

MAY, 2019

...IN SACRED PLACES...

CELEBRATING MINISTRIES OF CALVARY AND ZION LUTHERAN CHURCHES

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR KIM

Why do you attend church?

This is the question that has been raised many times in the past year as church attendance across the nation continues to be on the decline. Interestingly, the majority of Americans describe religious faith as being very important to them, but on a given Sunday the majority of Americans are not in church. It seems as though something doesn't add up.

There are a whole host of reasons that people decide not to attend church on a regular basis. For some it is genuine schedule conflicts (though the legitimacy of certain things as conflicts varies from person to person), for others it may be because of damaged or hurt relationships within the congregation (either with other members or with the pastor), and others may just not see the need of regular attendance to sustain and grow in their faith. In fact, a high percentage of those in the millennial generation (those born from 1980 to the early 2000s) believe that their faith can most effectively be lived out and grow outside of the walls of the church.

These kinds of things don't bode well for the future of the church. They make us wonder about institutional survival and worry about our children and grandchildren. They may make us question how to have a society that is not run on common core Christian beliefs. And for those of us who find our meaning and purpose in our faith as lived out through our churches, these kinds of facts and figures are particularly disheartening.

I wish I had the answers on how to turn things around in the church. Wouldn't it be great to have more people like we used to have? Especially young families and children? Indeed it would. If it is even possible (which I am not sure that it is), we won't get there by doing what we have always done in the way we have always done it. The church of previous generations can't be brought back because the world of those previous generations no longer exists. Changes in technology, media, government and corporate values and other similar factors mean that the way of life that prevailed during my childhood and your childhood is not coming back.



THANK YOU . . .

Dear Calvary Lutheran,

Just a note to say thank you for your recent generous donation to Polk County Blue Valley Community Action Program! Your support in helping the less fortunate is so very appreciated!!

Thanks again and blessings on your day,

Elizabeth King
Blue Valley-- director

The 2019 Cross County Post Prom Committee and students would like to thank you for your generous donation to our post prom activities. We could not have done it without your support!! Thank you!

Calvary Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for your generous gift. We really appreciate the generosity of great people in our community. May God bless you.

Thank you,
Stromsburg Ambulance

Thank you,

Your generosity helped make our post prom successful!!

High Plains Post Prom, 2019

WELCA NEWS	PAGE 3
MISSION & MINISTRY UPDATE	PAGE 4
MEET A MEMBER	PAGE 6
CALENDAR	PAGE 8

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

If the church is to truly have a place in our society, then I believe a few things are needed. First, churches must become places where we don't merely learn about God and about Christianity, but where we experience these things. What would it be like if we showed up on Sunday mornings expecting that in our midst that morning, we were going to encounter the very living God that we worship? God is indeed present in worship, but what would it take for us to see that with our very own eyes? How can we see the risen Lord in our neighbors, friends, and those people who annoy or anger us? I think we far too often show up expecting to hear about God and to be fed at the table for living out our faith, but we don't come expecting to have our hearts and minds and selves radically transformed by the saving power of the gospel.

Another thing that churches must do is to get outside their doors. Faith is something that is lived out more than just a couple of hours a week inside church walls. I am, of course, stating the obvious there, but what do you do with that knowledge? How do you live out your faith in your workplaces, homes, or schools? What difference does Christ make in the way you conduct yourself on the baseball diamond as well as in Bible Study? Who can you bless through your friendship? How can your acts of loving kindness make this world better not only for yourself and your loved ones, but for others around the globe? Without allowing the good news to transform us and inspire us to work for the good of all that God has made, what value do people see when they look from the outside into the church? Changed hearts and minds, the changed lives of Christians bear strong witness to others.

