



2508 Washington Ave SW  
Bemidji, MN 56601

## *Reflections on the Importance of One's Voice*

Greetings, friends. It was about a week ago that we (Pr. Jeremiah and Pr. Chris) got into a deep discussion about life together, especially what that means right now in our society with the election around the corner. In all honesty, we found the conversation to span a whole lot of emotions including joy, anger, fear, confusion, and even hopefulness. There is a lot going on right now in our country. Some of it is beautiful. Some of it is heart wrenching. So much of it is just messy, and yet we believe that our faith matters, which also means our involvement in the world matters. But what does that mean? And how does our faith inform how we intersect our world? Because it does. It informs our decisions, our interactions, our concepts of who belongs and who doesn't, and especially how we see the people around us. We wanted to offer today a few thoughts from that conversation, especially as our society journeys through these next few weeks.

What does it mean to live out love in community? This is a question about the values that shape who we say we are. It needs to be more than words, but also actions and engagement in the greater community. Yes, this means getting involved. Yes, it means supporting those in need. And yes, right now, it means making your voice heard as part of our civic responsibility during elections. Remember, salvation isn't part of this. That gift has already been freely given for you and it is precisely that gift that sends us all out to engage and help shape the world today, to be God's hands and feet in this world. Our faith informs our decisions, not driving us to one political persuasion or another, but informing us as to which values and questions to consider when engaging our civic voice.

What are those values? As we discussed these things together, Compassion surfaced as a foundational value. Jesus had compassion for those in the world, especially those who the world holds no expectation that you would love. The homeless, the immigrant, the orphan; a list that goes on and on. Compassion calls us to see all people as wholly beloved and belonging in God's arms. Compassion is a value that leads us to each other. As we continued to discuss, we found that Truth stirred many of our emotions, especially when it is distorted or when half-truths are used to mislead. It seems that we are living in a time and culture where facts and opinions are often seen as the same thing. But truth, grounded in a love for all, is a value given to us by God. The council of bishops for the ELCA has put out a clear message about the importance of truth. If you are curious to read it, follow this link [elca.org/News-and-Events/8247](https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8247). Truth is a guiding value, and where does that truth begin? In the open arms of a loving savior. Finally, as we kept exploring this topic, Humility became a central value. Life lived in community requires a certain level of seeing ourselves not as first or better, but as part of a greater whole. The ability to put others before yourself, to see them as wholly beloved just as you are, or to admit when you are wrong and change course, that is an expression of humility. It honors relationship and is formed from the foundation of Christ's example of servant leadership.

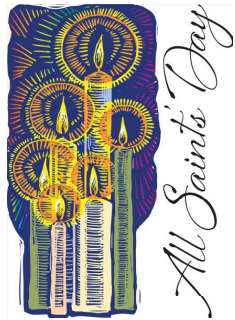
Compassion, Truth, and Humility call us out to be real, honest, and authentic with each other as we engage in this world. The question that guides us, the question that very much informed Martin Luther's understanding of the life of a Christian is to ask, 'Who is my neighbor?' The clear answer from the life of Jesus is simply and profoundly, 'All people'. Jesus didn't die on the cross to save a certain group of people. He died for all. That image of open arms as he breathed his last breath, a breath of compassion, truth, and humility, was a breath of love poured out. That image took our hearts in this conversation to a place of pain and beauty. It is a message that is often twisted to justify terrible statements and secret agendas, but Jesus' agenda was not secret. He came for all. He died for all. He rose for all. Period.

Dear friends in Christ, you were made in love to be love; a love that comes from God, a love we share with all people. We invite you to meditate on this message as these next few weeks unfold. To consider how these values drive us to ask questions like 'who is my neighbor'. But don't let it stop there. May it lead us all to see others, to have compassion for them, to welcome all people in God's name, and to step out in truth and humility, sharing God's love. It is what binds us today, and what will continue to gather us after these next few weeks have unfolded. Being a church family doesn't always mean we will agree, but it does mean that even when we don't, Christ's open arms still call us to his table, to be embraced in his love, connected to one another, and formed again as his body in this world. May you know that you remain near our thoughts and prayers as you exercise your right and responsibility to make your voice heard. We eagerly look forward to being gathered with you at God's all welcoming table, as we continue to live into the joys and challenges of being church together. You are loved, friends. Always, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Peace, Pastor Chris Leach and Pastor Jeremiah Holst

## All Saints Worship

9:00AM ON SUNDAY NOVEMBER 3, 2024



You are invited to join us for a time of remembering our loved ones who have gone to be in a nearer presence with God. We will offer prayers for all saints, toll the bells as we name loved ones lost in the last year, and celebrate their light by lighting candles in memory of them. All are welcome to share in this beautiful tradition. No need to bring anything special. Just your presence and your love. If you have anyone specific you would like us to remember in the prayers, please provide that name to the

office or to one of the pastors. We look forward to seeing you as we gather for All Saints Worship on Sunday, November 3.

