

DECEMBER, 2018

...IN SACRED PLACES...

CELEBRATING MINISTRIES OF CALVARY AND ZION LUTHERAN CHURCHES

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR KIM

Dear Siblings in Christ,

I hope that you had a blessed Thanksgiving and took some time to give thanks to God for all that you have been blessed with.

I greatly enjoyed the holiday, especially getting to see my two little nieces. Nora is two and a half and Everly is one and half. Even though I see them fairly often I am always amazed at how much they change physically and developmentally from time to time.

Now that Thanksgiving is over, it is time to start thinking seriously about Christmas. There is always so much to do this time of year, much of it enjoyable, some not so much. My least favorite task of the season is Christmas shopping. Going to the mall is the absolute worst. Thankfully, there is Amazon, so I can do most of my shopping while sitting on the couch. Because I don't have to stress about going out to the stores, I enjoy picking out gifts for my family much. And thanks to being able to snoop on my sister's Amazon wish list, I am no longer stumped by my notoriously hard to shop for sister Kirstin.

While browsing online, I came across a post that got me thinking about my holiday shopping. It read "*no holiday should manipulate you to the point where you're going into debt just to show someone you love them.*" This made me pause to reflect on my shopping habits.

While I am not in danger of going over-board on my holiday shopping, (I set money aside for several months and stick to that budget as tightly as I can.) I can see that the temptation is real. One the one hand, it can be easy to want to make our loved ones happy by buying what they would like or want. It feels great to see their smile.

We need to be careful that we don't think that over-spending is the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



THANK YOU . . .

Dear Calvary Lutheran Church Women of ELCA,

Thank you for supporting the ministries of Women of ELCA with your recent gift. Your faithful generosity makes a real difference. Thanks to your support, Women of ELCA is always busy with life-changing ministry throughout the church. Your support also made it possible for Women of ELCA to present at the Youth Gathering, helping thousands of teens and their adult leaders understand human trafficking and what they can do to end it. Your generosity makes all this possible, and so much more. Thank you!

With gratitude,
Linda Post Bushkofsky

Dear Friends of Calvary Lutheran Church,
We received your gift to Lutheran World Relief. Thank you! Your gifts fund the "I am Safe" community center in West Mosul, where children come to get help with trauma. On behalf of LWR, our partners and those we serve, please accept my thanks for your generous support and partnership. May God bless you!

Warm Regards,
Daniel V Speckhard

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(CONTINUED FROM PASTOR KIM'S MESSAGE ON PAGE 1)

only way we can express our love. But even more problematic than following into that trap is when we use our holiday spending as a way to try to fix relationships.

Family relationships are notoriously difficult. It is only natural that the people who sometimes know us the best stress us the most because they have experienced us at our best and our worst. Likewise, we have experienced them at their best and their worst and everywhere in between. Disagreements and hurts over all kinds of things may have strained our relationships or continue to push our buttons.

If this is the case for you, it is nothing to be ashamed over or to try to overcompensate for. Also, don't feel like you have to put yourself in a situation that is unhealthy for you. Take care of yourself and those you love.

And remember, what we are celebrating this time of year is the truest of true loves: the love of God for us that became a real flesh and bone person in Jesus Christ. This love is worth more than we might responsibly or irresponsibly spend on our family and friends that time of year. This love has the power to change us and others. When we have those difficult people to love we can entrust them to the loving care of God and hope that if nothing else we can show them kindness. And I hope that you receive kindness in return.

It is also my hope and prayer that as you spend time in celebrating this season, that you experience love. Not just love from friends or family. But the love of God that is unchanging, unending, and unsurpassable. This love, Jesus Christ, was born for you today.

In Christ,

Pastor Kim

W.E.L.C.A. NEWS

Through Advent, God invites us to tune in to our faith rather than feel stressed out - a challenge given the crazy pace and pressures the holiday season can bring. An article in *Living Lutheran* encourages us to "carve out time to read devotions; learn to 'say no' when you're feeling over-committed; explore mindful movement (exercise, yoga, Tai Chi, etc.); limit social media; and focus on 'presence', not presents."

