



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

Our Lenten Journey to the Cross

Brokenness... it is something we all know. It is something we all experience. It is something we all feel. As we look out across this war torn world, we see unimaginable pain and suffering. Even here at home, we are challenged by grief, suffering, questions, and poor choices that rip at the very fabric of our relationship with God. All these things remind us of how fragile life can be and how in need we are of a savior to overcome those powers and pressures that weigh us down. It is in this brokenness that we find our souls yearning for a return to God. And so begins Lent, and our journey to the cross. This month we begin that journey in worship on Ash Wednesday (February 14) with the Imposition of Ashes. From there, our forty day journey to the cross continues. As we enter this journey, let us begin with exploring what Ash Wednesday and Lent are all about.

What is Ash Wednesday?

The imposition of ashes began to develop in the eleventh century where it had become customary to receive ashes at the beginning of Lent. The Christian use of ashes relates to a fourth century Jewish practice where public penitents were dressed in sackcloth and sprinkled with ashes on the head as a sign of repentance. As it is practiced now by many churches and denominations, being marked with ashes is a public acknowledgement that one is a sinner, as we all are. Receiving the ashes in the sign of the cross is a symbol of repentance and forgiveness. The ashes themselves are the burnt palms used on Palm Sunday of the previous year. While receiving the ashes, it is customary to hear these words, "Remember you are dust and to the dust you shall return." They are a reminder of our mortality, that from the dust of the earth we were formed and when we die, we will return to being dust again. Though we are in bondage to this reality, we belong to God. In the repentance of sin and the forgiveness that comes through Jesus' death and resurrection, though we die, we shall live forever. Ash Wednesday begins the spiritual journey of Lent; a time of renewal in the love of God. (Information on Ash Wednesday was compiled from www.elca.org and www.aboutcatholics.com)

What is Lent?

The word Lent derives from the Middle English word Lenten, meaning springtime – the time of lengthening days. In its earliest form, it consisted of three weeks and was an intense period of spiritual and liturgical preparation for catechumens before they were baptized at Easter. By the time Christianity was legalized in the fourth century, Lent had developed into its current length of forty days. This length connects scripturally to the time Jesus fasted and was tempted in the desert, (Luke 4:1-13). Some now also believe that it relates to the early church's forty-day fasting practices especially engaged by monks. This fast, beginning right after Epiphany, stressed prayer and penance. Once most people were Christian and baptized as infants, Lent lost the connection to the preparation of catechumens for baptism and the themes of repentance and fasting became dominant. (Information on Lent was compiled from www.elca.org and www.aboutcatholics.com)

Our Journey Together to the Cross

Our practice of Lent consists of forty days leading up to Maundy Thursday. We understand it as a journey of returning to God. It is a time that exposes those things in our lives that keep us from God or turn our hearts from seeking God throughout our lives. For each of us this is different, but collectively we struggle down this road together. Lent creates space for us to bear with one another the struggles of this life, and to find strength and encouragement to return and reconcile our lives with God. Though we do not practice communal forms of fasting from food, our Lenten journey does encourage us to explore ways of personally fasting as we journey to the cross. For some, this may be giving up certain foods or refraining from drinking certain beverages. For others, this may be including healthy practices of exercise, prayer or reading. Whatever the case, we are encouraged to find something that personally helps us reconnect our souls with our God.

Together as a church family we will do this in a few ways. First, will be the removing the language of "Halleluiah" from our vocabulary for the duration of Lent. During the children's sermon on Ash Wednesday and as part of our lessons the following Sunday, we will discuss this practice, and the kiddos will assist us in removing the word not to be returned until Easter morning.

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In addition, our Wednesday ministry will change with the addition of a noon Lenten service. We will gather for music, scripture, and a readers theater presentation of our evening drama. Calvary Alive will still begin with a meal at 5:15pm, which flows into worship at 6:15pm. In worship, we will sing the beautiful Holden Evening Prayer; a contemporary liturgy that is accessible for all ages. Embedded within the evening prayer liturgy will be a five-part drama series that explores themes of worship and faith as we Journey to the Banquet of the King. Sunday services will connect to these themes as well in a sermon series that digs deep into aspects of Christian worship. Here is a schedule of our Lenten Journey for this year:

February 14:

Ash Wednesday Worship – 6:15pm in the Sanctuary

February 18 and 21:

The Power of Forgiveness – 1 John 1:5-10

- * Sunday Series: What is Confession and Forgiveness?
- * Wednesday Drama: Meet the Gatekeeper

February 25 and 28:

