



YEARS—1873—2023

CELEBRATING MINISTRY OF CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH



What does it mean to be present? One definition says that being present means being fully conscious in the moment, focused and engaged in the here and now. Being present means paying attention to what is happening right in front of you, participating and involving yourself.

God is present in our lives, fully engaged in what we do. This is shown throughout the Bible. The greatest example of God with us—from the baby in the manger to the Holy Spirit coming down on Pentecost. Jesus paid attention to the people around him, talked to the woman at the well whom everyone else ignored, engaged with the tax collector in the tree whom everyone else hated, and being with Mary and Martha after Lazarus died. Emmanuel, our name for Jesus, means God with us. Jesus is with us in all that we do and asks us to do the same for others.

It is hard to keep present in the moment. There is always so much going on, especially during this time of year. From family gatherings to school sports, vacations, church services, volunteering, shopping for presents, and so much more. It is hard to focus on one thing at a time when there is so much to get done.

This holiday season, between giving thanks, longing for the coming of Jesus, and celebrating his wonderful birth, we are focused on pausing, being still, and being fully present in the with our friends, family, and loved ones. Follow in the footsteps of Jesus, be with the people whom we love. Through all the business of the season, focus on what is important. Be present where you are and present with those you love.

Peace

+Pastor Hillary

Questions to Consider:

What can I add to this season that would truly allow me to pause?

What tradition do you have that nurtures being present at this time of year?

As you are on the GO, how are you going to practice being present?

Prayer: Emmanuel, you are present with us. Help us be present with each other. Amen.

Pastor Evan, Pastor Hillary and Wilder invite you to attend their Christmas Open House on Friday, December 8, from 4pm to 7pm Refreshments will be served and Holiday Attire is encouraged!!

GET MERRY AND BRIGHT

Christmas Open House

DECEMBER 8 4-7 PM
PASTORS CHRISTENSEN
726 WEBSTER AVE, GENOA NE

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED
HOLIDAY ATTIRE ENCOURAGED

WELCA NEWS	PAGE 2
WHAT'S HAPPENING	PAGE 4
CALENDAR	PAGE 8

Announcements

The Evangelism and Outreach Team oversees a non-perishable food and personal care item collection.



*Please place items you wish to donate in the basket .December donations go to:
Blue Valley Community Action*

On Sunday, October 15 we welcomed Jameson Parker Oquist into our faith family by holy baptism.

Jameson was born on March 26, 2023 to Erik and Joslyn Oquist



On November 12, 2023 Clerissa Udey and Martin Donati were united in marriage in Seattle, Washington. Clerissa is the daughter of Mark and Penny Udey.



We pray for God's blessings on this union.



W.E.L.C.A. NEWS

***WELCA Annual Christmas meeting for all women of the church will be Dec. 10 at 9:00 a.m.** in the church basement. We are blessed to have Sherrri Nielsen, the director of Genesis House as our guest speaker. Host will be Miriam Circle. We will be voting on where to send our end of the year offerings and for 2024 officers.

***Service** for month of December is an offering for a local family in need.

***Altar care** for December will be Cheryl Jones and Kay Jones. January will be Kay Jones.

***Flowers and cheer in December will be by Miriam circle.** Thank you for watering any plants.

Ruth Circle will do flowers & cheer in January, February and March.

***Poinsettias may be brought to church for Christmas Eve services.**

***THANK YOU** to all that gave offerings for needy families with children served by ESU #7 at November circles and at church. Your offerings are helping make Christmas memorable for about 70 children.

***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!

***Time to sign up** for 2024 ushers, readers, and worship assistants. If you would like to help, please sign up at church or talk to Jean Waller.

"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

Church happenings

Recipe



Please plan to attend, and bring a friend. If you have not attended in the past, it is not too late to start. It's a fun evening of fellowship with the youth in the church, games, bible study, get to know the Pastors and each other. We meet the 1st and 3rd Sundays at 6:30 pm

Dear Calvary WELCA

We very much appreciate your cash donation to Genesis House. We are hoping to make G,H, handicap accessible this year and your donation will help us with this goal!

Thanks so much, Sherri Nielsen



We at Calvary Swede Home extend our heartfelt sympathy to Fran Lott and her family in the loss of her Mother, Yvonne Stauber.

Yvonne passed away on Sunday, November 5, 2023. Funeral services were held at Swede Home on Thursday, November 16 with burial at Swede Home Cemetery.



