



2508 Washington Ave SW  
Bemidji, MN 56601

## *Pastoral Letter from Pr. Chris*

Greetings dear siblings in Christ,

What a week it has been. The groan of creation has been full of deep grief. The destruction of forests and damage to homes has left exhausting work. The real and present suffering of so many has been overwhelming. The cry of the psalmist, "How long O Lord..." (Psalm 13) feels very close to the heart right now. We have been in crisis. We are still in crisis...

Yet the light of Christ has shown bright. We thank God that no one was killed in the storm. We are humbled by the gift of so many hands reaching out. Countless stories have been shared of how neighbors have reached out to care for neighbors. How strangers have become friends through mutual support. How the church, that is you, has rallied to bear this tragedy together. You are a beacon of light, and I am proud of how you are caring for each other during this crisis.

As we enter the second week of response to this crisis, we know that many of those family members and friends from out of town who have rallied to support in this time are heading home. We also have heard some folks are through their clean up and willing to help others. While we have been able to connect help to others in need and have reached out to support other community groups as they, too, care for our community, we know the continued need is great. Here are a few ways we invite you to continue responding to this crisis:

We are seeking to expand our church's list of helping hands: If you are through your own clean up or in a place where you are ready and willing to lend your helping hands to another, please let us know, ([gfurtz@calvarybemidji.org](mailto:gfurtz@calvarybemidji.org)). This may be in the form of using your chainsaw skills to help with continued tree removal, raking a yard, making a meal for someone who is exhausted, taking someone out for coffee, helping with some housework, and any other way that you sense you are willing to help another person in need. As we continue to respond to this crisis, we will seek to connect those who are willing to help with those who are in need of help.

If you see a need, whether that be a church member or greater community member, and it is beyond your ability to respond yourself, reach out to the church office (218-751-1893) and we will seek to activate a team to assist. Folks have already been reaching out and as we expand our helping hands list, we will continue to support and connect folks in helpful ways.

Keep each other in prayer and send messages of love and encouragement. We need to keep encouraging and lifting others up. We are all in this together.

And as always, your church home is available to you as a space to take a break, connect with friends, or find some silence away from the symphony of chainsaws. The preschool has been able to meet all week, has even absorbed some additional friends during this time of crisis, and the joy of their voices can be a welcomed break from the weight of it all.

Dear friends, you remain close to my heart and do not stray from my prayers. Know you are loved, and you are being held in God's arms as we navigate this crisis. We are always stronger together. God's peace be with you all.

Pr. Chris Leach

## Annual Meeting and Church Family Potluck

Join us as we gather as a church for our annual meeting on August 3, 2025 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 upcoming year. Following the annual meeting we will share a church family potluck.

Wondering what a Potluck is? It is where each person or family brings a food dish to share, we spread them out on a table, and we enjoy a meal together with some church family fellowship. Crock pot dishes, salads, and desserts tend to be great ideas. We look forward to seeing you there!

Church Council



## A Note of Thanksgiving

I want to give a special shout out to four of our Council Members who are completing their terms this month. Thank you Nicholle Bieberdorf, Len Ochowicz, Renee Dralle, and Larry Kent 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

## Church Closed

Just a reminder that the building will be closed Friday, July 4 in Observation of Independence Day. We hope everyone has a safe and fun weekend with family and friends.



## Meals on Wheels



Our next opportunity to serve community members in need of meals will be August 18–22. Calvary needs volunteers to cover three routes, two people for each route from 10:00am to noon. We deliver the entire week, so opportunities exist for anywhere from one to all five days.

If you are interested in helping, contact Len Ochowicz at 320-364-3117. Meals are packed, ready for delivery, and can be picked up at the rear entrance of the Senior Center in Bemidji.



## Help Needed for Cleaning

CALLING ALL GUYS AND GALS!



We are planning a deep cleaning of the kitchen and pantry for this summer. We need your help! Many hands will enable us to finish the necessary tasks in one morning. But we will have a second morning, scheduled if needed. Lunch will be provided. Please contact

Kathie Ochowicz at 320-492-7721 or Judy Westerman at 218-340-5474 know if you are able to help. Thank you so much!!!

Kathie and Judy

## Food Shelf



Bemidji's Food shelf was open and continued to provide to those in need following the recent catastrophic storm that hit the Bemidji area. At a time when everyone was struggling to recover with personal damages, our Calvary members

were instrumental in making sure people felt welcome and supported as they arrived in high numbers. Calvary volunteers stepped forward with a higher-than-normal number of people and were able to provide services to 60 families in the first two hours.

Calvary truly reflects the biblical calling of loving and serving others even as we ourselves wish to be served. We are blessed to be part of this community.

