

January 2026

# CALVARY CALLING

News that serves and ignites people for Christ



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**Sun. Jan. 4 - Star Words Sunday**  
9:00 a.m. - Traditional Service  
10:30 a.m. - Contemporary Service

**Wed. Jan. 7**  
5:30 p.m. Worship  
Wednesday School Resumes

**Sun. Jan. 11**  
Regular Worship Schedule  
Sunday School Resumes

**Wed. Jan. 14**  
5:30 p.m. Worship

**Sun. Jan. 18**  
Regular Worship Schedule  
Rummage Sale Donations Start @ Noon

**Wed. Jan. 21**  
5:30 p.m. Worship

**Sun. Jan. 25**  
Regular Worship Schedule

**Wed. Jan. 28**  
5:30 p.m. Worship

## Epiphany Star Words: Join Us January 4 & 7

As we step into the season of Epiphany, we remember the Magi who followed a star encountering Christ's light. This year, we invite you to mark the Epiphany season by handing out Star Words at worship. The word you receive is meant to help guide, nudge, challenge, or comfort us in the year ahead.

You're invited to worship on Sunday, January 4 as we draw our 2026 Star Words together:  
9:00 a.m. Traditional  
10:30 a.m. Contemporary (One contemporary service this day.)  
5:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 7

Whether your word feels like a gift, a surprise, or something to wrestle with, we trust God meets us through it. Take it home, pray with it, look it up, pin it somewhere you'll see it, and notice how it travels with you through the year.

Blessed Epiphany, beloveds!  
May the Light that guided the Magi guide you, too.

**Pastor Rachael**



# A MESSAGE FROM LEAD PASTOR RACHAEL PUTTBRESE

I've never been one to make New Year's resolutions. But I do love opening a brand-new calendar.

On New Year's Day, I take time to fill in birthdays, anniversaries, upcoming vacations, and already known special events. I also write in the heavenly birthdays of loved ones and the anniversaries of the days they passed into eternal life in Christ. As I do, I notice how the calendar holds both grief and gratitude. Some dates are already full of memory and meaning; others remain blank, open, and waiting.

Those empty squares carry promise and potential. And in many ways, they remind me of the journey of faith.

Each day we wake up with the promise of new life in Christ Jesus. Scripture tells us, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

That promise isn't reserved for January 1; it greets us every morning. As the writer of Lamentations proclaims, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases...they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Every day, we are invited to live as God's beloved...held in love, shaped by mercy, and sustained by grace. Each day opens space to encounter Christ in those we meet, to practice compassion, to grow in faith and trust, to offer forgiveness and receive it in return, to serve, worship, and pray. This is the rhythm of our baptismal life: caring for our neighbor, seeking justice, loving boldly, and walking humbly with God.

Faith, after all, is not just for Sundays or a seasonal practice. Faith is something we exercise in daily living. Following Jesus is a way of life we are called into all 365 days of the year.

I've always found it striking that the phrase "Do not be afraid" appears in Scripture roughly 365 times...a reminder for every single day. In a time when fear, division, and uncertainty feel especially present in our country and our world, it's not surprising if the turning of the calendar brings more worry than joyful anticipation. And yet, again and again, God meets us with the same promise: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you" (Isaiah 41:10).

So perhaps the invitation of this new year is not to resolve to do more or be better, but to trust more deeply. To live into the promise God places before us each day. To step into those empty squares with courage, hope, and love, trusting that Christ will be already present there.

May this new year be one where we practice faith daily, lean into God's grace, and discover again and again that we do not walk alone.

Grace and peace as we begin this new year together.

Pr. Rachael

## Mark Your Calendars!

Calvary's Annual Meeting will be on Feb. 1. Meeting format is still being discussed so look for updates in our weekly communications.

## Prayers & Sympathies

Roy Nyberg's brother,  
Thomas Nyberg,  
died 12-10-25.

Randy Boettner's mother,  
Louvain Boettner,  
died 12-11-25.

Erin Navarro's uncle,  
Jeff Chappell,  
died 12-13-25.



## **MEN'S MINISTRY**

This group meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. here at Calvary in the library. This is an opportunity to get to know other men in the congregation. We hope to see you there!

## **MEMORY CAFE**

The Memory Cafe will be held on January 13, 2026 from 1:00-3:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall at Calvary.