Calvary-Swede Home **Christmas Eve service will be at 10:00 pm on December 24.**

There will be **NO** morning worship Service on Sunday December 24 nor worship service on Christmas Day.

This recipe comes from Marla Teegerstrom. It is her mother's recipe and a Swedish favorite in her family

Rye Happies – Marla Teegerstrom

Preheat oven 350 degrees

There is no wheat, no milk, no butter

(To double the recipe the ingredients are listed in parentheses)

1 cup rye flour (double recipe 2 cups)

1 cup chopped walnuts (2 cups)

1 cup firmly packed brown sugar (2 Cups)

1 cup quick cook oats (2 cups)

1/2 tsp salt (1 teaspoon)

1/2 cup cooking oil (1 cup)

2 eggs (4 eggs)

1/2 Tsp vanilla (1 Tsp)

9x9 pan lined with parchment or greased (jelly roll pan if doubling) bake 20-25 minutes

Take out of pan after 10 minutes (turn upside down on foil should come right out) cut into squares and dust generously with powdered sugar



The Christmas season is here, and we would like to thank Pastor Evan and Pastor Hillary for their service to Swede Home by giving them a monetary Christmas gift. If you would like to participate, please give your gift to Council Treasurer, Kay Jones or Council member Kent Adelson, or you can mail to: Calvary Lutheran, 950 129th RD, Stromsburg, NE 68666 by December 14th.

We will be presenting this gift to them on Sunday, December 18, 2022. Thank you and Merry Christmas

Upcoming events

GIVING TREE

Last year, many of you donated to help needy families served by ESU 7. Thank you! They were very thankful and moved by your generosity.

We are again taking up an offering for these families, as they have about 60-70 kids to buy for. We are the main givers for their Christmas. So please open your hearts and help as you are able. Donations should be given to Bonnie Carlson or Cheryl Jones by Dec. 3. (Checks payable to "Calvary WELCA").



Rather than ornaments with dollar amounts on the giving tree at church, this year it is a reminder that cash offerings are welcomed by the ESU #7 for the needy children they serve. Please bring any donations to church and place in the offering plate

by the Giving Tree on Sundays, or to circle meetings by December 3. (Cash donations are welcome for Genesis House, too.)

Trunk and Treat

Sandy Johnson hosted the Swede Home Trunk and Treat in Stromsburg on Tuesday October 31.



Looking forward to our events in January, the annual meeting is scheduled for the last Sunday in January, the 28th. As in the past, it will be during and after the worship service.

JW catering will again cater the congregational meeting following the service. The meal is a gift to all members as a thank you for all that you do. If it is the committees you serve on, Bible Studies you attend, serving the funerals and special occasions, assisting in worship service and especially to those who worked behind the scenes to make the 150th Celebration a year to be thankful. Thanks to all in the past and present who have Swede Home the strong congregation that it is. THANK YOU for Knowing God, Loving God, and Sharing God's word.

The Longest Night

A Blue Christmas service of lament and hope for those not feeling very merry

Two Services:
 Calvary - Tue 12/19 - 6p
 Augustana - Thu 12/21 - 6p

The service at Augustana will be streamed on Facebook Live

Thank you



I owe so much gratitude to Calvary Lutheran Church and I hardly know where to begin. Thank you to the church council and the congregation for the lovely reception following the service October 22.

Singling out people is always risky because someone(s) may be missed but I want to thank Linda Fuhr and Cheryl Jones, who were instrumental in planning the reception. Thanks to the council and congregation for supporting my effort to provide a scholarship to a seminarian to the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and for the personal remembrance (a beautifully delicate necklace). Thanks to all who have contributed to matching the \$2500. Thanks to Pastors Hilary and Evan and the worship & music committee for allowing me to bring my idea of music and art to fruition. It was a labor of love to research the origins of the stories and symbolisms of the windows. It has been a gift to share my music with this congregation for 48 years (egads!) and I thank you all for your patience and support. Calvary is a congregation truly full of grace.

With Heartfelt gratitude

Diana

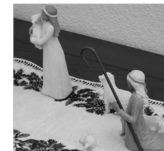


Beginning to look a lot like Christmas



The Advent Candle is in place, with the first lighting on the first Sunday in Advent, November 26. Thanks to Diana for setting this up.

The Nativity display is in the narthex. Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus and the animals are in place, with the Shepards and their sheep coming to pray. The Wise men and their camel are across the way and will move close each Sunday until they are at the Nativity to worship the King. Thanks to Don and Linda for setting up the display.