*Executive Meeting Dec. 2 at 9:00 a.m. at church for officers, circle leaders, and project chairs.

*WELCA Annual Christmas meeting for all women of the church will be Dec. 9 at 9:00 a.m. in the church basement. Hosts will be Miriam and Mary Anna Circles.

*Service for month of December is Christmas for a local family.

*Altar care for December will be Cheryl Jones.

*Flowers in December will be by Miriam circle. Thank you for watering any plants also. Poinsettias may be brought to church for Christmas Eve services.

*THANK YOU to all that gave offering for needy families with children served by ESU #7 at November circles. Your offerings are helping make Christmas memorable for over 60 children.

*Remember - Gathermagazine.org. - "Fear Not: an Advent/Christmas Devotional" will be available to download from *Gather*. Advent begins this year on December 2.

*Thank you for helping fill out the annual yearbook for WELCA meetings, committees, etc. We appreciate Kay's work at creating the yearbook for us!

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." ~ Isaiah 9:6

Wishing you a Blessed Christmas,

Cheryl



Merry Christmas

MISSION AND MINISTRY UPDATE



Feeding the Future

In Malawi, a densely populated country in southeast Africa, many children—especially those 5 and younger—don't receive enough food.

But ELCA World

Hunger and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi (ELCM) are working together to end child hunger through a feeding center that touches 60 of the church's congregations. The center is supported, in part, by grant from ELCA World Hunger.

"Feeding centers are indeed a lifeline for many orphans and other vulnerable child[ren], especially in poor and hard to reach communities," says Mable Madinga, ELCM general secretary and Diakonia director.

In fact, there are 1.8 million children in Malawi orphaned each year because their parents die of HIV and AIDS, Madinga says.

While the overall goal of this program is to help reduce malnutrition in children 5 and younger, it also provides nursery schools to promote early childhood development and a mobile clinic.

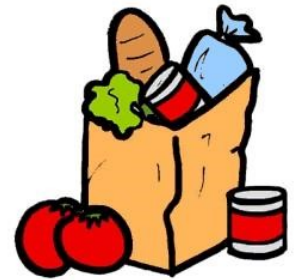
Madalitso, now 25, benefited from this program as a child. He lost his father before birth, and his father's relatives took possession of the family's house, leaving Madalitso and his mother homeless. Fortunately, when Madalitso's mother took him to her home village, she heard about the feeding center and enrolled him immediately.

"That was the beginning of my new life," he recalls

Thanks to your support of ELCA World Hunger, young children in vulnerable situations receive the food, education and health care they need to grow and thrive.

"My life through the feeding center has helped me to work hard, form stable relationship[s], develop a sense of responsibility, consideration and self-control," Madalitso says. "I sincerely thank ELCM for the support through my life."

SWEDE HOME FOOD PANTRY



The Evangelism and Outreach Team oversees a nonperishable food and personal care item collection. You are welcome to bring donations at any time. ***Please place items you wish to donate in the basket located in the entry way of the church.***

Items are usually delivered the last week of the month. In December, your donations will go to Blue Valley Community Action in Osceola.

Most recipients of Blue Valley Food Bank are families of 4 headed with working parents with little extra time. Canned meats are especially needed, Boxed Dinners, Canned Fruits, and Vegetables, and Breakfast Cereal are always needed as well. Dessert mixes are a special treat. All items we donate are greatly appreciated by the recipients as they meet their critical needs.

Thank you...

Dear Friends,

Thank you! Your church group seems to find the very best, and most needed items, food, and groceries that help our struggling families. And, always, some unique and beautiful gift items, too—that is a beautiful afghan you brought. We will soon be preparing for the holidays and Christmas—your gifts will be available to our ladies who will "shop in our" Circle of Giving" shop that will be set up in the basement. We are full—up on lots of things, storage areas full, too, and we need to free up space in our home. Our "Open Arms" programs will begin soon to offer education and "hands—on" learning to women in Butler and Polk Counties.