## Sunday School

Some fun things are coming up in Sunday School. After a successful Faith Family Project making games to give away, we'll be gathering again on Sunday, December 1 after the Connections Worship at 10:30am for another fun project that will benefit others. It's a family affair, so the more the merrier. Take time after worship to work together as a family in a faith-filled way.

## Sunday School

FOR THE WHOLE CONGREGATION

Mark your calendar for another chance for Sunday School for the Whole Congregation on Sunday, December 22 at 9:00am. We'll celebrate together in worship and add in a presentation of the nativity story involving everyone in the congregation. It's a great way to witness the original story of Christmas and to involve all your friends and family in the congregation. There will be no 10:30am Connections service that day. We'll all worship together.

## Wreath Sale

We'll be selling wreaths again this year. Stop by the church office to place your order by November 18. Funds raised will support Calvary youth and families in upcoming events including a Senior High Trip to Denver next July and a Middle School Adventure Serve trip in June. Wreaths will be delivered the week of December 2-6 (watch for specific dates to come). Thanks in advance for supporting Calvary youth. Any questions? Contact Brett Carter, Director of Faith Formation.

## Advent Worship

If you can believe it, Advent is right around the corner. We will begin our journey through Advent on December 1 by lighting the Advent Wreath, singing a new liturgy written by Pr. Chris, and gathering in the wonder, anticipation, and mystery of Christ's Advent. We will follow the lights of hope, peace, love, and joy, all leading up to the celebration of Christmas on December 24 in worship. It will be a beautiful season to experience Christ's love.

## Middle School Youth Gathering



Confirmation kids in grades 6-8 head to Luther Crest Bible Camp for a synod-wide gathering of middle school youth for a weekend of spiritual fun November 22-23. Kids and some adult leaders will leave from church on Friday at 2:00pm and get back on Saturday between 5:00-6:00pm. It will be a great overnight experience of faith and fun. Lodging, meals, speakers, and a whole lot of fun is all included. Pray for our middle school youth participating in this event to be filled with the Spirit who abides in all of us.

## We're Going to Denver

Senior High Youth travel to Denver July 12-19, 2025 for our summer trip. We'll be doing service work with Youthworks in partnership with local organizations to meet the ongoing needs in the community. Possibilities include working at a food shelf, a soup kitchen, a children's program, or an elder care center. Families should have received information in the mail. If you have more questions, contact Brett Carter, Director of Faith Formation through the church office. Registration is open now and fundraising is already underway, so sign up today. You can use the QR code to register or find the link at [calvarybemidji.org](http://calvarybemidji.org).

## Club

High School youth meet Wednesdays at 7:15pm for Club, a chance to check in on what's happening and share concerns in a faith-filled environment. Club is where we make room for questions about the world and wonder what our faith has to do with daily life. All are welcome and friends are encouraged. Treats are provided and sometimes a song or two. Make a plan to start your Wednesday night with the Calvary Alive meal at 5:15pm, worship at 6:15pm, and Club to follow. See you there!

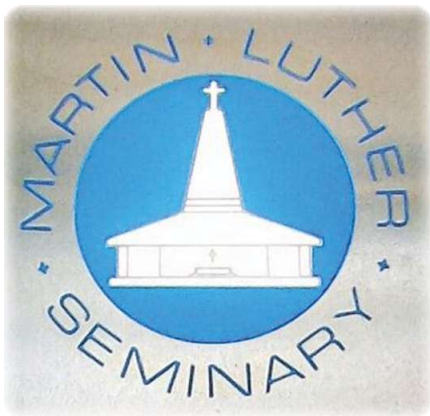
## Volunteers Needed



Looking for a way to get involved with the Calvary Community? The Altar Guild needs you! Calvary's Altar Guild is responsible for preparing the elements for Communion and Baptisms - It's a great way to help support the shared worship life of our congregation! If you have questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Pr. Jeremiah.

## See Calvary's November Birthdays Here!

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



## November Ministry Partner Martin Luther Seminary

Our November monthly ministry partner is Martin Luther Seminary of Lae, Papua New Guinea. Martin Luther Seminary has been training Lutheran pastors for ministry since 1966, serving the large Lutheran population of PNG. It currently holds 12 faculty and serves around 75 students who are studying for a variety of needed positions in the church.

Martin Luther Seminary has passionate students, but their facilities are often in disrepair and they lack the financial means to improve them. We can support this important ministry with our prayers and our financial gifts! Checks can be made out to Calvary Lutheran with the note "Martin Luther Seminary" or "November Monthly Ministry Partner." You can also designate a gift through RebelGive. We are the worldwide church together!

## Baptisms at Calvary

If you are interested in having your child baptized at Calvary, please visit the [baptism page](#) on our website for more information to get scheduled with us! If you have any questions, please contact the office at 218-751-1893.

## The Refuge GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Calvary is hosting a grief support group for those who have experienced a death related loss. This is a continuous support group called The Refuge. Group meetings are from 4:00-5:30pm the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month in Room 1 at Calvary. No need to pre-register. Contact Erin Kossivi at 813-417-7678 with questions!