The tree with all its beautiful lights and ornaments is again gracing the sanctuary—along with additional decorations. Once again we thank Mike and Anita Haack for their gift of the tree in memory of their son, Jason. Thanks to Mike, Anita and their granddaughter Lex, Randy and Fran Lott, Dan and Lisa Oquist and Monty and Chery Jones for decorating.



There are new table decorations on each table in the fellowship hall. With the little tea light candles adding warm to each table and new Christmas greens, it truly is beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

Thanks to Kay, Elaine and Linda for the new center pieces and setting them up.

Kathi Jones will be doing the front planters this week and they will be welcoming and beautiful as always.

THANKS TO ALL

Calvary Lutheran Church
 Nebraska Synod, ELCA
 950 129th Road
 Stromsburg, NE 68666
 Church Phone: (402)764-5981
www.calvaryswedehomechurch.com
 Email calvaryswedehomechurch@gmail.com
 Facebook "Swede Home"

Every Member of the Congregation—Ministers

Randy Lott, Council Chairman
 Kent Adelson, Council Vice Chairman
 Missy Althouse, Council Secretary
 Diana Johnson, Organist
 Linda Fuhr, Church Office Manager
 LeeAnn Willhoft, Custodian

Council Members:

Todd Hanquist, Lynn Hofmann, Dan Oquist,
 Kent Adelson, Missy Althouse, Kris Udey, Randy Lott
 Jarrett Althouse, youth representative

Pastor Evan Cell Phone 402-689-5495 (text or call)
 Email: evan@pastorchristensen.com

Pastor Hillary Cell Phone 402-980-1102 (text or call)
 Email: hillary@pastorchristensen.com

IF you are texting or emailing a pastor, please include both pastors in the text or email

Please contact Linda Fuhr, Church Office Manager at

calvaryswedehomechurch@gmail.com or text or call
 402-366-2091, If you have not done so, follow **Swede Home** on
 our Facebook page.

Spiritual Practice: Body Prayer

Body Prayer is an age-old practice that engages our entire body in prayer, both physically and spiritually. Moving into intentional positions while practicing breathing and prayer can help us stay focused and centered in our prayer time. This practice is great for young and old alike and can always be adapted to our own unique abilities. Check out the two Body Prayer practices shared below. Joyce Rupp and Deborah L. Sheehan share helpful guides in this practice.

Six Gestures of Morning Prayer: Taken from *Out of the Ordinary* by Joyce Rupp

1. We offer the Creator praise and gratitude: *Stretch your arms high and wide above your head.*

I thank you, Holy One, for the gift of another day of life.

2. We intentionally become aware of our spiritual bond with all of creation: *Hold arms out from your sides, a little below shoulder height. Pivot to the left and to the right with your arms stretching outward the cosmos.*

I reach out in compassion to my sisters and brothers throughout the universe.

3. Offering my life to the Holy One: *Stretch your arms out straight in front of you, slightly apart, palms up.*

I give to you all I am and all I have.

4. Opening to accept what the Holy One offers me this day: *Pull your hands close together and cup them as container.*

I open my entire being to receive the gift that you have waiting for me in this new day.

5. Remembering to be kind to our planet Earth: *Bend over, reach down, and touch the floor.*

I touch this planet, Earth, with awe, reverence, and gratitude, promising to care well for her today.

6. Awareness of the indwelling presence of the Holy One: *Stand with crossed hands over your heart, and bow forward.*

May I be united with you throughout this day, aware of your love strengthening me and shining through me.



The regular column of "Meet the Member" is taking a break for the holiday.

We will return in 2024, and are planning an new feature to the Members column.

Be watching!

We Reach to all our faith family in prayer and celebration

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS



- Court Clelland
- Monty Jones
- Kathi Jones
- Karen Gestrine
- Duane Jones
- Lois Fick
- Janice Forsberg
- Melissa Forsberg
- June Larson
- Beth Jones Wienik
- Jane Wells Bachman
- Luna Stauber



- Genesis House and Living Waters Rescue Mission, Blue Valley Action
- Houses for Health recipients.
- Bishop Scott Johnson and the Nebraska Synod staff
- Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and all ELCA congregations and members
- Brody Ienn in service to our country
- Our government leaders
- Our companion synods in Tanzania and Argentina

To request prayers please email the church or call Linda (402-366-2091) or Cheryl (402-366-4797)



You are welcome to bring a pointsets to church for the Christmas Eve Service on Sunday, December 24.