Thank you,
Pat

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Carol Joy Holling Early Bird Special

Register by January 31st, 2019 to save \$50 on next summer's full—week sessions (Sorry no discounts for Taste of Camp or Mini sessions). Sending more than one child to camp? Receive an additional \$25 discount for each child of the same family attending a full—week or mini session. Discounts are applied to final balance not deposits. To register talk to Pastor Kim or go to caroljoyholling.org



Calvary Christmas Program

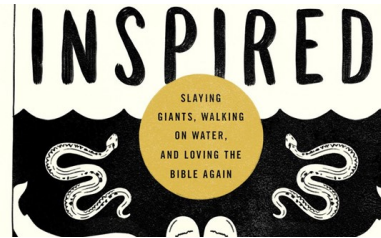
Calvary's Christmas Program will be Sunday, December, 16th during worship. Come hear the children tell the story of the birth of Jesus.

Zion Christmas Program

The Benedict Community Sunday School Christmas program will be held Sunday, December 16th during worship at 8:15am. Come hear about the birth of Jesus and enjoy donuts and coffee afterwards.

Thanksgiving Soup Supper & Worship

Sunday, November 18th Benedict Community Sunday School hosted a well attended Soup Supper and Worship! Thanks to all who came & made donations.



Bible Study

As ELCA Lutherans, we believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God. But what does that mean?

Rachel Held Evans is a best-selling author who has wrestled with faith and what it means to live that faith in our current society. In her latest book, she explores how we read and interpret the Bible.

This is what the blurb about the book has to say about it:

If the Bible isn't a science book or an instruction manual, then what is it? What do people mean when they say the Bible is inspired? When Rachel Held Evans found herself asking these questions, she began a quest to better understand what the Bible is and how it is meant to be read. What she discovered changed her--and it will change you too.

Drawing on the best in recent scholarship and using her well-honed literary expertise, Evans examines some of our favorite Bible stories and possible interpretations, retelling them through memoir, original poetry, short stories, soliloquies, and even a short screenplay. Undaunted by the Bible's most difficult passages, Evans wrestles through the process of doubting, imagining, and debating Scripture's mysteries. The Bible, she discovers, is not a static work but is a living, breathing, captivating, and confounding book that is able to equip us to join God's loving and redemptive work in the world.

Join us for a study of this amazing book as we seek to better understand Scripture and to grow together in our faith. We will meet on Tuesday evenings during January and February at 7pm at Swede Home. We will begin on Tuesday, January 8th, 2019. Books are \$12 and are available from Pastor.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

A little note from Genesis House

Hello...well, here we are, time to think of the holidays ahead! We have begun our new adventure, and a new direction for Genesis House. We've hired a young lady, Nicole to be the manager of our "Open Arms" program. She has great skills, energy, enthusiasm and a desire to help others. I hope you will soon meet her and give her your support. Soon, we will begin doing programs in our communities to offer opportunities for women to improve their lives as they learn in a fun and comfortable environment. Genesis House will be the site of some of these learning sessions, so I have been busy trying to "free up some space" in areas of our home. Our storage areas are full of wonderful things...household supplies, clothing, baby care items, and new gift items for Christmas that were left from last year. You have given us many of the things we need most when helping women rebuild their lives! I will soon be setting up the "Circle of Giving" shop in the basement where clients will shop for gifts for themselves and their families.

We hope you will have time to visit us during this season of thanksgiving, and the celebration of Christmas to come. I love to give tours and tell you about the work we are doing, and the plans we have for the future. You have helped many miracles happen throughout the years. You are a big part of the strong foundation of givers who keep us going every year, and we give thanks for your continuous support and generosity.

