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A Prayer for the Storms

“On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?' (Mark 4:35-41)

So, I am curious, God. Does Jesus rebuke the wind or his windblown companions in this story? I suppose the answer is 'yes', which really leads me to another question: Is Jesus equating fear with lack of faith? I think this troubles me because isn't doubt part of faith? I mean, if one has no doubts, then do they really need faith? And what are fear and faith after all? And how does trust play a central role in both?

I get what is happening here. Jesus and his disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee. They are moving from what is familiar to what is unfamiliar, which is an experience we can all resonate with. Maybe this story isn't just a story about the weather and a boat trip but a story about life, and faith, and fear. The three are often related. Sometimes the sea of life is rough. The wind is strong. The waves are high. The boat is taking on water and sinking. I bet we could all tell a storm story. Some would begin with a phone call, a doctor's visit, or news we did not want to hear. Some of them will start with the choices we have made. Some would be of hopes and plans that fell apart. Some take us by surprise and some build as we watch. Storms indeed happen and are ultimately about changing conditions which sometimes becomes overwhelming, chaotic, frightening, especially when the distant shore seems so far away. That seems to reflect what the disciples were feeling. A deep fear which drives them to project it on Jesus. “Do you not care that we are perishing?” I bet you have heard those words echoed by many of us in the storms of our lives. “Do something, God, fix it. Make it better.” I mean how can Jesus sleep at a time like this? Sleeping Jesus is not what they or... we... want.

Maybe sleeping Jesus is one of the keys to understanding this story. He is in the same boat with the same storm as the disciples. He is surrounded by the same water, blown by the same wind, beaten by the same waves, but his response is very different. While the disciples are gripped by fear, Jesus sleeps. The disciples want action. Jesus embraced stillness, and I wonder if his sleep reveals that the greater storm and the real threat is not the wind, waves, and water around us, but what's within us. That interior storm is the one that blows us off course, beats against our faith, tears down our trust, and threatens to drown us. Far too often they lead us to anger, isolation, or denial which become our shelter from the storm. And yet Jesus calls “Peace! Be still!” Jesus speaks to the wind and the sea, not just to change the weather, but to change us. “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”

I get, God, that storms happen. I also get that faith - more faith, better faith, stronger faith, the right kind of faith - does not eliminate the storms of our lives. Faith does not change the storm. It changes us. Faith does not take us around the storm but through the storm. Faith allows us to see and know that Jesus is there with us. Faith is what allows us to be still and know that your Spirit blows more mightily than the winds of any storm. That your power is stronger than any wave that beats against us. That your love is deeper than any water that threatens to drown us. Faith is trust that you are with us amid the storm, and your response is always the same, “Peace! Be still!”

Faithful God, we ask that when we close our eyes and feel the rush of the wind, the waves that crash in, help us pause to see you. Help us turn our eyes to you. That the fear of the unknown would not paralyze us but instill in us a great sense of trust that you stand in the midst of the storm, that your light will lead us through. We hold onto your promise that you are always with us, but know truly that it is your promise that actually holds onto us. Thank you, God. Thank you. In Jesus's Name. Amen.

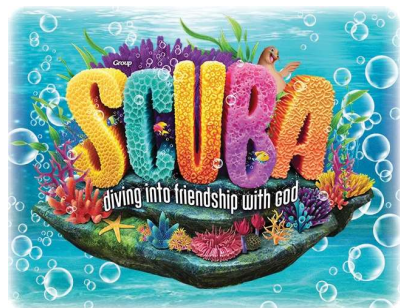
Pastor Chris

A Note of Thanksgiving

I want to give a special shout out to three of our Council Members who are completing their terms this month. Thank you Jim Molde, Mitch Eickman, and Sonia Wadena, for your dedication, leadership, and love that you have given our church family. You have been a blessing to serve with and I am thankful for your partnership in the Gospel. Please know that the light you have shined has blessed lives, not just here, but beyond our walls. We would not be the same church without your gifts of leadership. Take care and God bless you on your journey!