The Memory Cafe is a monthly educational event for people living with any type of dementia and their family, friends, caregivers, and people who want to learn. From 1:00-1:30 p.m. we have time for coffee and conversation plus time to browse the free resources. At 1:30 p.m. there is an educational program with time for questions. Following the program at 2:30 p.m. there is time to visit with the speaker and enjoy refreshments. All are welcome to attend and the event is free.

## **READING RELIGIOUSLY**

**January 15 @ 6 p.m. | Blue Moose**

Love to read? Looking for great conversation and new perspectives? Our Reading Religiously Book Club is the perfect place to dive into engaging stories, share ideas, and connect with fellow book lovers. Whether you're a lifelong reader or just getting started, all are welcome. Grab a copy of *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans and meet us at the Blue Moose.

## **ALL-AGES BOOK CLUB**

**January 11 @ 3 p.m. | Fellowship Hall**

Discover the joy of reading together!

Our All-Ages Book Club is a welcoming space for readers of every generation to share stories, spark conversation, and build community. Each month we explore a new title that's fun, thought-provoking, and perfect for discussion. Come connect through books—you bring the curiosity, we'll bring the stories! This month we will be reading *Speak Up Santiago!*.

## **STITCH & CHAT GROUP**

**January 15 @ 1:30 p.m.**

Meets the third Thursday of this month in the Library. This is open to all women who want to bring their "handiwork" for an afternoon of fellowship and crafting.

## **CALVARY CLASSICS GAME NIGHT**

**January 20 @ 4 p.m. | Fellowship Hall**

All Calvary Classics are invited to a fun-filled evening of games and fellowship. Bring your favorite hors d'oeuvre to share and enjoy time together. We hope to see you there!

## **LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF QUILT ASSEMBLING AND POTLUCK**

**January 27**

We would like to encourage you to join us on the last Tuesday of the month from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. to help assemble the quilts. We also have a potluck lunch at noon. You can come for an hour or two or the whole day, that is up to you. We hope you can join us.

## **THE UNFORGETTABLES CHOIR**

The Unforgettables will begin the Winter/Spring Semester on January 28, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall at Calvary. The Unforgettables Choir is a community and regional choir for people living with any type of dementia and their care partner. We currently have people from Mayville, Portland, and Cavalier that drive in each Wednesday to be part of the choir.

The Unforgettables meet every Wednesday from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall at Calvary. From 9:30-10:15 a.m. we have time for coffee and conversation and from 10:15-11:30 a.m. we sing songs that we know and songs that are new to us. No choral experience is necessary. To register call the church office at 701-772-4897 and they will put you in touch with Mary Ann. You may also come to a rehearsal where there is always a place for you.

# Highlights of Church Council

## FINANCE - 2025 FINANCE REPORT

### Month of November

**Giving:** Calvary's November congregational giving was \$8K higher than last year. This can be attributed to the receipt of large one-time gift where Calvary was the beneficiary of an IRA. November 2025 giving compared to budget was \$15K over budget due to the one-time gift. Weekly giving in November was 96% of budget.

**Expenses:** November expenses were favorable to last year by \$8k at \$71.3k. November expenses compared to budget were \$16k favorable primarily due to lower headcount and lower maintenance costs than budgeted.

**Income (Loss):** November income of \$30.8k is favorable \$16K to last year and \$30K favorable to budget.

### Year to Date

**Giving:** YTD November giving is comparable to prior year at \$785K. This can be attributed to timing of annual gifts, a large one-time gift and a slightly higher weekly giving than prior year. YTD November giving is under budget \$169K at 82% of budget..

**Expenses:** YTD November expenses are \$45K lower than prior year due to \$63K lower staff ministry costs and \$8K lower supporting ministry costs offset by \$6K increased utility costs, \$4k insurance costs, \$10K Maintenance Costs and \$7K Building & Equipment.

**Income (Loss):** YTD Net Loss of \$16.2K is \$45K lower than last year which is the result of \$45K in favorable spending compared to last year.

### Forecast

**Giving:** Based on current trends and an analysis of historical giving patterns, we are forecasting a year-end shortfall in contributions. This gap is projected to be approximately \$99K, representing a 5% deviation from the budgeted amount for the year.

**Expenses:** Expenses are projected to continue trending at the current YTD average of \$77K per month, ending the year at \$902K and \$140K under budget.