The Power of Music – Colossians 3:12-17

- * Sunday Series: What are Hymns of Worship?
- * Wednesday Drama: Meet the Poet

March 3 and 6:

The Power of Scripture – 2 Timothy 3:10-17

- * Sunday Series: What is Scripture?
- * Wednesday Drama: Meet the Teacher

March 10 and 13:

The Power of Prayer – John 17

- * Sunday Series: What is Prayer?
- * Wednesday Drama: Meet the Pauper

March 17 and 20:

The Power of Holy Communion – 1 Cor 11:23-26

- * Sunday Series: What is Holy Communion?
- * Wednesday Drama: Meet the Chief Steward

Let us begin this journey on February 14 with Ash Wednesday and travel that road together to the cross. May Lent be a time of renewal in your personal life and may it be a time of renewal for our worship life.

Peace on the Journey,

Pastor Chris

Lent Mentoring

Interested in spending 20 minutes each Wednesday night during Lent having conversations with our awesome confirmation students? Lent begins February 14, and Pastor Jeremiah is looking for Lent mentors! If you would like to participate or have questions about the program, please contact Pr. Jeremiah.

Ashes To Go

If you're planning on worshipping online at home February 14 Ash Wednesday and would like ashes for the service, you can pick up a packet of ashes from Jamie in the office.

First Communion Training

Calvary will be hosting first communion training on Thursday, February 1 at 6:30pm. This is for all those interested in taking their First Communion the following Sunday February 4 at the 9:00am service. Lent begins on Wednesday, February 14.

The class is for all 5th graders at Calvary, though all ages are welcome. If those younger (or older) are hungry for the sacrament and wanting to learn about it, the meal is for them too! Contact Pr. Jeremiah with questions.

Stewardship Letter

In January, there was a Stewardship Letter sent out from Pr. Chris and Nicholle on behalf of Council. Please check out the letter electronically if you didn't receive it! Also, you can scan the QR Code below to register for RebelGive so you can donate electronically! If you have any questions, please call the office at 218-751-1893.

[Click here to read the stewardship letter!](#)



RebelGive

**Connect Through
Giving!**



Call Jamie or Garrett for Help! 218-751-1893



Baptisms at Calvary

If you are interested in having your child baptized at Calvary, please visit our baptism page on our website to get scheduled with us! If you have any questions, you can contact the office at 218-751-1893.

[Click here to register on our website!](#)

Adult Education



Adult Education meets Sunday mornings from 11-11:30am! Ron Gladen will continue the series looking at the book of Revelation February 4 and February 11. Then we will move into Luther's Small Catechism February 18 and 25. Come be a part of the conversation!!

See Calvary's February Birthdays Here!

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

MONTHLY MINISTRY PARTNER ~ UNITED WAY'S BACKPACK BUDDIES



Calvary's February ministry partner is the United Way's Backpack Buddies program.

While every child has access to a nutritious breakfast and lunch during school, the same cannot be said for weekends and school breaks. The Backpack Buddies program was developed to help ensure that children in the Bemidji school district have access to nutritious, non-perishable, and easy-to-prepare food at such times when other resources are not available.

The Backpack Buddies usual weekly menu includes 2 entrees, 1 snack, 2 breakfast items, 1 vegetable, 2 fruits, 2 milks, and 1 high protein item. The food packs are discreetly distributed to children, as best determined by the school, on the last day before weekends and all scheduled school breaks/holiday breaks.

Helping make sure children in our local area have enough to eat is one way we can work to fulfill Christ's command from Mark 6:37: You give them something to eat. We're proud to partner with the United Way in making this program a reality!

High School Summer Trip

We're regrouping for our High School Summer trip with a change of plans that will be less expensive and closer to home. Brett will present a plan for you on Wednesday, February 7 at 7:15pm in the Youth Room with the rest of the CLUB group. Watch for details coming home via email, Remind, and maybe even snail mail. Let's find a way to experience a fun, faith-filled adventure this summer! Plan on being at the meeting for both parents and kids. Any questions, talk to Brett.

Hangin' With Mark

Lenten Bible Study Series

Wednesdays, February 14, 2024 - March 20, 2024

Join us for six weeks as we journey through the Gospel According to Mark. Experience God's relentless story of love and the hope it brings for your life together with God. All you need to bring is you and your favorite Bible, whatever translation you like and preferably one you are comfortable writing in. Come to learn, share, and listen as we grow together as Christ's church. Pastor Chris will be leading this study, and you can participate in morning sessions (10:00am) or in evening sessions (after worship at 7:30pm). Sign up today in the church office. Come, let's hang out with Mark and his fast-paced narrative of the story of our Savior.

