

CALVARY

United Methodist Church



The Longest Night

A Service of Comfort & Hope



DEC

21ST

2025

You are God's beloved. *You* are welcome here.



WELCOME TO CALVARY



OUR WELCOME STATEMENT

Calvary United Methodist Church believes that all means all.

We open our hearts, our minds and our doors to all our neighbors. We gladly invite into our shared life all persons who seek a community of support where they can grow in God's grace. Regardless of your race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, relationship status or background – **you are God's beloved, and you are welcome here.**

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

If this is your first time with us, welcome! We're so glad you're here. We'd love to get to know you better, so please stop by the Welcome Areas to learn more about our church family. You'll also find a Get Connected card in the back of the pews – feel free to fill one out so we can stay in touch. If you need a large-print Bible or hymnal, just ask one of our friendly greeters – we're happy to help.

FAMILIES WITH BABIES OR YOUNG CHILDREN

We welcome all of God's children to join us in worship – including our littlest ones! If it would be helpful, there's a Family Area at the back left of the sanctuary, complete with rocking chairs and toys to keep little ones comfortable and engaged.

LOCATION OF RESTROOMS

From the front exits of the sanctuary: (1) to the right, you'll find an accessible restroom and a baby changing table on the same level; (2) to the right and to the back, you will find women's and men's restrooms; (3) to the left, restrooms are located down the stairs, or an elevator is available by exiting the right side of the sanctuary and heading toward the back of the building.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6



PRAYER CONCERNS

IMMEDIATE PRAYER CONCERNS

Aleata Weis

Rev. David Eichelberger and family –
David's aunt, Cathrine Dittmar,
passed away on December 8.

Tim Napieralski

Joe Grzybowski – friend of Judy Melvin

CONTINUING CONCERNS

Renee – friend of Mark Snyder

Paul Brucker

Jeanne Dithomas

Kyle Giest

Susan Cilliland

Terri Jagielski

Martha Helmreich

Judy Melvin

Sheila Molyneaux

Marcia Webb – friend of Mark Snyder

Venus W.

Joyce Zimmerman – sister of Yvonne Hudson

SHARING PRAYER REQUESTS & JOYS

If you have a prayer request or a joy to share, you have a few options:

- Fill out a Prayer Request card located in the back of the pews and place it in the offering plate.
- Contact the church office directly at 412-231-2007.
- Submit a request online at calvarypgh.com/contact.

We treat all prayer concerns confidentially, unless you indicate otherwise.

Prayer concerns remain on our list for four weeks. Each week, the oldest requests are removed as others move up.

If you'd like us to send a card or email to let someone know we're praying for them, please include their mailing address or email.

ORDER OF WORSHIP



WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP +

Leader: Lord, it is night. The night is still.
People: Let us be still in the presence of God.
Leader: The night is dark.
People: Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.
Leader: The night is quiet.
People: Let the quietness of your peace enfold us and all dear to us.
Leader: The night is long.
People: Let the length, and breadth, and height and depth of your love embrace us.
Leader: The night heralds the dawn.
People: Let us look expectantly to a new day.
Leader: For weeping may linger for the night,
People: But joy comes with the morning.

HYMN + "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" – #211 UMH (Verses 1-2)

PRAYER +

Oh God of love, God of mercy, we open ourselves to your presence here in this quiet place. You know our deepest needs. You know our hurts, our loneliness, our fears. We pray that you will enter our lives bringing comfort where it is needed, healing, forgiveness, strength, and peace. We pray that each one here may be blessed in this time of quiet remembrance by the certainty of your loving presence. Come into our hearts, and give us peace. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES WITH PRAYER

Leader: As we light the candle of hope, we pray for those who feel hopeless in our world today. We pray that hope might be a part of our tomorrows.
People: Gracious God, be the light in our darkness tonight.
Leader: As we light the candle of peace, we pray for all victims of violence, for those traumatized by war and those in pain because of their neighbors wrongful actions.
People: Gracious God, be the light in our darkness tonight.
Leader: As we light the candle of joy, we pray for those whose hearts are weighed down by sorrow, whose joy has been taken away and the empty feeling that seems to stay.
People: Gracious God, be the light in our darkness tonight.
Leader: As we light the candle of love, we pray for those who do not feel loved, for those who struggle to love others, for those who sit alone at a table, for those who grieve deeply and feel like they cannot move on.
People: Gracious God, be the light in our darkness tonight. We give thanks for the gift of hope in a time of despair, for the gift of peace in a time of uncertainty, for the gift of joy in a time of sadness, for the gift of love because Jesus is God's love for the world today. Amen.