**Income (Loss):** The anticipated excess income over expenses is estimated to be approximately \$40K.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS & NEW BUSINESS

### Building & Grounds

Brad Thoreson is assisting in Danny's absence. Available during the evening hours only; there has been coordination with Calvary staff to assure communication lines are open.

### Evangelism

Angel Tree has been successful again this year.

### Education

Advent Festival was a great success, lefse event brought generations together. Over 300 children participated in the Christmas program.

### Nominating Committee

Council to email Pastor Rachael on interest to remain on the Council if term is complete and willing to continue serving.

### Nametags and slides to identify Council Members

Discussion surrounding name tags for Council members to allow connection within Calvary

-Pastor Rachael has a congregational member that is willing to purchase nametags for all members

**Next Council Meeting: Jan. 13 @ 6:30 p.m.**

## 2025 BUDGET

<b>2025 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>1,041,258.00</b>
Offering through 12/7/25	836,653.07
Expenses through 12/7/25	835,824.05
<b>Balance of Building Expansion Loan</b>	
as of 12/31/25	371,918.73

## Foundation Grants

### Approved November 19, 2025

\$2,500 Lisa Piche  
Feed My Starving Children Mobile Pack

\$5,000 Jan Kurtyka  
Lewis & Clark Backpack Program

### BUILDING EXPANSION FUND

In memory of Meinhardt and Delores Bader by  
Michael and Mary Bader

In memory of Virgil Stenberg by Terry and Charleen  
Farder

In memory of Sally Wilde by Marilyn Linnell

### GENERAL FUND

In memory of Meinhardt and Delores Bader by  
Michael and Mary Bader

In memory of Elva LaFave by Allen and Debra LaFave

### GOOD SAM FUND

In memory of Vicki Kroetsch by Calvary Lutheran  
Church Women

In memory of Janet Noblin by Calvary Lutheran Church  
Women

### LEWIS & CLARK BACKPACKS

In memory of Meinhardt and Delores Bader by  
Michael and Mary Bader

In memory of Esther Brokke by Terry and  
Lisa Ackerman

In memory of Janet Noblin by Willis and Karen Botnen

### MEMORY CAFÉ

In memory of Gordon Sather by Peggy Tierney

### UNFORGETTABLES CHOIR FUND

In memory of Mary Ann McKenna by Michael and  
Rhonda-Lee Poellot

## FUND BALANCES

Youth	60,959.21
Honduras Mission	22,519.67
Foundation	809,676.69
Good Samaritan	4,321.40
Refugee	6,918.52
Campership	4,907.37
Music	901.06
Library	1,027.46
Unrestricted Reserve	17,000.00
Landscaping	76.20
Contemporary Worship	2,674.39
Education	2,061.27
Fine Arts	934.31
Missions	41,024.81
Quilting	2,292.91
Memory Café	15,467.22
Unforgettables Choir	17,810.59
Prayer Chain	12,618.50
LaGrave on First	988.16
Lewis & Clark General	4,027.83
Lewis & Clark Backpack	32,005.53
Hymnal & Bible Fund	1,796.60
Coffee Shop	3,249.10
Columbarium	31,412.10
Stephen Ministry	1,033.75
Operation Technology	2,005.22
Organ/Piano	(717.33)
General Maintenance	4,219.60
Sanctuary Projector/Screen	1.61
Hearing Aid Loop	1,057.00
Roof Repairs	6,912.33
Building Expansion	253,719.54
Seminary	503.95



## Lift Every Voice Choir

On Sunday, November 23, at 2:30 p.m., Calvary hosted the second annual "Lift Every Voice Choir Festival," a concert featuring choirs from Calvary Lutheran, United Lutheran, Sharon Lutheran, Our Savior's Lutheran and Zion Methodist churches. It was a lovely afternoon of music and raised over \$1700 for St. Joseph's Food Pantry. A special thank you to all who attended and donated so generously. We are hoping to continue this as an annual event so look for information on the 2026 concert early next November!



## CALVARY CLASSICS 2026



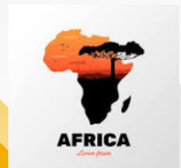
**January 20, 4:00 PM  
Game Night**

Bring your favorite  
hors d'oeuvre to share



**February 24, 4:00 PM  
Potluck -**

with Sharon Lutheran  
Golden Age Club



**March 24, 4:00 PM  
Nancy Yoshida**

Join us for dessert as Nancy  
presents her travels to Africa



**April 28, 1:30 PM  
Ralph Englestad tour - \$6.00**

Meet at the Ralph at 1:15 PM  
Park on the North side.

