths, and Baptisms is updated monthly as a way to stay informed of what is happening in our congregation.

- **Baptisms: Finley Mae Stevens** (daughter of Ryan & Allie Stevens)



## MONTHLY MINISTRY PARTNER ~ MINNESOTA FOOD SHARE

Our monthly ministry partner for March is Minnesota Food Share! God cares about physical hunger as well as spiritual hunger. For that reason, Calvary continues to partner faithfully with the Bemidji Community Food Shelf. This month, we join food shelves, faith communities, businesses, and organizations across Minnesota in acting to end hunger and food insecurity. Minnesota's charitable food system (food shelves, food banks, meal programs, etc.) continues to run at capacity.

Supporting government programs like SNAP ("food stamps") and creating a more just and equitable food system are integral parts of meeting the needs of food insecure households and working toward ending hunger in our communities.

Let's join together as followers of Christ in heeding his command to "Feed my sheep." Donations can be made through RebelGive by selecting "second offering monthly partner," or by checks made out to Calvary Lutheran with "MN food share" in the memo line.



## Ways you can SERVE

### Help Wanted:

**Actors needed:** Please contact Shar (spaquette@calvarybemidji.org) if you are willing and able to be part of our "Journey to the Cross" stations dramatic worship on April 7. Some vital roles still need to be filled. No experience necessary, and no speaking parts. Just a willingness to be part of an impactful service.

**Choir singers for our Holy Week presentations:** please contact Shar (spaquette@calvarybemidji.org) if you love to sing and are willing to join this fun group for a short-term gig. We rehearse on Thursdays at 5:00 pm.

**Head Usher/Host 10:45 am Sunday services:** This role would be the connecting person between the worship staff and the worship hosts for the particular service. Visit with Pr. Jeremiah (revholst@calvarybemidji.org) or Shar (spaquette@calvarybemidji.org) to find out more!

**Hosts for 10:45 am Sunday service:** Come and help be a welcoming and organizing presence during worship. This is a relatively easy, yet vital role, in our worship services. We try to keep commitments to once per month. Contact Shar (spaquette@calvarybemidji.org) to get on the list!

**Calvary Alive Cooks and Clean Up Crew:** If you would like to volunteer to help cook or clean up after meals, please contact Garrett! You can get more information or sign up to help in the office, or by emailing gfultz@calvarybemidji.org. This is a great way to support our Calvary community!

**Sunday School Teachers:** If you have a love of kids and think that teaching them about faith is important, then we need you! Don't let the occasional conflict keep you from this rewarding opportunity ~ we can work with your schedule! Please call, text, email, or talk to Brett to let him know you can help out. 218-210-2622 or bcarter@calvarybemidji.org.

**Coffee Fellowship Hosts:** At this point, if we don't have a group hosting coffee fellowship on Sundays, it falls to the (already busy) office staff to get the self-serve coffee carts/tables set up for our use on Sunday. Wouldn't it be so much nicer to have people/groups/families volunteering to host an occasional Sunday? It is really very easy, and we would love to take the time to equip you to be the church and serve each other! The next open Sunday is **April 2 ~ please let the office know if you can help or if you want to sign up for a different Sunday in the future.**

## Preschool News

### Preschool Update from Director Tony Kerr

Greetings Calvary families! Calvary Preschool has been busy with so many things like assessments, family fun nights, conferences, all the preparation for them, and the countless day-to-day activities. We have had many calls and inquiries about preschool for next year and are already planning for our summer programs. Because of this, we opened pre-registration a month early. If you need preschool and/or childcare services for this summer or next year, stop in and pick up paperwork, take a tour of the school, and see what we are about. Our doors are open! Our open house for all families will be Thursday, April 13 at 5:30 pm. Our next family fun night will be Thursday, March 30, from 5:00-6:30 pm, where we will celebrate Dr. Seuss with stories, a short movie and a delicious meal of green eggs and ham. It will be a blast! Among all these exiting activities, we are also beginning to prepare for our Easter Programs which will take place on April 13 and 14. More information on those will follow. The preschool always has something fun going on. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers as we look to the next couple of seasons of programming. We are truly blessed, our team is solid, and God is with us!

