

Callings from the Lakeshore

Calvary & St. Paul Lutheran: Two Churches, One Body

December 2024

... and you shall call his name
Jesus for he will save his
people from their sins.
Matthew 1:21, ESV



Notes from the Pastor's Chair

I struggle this time of year. The time between Thanksgiving and Christmas is a hard time for me. Holidays are happy and great for many people, but not for all. Holidays are a time for families to gather, share, eat, laugh, and be together. But that was not the case for me growing up, and it has left a mark on me as an adult.

Advent marks the beginning of the new year in the church. We wait and watch for the birth of Jesus. We wait for the story to start. It is probably not the first time we have heard it, but we still wait with hope for the birth of Christ into our world. Each time we hear, it is a chance to renew our faith, belief, and hope that Jesus's life is still making a difference in the world.

We all have stories to tell. We all have stories that are worth being told. My childhood experiences tarnished my view of Christmas, but because of something my mom insisted on, they didn't tarnish my view of Christ or the story. Amid all the unhappy and unhealthy events, my mom celebrated Christmas Eve in a big way. It was a day when the daily routine stopped. She made a place for joy for at least twelve hours. Christmas Eve was the only time I went to church with another person from my family while growing up.

My mom and other siblings who still lived at home or those back for a visit, and I would head off to church. We attended the seven o'clock service and the eleven o'clock candlelight service. Choirs and children's programs filled the seven o'clock service with joyous hymns and occasional surprises. The eleven o'clock service was quieter and had a smaller choir. The atmosphere was expectant and eager and ended with lighting candles as we sang Silent Night.

We didn't go home between the services. We usually found someplace to hang out with family and friends from church. Sometimes, it was in the church basement. (I have a long history of spending lots of time in churches.) There was a complete release of the tension and anxiety from my house. People laughed, talked, and sang. People were free.

I grew up associating the birth of Jesus with the feeling of being free. Free from fear, anxiety, and tension. Free to be the fun-loving, goofy kid that I was, even if it was only for one day a year.

After leaving for college and making a way for myself, I tried to continue celebrating Christmas Eve, but I was unsuccessful, not because my mom wasn't there, but because the message had changed.

Eventually, I left the church entirely. People leave the church for many reasons. I left because it was no longer a place where I could be free to be me, even one day a year.

It is not uncommon that in our joy and love for the season of Christmas, we wonder a bit harder why the pews aren't overflowing and that there is no children's program anymore. We need to

remember that our stories are not everyone's. That the church, not God, hasn't always been good for everyone. That church hasn't always said and done what Jesus teaches us to do. That church and the people in it are complicated, and so are those that aren't here.

Changing anything is done in little bits. As you can see, I came back to church. It took lots of little steps, sometimes forward, sometimes backward, but in the end, here I am. I still struggle with this time of year, and I suspect I always will. My relationship with God and church is complicated, just like yours.

This may seem like a lot of doom and gloom, but it's not. The story of Jesus told on Christmas Eve is about renewal. Every year, we get a chance to hope anew, work for peace and reconciliation, try to bring joy into the lives of those around us, and love our neighbors as ourselves. We get to love God.

Christmas Eve is when I take stock of myself, my faith life, and how things are going. It is when I look to next year and imagine what little steps I can take to help others on their journeys, wherever they are along the way.

Peace and love,
Pastor Heather

CALVARY WORSHIP TIMES:
Sunday mornings at 8:30am.

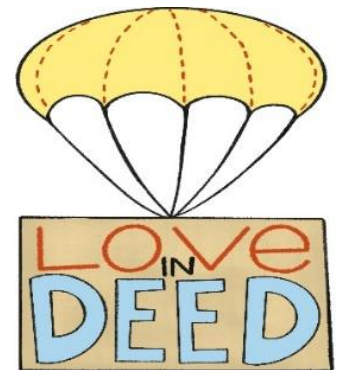
ST. PAUL WORSHIP TIMES:
Sunday mornings at 10:15 a.m.



WORSHIP SERVICES ONLINE

Worship services for both churches continue to be recorded and shared for everyone who is unable to come to in-person worship. Recorded services can be found on each church's website. The link for online worship is included in weekly emails for both churches. If you need help finding services online, please call the church office.