AN INVITATION TO THE MANGER OF JESUS

OLD TESTAMENT WORDS FROM THE PROPHET Isaiah 9:1-7 NRSV

- 1 But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.
- 2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.
- 3 You have multiplied exultation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.
- 4 For the yoke of their burden and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.
- 5 For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
- 6 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- 7 Great will be his authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Leader: The word of God, written by the people of God, for the people of God.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD † Luke 2:1-7 NRSV

- 1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.
- 2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.
- 3 All went to their own towns to be registered.
- 4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.
- 5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.
- 6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.
- 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

Leader: The word of God, written by the people of God, for the people of God.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN "In the Bleak Midwinter" – #221 UMH

SERMON "The Longest Night Reflection" – Rev. Karen Slusser

AN INVITATION TO LIGHT A CANDLE

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE LORD'S PRAYER * #895 UMH

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

SHARING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery of shared bread and shared cup and shared presence, in which you have given yourself to us. We thank you for the light of Christ that stays with us in our darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it. Jesus Christ hears our cries, knows our hearts, and in the midst of all of our thoughts and emotions, he offers us hope and healing. Lord Jesus, grant now that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in your name. Amen.

HYMN † "O Little Town of Bethlehem" – #230 UMH

BENEDICTION †

**Leader: The light shines in the darkness,
People: And the darkness does not overcome it.
Leader: Christ lights our path through the shadows.
People: We are not alone. Thanks be to God!
Leader: Go in the grace and peace of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

POSTLUDE †

Feel free to remain in the sanctuary for peaceful contemplation.

Caregivers are stationed on either side of the altar, ready to talk if you wish.

If you'd like a conversation, simply step forward – they're there to listen.

Wishing blessings upon you on this longest night!



CALVARY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**JOIN US SUNDAYS
AS WE CELEBRATE ADVENT**

10:00 AM — Sunday School

11:00 AM — Worship

**CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDLELIGHT SERVICES**

4:00 PM — Child Friendly with Carols

7:00 PM — Music | 7:30 PM — Service

You are invited to discover a more meaningful holiday season by celebrating Advent and Christmas at Calvary.

Let the words of beloved carols and scriptures set the foundation. Stirring choral and organ music will set the scene. The peaceful illumination of Advent builds to an unforgettable Christmas Eve Candlelight Service as both young and old remember the birth of Jesus, our Savior.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated at each service. Our communion table is open to everyone.

Refreshments to follow each service in the chapel.

MISSIONS & OUTREACH



ANNOUNCEMENT

WINTER CARE COLLECTIONS FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

Although Thanksgiving has passed, Calvary is continuing our food drive to support families in need throughout the season. Donations may be placed in the bins in the chapel and will be shared with local food banks and families in our community. The most needed items include **boxed milk** (especially for children), **pop-top canned goods such as soups, vegetables, tuna, and chicken, cooking oil, salt, pepper, spices, sugar, flour, baking mixes, tea bags, coffee, dishwashing detergent and feminine hygiene products.**

FOOD COLLECTION CONTINUES

Calvary is currently collecting several needed items to support our community partners this season. We are gathering **gloves and hand warmers for Daily Bread**, as well as toothpaste and cloth grocery bags for Northside Common Ministries. All donations may be placed in the collection bin in the chapel. Thank you for helping us share warmth and care with our neighbors this winter!

EVENTS

“CHANGE MATTERS” SPECIAL OFFERING

Sunday, December 28 (Last Sunday of each month) | During Worship | Sanctuary

Our children are collecting “change” – because when we all give a little, it adds up to make a big difference! These gifts help purchase food for Daily Bread.