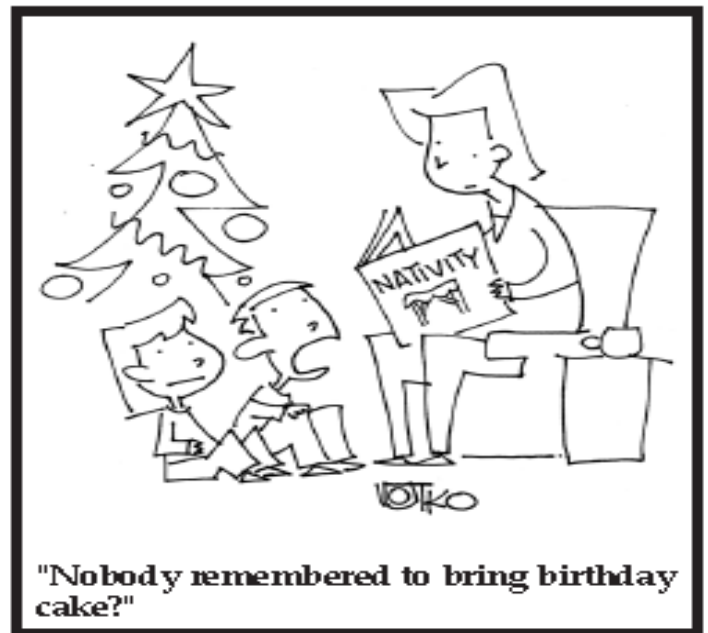
From
Pat at Genesis House

Thank you...

On behalf of all the volunteers of the Food for Thought Weekend Backpack Program and A Place at the Table, Inc., I would like to extend a very sincere and heartfelt "Thank you" for your recent donation to care for those in need.

Because of the generosity of you and others here in our area, we are now bringing much needed hunger relief to students at areas schools, where in some places almost 50% of students are eligible for free/reduced school meals. We also have opportunities to volunteer to help fill backpacks and transport them to the schools each week.

Kindest regards,
Jason Rosenkranz, Treasurer



from JoyfulNoiseLetter.com
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MEET A MEMBER

Calvary Lutheran Church
Nebraska Synod, ELCA
950 129th Road
Stromsburg, NE 68666
Church Phone: (402)764-5981

Doug Jones, Council President
Diana Johnson, Organist
Brienne Schoch, Secretary
Tina Watts, Sunday School
LeeAnn Willhoft, Custodian

Council Members:
Linda Fuhr, Todd Hanquist, Lynn Hoffman, Doug Jones, Kay
Jones, Nick Nicholson,
Chris Smith,
All Calvary members, Ministers

Rev. Kimberly Belken
Pastor
(402) 764-0481 (cell)
(402) 764-5961 (parsonage)
(402) 764-5981 (church office)
kimberlybelken@gmail.com

Zion Lutheran Church
Nebraska Synod, ELCA
202 Sherman
Benedict NE 68316

Cal Bittinger, Council President
Diana Johnson & Craig Swedenberg, Musicians
Chris Jarosz, Sunday School

Council Members:
Cal Bittinger, LuAnn Bolton, Dawn Kush, Justin Schoch
All of Zion members, Ministers



Meet a Member: Lynn Hofmann

Lynn Hofmann grew up in Geneva, NE. Her dad was a medical doctor (retiring in 2015), and her mother was a stay-at-home mom. She has 1 sister and 2 brothers, all who live in Nebraska or Iowa.

Lynn graduated from Geneva high school in 1987, then attended UNL, receiving a BA in Education. Her first teaching job was at Battle Creek. In 1994, she moved

back to Geneva and worked as the activities director's secretary for 7 years. In 2001, she began teaching at Sutton. Lynn has a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction from UNK and a Master's in Education with a Reading Specialist endorsement from Concordia University of Seward.

It is Lynn's 3rd year teaching English, speech, journalism and drama at Shelby-Rising City School, as well as directing the Spring Play. Tom teaches Ag at High Plains School in Polk.

Lynn and her husband, Tom have been happily married for 17 years. They have 4 children: Austin, 23, works for a large diversified farm operation in Sutton. Brittney, 21, will graduate from UNL in May with a degree in Ag Business & Banking. Also have 10-year old twins Peyton & Rylee, in 5th grade at High Plains. They are active in sports and love showing goats & pigs in 4-H.

Lynn loves being outside, yard work, running, reading, sleeping in, and family time. Family time consists of movie night or watching *Big Bang Theory* or *Last Man Standing* and cuddling on the couch.

Tom & Lynn met in college; however, this meeting was just as acquaintances. They became reacquainted in Sutton, when she called him and used needing "more information about Sutton school district" as the excuse to go out with him. Their first official date was the movie *Joe Dirt*. Nine months later he proposed, and they were married July 20, 2002; which happened to be 105 degrees in the shade!