## 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 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!

## High School Summer Trip to Denver



We're taking a big road trip to Denver between July 12-19, to do some service work alongside the people of Colorado. Senior high students will work with a variety of non-profit organizations

and do a little site-seeing while deepening their faith over this wonderful week. Please pray for Aiden Fillipi, Amanda Olson, Evan Gack, and Maren Eickman along with adult leader, Nicholle Bieberdorf, and Brett as we do a little faith growing as a group. We look forward to sharing our experiences when we come back. Thanks for all your support for making this trip possible!

## It's "All-In" Time for VBS



It's "all-in" time for Vacation Bible School. Drawing on the theme True North, we're going to create a forest in the Sanctuary. It will take all of us, so watch for your opportunity to help out. We'll need supplies, decorators, helpers, teachers, crew leaders, prayers, and more! You'll be seeing and hearing requests for all these things.

Several people have already committed – Amazing! Thanks in advance for making another year of VBS a huge success! You can register now at our website at [calvarybemidji.org](http://calvarybemidji.org), or use the QR Code below.

## VBS Registration



Registration is now open for Vacation Bible School happening Monday-Thursday, August 4-7 and in worship on Sunday, August 10. Our theme is True North where we will learn to trust Jesus in a wild world. Kids in preschool through grade 5 are encouraged to register and bring a friend. We had so much fun last year, and it will be

another great summer this year. Families and helpers are already ready to go, so join us! We'll need leaders, helpers, and scenery builders to make the event look good and inspire everyone. You can visit our website at [calvarybemidji.org](http://calvarybemidji.org), or Scan the QR code to register now and talk to Brett for more information.

## Ways to Help



Looking for a way to serve your community this summer? Help serve a meal to the Peoples Church community! While Peoples Church is undergoing construction, other local congregations are providing nightly meals for their community, served

out of First Lutheran. Calvary is providing meals on Monday nights. If you're interested in helping out some Mondays this summer, please reach out to Renee Dralle (641-220-1424) or Pr. Jeremiah (218-751-1893) for more information.

## Storm Recovery Thank You

We want to offer a very heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped their neighbors, Calvary, and the community as a whole following the storm that hit Bemidji in June. It was amazing to see everyone supporting each other in such a trying time. Calvary had a multitude of volunteers take time out of their personal storm recovery process to assist with community needs. They helped clean the church building, clear trees from Calvary's church property and cemetery property, and even baked cookies for a community meal. These projects brought in over 100 volunteers and produced over 1,000 cookies!! It is amazing to see how Bemidji came together, and we are blessed to be a part of it.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### 12 MONTH FISCAL YEAR – JULY-JUNE

#### General Fund – May

<u>Income</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Income</u>
\$116,859	\$105,792	\$1,083,995
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Expenses</u>
\$119,447	\$127,479	\$1,102,414

**Cash, Receivables, & Savings:** \$113,700

**May Ministry Partner:** Peoples Church \$1,928

**Calvary Foundation Balance:** \$57,908

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



## *A Message from Calvary Council ~ Renee Dralle*



Dear Calvary family,

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Those two words hardly seem adequate to express the council's heartfelt gratitude for your response to the church's end of the year stewardship appeal. As of the writing of this article, just a little over \$36,000 has been raised! Praise The Lord! Your generosity will enable Calvary to continue our current programming and look toward future projects as well. God is Good!

As you take time this summer to rest and recharge, I would encourage you to give some thought to ways you can volunteer at church when our fall programming starts. Would you be willing to usher, serve communion, perform altar guild duties, deliver Meals on Wheels, work at the food shelf, serve coffee on a Sunday morning, help serve and clean up on Wednesday nights after the Calvary Alive meal, teach Sunday School, or be a small group leader for confirmation? There are SO many ways to give back to our church that don't require money!! If you are interested in learning more about any of these opportunities

to serve, please reach out to the church office, Pastor Chris, Pastor Jeremiah, or one of your council members to learn more.

As my term on the church council comes to an end, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to serve our congregation. I have learned so much about the inner workings of Calvary and am humbled to have played a small part in our church's growth and development. May the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

P.S. Don't forget the annual meeting on Sunday, August 3 following the 9:00am service!

Renee Dralle - Member at Large, Church Council



### *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 2025-2026 school year. It will be a blessed year together!

Ashley Holmgren

### *No School*

There will be NO SCHOOL Thursday, July 3 and Friday, July 4 for recognition of Independence Day.



### *Celebrate Summer Programming*

The last day of Summer Programming is August 22. There will be a Summer Program at 2:00pm that day followed by an ice cream party to celebrate a fun summer together!

Men's Breakfast & Bible Study - Wednesdays 8:00am  
Martha Circle - 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month 1:00-3:00pm  
Hope Circle - 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month 9:30-11:00am  
Marigold Circle - 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month 10:00-12:00pm  
Senior Group - 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of every month 12:00-1:30pm  
Crafters - 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of every month

### *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 4:00-5:30pm the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month 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 4:30-5:30pm. For more information contact Erin Kossivi 813-417-7678.