

...IN SACRED PLACES...

CELEBRATING MINISTRIES OF CALVARY AND ZION LUTHERAN CHURCHES

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR KIM



No doubt you have heard the song the 12 Days of Christmas several times before. But did you know that the 12 days of Christmas are actually the 12 days in between Christmas and Epiphany rather than the last 12 days counting down to Christmas. While we certainly don't give elaborate gifts for 12 days following Christmas, those 12 days are still important for us. They are a time to reflect and remember the significance of the true gift that we have just received at Christmas—Jesus Christ, God in flesh. How will we respond to such a gift?

The end of the 12 days of Christmas is the day of Epiphany, January 6th. This day on the church calendar is the date that commemorates the wise men arriving with their gifts to worship the Christ child. They come bearing the finest things that they can offer, but the highest most valuable gift they give is their worship.

These wise men (and perhaps women) traveled a great distance to offer their gifts because they were responding to the gift that had first been given to them in Christ. They received God's gift and then offered their gifts to God. This is the way God does things—God always gives to us first. We don't have to do anything or be anything special for God to give to us. God gives freely and with delight because we are God's beloved children.

If you have ever given a gift to someone special, you have an idea of how that works. Though I give and get gifts every year, this year it was especially fun. Perhaps that is because my niece Nora was so into presents that it was wonderful to see her delight. She opened all of her gifts, all of her mom's gifts, and most of mine. She was so excited to see what was in each package. And she wanted to play with all of her new toys right then. What else made this Christmas fun for me was watching the rest of my family delight in the gifts

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THANK YOU . . .

Dear Zion and Calvary members,

It is wonderful to be able to start the new year off with a heart full of gratitude. That is exactly where I am at as I sit down to write this newsletter article. I want to say a big thank you to everyone who has blessed me during 2018 with your friendship, prayers, cards, and the Christmas gifts (including the gift for my cats! They love their new toys). I am once again blown away and humbled by your generosity. It is an honor to be called to be your pastor.

With love in Christ,

Pastor Kim

Dear Friends at Calvary Lutheran Church, Swede Home,

Thank you for your gift of \$200/CRM Donation and \$200/LWRM Donation.

The Lord is so good to us. He provides our every need and we praise and thank Him for His provision

"Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!" 1 Chronicles 16:34

Praise the Lord,
Chaplain Nathan Joslin

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that they had received as well. It seems that this year, everyone did particularly well getting each other something they would love for Christmas.

Though Christmas is officially over on January 6th, I would encourage you to come to worship that day. We will again be getting gifts that day in worship, a paper star with a word on it. This may not sound like much of a gift to you, but it is meant to symbolize God's generosity in our life and to give us a special word to reflect on during the year. This word will hopefully help guide you and make you aware of God's presence in your life during the year. Include it in your prayer time and be on the look out for ways in which the word shows up. Who knows what you might learn from your star word.

The star word that I received last year was both challenging and valuable to me. I received the word responsibility. At times it was a reminder... yes, Pastor Kim, {blank} is your responsibility so quit procrastinating and get this done. At other times though, it was a reason to pause. If doing something was not a possibility for me for whatever reason, then clearly it was not my responsibility. Looked at in this way, it was a gift that told me I could let go of whatever it was that was worrying me and trust God with it.

If you still have your star word from 2018, I hope that it was equally challenging and valuable to you. I especially hope that it helped you to grow in your faith in some way and that you grew closer to God through it. I look forward to seeing what my star word is for 2019 and I can't wait for you to receive yours as well. (If you won't be in worship that day but would still like one, let me know, there are plenty to go around).

In Christ,

Pastor Kim

W.E.L.C.A. NEWS

Please know that I feel each one of you is such a BLESSING! You have opened your hearts and use your talents to serve God by helping others.

*Your November offerings to help make a special Christmas for needy families served by ESU#7 amounted to \$900 cash and a \$250 Thrivent Card used for groceries. Your December offerings (along with church offerings and \$350 from WELCA Treasury) added up to a gift of \$774.25 for local needy families. All I can say is THANK YOU!

*Thank you to Miriam and Mary Anna circles for hosting our General Meeting December 9. At that meeting, you voted to donate to the following from our Treasury: \$800 to Genesis House; \$500 each to A Place at the Table, Columbus Rescue Mission, & Living Water Mission; \$350 to Local Needy Families; \$300 to UNL Lutheran Campus Center; \$200 to Lakota Lutheran Center & Oaks Indian Mission; and \$150 to UNK Lutheran Campus Center.