Lynn grew up in the United Methodist Church in Geneva where she attended Sunday School regularly, was a member of youth group, and read scripture. When she moved to Sutton, she became a member of Zion Lutheran Church. There she taught Sunday School, VBS, directed the Christmas Program, was liturgist and was on nominating committee.

Becoming a member at Calvary has helped with the move to Polk for her family & herself. People at Calvary have been welcoming and interested in getting to know them. She has enjoyed getting involved by attending the adult forum, reading scripture, becoming a council member, and teaching an intergenerational lesson once a month for Sunday School. She looks forward to working with the children and youth for the Christmas program this year (on Dec. 16th).

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS



Linda Clauff
Dorothy Ehlers
Melissa Forsberg
Denny Johnson
Linda Johnson
Lenore Kessler
June Larson

Nick Nicholson
Alice Jane Oquist
Elvin Reetz
Imo Richardson
Harvey Schlegelmilch
Vance & Elaine Toline
Jan Wells-Bachman

- Genesis House and Living Waters Rescue Mission, Blue Valley Action, & Denver Metro Ministries
- Houses for Health recipients.
- Table Grace Café
- Bishop Brian Maas and the Nebraska Synod staff
- Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and all ELCA congregations and members
- Pastor Bob Bryan and the Nebraska Synod Prison Ministry
- Our ELCA Partner Synod—Pacifica Synod
- Our companion synods in Tanzania and Argentina

To request prayers call

Calvary: Jan Ernst 402-747-8041

Zion: LuAnn Bolton 402-710-8708

ANNIVERSARIES

CALVARY:

Dan & Fawn Ienn
December 2nd

Vance & Elaine Toline
December 7th

Nick & Carol Nicholson
December 12th

Ron & Linda Johnson
December 16th

Layne & Deb Hanquist
December 30th

ZION:

Jim & Donna Stearns
December 18th

Calvin & Teresa Bittinger
December 28th

BIRTHDAYS

CALVARY:

01—Don Fuhr
09—Bonnie Dittmer, Ella Twarling
11—Elaine Westring
13—Linda Jones
16—Gia Adelson & Jean Waller
18—Steve Anderson, Paul Ernst, Brady Hanquist
19—Craig Johnson
20—Layne Hanquist, Ryan Jones
23—Jadyn Johnson
26—Mervin Larson
27—Ryker Berggren
28—Joann Stevens
29—Carol Jones
31—Sandi Fredrickson, Cooper Smith

ZION:

01—Jordan Schoch
05—Harley Martin
07—Lonnie Schegelmilch
08—Teresa Bittinger
09—LuAnn Bolton



ZION WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

DECEMBER

Communion Assistant: Jacob Kush

Usher: Craig Bolton

Greeter: Dawana Bolton

Reader:

2—Ken Kush, 9—Dawana Bolton, , 23—Teresa Bittinger,
30—Joint Service @ Methodist Church

Acolyte:

2—Lyndsey Bolton, 9—Isaac Reetz, , 23—Tierney Schoch,
30—Joint Service @ Methodist Church

CALVARY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

December

Assistant Ministers—

Scripture Reader—Nick Nicholson

Ushers—

Acolyte—Jadyn Johnson

Altar Care— Cheryl Jones & Kay Jones

Bell Ringer—

December 2018

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1

2

8:30a Zion Holy Communion Worship
9:15a Calvary SS
9:30a Zion SS
10:30a Calvary Holy Communion Worship

3

4

5

9:30a Join the Conversation Bible Study
7p Calvary Council Meeting

6

7

8

9

8:30a Zion Worship
9:15a Calvary SS
9:30a Zion SS
10:30a Calvary Worship

10

11

12

9:30a Join the Conversation Bible Study
6p Confirmation
7p Men's Bible Study
7p Ruth's WELCA Circle

13

2p Mary Anna's WELCA Circle

14

9a Miriam's WELCA Circle

15

16

8:15a Zion Worship/Christmas Program @ UMC
10:30a Calvary Worship/Christmas Program