You may bring them any time during the week be-

fore Christmas and leave on a table in the basement.

ANNIVERSARIES

BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER

- 02 Dan & Fawn Ienn
- Layne & Deb
- 30 Hanquist



DECEMBER

- 01 Don Fuhr
- 01 Elise Fjell
- 06 Evan Christensen
- 09 Bonnie Dittmer
- 11 Elaine Westring
- 13 Linda Jones
- 16 Gia Adelson
- 16 Jean Waller
- 18 Paul Ernst
- 18 Brady Hanquist
- 19 Craig Johnson
- 20 Layne Hanquist
- 20 Ryan Jones
- 23 Jady Johnson
- 24 Owen Nielsen
- 26 Mervin Larson
- 27 Ryker Berggren
- 28 Elijah Fjell
- 28 Joann Stevens
- 29 Carol Jones
- 31 Sandi Fredrickson
- 31 Cooper Smith

DECEMBER

- Assistant Minister - Adelson Family
- Scripture Reader - Adelson Family
- Ushers -
- Altar - Kay Jones and Cheryl Jones
- Acolyte -
- Bell Ringer - Colby Nelson

We thank all those who agree to help with the worship service each month. We need Ushers and Acolyte, for December —let Jean Waller Know if you can serve for the month, or even a few Sundays

The Sign-up sheets for 2024 are on the ushers counter. Please consider when you can serve

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 10:30 am worship with communion Council following service 6:30 youth	4	5	6	7	8 Pastor Evan and Pastor Hillary open house, 4pm to 7pm at Genoa	9
10 9:30 am WELCA annual meeting 10:30am worship	11	12 7pm Men's bible study	13 No Ruth Circle	14 No Miriam Circle	15	16
17 10:30am worship with communion	18	19 The Longest Night service 6pm	20	21	22	23 Jones Family Christmas at the church fellowship
24 Christmas Eve service at 10:00 pm No morning worship 10:30 worship	25	26	27	28	29	30