Sunday School

We are having so much fun learning the stories from the Bible each week in Sunday School. As we move into the Lenten season, we want to help families prepare together. To do that, our next Faith Family Project Day will focus on walking alongside Jesus on the journey through Lent. We'll have a fun craft for the whole family that will also benefit the whole congregation. That happens on Sunday, February 18 beginning with worship at 10:30am and the project time in the Fellowship Hall after. We look forward to helping everyone enjoy the Lenten journey together. See you every Sunday (and for Wednesday Lenten Services starting February 14.)

Thank You!

Village of Hope sent a thank you card and to let all of us know how our generous donations helped their guests in numerous ways. They shared that they were able to welcome their guests with hot meals, private rooms with clean linens, and hot showers. Thank you to everyone that helped make this possible for them!



FINANCIAL REPORT

12 MONTH FISCAL YEAR – AUGUST-JULY

General Fund – December

<u>Income</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Income</u>
\$103,294	\$97,821	\$320,229
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Expenses</u>
\$112,729	\$121,416	\$479,212

Cash, Receivables, & Savings: \$57,466

December Ministry Partner: Village of Hope \$2,779

Calvary Foundation Balance: \$53,724

We want to thank everyone for their continued support as we grow in our ministry together!

Getting to Know Calvary Council ~ Sue Supalla



Calvary family,

My name is Sue Supalla and I am the newest at large member of Calvary council. My connection to Calvary Lutheran began some 27 years ago when my husband Randy and I enrolled our son in preschool here at Calvary. This was a great way to connect and begin our involvement and ultimately our membership in this welcoming place! The past decades I have been involved in altar guild, Calvary Alive meals, Servants of Shelter, teaching both Sunday school and confirmation, and previous terms on the council. I would like to invite you to take a "leap of faith" as well and get involved at Calvary. You will likely meet someone new and learn something about yourself and your spiritual journey.

Our future at Calvary looks bright with a full staff in place and increasing attendance at all the services! Christmas Eve was amazing with a huge gathering as we welcomed the Christ child. Let us keep the momentum going as we enter the new year ahead.

Just as my family works together on our farm and ranch.... it takes all of us in the Calvary family to make this place flourish and grow in our community. I invite you use your gifts of time, talent, and resources to continue

to make Calvary the vibrant church it is in our community. Please feel free to reach out to any of the council members if you have any questions or comments.

Peace to you and your family.

The Refuge GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Calvary is hosting a grief support group for those who have experienced a death related loss, especially during this Holiday season. This is a continuous support group called The Refuge, with group meetings held on Tuesday evenings from 4:00-6:00pm. The Refuge meets in Room 1 at Calvary. No need to pre-register - Contact Erin Kossivi at 813-417-7678 with questions!

Refuge Kids This group is for any child that has lost a close family member (parents, sibling, or primary caregiver). The program is best suited for kids 7-13 years of age. For more information contact Erin Kossivi 813-417-7678.

Food Shelf Representative Needed

Calvary is looking for someone to serve as our representative on the Bemidji Community Food Shelf Council of Churches! Duties include coordinating Calvary volunteers once a month (4th Wednesday of the month), attending a meeting once a quarter, and acting as a communication bridge between the Food Shelf and Calvary. If interested, please contact Pr. Jeremiah by calling the office at 218-751-1893

Opportunities to Connect

Quilters - Thursdays 9:00-11:00am

Men's Breakfast & Bible Study - Wednesdays 8:00am

Martha Circle - Every 3rd Tuesday of every month 1:00-3:00pm

Hope Circle - Every 3rd Tuesday of every month 9:30-11:00am

Marigold Circle - 1st or 2nd Monday every of month 10:00-12:00pm

Senior Group - 3rd Friday of every month 12:00-1:30pm

For more information about the different groups please contact the front office 218-751-1893.

Columbarium Niches Available!

It's been over a year since we installed Calvary's first columbarium unit! This unit provides some great benefits over traditional burials, like being cheaper, can be used in the winter without thawing the ground, and all the costs associated with interment are included in the one-time payment. We currently have five families that have reserved their space, and we have room for many more!

Each niche costs \$1,200 and has space for two standard sized urns. This payment covers the cost of the niche, niche door engraving, interment, and perpetual care of the columbarium site. We plan to use the funds from people claiming their spot in the existing unit to add additional units, add benches and lighting, and maintain the landscaping.

Contact Garrett in the office with any questions or to claim a space for you and your family.