17

18

19

9:30a Join the Conversation Bible Study
6p Confirmation

20

21

22

23

8:30a Zion Worship
10:30a Calvary Worship

24

5:30p Zion Christmas Eve Worship
10:30p Calvary Christmas Eve Worship

25

26

27

28

29

30

8:15a Zion Worship @ UMC
10:30a Calvary Worship

31

Know God, Love God, Share God's Love

COUNCIL NOTES

November Council notes

- Pastor opened meeting with book *Called by God to Serve – Reflections for Church Leaders* by Robert F. Holley & Paul E. Walters, chapter 3
- Beginning January 8, Pastor will lead an 8 week Book Study on *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again* by Rachel Held Evans. Mark your calendars and plan to attend
- Adults are invited and encouraged to attend the Metro Ministries mission trip on July 7-13. Contact Pastor for the details
- Pastor attended the synod Theological Conference October 29-31 in Lincoln. Keynote presentations on being church in the community were outstanding
- November 30 and December 1, First Lutheran Church in Kearney will host the Branches of the Same Vine-Healthy Shared Ministries conference. Pastor, Lynn Hofmann and Cheryl Jones will be attending, and Kay Jones will join them on Saturday, schedule permitting.
- We will invite families to assist with the lighting of the Advent wreath this year. A short scripture and prayer will be read along with the lighting of the candle (s)
- What a busy month for our church family! Brody Liam Paulson, great grandson of Jan Ernst was baptized. Ella Twarling, Jarret Althouse, Ethan Fjell and Eli Fjell received first communion during worship on October 21. During the November 11th worship service, Stephanie Mattson and her daughter Izzy Zurovski along with Ryan and Jen Fjell and their children: Elise, Carter, Ethan and Eli became members of Calvary. We thank the Lord for the continued growth of our church.
- Joint confirmation classes with Zion continue to meet at Salem in Stromsburg, both Youth and Adult Sunday School classes meet each Sunday, with the first Sunday of the month being a joint class. The mission trip with Denver Metro Ministries has been scheduled and deposit sent. We thank the Lord for the opportunities we are blessed with to grow our faith and share our faith with others
- The sound system has been installed and continues to be tweaked. The engineer has also done an evaluation assessment on installing sound panels for the basement. We also added to the system a hook up to an iPod or tablet that will allow music to be played via the sound system. The council sincerely thanks the families who have given memorials to Calvary and the Memorial committee for directing funds for the sound system project.
- The newsletter box will be given to the ushers the first Sunday after publication. Any newsletters not picked up that Sunday, will be mailed.

Treasurer's Report

October, 2018

Beginning Balance	\$549.96
<u>Offering:</u>	
General Offering	6460.78
ELCA Disaster Relief	5.00
Sunday School Offering	107.50
ELCA Mission Share	200.00
Transfer of General Funds from SAV	1500.00
Zion for September Share	1799.76
	<u>10073.04</u>

Expenses:

Bank Charge for Statement Copy	2.00
Vanco eCheck Monthly Fee	8.39
Ink Cartridge	52.64
Open House/Special Coffee	116.00
Noyd Repair, LLC	123.57
1517 Media Sunday & Seasons, Etc.	448.28
NE Synod ELCA—Mission Share	1500.00
Zion Benedict October Share	1720.79

Utilities:

Church:	947.49
Parsonage:	174.46

Salaries:

Pastor	2230.96
Mileage	338.16
SECA	221.84
Portico Benefits	1046.82
Professional Expense	2.95
FICA 3rd Quarter Tax	591.66
Diana	445.41
LeeAnn	236.64
Bri	230.23
	<u>10471.42</u>

Balance as of October 31st, 2018

<u>\$151.58</u>

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Mission Statement: Know God, Love God,
Share God's Love**



Guiding Principles:

1. **Jesus is Lord and Savior**
2. **All are welcome in this place.**
3. **Serving in love with generosity and hospitality**
4. **Provide an atmosphere for spiritual growth and reflection.**
5. **Teaching and sharing God's Word with joy**
6. **Mutual respect in relationships**

Return Service Requested

**950 Road 129th
Stromsburg, NE 68666**

**CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH
NEBRASKA SYNOD, ELCA**

.....IN SACRED PLACES.....