## Refuge Kids

This group is for any child that has lost a primary caregiver to death (parents, sibling, or primary caregiver). The program is best suited for kids 7-13 years of age. The group meets weekly on Fridays in the Bemidji Covenant Church Family Life Center from 4:30-5:30pm. For more information contact Erin Kossivi 813-417-7678.

## Calvary Preschool Closed

Calvary Lutheran Preschool will be closed on Friday, November 8 after our Fall Conferences. We will also be closed on the 28 and 29 for Thanksgiving break. I hope everyone enjoys a nice time off with family and friends. We are thankful for all of our Calvary families!

Ashley Holmgren  
Director of Preschool Ministry

## Calvary Office Closed



Calvary Lutheran Church office will be closed on Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29 for Thanksgiving break. We hope you enjoy this holiday with your family and friends.

## Opportunities to Connect

Men's Breakfast & Bible Study - Wednesdays 8:00am  
Martha Circle - Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month 1:00-3:00pm  
Hope Circle - Every 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  
Crafters - 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of every month  
Quilters - Every Thursday Starting September 19, 9:00-11:00am

For more information about the different groups please contact the church office 218-751-1893.

## Food Shelf Update

I am excited to share with Calvary the hiring of a new Food Shelf Coordinator, Serena Hall. Serena will work with the many volunteers from the Council of Churches in the Bemidji area. As you have the opportunity, please take time to introduce yourself and welcome her to our local food shelf. I am sure that she will share with you other exciting news she has in her life.

If you are interested in helping at the food shelf, Calvary volunteers gather the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month of the year. To volunteer please contact Len Ochowicz at 320-364-3117.

If you would like to donate items, please note that the food shelf can use canned goods, toilet paper, and personal items. Please put donations in the basket in the front entrance of Calvary.

Len Ochowicz - Calvary Food Shelf Rep.

## FINANCIAL REPORT 12 MONTH FISCAL YEAR – JULY-JUNE

### General Fund – September

<u>Income</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Income</u>
\$90,556	\$106,367	\$249,106
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Expenses</u>
\$95,783	\$104,190	\$253,753

Cash, Receivables, & Savings: \$68,070.38

September Ministry Partner: Preschool Scholarships \$1,366

Calvary Foundation Balance: \$54,099.65

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

## A Message from Calvary Council ~ Amber Coquette



Happy Fall!

My name is Amber Coquette and I recently began my first term in serving as the Council Treasurer. My husband and I became members of Calvary not long after moving to Bemidji in 2010. We love the community and are excited to call Calvary our church family. Our two children attended the Calvary Preschool Program and currently are involved in the Sunday School Program. The future of rebuilding the Calvary Youth Programs is bright!

The council has seen an increase in financial giving trends over the most recent year, which will allow us as a congregation to move more towards not only being financially stable, but towards being financially sustainable. We continue to encourage support within our church, not only financially, but also through the Faith in Action Ministry Teams (refer to the recent brochures / orange cards that were distributed). We have an incredible amount of talent within our congregation, and we can do so much if we all join together, regardless of the size of the contribution.

Amber Coquette

## The Angel Tree is Back

RETURN GIFTS TO CALVARY BEFORE DECEMBER 15



Unfortunately, there are many people in our community that are struggling to survive. The Angel Tree presents a great opportunity for you to help families in need by providing gifts to their children this holiday season. All gifts will be given to children within our community.

Stop in the church to see the Angel Tree in the front narthex towards the end of November. Select an angel (or two or three!) from the tree for which to provide a gift. Please sign out the angel tags that you are selecting on the sign out sheets of the specific color in the church. All gifts must be returned to the church office in a gift bag, unwrapped, with the angel tag before December 15. This is to ensure we can get gifts to the schools before Christmas break. Thanks for donating to the families and children that may not otherwise receive gifts this season!



## Bell Choir

THE CALVARY/PRESBYTERIAN BELL CHOIR NEEDS YOU!



We are looking for more people interested in ringing with our shared bell choir. This group is a lot of fun. No experience necessary! We practice Mondays 5:30-6:30pm at the Presbyterian Church. Talk to Nicholle Bieberdorf for more information: 218-766-8063.

## Faith in Action Reminder



A few weeks ago, we celebrated Faith in Action Sunday/Wednesday with an invitation to fill out a brief card on how you want to put your faith into action this next year. If you have not done that, please take a few moments to complete it. The brochures can be found in the pews, on the usher tables, and in the church office. Thank you for sharing God's love in these beautiful ways!



**RebelGive**

Connect Through  
Giving!



Call Jamie or Garrett for Help! 218-751-1893



## NOVEMBER CALVARY ALIVE MENU

NOVEMBER 6:  
CHICKEN FILLET SANDWICH  
WITH CALICO BEANS

NOVEMBER 13:  
TATOR TOT CASSEROLE

NOVEMBER 20:  
PIZZA

