

CALVARY CALLING

Called by God | Centered in Grace | Calvary Serves and Ignites People for Christ

www.calvarygf.org

August 2020

Last month at Calvary

Calvary Updates

This is a forum to find out what's happening at Calvary. Our church is a living, breathing place. Take some time to read about the body that is Calvary so we can tell each other and the community our story, who we are, what we care about and what we believe.

In These Pages...

Calvary is a big church with a lot going on! That means many ways to connect with your church family- worship events, education opportunities for all ages, classes, groups, and activities.

There is something for everyone...take a look!



PARKING LOT

The parking lot project is nearly complete! Concrete has been poured, lines have been striped and the safety light has been installed. The old electrical poles were taken out and now we are waiting for the green space to have grass seed added. Drive by and check it out if you haven't seen it yet!



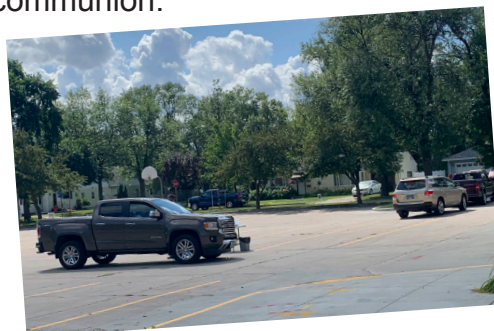
COMMUNION EVENTS

We have been utilizing the parking lot this summer! On July 29 we invited the fifth graders and their families to a socially distant, outdoor, first communion celebration and worship service. On August 5 and August 9 we had drive-thru communion.



STORYBOOK WALK

If you are looking for an activity to do with your kids, come on by Calvary for our first storybook walk. As you walk around the block it will take you through the pages of a book called, *Saturday*.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR IVY

"The Eyes of Jesus"



Dear Calvary,

Do you ever have those moments where you just can't quite come up with the words you are looking for and then all of a sudden you come across something and it is absolutely perfect? I had that moment today. I was thinking about what God may be wanting me to write for you when I looked over on my desk and there was one of my favorite books of blessings.

It is called, *"To Bless the Space Between Us"* by John O'Donohue.

There are blessings for all kinds of moments in life. For a breakup, for a new beginning, the onset of illness, for work, for praise, for rain. See?

Blessings for almost everything. And then - there it was. Exactly what I was looking for. Enjoy.

The eyes of Jesus I imagine the eyes of Jesus were harvest brown,
The light of their gazing suffused with the seasons: the shadow of winter,
the mind of spring, the blues of summer, and amber of harvest,
a gaze that is perfect sister, to the kindness that dwells in his beautiful hands.
The eyes of Jesus gaze on us, stirring in the heart's clay the confidence of seasons
that never lose their way to harvest. This gaze knows the signature of our heartbeat,
the first glimmer from the dawn that dreamed our minds,
the crevices where thoughts grow long before the longing
in the bone sends them toward the mind's eye,
the artistry of the emptiness that knows to slow the hunger
of outside things until they weave into the twilight side of the heart,
a gaze full of all that is still future looking out for us to glimpse the jeweled light in winter stone,
quicken the eyes that look at us to see through to where words are blind to say what we would love,
forever falling softly on our face, his gaze plies the soul with light, laying down a luminous layer beneath our brief
and brittle days until the appointed dawn comes assured and harvest deft to unravel the last black knot and we
are back home in the house that we have never left.

Here we are: awaiting the last knot to unravel so we can be back in the house that has never left.
The church is still here. We are still living out our faith. Jesus is not gone. Our faith does not leave us.
We have never left and yet we can't wait to come home. In the now and not yet of this pandemic,
may the blessing of the eyes of Jesus be a reminder that God is at work.
We are being freed from what once was so that we can be what God is creating. That has never left.

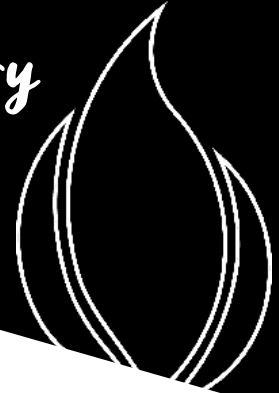
Grace and peace,

Pastor Ivy

Calvary CONNECTS

GET INVOLVED

Connect with People at Church



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Registration is open!

Christian education opportunities at Calvary are open for registration. Details on Sunday/Wednesday school were mailed to families but there is more information within the pages of this newsletter. Read on!

SEWING CLUB

August 20 @ 1:30 p.m.

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

QUILTING DAY

August 25 @ 9:30 a.m.

