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## *Reflections on the Stuff of Our Lives*

On the walls of a sacred space called Dobmeier Funeral Home are the words “Your Story Matters”. I remember seeing these words for the first time many years ago and being immediately struck by not only the importance of their message, but the power of belonging embedded within them. Your story indeed does matter. All the joys. All the struggles. All the memories. They all make up the wonderful you. Your story matters. Yet even beyond this truth is an even deeper truth. Your story matters to God; God who will not be distant from your story but God who reaches deeply into your story weaving together in Jesus’ story of love.

The journey of Lent is made into a lot of things, but what remains at the heart of it for us as Christians is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This is God’s story of love, not just some historical act long ago, but a living breathing story of salvation that is just as real for us today as it was for the disciples. This time of journeying to the cross invites us and empowers us to name brokenness, to name real life pains, and to expose sin in our lives. As our Lenten drama unfolds, this journey invites us to name the “stuff” in our lives that we carry. The stuff that weigh us down. The stuff we need to let go. It is a time to share our story, to lay it all at the foot of the cross and to experience a returning to joy; a returning to Christ. This journey is one of reflection intimately wrapped in the liberating gift of salvation.

On this journey to the cross we experience something powerful. In God’s great story of love in Jesus, we find our stories becoming intertwined with God’s story. Why? Because our story matters to God. So much so that God would send his only son to be with us, to bear our crosses, to die for us and to be raised for us. God’s story is of a deep love for you. A love which forever unites you with God. A love that can never be broken. A love that will never grow weak.

Yes, it is true that Jesus died for you. Why? Because your story matters to God.

Yes, it is true that Jesus was raised for you. Why? Because your story belongs to God.

So, I ask, dear friend, what stuff is weighing you down today? What are you being led to let go of this Lent? Where do you need Jesus’ liberating love to set you free? And whatever your answer may be, may you know that you are loved. That your story matters to God, and may you be embraced again in the power of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Pastor Chris

## *Experiencing God's Story in Holy Week*

*Come and worship through Holy Week and experience God's Story of a deep love poured out for you.*

### **Palm Sunday Worship**

**March 29 at 9:00am**

*We will be joining all services together that morning in one beautiful worship service. Following worship, we invite everyone to Sunday School for the whole congregation in the Fellowship Hall.*

### **Maundy Thursday Worship**

**April 2 at 12:00pm & 7:00pm**

12:00pm Holy Communion Worship

7:00pm with a **Live Last Supper** drama and Holy Communion

### **Good Friday Worship**

**April 3 at 12:00pm & 7:00pm**

12:00pm Tenebrae Service

7:00pm With **our Calvary Choir**: As they take us on a journey to the Cross through Music and Word.

### **Easter Morning Celebration Worship**

**April 5 at 6:30am, 8:30am, and 10:30am**

*The Easter Brass will play at 8:30am and 10:30am and Holy Communion will be shared at all three services.*

**Easter Breakfast** will be served from 7:30-10:00am

## **Sing for a Season**

6 Songs - 5 Rehearsals - 1 Powerful Night of Worship on Good Friday

### **Where**

Calvary Lutheran Church

### **Rehearsals**

Every Thursday night in March at 5:30pm. The final rehearsal will be Wednesday, April 1 at 6:00pm.

### **Sharing Music on Good Friday**

The service is at 7:00pm on April 3.

The Choir will be singing a Cantata, a blending of music and readings.

### **Who**

Everyone is Welcome

You are invited to share your love of music through the Calvary Choir as we worship God during Holy Week this year. Come and sing, experience God's love in music, and help share God's message of salvation on Good Friday.

Contact Mary Thoreson (218-556-6542) or Pr. Chris if you are interested.

*Lenten*  
SEASON

## ***A Blessing of a Lenten Devotional***

We have been so blessed to share this journey of Lent with many hearts and stories in our Lenten devotional book. Your stories have touched our lives. Your faith has enlivened our faith, and your witness has given us courage as we walk this road together. While we are only halfway through this season of Lent, we give thanks for all who shared devotions this year making this walking together resource possible. You are a blessing and we thank God for you!