## Holy Grounds

Holy Grounds is open and we need your help! Be a part of this hospitality ministry at Calvary Lutheran Church to provide a welcoming place for fellowship before and after worship times at Calvary. Sign up for as few or many time slots as you would like. Have fun serving coffee and getting to know the people at Calvary. Our espresso machine, lovingly named Franke, is very user friendly and training is provided.

Two shifts are scheduled each Sunday for two people per shift. Families/friends are also welcome to volunteer together. Shifts run from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m and 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.





## HONDORUS RUMMAGE SALE

Our rummage sale will take place on January 24! We are looking for volunteers beginning Saturday, January 18, at noon, through the end of the sale on January 24. Help is needed with setup, sorting, sales, and cleanup.

Donations will be accepted from Saturday, January 18, at noon through Wednesday, January 21. Thank you for supporting this event—your time and donations make a big difference!

The Calvary Honduras rummage sale has been supporting our projects in El Triunfo, Honduras, for more than 20 years. The funds raised go to support our three nutrition centers that provide hot meals to children in need three days a week and our medical clinic, which is available on weekdays for anyone in need of basic medical care. Discounted basic medications are also provided through this clinic. Although we are unable to take a team to Honduras this year due to increased safety concerns, it is very important that we continue to support our programs. We can only do this through the generosity of Calvary's support for our rummage sale through donations of items, volunteer work, and of course shopping on the day of the sale.

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## THE UNFORGETTABLES CHOIR CONCERT

The Unforgettables Choir braved a winter storm and presented their Christmas Concert on Wednesday, December 10, to 175 people who also braved the cold and snow. It was a joy-filled day full of music, love and laughter. The concert may be viewed on the Calvary website at <https://calvarygf.org/unforgettables>

Thank you to all who attended and shared the day with us! We appreciate your support more than we can express.





## A Lewis & Clark Partnership

Calvary's "It Takes a Village" partnership with our neighbor school, Lewis and Clark, is thriving in its fourth year of supporting the backpack meal program. This ministry allows us to live out our call to compassion by helping meet the nutritional needs of food-insecure children in our partner school. Each week, the program provides weekend meals for students who might otherwise go hungry.

It costs approximately **\$100 to support one child** for an entire school year. We invite you to consider sponsoring one or more students for the 2025–2026 school year—every contribution, large or small, makes a meaningful difference.

For those who prefer to donate food items directly, collection tables are located outside each worship space. Picking up an extra item or two while you shop is an easy way to support this ministry. An **Amazon Wish List** is also available for anyone who would like to have items shipped straight to Calvary.

Together, we truly can make a village of care around the children at Lewis and Clark.



### Items For Backpacks

Ramen noodles - chicken flavor  
Soup or noodle cups  
Mac and cheese cups  
Cans of chicken noodle soup  
Instant oatmeal packets  
Fruit cups/applesauce  
Individually packed snack items not containing nuts  
Juice boxes (100% juice)

### Volunteer Opportunity

Volunteers are needed to assist in filling bags on the third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in the church narthex. Our next meeting date to pack is January 20.

### Sponsoring a Child

It costs roughly \$100 to sponsor one child for the entire school year. We ask that you consider sponsoring one or more so we can meet our goal of providing for all students. Your sponsorship provides food and support for a child in need. It's a simple way to make a lasting impact—one student, one life, one future changed.

Thanks to your generosity, 31 students are sponsored for the school year! Let's keep going and see how many more we can support.

Two ways to sponsor a child:  
Give \$100 or \$100 check designated to Sponsoring a Child to our Finance Director, Heather.

or

Donate online by scanning the qr code then click over to one-time gift, press the drop down and click Lewis & Clark, press second drop down and click Sponsor a Child.





# Calvary Angel Tree

Thank you, Calvary family, for the incredible outpouring of love and generosity you've shown through this year's Angel Tree ministry. Because of you, children, seniors, veterans, and families in our community will experience the warmth, hope, and joy of Christmas in a very real way.

Your willingness to pick up tags, shop for gifts, support our registries, volunteer your time, and pray for those we serve reflects the heart of Christ at work among us. This ministry is only possible because of your faithful compassion and commitment.

Thank you for being a church that shows up, gives generously, and shares God's love so beautifully. You are a blessing!