Sign Design

COMPETITION

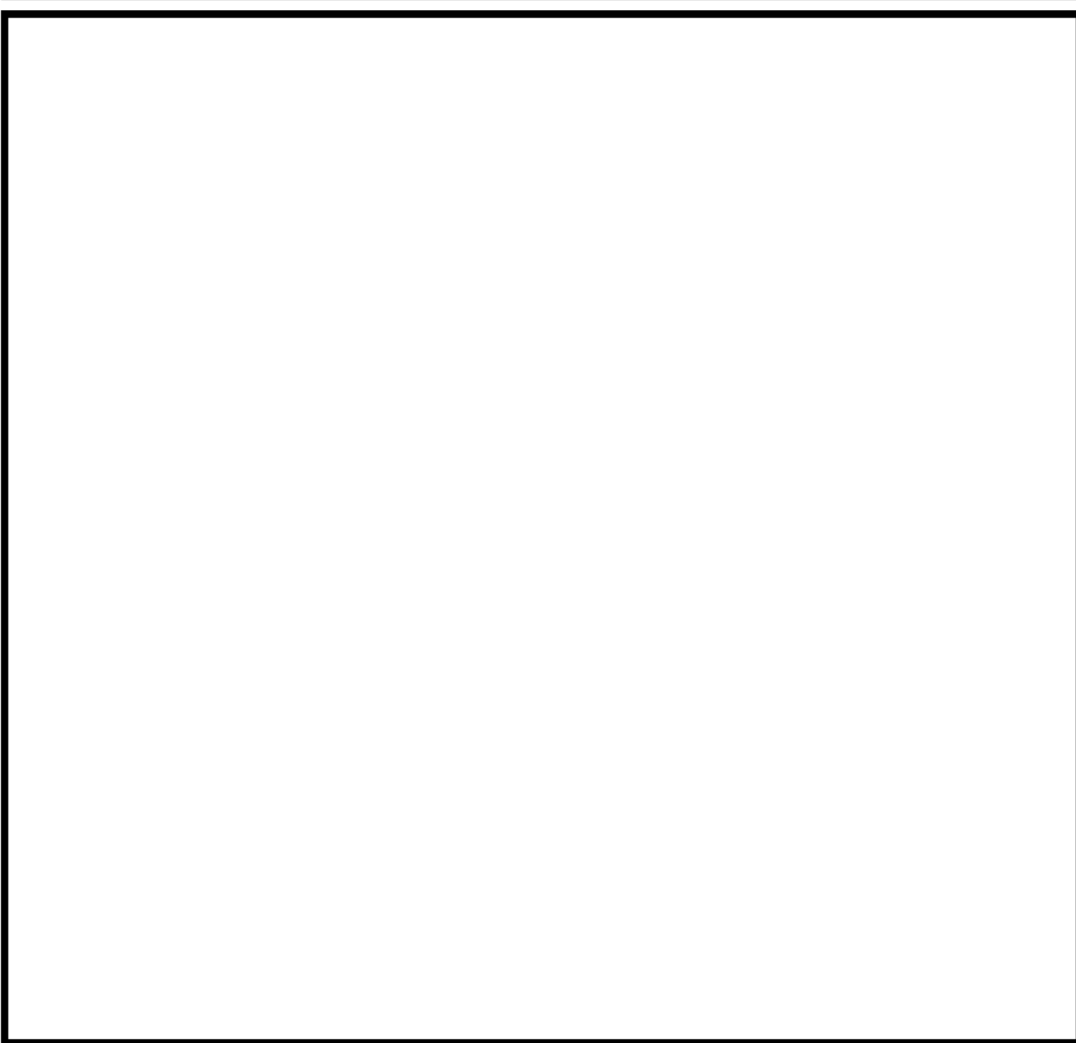


RULES

- Use the space below to create your design
 - Signs will be 4' x 4' squares
- Keep it simple! Designs cannot have too much fine details, as they cannot be cut or seen from the road.
- Church council will vote on which we'll use!

Name of designer:

Title of design:



ENTRIES ACCEPTED DEC 1, 2023 - JAN 14, 2024

Contact a Pastor with any questions!



FALL BOOK STUDY

Over the last months of October and November, members of Augustana and Calvary gathered throughout the week to discuss Rev. Dr. David J. Lose's book *Making Sense of the Cross* (Augsburg Fortress, 2011).

We had two groups meet each week. Once at Augustana in Genoa on Tuesdays at noon and again on Thursday evenings at Calvary. We had over a dozen people between the two each week. Having two sessions each week allowed some members from one church attend the study at the other church. Regulars at Augustana included Jane and Dave Baxa, Stacy Nelson, Sadie Micek, Abigail Vetick, and Cheryl Jones (of Calvary). Meeting at Calvary were Linda and Don Fuhr, Wayne Johnson, Deb and Mike Cramer, Diana Johnson, Sandy Johnston, Kay Jones, Elaine Westring, Janelle Udey, Lisa Oquist, Gia Adelson, Deb and Layne Hanquist, and Scotty Andreasen (of Augustana).

This book study focused on the various "Theories of Atonement" that Christians throughout the years have believed. We began by reading the Passion Narratives of all four gospels. This helped us understand that even the Holy Scriptures talk about Jesus with multiple perspectives. We also learned that "Atonement" means "at-one-ment," and it is what Jesus does for us on the cross to bring us back into right relationship with God. It turns out that there are many ways that people have understood *what* exactly it means for us when we talk about Jesus and the cross. The author encourages us to use four questions to help guide any discussion about atonement. 1) What does a theory say about who God is or what God is like? 2) What does a theory say about the human condition—what is broken? 3) What does Jesus do to repair what is broken? 4) What does a theory say about how Christians are to live in response to atonement?

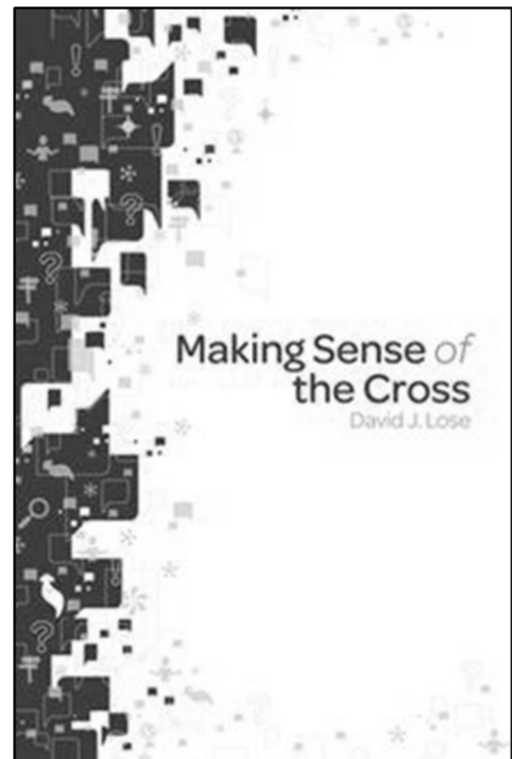
These four questions, along with the text and accompanying videos, guided us as we learned about the different theologians and their ideas about various atonement theories, like "Ransom and Victory"; or Anselm of Canterbury's idea of "Substitution" or its close relatives of "Sacrifice" and "Satisfaction"; Peter Abelard's theory of "Example and Encouragement"; and even Lose's own suggestion of "Event and Experience."