Pr. Chris

Save The Date to Dive Into VBS!



Register now for VBS! August 12-15 from 9:00am-noon and Sunday, August 18 during worship at 9:00am. We're gathering together for a week of fun under the sea with Scuba: Diving Into Friendship with God! VBS is for kids in preschool through entering 6th grade this fall. It will be a

chance to get to know God as a friend forever through music, games, science experiments, Bible stories, and more. Register in the church office or use this link <https://forms.office.com/r/GCUSzsc6z0>. Contact Brett Carter with any questions at bcarter@calvarybemidji.org

Help Wanted

We have had an amazing outpouring of support for our upcoming Vacation Bible School week in August. If you feel the call, we could use your help, too. We need partners for our station leaders who will teach a lesson each day; crew leaders for our groups of kids who will hang out with them from station to station each day; and helpers to provide support throughout the week. Let Brett Carter (bcarter@calvarybemidji.org) know if you can help—whether for a day or all week. We meet from 9:00-noon, Monday-Thursday, August 12-15 and we'll share with the congregation during worship on Sunday, August 18 at 9:00am. Thanks in advance for joining the more than 25 people who have already agreed to help!

Calling All Helpers

We're going to make a coral reef inside the whole church during this year's Vacation Bible School and we need your help right now. If you can follow a how-to video or simple directions, or if you just need to know a theme and you can go with it, we have supplies on hand to make things like coral, sea creatures, underwater flora and fauna, and more. Whether you want to just do one project or take on a whole room, we have work for you. We already have a team in place to make sense of it all. Now we need you to help make it happen. Talk to Brett Carter (bcarter@calvarybemidji.org) to let him know what you can do.

BACM Summer Recital Series

RECITAL AT CALVARY, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7!

Be sure to join us at Calvary on Wednesday, August 7 for a recital featuring our own Mary Thoreson on Piano, Sarah Leach on Piano and Samantha Melberg on Flute. This summer marks the 37th season of recitals! From 12:00-12:30 each Wednesday, a Bemidji area church hosts a recital for the public to enjoy. Lunch will follow each recital with a freewill offering. Check Calvary's Enews weekly for the featured musician and venue location of each recital or [click here](#) for a full schedule.

Preschool Registration is Open

Calling all families with preschool age children. Registration for the fall is well underway. We have a wonderful program teaching kindergarten readiness centered in the love of Jesus. Calvary's preschool is a compassionate and caring place to learn, grow, and connect with other kiddos and families and we want you to be part of it. Spots are filling fast! Call today (218-751-1893) to set up a time to walk through the preschool, meet some of our amazing teachers, and get registered for the 2024-2025 school year. It will be a blessed year together!

Ashley Holmgren

Houseboat Trip

Prayers requested for our houseboat crew getting ready to sail Rainy Lake July 21-26! We'll be spending a week connecting with each other, with nature, and with God's creation, all while trusting the Spirit to guide us. We probably won't have phones, so conversations, music, games, hiking, swimming, and more will make it a great week together. Pray for Kyja, Kaden, Amanda, Serenity, Megan, Kaylah, Aiden, Lucas, Evan, and me that we have an amazing week. And thanks to the whole congregation for helping make this trip possible.

Brett Carter

Volunteers Needed



Looking for a way to get involved with the Calvary Community? The altar guild needs you! Calvary's altar guild is responsible for preparing the elements for Communion and Baptisms - it's a great way to help support the shared worship life of our congregation! If you have questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Pr. Jeremiah.

See Calvary's July Birthdays Here!

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

See Calvary's August Birthdays Here!

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

JULY'S MINISTRY PARTNER ~ NORTHWOODS CAREGIVERS



Our congregation and community include people of all ages. This month, our ministry partner is an organization that connects with and serves elders in our community. Northwoods Caregivers provides respite care, shopping help, transportation, and many other services for neighbors who can use this assistance. Calvary is a long-time supporter of this vital ministry, and we are proud to continue our partnership of service to the Bemidji area!