Join us in the Fellowship Hall for Quilting Day on the last Tuesday of the month. Come for an hour or two or the day!

BACKPACK BLESSING

Join us for outdoor worship on August 30 in the parking lot at 9:00 or 10:30 a.m. A special invitation for students, teachers, paras, bus drivers, principals and all those going back to school in whatever way! There will be a special blessing upon you and we have a special gift for you to take home.

100TH BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS

Cleone Strinden celebrated her 100th birthday this August. Although she recently moved to be closer to family, she is Calvary's oldest member! Write to her and say, "Happy Birthday" by sending a letter/card to:

Cleone Strinden
2801 39th Ave. SE #429
Mandan, ND 58554

FOOD DRIVE

SUNDAY

September 6

The first Sunday of each month Calvary hosts a food drive. Even if we are not worshipping together in the building at that time we can still come together to help out the community. Consider picking up a few extra items at the grocery store and bring them to church with you! There are shopping carts available on both ends of the building or you can bring food to the office. If we do not have in person worship that Sunday we will have a shopping cart in the entryway at door 1.

Ideas include:

- nonperishable canned fruits and vegetables
- peanut butter and granola bars
- soup, macaroni, spaghettios, rice, pasta

MOVIE NIGHT

Drive-in style

On September 27, join us for a drive in movie in the Calvary parking lot. You bring your wheels and blanket, we'll have popcorn and snacks. See you there for some movie magic!

DRIVE-THRU COMMUNION

Join us August 26 | 3:00-6:00 p.m.

We will have drive-thru communion again on August 26 but this time in the east parking lot. Come on by and be reminded of Christ's sacrifice for us.

A note from Pastor Kirk

"A Spirit of Unity"



At a time of great division, the apostle Paul wrote this in his letter to the Ephesians:

I therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beg you to live a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Dare I point out the obvious that I personally have seen or heard very little of this "unity of the Spirit" language as I listen to people speak these days? From the wisdom of wearing of masks in a pandemic to the historic truth currently exposing racial disparity in policing, voting, wages, education, housing and incarceration practices to the deep hatred expressed in today's politics, the idea (or commitment) to Paul's description of the "unity of Spirit" is seemingly "Gone With the Wind."

In this moment, Calvary gets the rare opportunity to name just how we believe God's Spirit is anything but MIA. How we exhibit trust in God's Spirit as a divine movement that listens and acts on behalf of others! We are defined by God as tribal in only one sense – a tribe that gives up its own identity, wealth, time and even love for OTHER tribes! Don't believe me? Listen to the apostle Paul writing on behalf of his own people who have spurned him (and their Messiah):

"For I wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh."

Calvary has been called by God through God's spirit of unity, to give up its life for those who live in other communities, other beliefs, other politics, other philosophies. What? This is what is meant by the theology of the cross. A new reality that we could never accomplish on our own. A new reality that will cost us dearly. A new reality that feeds the world mercy even as it often pains us.

Pandemic? Racial division? Political world gone amok? **THIS** is why the body of Christ exists! We have been baptized into this broken world for a reason! Please, do not try to do this on you own!

Prayers to you and to all the world,

Pastor Kirk



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CALVARYGF.ORG

Highlights of the
CHURCH COUNCIL
July 2020



Treasurer's Report - Overview

June income was \$5,000 higher than the prior year. A large yearly gift was given in June which helped income on a monthly level. It is amazing even with very small on-site worship services, Calvary members and friends continue to support Calvary's ministries each day.

Calvary held the first "in the building" sanctuary worship service on June 28. As the numbers continue to rise we will discuss how to proceed with worship. Year-to-date income through June was \$2,000 lower than the prior year and \$10,000 lower than the five-year average. Year-to-date expenses through June were \$7,000 lower than the prior year and \$8,000 lower than the five-year average. Even though Calvary and its ministries do not look identical to how they have in the past, members have not changed how important Calvary is in their lives. Please continue to pray for continued support and faithfulness in Calvary's partnership in ministry.

Council Business

Some security measures have been added including an alarm system. Decisions about worship weddings/funerals and other types of worship services were discussed and how to proceed safest for all. The parking lot project is still underway. The energy poles will be removed by XCEL Energy soon.

Officers and Ministry Teams

Diane Stoley reported that meals are still being served at La Grave so they continue to ask for help with that ministry. Dustin reported that the indoor services had been going well with 20 people and was going to be increased next week but due to the increase in Covid cases that wasn't going to happen. Jen Monzelowsky reported that care packages for nursing home members would be assembled on July 30 at Calvary. Erin Navarro reported that there was going to be a by-laws meeting this week. The virtual election of the new Synod Bishop will be August 14-16. Our voting members will be Erin Navarro, Diane Stoley and Matt Vanderpan. Back ups include Dustin Lang, Danny Navarro, and Dale Schulz. We need to check who the other congregational members are.