In Christ,  
Tony Kerr

### Meal Schedule for Calvary Alive

- March 1 – Chicken Wild Rice Soup
- March 8 – Hamburger Soup
- March 15 – Potato Soup
- March 22 – Split Pea Soup
- March 30 – Italian Wedding Soup

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### 12 MONTH FISCAL YEAR – AUGUST-JULY

#### General Fund – January

<u>Income</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Income</u>
\$102,449	\$102,036	\$599,681
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Expenses</u>
\$108,780	\$109,766	\$611,542

(General Income Y-T-D Includes Grants of \$15,957)

Cash, Receivables, & Savings: \$223,903

January Ministry Partner: Churches United - \$1,794

Calvary Foundation Balance: \$53,255



## Getting to Know Calvary Council Member ~ Len Ochowicz

Hello church! I am council member-at-large Len Ochowicz, and I write this just a few days before our special meeting on February 12. I have a question: What does God want us to do? Since I ask this question of God, I find myself in God's word which guides our life together on this earth, looking for an answer just as Moses wondered what God expected of him. God's spoke to Moses saying, what does the Lord your God require of you? He requires only that you fear the Lord your God, and live in a way that pleases him, and love him and serve him with all your heart and soul. It is an answer that applies to all of us individually but we also are aware that this same question applies to Calvary as a whole, what does God want Calvary to do? As I reflect on Calvary as a church, memories of our grandchildren's confirmation service and the prayers and blessings over them by Pastor Genelle and the congregation come to mind. We weren't members then, but we were part of this special time. This is Calvary. When we eventually moved here, we joined this church because we were welcomed and invited to serve with you here, and in the community around us. This is Calvary. Shortly after, Calvary's pastor left, we grieved together with you, and we heard this is Calvary. New leaders appeared and we continued as the Calvary I knew. When cancer invaded our family, our lives changed and we were visited, prayed over, and offered prayers by those we knew and by those we did not know. Again, we heard this is Calvary. Even as this very important special meeting comes about, and Calvary continues to plan for the future, I am reminded of why we show up. It is to have God's spirit guide us in our calling of a new pastor to partner with to accomplish God's will for Calvary. It is to create a place where people who are struggling or are crying over those they miss or weeping their way through times of disappointment can receive ministry. This is Calvary. It is a community of real people, with real beating hearts, that are attentive to each other in mercy and grace and love. It is a living, breathing place to be led by a living and breathing pastor who also is much like us at Calvary.



## Online Church Directory!

Calvary's church directory is online, and it's not complete without YOU! Check it out at [members.instantchurchdirectory.com](https://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!

## Youth Silent Auction SUPPORTING YOUTH MISSIONS

It's time once again for the Youth Silent Auction in support of two amazing mission trips this summer. The silent auction bidding begins Wednesday, March 22 and ends with a flourish on Palm Sunday, April 2 at the end of the Sunday School hour between services. Watch for your chance to bid on some amazing items, all of which support 36 kids who will learn lots about what it means to serve God in a hands-on, worship-filled experience. Thanks in advance for supporting our youth. Great quality donations are welcome. Contact Brett ([bcarter@calvarybemidji.org](mailto:bcarter@calvarybemidji.org)) for more information.

## The Refuge GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Calvary is hosting a grief support group for those who have experienced a death related loss. This is a continuous support group called The Refuge. Group meetings are from 5:00-7:00 pm on Thursdays in Room 1 at Calvary. No need to pre-register. Contact Erin Kossivi at 813-417-7678 with questions!

**Refuge Kids** is for any child that has lost a primary caregiver to death (parents, sibling, or primary caregiver). The program is best suited for kids 7-13 years of age. The group meets weekly on Fridays in the Bemidji Covenant Church Family Life Center from 4:30-5:30 pm. For more information contact Erin Kossivi 813-417-7678.

## Bible Camp EARLY BIRD DEADLINE MARCH 20

Yes! It's already time to register for Camp Emmaus' summer camp experiences, with an early bird discount when you register by March 20. Opportunities abound for all ages. Register at [pathwaysbiblecamps.org](https://pathwaysbiblecamps.org) today. Scholarships are available. Contact Brett ([bcarter@calvarybemidji.org](mailto:bcarter@calvarybemidji.org)) for more information.



Go to <https://youtu.be/VZMAe7qLupg> to see a promotional video. Camp is a great way to have fun in the summer!

## Daylight Savings Time

March 12 begins this year's daylight savings time, so don't forget to "Spring Ahead" with your clocks. If you forget, you will miss worship on Sunday morning.