Calvary Game Night!

As attendance grows with each event, Calvary's game night continues to be an exciting success! During June's game night, we had three gaming groups playing alongside each other with games such as Throw Throw Burrito, Catan, Apples to Apples, and more! Our goal is to hold a game session at least once a month, so keep your eyes open for our schedule!

We hope to set a new attendance record with our July game night on Tuesday, July 30 at 6:30pm, following that night's worship service. We are also currently planning to hold our August session on Tuesday, August 27, also following our Tuesday night worship service.

If you have any recommendations or questions, speak with Garrett in the office. We hope to see you at game night!



Opportunities to Connect

- 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 of every month 10:00-12:00pm
- Senior Group - 3rd Friday of every month 12:00-1:30pm
- Crafters - 2nd and 4th Mondays of every month

For more information about the different groups please contact the church office 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 for more information to get scheduled with us! If you have any questions, please contact the office at 218-751-1893.



RebelGive

Connect Through Giving!



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



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

This group 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.

FINANCIAL REPORT
12 MONTH FISCAL YEAR – AUGUST-JULY

General Fund – May

<u>Income</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Income</u>
\$125,546	\$97,821	\$938,391
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Expenses</u>
\$115,240	\$115,986	\$971,144

Cash, Receivables, & Savings:	\$80,947
February Ministry Partner: People's Church	\$2,073
Calvary Foundation Balance:	\$53,212

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

A Message from Calvary Council ~ Len Ochowicz



Hello Calvary!

My name is Len Ochowicz and I am an at large council member who is about to enter my last year. Kathie and I joined this congregation in 2020 and have been active in this congregation since. One of the reasons we are so involved is we love being in a relationship, not only with the God we serve, but being able to grow our church with all of you.

In a few weeks we will all be gathered once again to be about the business of the church at the annual meeting. This can be an unsettling time for any of us because we often get uncomfortable as we begin to hear the small voice of God urging us to take a deep breath as He quietly asks us to consider serving on council, helping with the food shelf, visiting our neighbors, becoming involved in a bible study, or simply to become more involved at Calvary. Any of these activities are known by another name: The ministry of Calvary. This ministry is vital to the growth and vitality of our church. God isn't calling us to be the best or the most vocal or the wisest person. He simply is calling us to be ourselves and to share what gifts we have and to remember how valuable we are to Him. We often forget that God wants us to minister with Him whether we are young, middle aged, or older.

There is a place for all of us to serve Him and to ensure Calvary remains an active and vital place for all who attend here and for those we serve.

Sunday, July 21 following the 9:00am service is our annual meeting where any of us can stand up and say: 'Here I Am Lord, pick me!'

Peace and love,

Len Ochowicz

Meet the New Preschool Director ~ Ashley Holmgren

Hello Calvary!

We are excited to announce our new Director of Preschool Ministry! Ashley Holmgren has accepted the position and brings wonderful gifts and a heart of joy and love to the preschool. She has degrees in early childhood and elementary education, experience leading in a child care setting, and has served these last couple years as a teacher in our program. We are blessed to have her step into this leadership role and are greatly excited for what the future has in store for our preschool families. Here are a few words from Ashley: "I am so excited to be jumping in as the Director of Preschool Ministry at Calvary Lutheran Preschool! I have had the opportunity to teach in our program for the last few years, and even been a parent of two Calvary preschoolers myself. I am very passionate about our preschool and looking forward to a bright future with you all!" Please welcome her when you see her! She will be amazing!



Annual Meeting 2024

Join us as we gather as a church for our Annual Meeting on July 21, 2024, at 10:15am. Following worship that morning, we will gather in the sanctuary to tend to some of our business as a church, celebrate the wonderful year together, and look forward to the next year before us. We look forward to seeing you there!

Church Council



ANNUAL MEETING