Sharing God's Love with our Community & Beyond



MONTHLY TREP FOOD DRIVES (CALVARY)

Calvary is hosting monthly food drives for TREP. Each month is a specific focus. **For December the focus is on canned meals**, but all donations are welcome. Many recipients do not have storage for flour, sugar, etc. so cookie mix pouches are preferred. Any items for TREP can be placed in the grocery cart inside the main entrance.

PETER'S PANTRY & BLESSING BOX DONATIONS (ST. PAUL)

There is a basket near the church office at St. Paul to drop off donations for Peter's Pantry. Thank you for all the donations we find in the basket each month! Your generosity to those in need is appreciated. If you have items for the Blessing Box, please place those directly in the box outside. Items should be able to withstand freezing temps during winter months.



"For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home."
Matthew 25:35

This is the first time I have written something in the newsletter that is *from* me and not just passing along information about an event. Am I allowed to do this? I laugh a little as I ask myself that question. Either way, here I am, typing out some thoughts.

In November I attended the WOW meeting at St. Paul. As I sat in the meeting and listened to them talk about upcoming outreach in our community, I thought about my own little family of three and what we do during the holiday season. I could feel the Holy Spirit impressing on my heart the need to recognize Jesus, not just during the holidays, but all year long.

So many times, we miss him or at least I know I do. I overlook others. I think about my own comfort before I think about others. If we're honest, we all do. I'm not just talking about the homeless in our community; I'm talking about missing Jesus everywhere. Recently, my husband went through a health scare. (Don't worry! He is perfectly healthy!) It was scary as we waited for test results and answers. But it was also bothersome to me. I needed to count on him for certain things and because he was struggling, that wasn't possible at the time. In those weeks and months, I often missed recognizing Jesus in my own husband. I missed opportunities to treat him with the love and compassion he deserved in every moment of that struggle.

How many of us have failed to recognize Jesus in our own spouse or children? Or others in our family? If we can miss seeing Jesus in the people

closest to us, we certainly don't always recognize him in strangers.

Later in Matthew 25 Jesus says, "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink?'" Jesus goes on to say, "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'"

The Christmas season can be a beautiful reminder of caring for others. And yet, sometimes it's still difficult. We are all prone to selfishness, even if we don't want to be. Recognizing Jesus isn't something that should be saved for the holiday season. This is something we try to teach our son, who is 10 years old. But it's best taught by example and that pushes me out of my comfort zone because I must do it first, before I can ask my child to. And isn't that what Jesus did for us? He became flesh... for us. ***We are the least of these.*** Now he asks us, his children, to do the same for others.

Recognizing Jesus is something that should be part of our daily lives. Jesus tells us in Matt. 6:33 that if we seek the Kingdom of God first, he will give us everything we need. We don't need to seek our own comfort first. Jesus promises us that he will care for us when we seek to recognize him first!

As 2024 ends and a new year approaches, my family will be looking for new ways to recognize Jesus in our lives, in each other, and in the eyes of the people we meet. My prayer for all of us is that we seek to recognize Jesus in ways that are meaningful and hands on. May we love the least of these, in whatever ways they come into our lives.

Wishing you all the love, joy, hope, and peace that Jesus brings, this holiday season and always.

Alyssa



Women of Worship (WOW) at St. Paul are REOGNIZING JESUS!

They will be hosting four dinners during the winter for the Manitowoc Warming Shelter.

The dates are:

*Thursday, Jan 30th., Friday, Feb 28th.,
Thursday, March 6th, and Friday, March 28th.*

If you would like to help or volunteer as a family or a group of friends, please contact your church office for contact information for the Warming Shelter or find them on Facebook under "Manitowoc Warming Shelter."



ST. PAUL HAS A NEW WEBSITE!

Please check out St. Paul's new website & mark it as a favorite! The old website will still be up for awhile

until the new one has all the finishing touches. Please be patient with us as we finish those things up. Building a website from scratch is incredibly time consuming.

**You can check it out at
www.stpaulmanitowoc.org**

Share it on social media!

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES OR OUT-OFFICE TIMES.