## Calvary Lutheran Church

Calvary Lutheran Church was established in 1953 after the announcement of the establishment was made by Reverend L.E. Tallakson of Fargo, president of the North Dakota District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

### Location

1405 South 9th Street  
Grand Forks, ND 58201

### Contact

701-772-4897  
place4u@calvarygf.org

## Our Worship Services

### Sunday\*

9 a.m. - Sanctuary &  
Fellowship Hall

10:30 a.m. - Fellowship Hall

### Wednesday\*

5:30 p.m. - Sanctuary

\*Holiday and summer services may have different times.

All services are streamed online.

**calvarygf.org**

## WAYS TO GIVE

### 1. Text

701-922-9020

### 2. Online

at calvarygf.org

### 3. In Worship

Drop a gift in the offering plate

### 4. Mail checks or money order

Calvary Lutheran Church  
1405 South 9th St  
Grand Forks, ND 58201

## Looking to donate your time?

Call 701-772-4897 or

Email place4u@calvarygf.org



# Youth and CONFIRMATION

## Confirmation in January

Wed., Jan. 7, 7:00 p.m. All Confirmation Parent & Student Forum with Pr. Rachael (Fellowship Hall), This night is also the January elective sign-up deadline.

Wed., Jan. 14, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. Electives Begin wk 1

Wed., Jan. 21, 7:00-8:00 p.m. Electives wk 2

Wed., Jan. 28, 7:00-8:30 Special Conference-Wide Confirmation Event (at Calvary)

\*\* More information on this event will be coming soon.

## Volunteer Opportunities: Elective Class Leaders

We are seeking eight caring Confirmation Companions to help lead our January elective courses. This is a meaningful opportunity to learn alongside our youth and offer your time and care in a way that truly makes a difference. Our young people thrive when surrounded by supportive, invested adults, and leading an elective is a beautiful way to help shape their faith journey.

\*\* Guidance, materials, and lesson plans are provided, and you may choose whether or not to be placed in your own youth's class. If you'd like to learn more, reach out to Pastor Rachael at [revrach@calvarygf.org](mailto:revrach@calvarygf.org).

## Youth Ministry Updates

As we move through a staffing transition, Pastor Rachael will be forming a **Youth Ministry Vision Team** to review our current programs and help shape the future of youth ministry at Calvary. This group will identify our ministry needs and the qualities we're seeking as we begin looking for candidates for the Youth Ministry Coordinator position.

This transition gives us time to reflect on Confirmation and youth ministry as a whole, ensuring we stay rooted in faith formation while strengthening opportunities for relationship-building, service learning, youth group connections, and future mission experiences. If you're interested in serving, please reach out to Pastor Rachael. Updates will continue in the monthly newsletter.

## In the months ahead:

**Confirmation** will continue as planned, including elective courses in January and February.

**High School Youth Group** and **SPARK** will pause during the transition.

Early plans are underway for a **summer service-learning trip** and a **Calvary Week** at Camp Metigoshe.

Families are encouraged to explore **summer Bible camp** opportunities at Park River Bible Camp and Red Willow; schedules will be posted soon.

Thank you for your prayers and partnership as we walk this season together.



# Kids & Family



## December Recap

Calvary Kids had a busy and festive Advent season. We kicked it off with the Advent Festival and added fresh lefse to our activities. Our kids then sang loud for all to hear at our Wednesday School Christmas program and at two Sunday School programs at 9:00 and 10:30 a.m. Our 4- and 5-year-olds also met and made gingerbread nativities for their December Milestone event.

There's something truly magical about seeing the season through a child's eyes, especially as they start to grasp the wonder and beauty of the Christmas story.



## Family Sledding Event Jan. 19 @ 2:00 p.m.

Looking for some fun on a non-school day? Join us at the Lincoln park sledding hill for some snowy fun! Bring your own sled....we'll provide the hot chocolate!



## Upcoming Dates

January 7- Wednesday School resumes  
January 11- Sunday School resumes  
January 19- Family Sledding Event  
January 21- No Wednesday School

**CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

1405 South 9th Street  
Grand Forks, ND 58201

(701) 772-4897

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**CALVARY STAFF**

Pastor: Rachael Puttbrese  
Finance: Heather Vandervort  
Communications and Tech: Marcus Mandt  
Education: Nichole Bye  
Receptionist: Cathy Bubb  
Director of Faith in Action: Julie Pedersen  
Facilities Manager: Danny Navarro