In person worship isn't going to happen yet as the number of positive Covid cases is increasing. Our criteria will be more on trends not number of cases. We will try to be in solidarity with other churches that have had positive cases. Weddings may be a little different as they involve mostly family, Ushers will be asked to provide masks and space attendees for seating. For now it is still wait and see what happens as to when we will resume opening the church. The numbers of people viewing the online services seems to be about the same as normal attendance for this time of year.

WELCOME ^{to} CONFIRMATION

Last fall we began looking at different confirmation programs and re-working our program to better fit students and families of all kinds. We began rolling out the new confirmation program this spring so we could launch it this summer/fall and it just so happens that the timing of the pandemic lined up with our new program. Whatever the COVID-19 situation is this year, we are ready for Confirmation at Calvary.

WHY THE CHANGE?

1 People are busy!

WE DON'T JUST WANT YOU MAKE TIME, WE WANT YOU TO ENJOY THE TIME.

Students and parents alike have schedules much different than the schedules people had 20, 30, 40 years ago. School schedules, athletic schedules, and other activities no longer revolve around the church schedule. We want to be flexible in the timing and frequency of classes, in order to make them both achievable and accessible.

2 Class sizes were too large

SPACE ALLOWS FOR GROWTH. IT'S AS TRUE FOR GARDENS AS IT IS FOR KIDS.

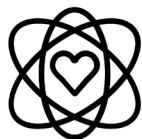
Ideally, a small group Confirmation class would consist of 6-8 students and 2 small group guides. With the amount of students in our program and the amount of space in our building it worked to do it this way, but it definitely didn't work well. After a long day of learning at school, sitting in a big room of 200 people trying to learn was difficult for students. Offering multiple classes throughout the year allows for class sizes to be smaller and for relationships to develop much better.

3 We heard your feedback

YOU SPOKE AND WE LISTENED.

We heard from students, parents, group guides, and congregation members alike that Confirmation programming was too long and that students weren't able to articulate their faith.

The new confirmation program uses a university style classes and credits system and students are able to choose elective classes that interest them such as Faith and Science, Care for Creation, Scary, Gross and Weird Stories of the Bible, Can I Ask That? and more. For a full list of classes, to learn more about the program or to register, [sign up at calvarygf.org/confirmation](http://calvarygf.org/confirmation).



CORE CLASSES (Required Classes)

- Bible Basics
- Sacraments
- Commandments/Creeds
- The Lord's Prayer
- The Seven Habits of Effective Christian Families (attended by student and a guardian)



ELECTIVES

Elective courses allow students and families to choose what they would like to learn more about. Elective opportunities vary from year to year.



ENRICHMENTS

- Worship participation
- Service Opportunities
- Faith Expression
- Bible Camp
- Mission Trips
- Confirmation Retreat
- Mentor Year



SUNDAY SCHOOL AND MILESTONE MINISTRY

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION UPDATE

We have spent the summer planning and dreaming up what Christian Education will look like during the pandemic. While we know it may not look like what we are used to, we are certain that helping families build their relationship with each other and with God is important to us. After much consideration, discussion with other local churches, and our own staff, here is our plan for the 2020/2021 school year.

SUNDAY SHCOOL

We will be offering a weekly online Sunday School that will be posted on our website and Facebook page each Sunday morning, for you to access whenever is convenient for your family.

MILESTONE MINISTRY YEAR

At this time, we don't feel that holding weekly in-person classes is a safe option, however, we are excited to announce that we will be offering milestone ministry opportunities for each grade level throughout the year. These events will center around building family relationships, growing in your faith, service to others, exploring the Bible and participating in the ministries of our faith community. These activities will be designed for your child to engage with their faith at their level as you wonder, play and learn together. This will also allow us to provide instruction in a safer environment with fewer people in the building at one time. Our plan for now will be to hold these sessions physically distant with participants wearing masks. If COVID rates become too high, and it is not safe for us to meet in person (or your family doesn't feel comfortable meeting in person,) we will create kits and instructions for each milestone event to be completed at home.

For a full list of milestone activities and dates for each grade, head to calvarygf.org.

REGISTER TODAY!

There is always time! If you are a new member or have just been thinking about signing your child up for education opportunities at Calvary, YOU CAN! Sign up for education opportunities on the church website.



FALL SPECIAL EVENTS

Backpack Blessing-
August 30

Drive-In Movie Night-
September 27

Trunk-or-Treat-
October 25

Advent Festival-
December 6