It was decided to get a new clock for the kitchen. Jean Waller will take care of purchasing.

*Service for month of January is a monetary offering for energy & food assistance for Blue Valley Community Action clients.

*Altar care for January will be Kay Jones. February will be Carolyn Nielsen & Bonnie Carlson.

*Flowers in January & February will be by Mary Anna Circle. Thank you for watering any plants.

*Bingo will be at Midwest Covenant Home on Tuesday, 1/29 at 2:00 p.m. with Ruth Circle helping (3 people needed).

JANUARY

Hostess/Dessert Bible Study

Ruth – 1/9	Cheryl Jones	Cheryl
Mary Anna- 1/10	Gladys Johnson	Gladys
Miriam – 1/11	Diana Johnson	Diana

"Try not to become a person of success, but rather become a person of value." ~ Albert Einstein

Cheryl

MISSION AND MINISTRY UPDATE

Rebuilding brings hope...

As the Central African Republic continues its long road toward lasting peace, the effects of the years of conflict can be seen in the country's fallow fields and fallen homes. When farmers fled from violence, their crops were left to rot or were destroyed in the fighting. By some estimates, about 75 percent of the homes in the town of Bohong (in the Bouar region) were destroyed.

Yet the people of Bouar have returned and are rebuilding their communities with the support of the Food Crop and Environmental Protection project (AVPE), a program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic (EELRCA) and Lutheran Disaster Response. "What courage of the people who have come back and begun the rebuilding process," said ELCA missionary Susan Smith. Farmers returning to their fields are learning new techniques to tend crops while protecting the environment. AVPE provides seed to some who lost their crops and livelihood in the conflict and sets up demonstration fields to help teach farming methods.

In Bohong, young men are working with an aid team to build new homes. About 600 houses have been built by teams of local residents. The project, supported by Lutheran Disaster Response, provides cement for house foundations and wood for door and windows frames.

In addition, the Spring Box Program (PASE) works with local participants to build spring box wells, and the EELRCA provides life-saving vaccinations and medicine to residents. "Building and rebuilding brings hope," Smith said. Sustainable livelihoods, new homes, clean water and health care are moving residents from hope to reality.



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 January, your donations will go to Genesis House.

Most recipients of Genesis House are women and children in need. Food and grocery items: cream soups, meal-type soups (like Chunky Campbells and chili), SpaghettiOs's, canned milk, spaghetti sauce, taco sauce and salsa, ketchup, mayo, cooking oil, salad dressings, pie fillings, canned meat (chicken, tuna, ham), small boxes of Velveeta cheese, cans of chicken or beef broth, canned fruit juices and fruit.

Hamburger or tuna helper, rice a roni, potato mixes, stuffing, noodles, brownie and cake mixes, frostings, bisquick, pancake mix, syrup, cornbread, taco fixings, packaged gravy and sauce mixes, baking supplies including sugar and flour, tea bags, regular coffee, hot chocolate.

Food children can fix for themselves like: microwavable entrees like ravioli, spaghetti, etc., cereal bars, fruit and grain bars, healthy snack foods, cheese and crackers, snack pack fruit cups.

Household supplies: boxes of Kleenex, dish soap, plastic wrap, zip lock gallon size freezer bags, light bulbs, AA batteries, dryer sheets, tall kitchen size garbage bags, Clorox

Personal care items: deodorant, body wash, children and adult vitamins, over the counter cold medicines.

All of the items we donate are greatly appreciated by the recipients as they help meet critical needs.

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



If your child will be attending confirmation camp June 9-14th, please register by January 31st so we can take advantage of this offer!

Annual Reports

If you have information or a report for the annual meeting, please submit it to Pastor no later than January 10th. Email calvaswedehomechurch@gmail.com



Meeting Notice for Calvary

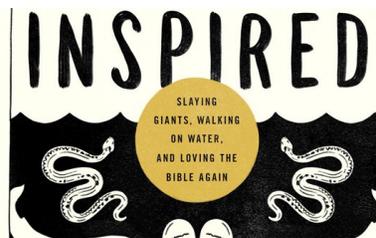
Notice of Annual meeting for Calvary Lutheran Church

Annual meeting will be on Sunday, January 27th during worship to conduct the business of the congregation. Following the service and meeting, a congregational meal will served so please plan to attend!

Meeting Notice for Zion

Notice of Annual Meeting for Zion Lutheran Church

Annual meeting will be on Sunday January 27th during worship to conduct the business of the congregation including discussion of congregation budget.