## ***Did You Know?***

Unless asked, hospitals don't alert pastors when their congregation members are admitted. If you would like Pr. Chris or Pr. Jeremiah to visit you while you're hospitalized, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at church! We would love to come and pray with you. For those who worship online at home, hymnals and bibles are available for use. Please let us know if you'd like one of the Caring Friends Ministry Team members to make a delivery and a visit!

## ***Summer Trip Meeting***

### **EASTER BREAKFAST SETUP**

Everyone traveling on summer trips will meet on Saturday, April 4 at 10:00am to talk about the upcoming trips. Then we'll all work together on setting up our Easter Breakfast fundraiser. There will be work for everyone, and funds raised will support our youth on two important summer trips. Contact Brett for more information.

## ***Easter Breakfast***

Youth and their families will again be serving breakfast on Easter morning, Sunday, April 5 from 7:30-10:00am. Bring your family and friends for a great way to start your Easter while also supporting the youth of Calvary as they prepare for some amazing trips this summer. Thanks for coming.

## ***See Calvary's March Birthdays Here***

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

## March Ministry Partner: Minnesota FoodShare



Calvary's Monthly Ministry Partner for March is Minnesota FoodShare!

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 FoodShare" in the memo line.

## Lock-In

It's time for another gathering of youth (this time for all middle and high school youth) for a lock-in from 8:00pm on Wednesday, March 11 to 8:00am on Thursday, March 12. We're planning the usual fun stuff including gym time and games, a pizza party, late night worship, and movie time. It's all just for the fun of it and you should come. Please bring \$5.00 to help cover the cost of pizza and bring a friend and enjoy a night in the dark in church.

## Silent Auction March 4-29

The annual Youth Silent Auction happens from March 4-29 this year with a big ending following Sunday School for the Whole Congregation. Proceeds from the silent auction support youth on two trips this summer to Duluth and Rainy Lake. Your donations and your bids make it possible for any kid who wants to go to have this amazing faith-filled activity. Remember, we're not bargain shopping, we're outbidding each other (or ourselves) to make the most of this event for our Calvary kids. So, bid often and have fun!

## Sunday School FOR THE WHOLE CONGREGATION

Join us for Sunday School for the Whole Congregation on Palm Sunday, March 29. Calvary will have just one service that day at 9:00am. We'll gather Sunday school kids and an adult (or the whole family) in the Lounge at 8:45am before worship for our parade lineup. Then we'll carry in the palms to lead the whole congregation in the celebration. We'll all worship together, (no 10:30am service that day), and then gather in the Fellowship Hall after church for a fun lesson/activity for everyone. Bring a friend as we all celebrate together.

## Save The Date For VBS

Vacation Bible School is in August again this year, Monday-Thursday, August 3-6 from 9:00am-Noon and Sunday, August 19 during worship. It's for preschool kids going into grade 5 this fall. We're getting ready to take kids deep into the rainforest as we explore the nature of God's love. Click the link to register [2025 VBS Registration - Fill out form](#) And talk to Brett to join the fun of decorating, teaching, and participating in VBS each year.

## Summer Trips

### BIBLE CAMP ON A HOUSEBOAT

Sign up now for Lifesaving Faith, the Senior High summer trip. It's a week-long houseboat ride on Rainy Lake offering a chance to unplug, enjoy God's creation, connect with others, and have tons of fun. Space is limited to the first 10 kids. Visit this [link to register 2026 Senior High Houseboat Adventure - Fill out form](#). Contact Brett for more information. If you are interested in traveling with us as an adult leader, let Brett know.

## Pi-A-Palooza

### CALVARY'S PIE AUCTION IS BACK



Join us on Sunday, March 15 from 2:00–4:00pm for a fun church family fundraising event. Have you desired to enjoy pie with your church family? Have you wanted to see how much one of your pies can auction for? Do you just long to throw a pie in your pastor's face, or even an office member? If your answer to any of these questions is

'yes', then you don't want to miss this special event! All proceeds from this fundraiser go to support Calvary's ministries, and the event is sure to be a great time. Come to Eat, Bid, and Throw as we gather to support this mission we share as a church family.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### 12 MONTH FISCAL YEAR – JULY-JUNE

#### General Fund – January

<u>Income</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Income</u>
\$101,366	\$105,869	\$717,921
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Expenses</u>
\$117,330	\$107,117	\$713,627

**Cash, Receivables, & Savings:** \$98,130

**January Ministry Partner: Pathways Bible Camps** \$1,025

**Calvary Foundation Balance:** \$60,623

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

## A Message from Calvary Council ~ Sharon Hoverson



Greetings Calvary!