I am so grateful for the opportunity to facilitate discussion about this engaging text. The material, at times, was challenging, but everyone was open to hearing new ideas. We even, sometimes often, found ourselves disagreeing with the thinkers—and sometimes each other—but recognizing always that we are all members of God's Church, saved by grace, and loved by God.

This is a study I think we will offer again in the future—but you can always read the book on your own. Just reach out if you're interested. As well, Pastor Hillary hopes to offer another brief study during the season after Epiphany (Jan – Feb) before Lent begins. So be on the lookout for more information coming soon!

+Peace,

Pastor Evan



COUNCIL NOTES

Newsletter Information

Church Council met on November 5 following worship service.

Present: Jarrett, Lynn, Missy, Kris, Todd, Pastor Evan

Absent: Randy, Kent, Dan

Highway Signs

\$675 for 3 signs, price is for both front & back and middle insert. Design cannot have small details.

Need to add page to November newsletter for design suggestions from Congregation.

Property Committee Updates

Need to confirm with Kent and Dan

Sign on fence will be rehung

Progress Update of Parsonage

Will follow up with Dan and Kent

Set Time for Christmas Eve Service on the 24th 10:00 pm

Annual meeting reminders

28th with both Pastors attending

Congregational Meal – JW catering with 2 meats. More to come.

Council members Lynn and Todd 2 year terms are up in December so need to replace.

Nominating Committee will handle. More to come.

Diana's scholarship matching funds as of October 29th \$2,100

If don't meet by next council meeting, we will match the difference.

Update on music director

Amy Harris and Janet Nielsen will provide music. Will be different but will make it work. More to come.

Update on Personal Care Kits

In 2024, additional \$250-\$350 needed to send same # of kits. More to come.

Three Point Council Agreement

More to come

Pastors' Vacations

November 20-22, November 26-29, December 31

Treasurer's Report October 2023

Offerings:

General Offerings	13,475.00
ELCA Disaster Relief	5.00
ELCA Disaster Relief - Middle East	100.00
Diana's Seminary Challenge	2,245.00
Mission Share	400.00
First English Rising City; Sept Share	1,762.90
Augustana Genoa; Sept Share	<u>2,768.17</u>
	20,756.07

Expenses:

Vanco eCheck Monthly Fee	9.69
Office supplies; envelopes	10.22
Test Messaging System-monthly fee	22.00
Maintenance; Toilet Seat	37.62
Cody's Computer Maintenance Plan	39.99
Eakes Office Solutions; copier paper	51.99
Taking Faith Home	59.95
October - Pastor Appreciation Month	111.18
LWR Care Kits	120.71
Eakes Office Solutions; Printer Contract Billing	146.52
Platte Valley Pest Control	150.00
Sundays & Seasons licensing	429.00
Bedient Pipe Organ Co.; 3rd of 4 Installments	280.00
ELCA Disaster Relief; Middle East	100.00
NE Synod Mission Share	1,580.00
First English Rising City; October Share	1,796.75
Augustana Genoa; October Share	2,820.72

Utilities:

Church	729.54
Parsonage	544.67

Salaries:

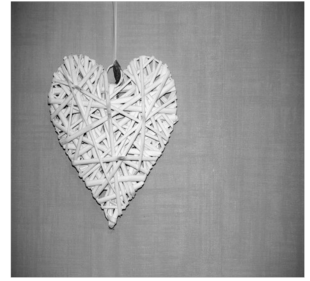
Pastors Hillary & Evan Christensen	2,474.56
Portico Benefit Services	1,207.12
Commuting Reimbursement	158.34
SECA	217.67
Mileage Reimbursement	159.87
Cell Phone Reimbursement	38.00
First Call Theological Education in August	53.20
Diana	476.24
LeeAnn	241.50
Linda	498.69
Federal & NE Withholding - 3rd Quarter	615.29

Balance as of October 31, 2023:

\$12,436.91

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

Stromsburg, NE 68666
950 Road 129th

**CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH
NEBRASKA SYNOD, ELCA**

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