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. Please read the Introduction through Chapter 1 before we meet.

Weather Cancellations

Weather cancellations for Swede Home will be announced on 10/11 News.

Evangelism & Outreach Committee

Evangelism & Outreach committee will have a meeting on Thursday, January 24th at 7:00 pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas Programs...

On Sunday, December 16th, both Benedict Community Sunday School and Calvary's Sunday School put on wonderful programs. Both programs told the story of Jesus being born very well. The kids did an amazing job. Thank you to everyone who put in the hard work to make these possible. Below are some pictures of the programs.



MEET A MEMBER

Meet Cal Bittinger...

Born in York in 1964, living in Benedict my entire life until my wife and I bought an acreage by Beaver Crossing in 2015. I attended Benedict Consolidated High School K-12, graduating in 1983. Most summer days you could find me, my brother Clay and most of the other kids in town in our back yard playing baseball...I still owe my mother three trash can lids, we thought they made perfect bases. I graduated from SECC Milford in 1985 with a degree in Electrical Technology. My wife Teresa and I were married in 2004 and with our blended family we have six children and eight grandchildren, ranging from 6 months to 16 years in age. I was a member at Zion Lutheran in Thayer in which I was baptized and confirmed. We joined Zion in Benedict upon the closing of Thayer at the request of my Aunt Carol Bittinger. To me the members of Zion Benedict are not just the members of our congregation but an extended family which can always be counted on. I have worked in the York/Benedict area all my life. In 1986 I sold insurance for German Farmers Mutual Insurance Company, taking over the business for my Grandfather R.O. (Roy) Heiden. In 1991 I was offered a position in the maintenance department at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women in York. This position came from the recommendation made by Jim Stearns who was the Maintenance Manager at the time. Thanks to Jim's tutelage I promoted to Maintenance Manger upon his retirement. I have been in this potion since 2011. I am currently serving on the Church Council as the Chairman.

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
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)
kimberlyrbelken@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

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS



Linda Clauff	Nick Nicholson
Dorothy Ehlers	Alice Jane Oquist
Melissa Forsberg	Elvin Reetz
Denny Johnson	Imo Richardson
Linda Johnson	Harvey Schlegelmilch
Lenore Kessler	Vance & Elaine Toline
June Larson	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

ZION WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

JANUARY

Communion Assistant: Gina

Usher: Todd Schoch

Greeter: Michelle Blair

Reader:

6—Gina Schoch, 13—Gary Hild, 20—Gina Schoch, 27—Todd Schoch

Acolyte:

6—Krayton Schoch, 13—Axton Martin, 20—Tierney Schoch, 27—Lyndsey Bolton

ANNIVERSARIES

ZION:

Steve and Jeanie Geis
January 31st



BIRTHDAYS

CALVARY:

4—Mike Larson
4—Fran Lott
5—Bill Carlstrom
9—Deb Hanquist
9—Mary Stevens
10—Mickey Berggren
11—Brileigh Twarling
14—Taylor Jones
15—Quin Rene Anderson-Cahill
15—Carole Dickson
16—Roxanne Czarnick
17—Linda Fuhr
17—Diana Johnson
20—Dan Ienn
23—Joel Cramer
23—Ron Dickson
23—Bryce Nielsen
24—Deb Cramer
24—Margaret Norton
27—Duane Jones
27—Janelle Udey
29—Ceagan Watts

ZION:

1—Craig Bolton
4—Adam Reetz
23—Russell Blair
24—Dorothy Ehlers

CALVARY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

January

Assistant Ministers— Wayne Johnson

Scripture Reader—

Ushers—

Acolyte—

Altar Care—

Bell Ringer—

January 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 5:30p Zion Council Meeting 7p Calvary Council Meeting	3	4	5
6 8:30a Zion Holy Communion Worship 9:15a Sunday School 9:30a Benedict SS 10:30a Calvary Holy Communion Worship 11:30a Nominating Committee	7	8 7p Inspired Book Study	9 9:30a Join the Conversation Bible Study 6p Confirmation 7p Men's Bible Study 7p Ruth's WELCA Circle	10 2p Mary Anna's WELCA Circle	11 9a Miriam's WELCA Circle	12
13 8:30a Zion Worship 9:15a Sunday School 9:30a Zion SS 10:30a Worship 11:30a Endowment Committee	14	15 7p Inspired Book Study	16 9:30a Join the Conversation Bible Study 6p Confirmation	17	18	19 Middle School Gathering—Kearney
20 Middle School Gathering—Kearney 8:30a Zion Holy Communion Worship 9:15a Calvary SS 9:30a Benedict SS 10:30a Calvary Holy Communion Worship	21	22 7p Inspired Book Study	23 9:30a Join the Conversation Bible Study 6p Confirmation	24 9a Quilt Day 7p Evangelism & Outreach meeting	25	26
27 8:30a Zion Worship & Annual Meeting 9:15a Calvary SS 9:30a Benedict SS 10:30a Calvary Worship & Annual Meeting	28	29 2p WELCA BINGO at Midwest Covenant Home 7p Inspired Book Study	30 9:30a Join the Conversation 6p Confirmation	31		