My name is Sharon Hoverson, and I am a new Calvary Council member. While I am new to this council, I am not new to Calvary. Calvary is a part of my heart. I have been loved and cared for by the people of this congregation since I was born. I've lived and worshiped in Wisconsin, Virginia, and the Bahamas, but Calvary has always been my soft place to land. In 1993 I moved back to Bemidji and raised my 3 kids, Joshua, Sara, and Wil at Calvary. My vocation is teaching, also a part of my heart, and I have been teaching kindergarteners at Ponemah School for 29 years.

This is an exciting time for Calvary! Attendance is up, programming is thriving, and the spirit is moving through this place! God is calling us to be a light in the community and beyond, to be examples of joy and peace and love to our neighbors. It is a pleasure to work with and beside you as we move into the future God has planned for Calvary.

Sharon Hoverson - Member at Large

## Stewardship Nuggets

Wow. Simply wow... I have been thinking a lot about the journey we have been on in stewardship these last few years. It has been quite a journey; a reflection of a congregation connecting and embracing life together as they respond to the challenges before them. In the summer of 2023, we ended our fiscal year with a budget deficit of about \$150,000 dollars. That was substantial and we set to the hard work of changing that reality by banding together, learning together, and giving boldly together. In the 2 years since, we have seen that deficit cut in half each year and with an end of the year stewardship appeal, we have been able to end each fiscal year balanced. This was amazing work and I am so proud of our congregation.

Over these years, as well as this last one, we have seen other great growth. Attendance, participation, and a lot of joy continue to grow, and with them, our giving trends are growing. As of now it looks like we have halved the trend again, and if nothing changed, we would be ending this fiscal year with a deficit around \$30,000. Of course, we have a plan for that with our end of the year giving drive and we are excited to rally our mission support to end the fiscal year strong.

These amazing steps forward would not be possible without a commitment to step up our giving together. We are always stronger together than we are apart. Thank you so much for the blessing you are in this life we share. Thank you for responding to call to grow your giving. Thank you for supporting one another, our shared mission, and bringing your joy and excitement as we gather. We know what challenges continue to exist before us. We know our mortgage debt is substantial and puts our budget in a bind. We know our building has specific needs that need to be addressed. We know we have hopes and dreams of growing our ministry through music, outreach, and opportunities to connect. And most of all, we know we are loved but our God who calls us together and sends us to be love in this world. What a wonderful journey it is to share life together and I thank God for you. God's peace, friends.

Pr. Chris

**CALVARY ALIVE**  
**MARCH MENU:**

- MAR. 4 - HAMBURGER STROGANOFF W/ NOODLES**
- MAR. 11 - CHICKEN & RICE HOTDISH**
- MAR. 18 - TACOS**
- MAR. 25 - BUILD YOUR OWN SANDWICH WITH WILD RICE SOUP**

*\*Vegetarian & Gluten Free Options Available*

## Preschool Garage Sale

Calvary preschool will be having its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual garage sale fundraiser this April 24 and 25. Please keep us in mind as you start your spring cleaning! We will start accepting donations Sunday, April 19 through Wednesday, April 22. Come shop, and find some great deals while supporting our preschool!

## Conferences

Preschool conferences are coming up on Wednesday, March 11 and Thursday, March 12 all-day March 12 there will be no preschool but there will be Childcare. Calvary Preschool will be closed March 13 after our parent-teacher conferences.

## Opportunities TO CONNECT

Men's Breakfast & Bible Study - Wednesdays 8:00am at Perkins  
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 at Giovanni's  
Quilters - Every Thursday 9:00-11:00am  
Choir - Every Thursday 5:30-6:30pm in the Sanctuary

### GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

The Refuge - 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month, 4:00-5:30pm in Room 1 at Calvary (Erin Kossivi 813-417-7678)  
Refuge Kids - Weekly, Fridays at Bemidji Covenant Church Family Life Center from 4:30-5:30pm (Erin Kossivi 813-417-7678)