CALVARY UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH – SERVING DAILY BREAD

Thursday, January 8 (2nd Thursday of each month) | 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Trinity Lutheran Church, 616 W North Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Calvary United Women in Faith organizes the meal preparation for Daily Bread, a ministry that provides meals three times a week to those who are unhoused or underemployed.

WEEKLY

SLEEPING BAG MINISTRY

Mondays | 6:00 PM | Fellowship Hall

This group makes sleeping bags from recycled materials, filled with personal care items, and delivers them to local homeless shelters. No sewing experience is required! We especially need sheets, curtains, coverlets and tablecloths. Contact Terri Howell (412-482-2211 / trr_howell@yahoo.com) for further details.

OPEN SANCTUARY

Thursdays | 6:00 – 8:00 PM | Sanctuary

The sanctuary will be open for prayer or silence or meditation every Thursday evening. Feel free to pass through as our special guest, or return on Sunday to make us your home.

SMALL GROUPS



WEEKLY

JESUS 101 – NEW BIBLE STUDY LED BY REV. MYLES BRADLEY

Sundays | 10:00 – 10:45 AM | Chapel

Join Rev. Myles Bradley for Jesus 101, an engaging study exploring the life and teachings of Jesus. The class will resume after the holidays on January 4, 11 and 18. All are welcome!

Session 1	December 7	Put Christ Back in Christmas
Session 2	December 14	Jesus Is the Reason for the Season
Session 3	January 4	Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus
Session 4	January 11	Twenty Centuries of Jesus
Session 5	January 18	Beyond Belief
Session 6	January 25	Jesus Christ Superstar

AA (ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS) – NORTHSIDE SUNDAY NIGHTERS

Sundays | 8:00 PM | Fellowship Hall

Every addict in the world has the chance to experience their message, and find the opportunity for a new way of life.

GA (GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS)

Mondays (2nd Monday every other month) | 6:30 PM | Chapel

Next Meeting: February 9

Through shared experiences, participants work toward recovery in a confidential and non-judgmental space.

NA (NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS) – MANCHESTER

Tuesdays | 7:00 – 8:00 PM | Fellowship Hall

Every addict in the world has the chance to experience their message, and find the opportunity for a new way of life.

IRON CITY SQUARES – LGBTQIA+ SQUARE DANCE CLUB

Wednesdays | 7:00 – 9:15 PM | Fellowship Hall

Iron City Squares invites you to join us for Modern Western Square Dancing. No partner or special clothing needed – everyone is welcome!

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

THIS GROUP IS CURRENTLY ON BREAK UNTIL JANUARY 8, 2026

Thursdays (Beginning January 8, 2026) | 10:00 – 11:30 AM | Parlor

Join us for our new study: "The Women of the Bible Speak – The Wisdom of 16 Women and Their Lessons for Today." This study will begin on **January 8, 2026**. All are welcome as we gather in community around God's Word. Books will be made available for a small purchase fee.

GET CONNECTED



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVE, SHARE, AND CONNECT THROUGH FOOD & FELLOWSHIP

Sharing food together is an important way we build connections and continue fellowship after worship at Calvary. To keep this ministry going, we're seeking volunteers and sponsors for our food and fellowship times. Teams are forming to assist with preparation, serving and clean-up – each team will take responsibility for one Sunday a month. If you're interested in joining a team, please speak to Mike Schnitgen, our Food Ministry Coordinator.

To support this ministry financially, a donations box will be available each week – any amount is appreciated. There are also opportunities to sponsor: \$50 helps cover after-service refreshments, and \$100 supports our monthly luncheon. Please see Mike if you'd like to sponsor a Sunday. Balancing food income with expenses helps support a healthy budget for Calvary. Thank you for being part of this vital ministry!

EVENTS

COMMUNION

Sunday, January 4 (1st Sunday of each month) | During Worship | Sanctuary

All are invited to the table of our Lord. You do not need to be a member of Calvary or any church to participate. The bread that we share is gluten-free so that all may share.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, January 15 (3rd Thursday of each month) | 6:30 – 8:00 PM | Chapel

There will not be meetings in July or December.