Know God, Love God, Share God's Love

COUNCIL NOTES

December 5, 2018 Council Notes

- Pastor has been meeting with the various committees in preparation with the annual meeting which will be Sunday, January 27 following church services.
- Joint bible study with Zion will begin on Tuesday, January 8 at 7 pm at Calvary. The study will be on the book *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again* by Rachel Held Evans. Books are available for \$12 each
- Pastor, Diana and Sandy attended the Freed For Life Prison Ministry celebration and fundraiser in Lincoln
- Pastor met with the Synod Rural Ministry Network on November 13th.
- Four families, the Hofmann's, Fjell's, Johnson's and Twarling's will assist with the lighting of the advent candles
- New members received on November 11 service were: Stephanie Mattson and her daughter Izzy Zurovski and Ryan and Jen Fjell and children Carter, Elise, Ethan and Eli. Welcome
- Future dates to remember: Wed March 6, Ash Wednesday, joint services with Zion will be held at Swede Home; also in March on Sunday the 17th at 3 pm – Calvary will again host the Nebraska Brass concert
- Lynn Hofmann is directing the Sunday School Youth Christmas program with the help of teachers and others. Program will be during the worship December 16
- Mission trip plans continue along with joint confirmation classes with Zion
- Building committee is following up on the suggestion to get programmable thermostats for the church
- Council met with Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Megan Morrow to discuss future ministry possibilities and partnerships for our congregation
- It was necessary recently to cancel the Sunday services due to weather conditions. This was done with prayerful consideration as the safety of our members is a prime concern. That particular morning, the visibility was not good, with snow blowing across the roads and fields, making it very difficult to drive. This decision was not made lightly. A neighboring church in York put out this statement on that Sunday, and it is quite fitting. "God is moving outside the church walls this morning. The blizzard will keep us from holding services this morning. Make your mission to serve someone today: Uplift them with prayers, kindness and Love" although that mission can be done daily, it is a reminder that we can always serve the Lord no matter where we are. In the event that council makes the decision to cancel services, the council members will call local members – and we will also post the cancellation on Channel 10/11 news. It can be seen on TV, or you can check for the cancellation on their website.

Treasurer's Report

November, 2018

Beginning Balance	\$151.58
<u>Offering:</u>	
General Offering	8224.80
Sunday School Offering	82.50
ELCA Disaster Relief	5.00
ELCA Mission Share	700.00
Zion for October Share	<u>1720.79</u>
	10733.09
<u>Expenses:</u>	
Vanco eCheck Monthly Fee	9.24
NE Department of Revenue	20.03
Church Mutual	25.00
Reformed Worship	35.00
NE Synod ELCA Shared Ministry	100.00
Anti—Virus for Pastor's Computer	106.99
Office Net Copier Paper	129.40
Double G Audio Radial Direct Box	137.95
Polk County RPPD LED Yard light	173.34
Bedient Pipe Organ Bi-Annual Service	250.00
Mowing 2018 Season	2100.00
NE Synod ELCA—Mission Share	0.00
Zion Benedict November Share	1834.32
<u>Utilities:</u>	
Church:	695.97
Parsonage:	287.04
<u>Salaries:</u>	
Pastor	2230.96
Mileage	315.81
SECA	221.84
Portico Benefits	1046.82
Theological Conference Lodging	177.63
Diana	445.41
LeeAnn	236.64
Bri	<u>268.60</u>
	10847.99
Balance as of November 30th, 2018	<u><u>\$36.68</u></u>
Designated \$\$ Transfer to Applicable SAV Acct:	
Thrivent Choice Funds	1119.00
Improvement Funds	1000.00
Youth DDA SAV	500.00
Double G Audio Balance (Memorial Fund)	\$7249.94

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.....