**Offices closed:
December 24th &
25th and January 1st.**

**Change in Hours: December 26th
office hours from 12-4pm.**



DAYS FOR GIRLS AT ST. PAUL Monday, December 9 at 1-4pm

Days for Girls International is a group that helps to provide reusable period products for millions of girls and women around the globe. No sewing experience (or experience of any kind) is necessary. Men & women are welcome to lend a helping hand.

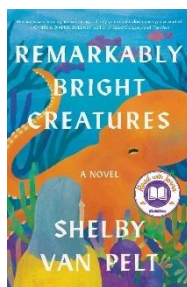
WOMEN OF WORSHIP (WOW) AT ST. PAUL Wednesday, December 4 at 11am

WOW meets monthly at St. Paul for planning of events & fellowship. All women from Calvary & St. Paul are welcome to attend.

FAITH CIRCLE AT ST. PAUL Tuesday, Dec 17 at 10am

Faith Circle is a group of women who meet monthly for a Bible study along with some Fellowship time. All are welcome!

BOOK CLUB AT ST. PAUL Thursday, December 19 at 3pm (Date change due to Christmas)



In December, Book Club will be reading Remarkably Brilliant Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt. We'll meet to discuss the book in the Gathering Room. If you're interested in joining, please let Joy know (joycarlson4@gmail.com) and you can be added to the Book Club email list for updates and news. We have library copies available to borrow.

**NOISY OFFERING AT ST. PAUL
The December Noisy Offering will go towards ELCA World Hunger. This offering will be collected on 12/15.**



HOLIDAY Brunch

Date: Sunday, December 8, 2024
Time: After 10:15am worship service
Place: Fellowship Hall (lower level)

Hosted by
Women of Worship



Friends from Calvary, St. Paul would love for you to join them for their Holiday Brunch.

**FOR A FULL LIST OF EVENTS,
PLEASE SEE THE CALENDAR PAGE!**

😊 **A LITTLE BIT OF LAUGHTER!** 😊



CALVARY NEWS

Thrivent Choice Dollars

If you are a Thrivent benefit member, you have Thrivent choice dollars available to you. You can go online into your Thrivent account and direct that Thrivent donate your dollars to either a charitable fund or a nonprofit organization.

A number of members choose to direct their choice dollars to Calvary. If you decide to support Calvary, check online and see if there are any existing undesignated funds.

Pastor Evaluation

The council will be conducting a yearly review of Pastor Heather in January. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact any council member to relay your thoughts. All council members' contact information is listed monthly in the newsletter.



RECYLCING OPPORTUNITY

Do you have ink cartridges lying around? Calvary has a box in the gathering pew for the recycling of used ink cartridges. They take all types except the long toner cartridges from larger printers. St. Paul members if you would like to bring yours in to be recycled arrangements can be made to get them over to Calvary. The more we recycle the less that end up in the landfill!

SCRIP

It's easy to buy cards and support this ongoing Calvary and St. Paul fundraiser.

- At Calvary see Cindy Schmidt.
- At St. Paul stop into the office before worship.

If you have any questions about our Scrip program or what type of gift cards are available, please ask. **Scrip gift cards are a practical, easy way to give a little extra to Calvary and St. Paul while shopping for items you already need!** Just a reminder: at St. Paul Alyssa does not currently handle SCRIP. You will need to purchase SCRIP on Sundays.



2024-2025 Retreats

- Jan 31-Feb 2: Winter Camp (grades 3-8) @ Pine Lake
- Feb 28-Mar 2: Family Weekend @ Pine Lake
- Mar. 7-9: Building Youth Groups (Upper Elementary and chaperones) @ Imago Dei
- May 27-28: Rooted (for adults) @ Pine Lake

Registration open now!

Email info@crosswayscamps.org with any registration questions. Go to crosswayscamps.org to sign up!



IN OUR PRAYERS

Calvary

- Scott and Samantha Spiering (Roxanne Spiering, family)
- Mary Keck (Kristin Keck's mother) cancer
- Harold Keck (Kristin Keck's father) cancer
- Sloane (4-year-old with cancer. Her grandparents are friends of Cindy Schmidt.)
- Don Stutzman

Prayer requests can be made by emailing the office at churchcalvarylutheran@gmail.com or by calling the church office at (920)793-3917.