COMMUNITY LUNCH

Sunday, January 25 (Last Sunday of each month) | Following Worship | Fellowship Hall

This is an expansion on our normally scheduled fellowship time following morning worship. Please join us in the fellowship hall located downstairs following morning worship.

WEEKLY

A TIME FOR FELLOWSHIP

Sundays | Following Worship | Fellowship Hall

Please join us around the tables in the fellowship hall following morning worship for refreshments and fellowship. Please use the stairs on the Beech Avenue side or the elevator in the back of the chapel.

MUSIC MINISTRY



WEEKLY

CHOIR REHEARSAL

Sundays | 10:00 – 10:45 AM | Sanctuary

Tuesdays | 6:00 – 7:00 PM | Sanctuary

No experience or audition needed! Come share your love of music!

HAND BELL CHOIR REHEARSAL

Thursdays (Oct – Mid-December) | 6:00 – 7:00 PM | Music Office (Upstairs in Chapel)

Tuesdays (Mid-December – May, Sep) | 7:00 – 8:00 PM | Music Office (Upstairs in Chapel)

All are welcome to join our handbell choir – no experience or audition needed!

SPECIAL EVENTS



CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Wednesday, December 24 | 4:00 PM & 7:00 PM | Calvary UMC

You are warmly invited to celebrate a meaningful and joy-filled Christmas Eve at Calvary. Our 4:00 PM child-friendly service with carols offers a welcoming space for families, and our 7:30 PM Candlelight Service is preceded by beautiful choral and organ music beginning at 7:00 PM. Come let beloved carols, sacred scripture and the gentle glow of candlelight prepare your heart as we remember the birth of Jesus, our Savior. The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated at both services, and our communion table is open to everyone. Following each service, we hope you'll stay for warm refreshments and cookies in the chapel as we continue the celebration together.

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS WORSHIP – “LESSONS FROM THE CAROLS”

Sunday, December 28 | 10:00 AM Breakfast & 11:00 AM Worship | Chapel

Join us for a festive morning as we celebrate the joy of Christmas together. Breakfast will be served in the chapel beginning at 10:00 AM, followed by worship at 11:00 AM also in the chapel. We will sing beloved carols and reflect on the message, “Lessons from the Carols!” All are welcome! Please note there will be no community lunch after worship. Feel free to wear your favorite Christmas attire as we continue the celebration.

EPIPHANY SUNDAY

Sunday, January 4 | 11:00 AM | Calvary UMC

All are warmly invited to worship with us on Epiphany Sunday! This day celebrates Christ's revelation to all nations, marked by the arrival of the Magi and their gifts. It reminds us of God's love revealed to the world and the journey of all who seek hope and light.

You ARE GOD'S BELOVED.

You ARE WELCOME HERE.



CONTACT US

PASTOR

Rev. Beth L. Nelson

412-398-7894 | RevBeth@CalvaryPgh.com

EMERITUS CLERGY

Rev. Myles Bradley

Rev. Jorinda Bullitt

Rev. Larry Homitsky

CHURCH STAFF

Music Ministry – Brian Burns

724-388-3246 | bsburns77@aol.com

Office Administrator – Mary Emili

412-231-2007 | CalvaryPgh@gmail.com

Family Ministry & Education

Megan Bova

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Brittany Bova-Mickens

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Communications – Karen Ferguson

724-448-1429 | karen.ferguson.15202@gmail.com

LGBTQIA+ Ministry Coordinator – Tim Napieralski

Social Media Coordinator – Judith Melvin

Worship Tech Coordinator – Aiden Weis

Food Ministry Coordinator – Michael Schnitgen

Assistant Facilities Manager – Susan Derouin

Facilities Manager/Wedding Coordinator – Aleata Weis

Treasurer – Georgia Brucker

CALVARY UMC

971 Beech Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

Office Hours

Monday: 9 AM – NOON
Tuesday: 9 AM – 3 PM
Thursday: 9 AM – 3 PM

Phone

412-231-2007

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Facebook

Calvary United Methodist
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YouTube

Calvary UMC Pittsburgh PA

Instagram

[calvaryumc_pittsburgh](https://www.instagram.com/calvaryumc_pittsburgh)

Quick Links