St. Paul

- Amy, Linda, Mary, Holly, Harold, & Karen
- Prayer request can be made by emailing the church office at stpaulmanitowoc@gmail.com or by calling the office at (920)-682-2228.

If you would like prayer but would like to keep it confidential, please feel free to contact us with those as well.



Calvary	St. Paul
5 th – Ollie Press	8 th – Kim Moddie
9 th – George Perry	21 st – Kristin Keck
20 th – Caroline Curtis	22 nd – Kari McKenna
26 th – Scott Spiering	25 th – Julia Sieracki
	26 th – Annika Strazny

Happy
ANNIVERSARY

Calvary

6th – Stan & Cindy Phelps

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please notify the church office

Calvary Lutheran Church

1921 Adams St. Two Rivers, WI. 54241

Email: churchcalvarylutheran@gmail.com

Website: www.calvarytworivers.org

Phone: 920-793-3917

Church Office Hours

Wednesdays 9:00am-1:00pm

CALVARY CHURCH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President & Treasurer, Joe Bitto

bittohoney@charter.net, (920) 304-6808

Vice President, Cindy Schmidt

Cas3761@gmail.com, (920) 901-7449

Secretary, Kim Braun

Kbalma1@charter.net, (920) 905-5303

Financial Secretary, Lori Williams

drlwilliams2010@gmail.com, (920) 588-0109

CALVARY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Diane Grasse (920) 764-8065
Stan Phelps (920) 901-3887
Bruce Larson (920) 755-4069
Kerry Rivest
Lisa Shimanek

St. Paul Lutheran Church

2601 S. 10th St. Manitowoc, WI. 54220
Email: stpaulmanitowoc@gmail.com
Website: www.stpaulmanitowoc.org
Phone: 920-682-2228

Church Office Hours

Mondays 10:00am-2:00pm
Tuesdays: 9:00am-1:00pm
Thursdays 9:00am-1:00pm

ST. PAUL CHURCH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President, Dave Kriewald
Dkriewald1@gmail.com

Vice President, Sharon Schwantes
Sharonretired64@gmail.com

Secretary, Cindy York
Cyork9786@gmail.com

Financial Secretary, Julie Dahleen
Neil Erickson
Shirley Oseiczaneck
Lana Sieracki
Linda Wallander

Pastor Heather Yerion Keck
pastoryerionkeck@gmail.com
cell: 816-820-4108

Office Hours:

Mondays 1:00-4:00 – St. Paul
Tuesdays 9:00-1:00 – St. Paul
Wednesdays 9:00-1:00 Calvary
Thursdays 9:00-1:00 – Calvary
*Other times by appointment.

Calendar of Events

AA & NA meetings happening weekly at Calvary:

Mondays – AA Meetings 7pm @ Calvary
Wednesdays NA Meeting 7pm @ Calvary
Thursdays: Bible Study with Matt from AA in
Fireside Room 5:30pm @ Calvary
Saturdays – AA Meeting 6pm @ Calvary

Date	Event	Time	Location
3 rd	Calvary Quilters	9am	Calvary
4 th	WOW	11am	St. Paul
7 th & 8 th	Wonder of Christmas	11am-4pm	St. James Episcopal in Manitowoc
9 th	Days for Girls	1-4pm	St. Paul
10 th	Quilters	9am	Calvary
10 th	Council Meetings	5:45pm 7pm	Calvary St. Paul
14 th	Warming Shelter Concert Fundraiser	2-4pm	First Presbyterian Manitowoc
15 th	Coffee & Fellowship Noisy Offering Confirmation	After Service 11:45am	Calvary St. Paul St. Paul
17 th	Quilters Faith Circle	9am 10am	Calvary St. Paul
19 th	Book Club	3-4pm	St. Paul
21 st	Finance Meeting	12pm	St. Paul
24 th	Christmas Eve Services	4:30pm 6:30pm	St. Paul Calvary
24 th & 25 th	Offices closed		
26 th	Office Hours	12-4pm	St. Paul
31 st	Quilters	9am	Calvary
Jan. 1	Happy New Year! Offices closed.		