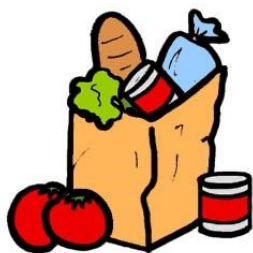
This witness is counter cultural to the way we tend to do things. Or perhaps better stated, it is different from the values that media, government, and the society as a whole try to teach us. As Christians we belong to one another. We are made for life together in community. From the youngest and least of us, to the oldest and wisest of us, we all have God given value. Living in the community of faith means that we live in ways that uphold the value of each person and that we seek the common good. We must be willing to not only want the common good, but also to work for the common good. Sometimes personal sacrifice or inconvenience may be asked of us, but when we live out our faith with purity and sincerity, we make those sacrifices or shoulder inconvenience with grace.

These things aren't anything new. They go back to the earliest days of the church. They are what we hope to be as a church, but because of our human nature struggle to achieve. So finally, what we must do to ensure the church as the body of Christ (not as an institution, congregation, or church building) survives is turn ourselves back to the disciplines of the faith—prayer, study, and worship. As much as you are able, participate and partake of these things. Pray for the courage and talent to live out your faith in a way that is contagious to others and that allows you to fully experience Christ in your life. I promise, you will be changed by our living Lord. Encountering the risen of Christ of Easter has never left anyone the same as they were before!

In Christ,
Pastor Kim



SWEDE HOME FOOD PANTRY



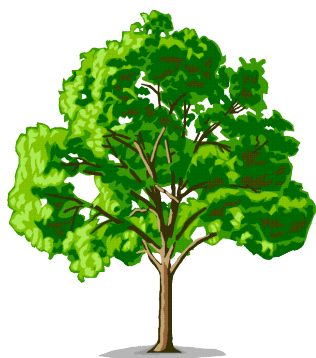
The Evangelism and Outreach Team oversees a nonperishable food and personal care item collection. You are welcome to bring donations at any time. ***Please place items you wish to donate in the basket located in the entry way of the church.***

Items are usually delivered the last week of the month. In May donations

will go to Genesis House in David City.

Most recipients of Genesis House are women and children in need. They need food and grocery items, food children can fix for themselves, household supplies and personal care items.

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



MEMORIAL WEEKEND WORSHIP

Join us for worship at Buckley Park in Stromsburg on Sunday, May 26th at 9:30 a.m. for a joint worship service with Zion and Calvary. Calvary will host fellowship following worship.

W.E.L.C.A. NEWS

*Service for May is offering for all circles to help defray VBS expenses and planning for Vacation Bible School treats by Ruth Circle.

* Memorial Day Coffee will be hosted by Miriam and Mary Anna Circles.

*Altar care for May and June will be Mary Anna Circle. White altar paraments will be in place all of May and 1st Sunday in June.

*Flowers for May through August will be Ruth Circle. Please remember to water any plants.

*Quilt Day will be May 23. Please join us!

*Many enjoy the fellowship time following worship on Sunday mornings. We need more people to sign up to serve coffee in May (before WELCA scheduling in the summer).

*Summer Coffees will be served in June by Miriam Circle; July 7 & 14 by Mary Anna Circle; and July 21 through August 25 by Ruth Circle.

*Looking Ahead: The Annual Ice Cream Social is scheduled for Sunday, July 21, followed by the social at Covenant Home Assisted Living on Monday, 7/22. That time will be here before we know it! Please put these dates on your calendars.

May

	<i>Hostess</i>	<i>Bible Study</i>
Ruth – 5/8	Kay Jones	Kay
Mary Anna- 5/9	Linda Jones	Linda
Miriam – 5/10	_____	_____

I saw this beautiful quote on a poster and wanted to share it with you here ~

***“Live for the moments
you can’t put into words.”***

Blessings to you on Mother’s Day, Graduations and Memorial Day Weekend,

Cheryl

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION AND MINISTRY UPDATE



The summer before Nate Berkas started high school, he went on a camping trip that would change his life. Berkas said his faith journey began in earnest on a five-night visit to the Boundary Waters with Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry, and ELCA camp in Cook, Minnesota

“It was the first opportunity for me to feel and see and experience God in a really tangible way,” Berkas said.

He went on several more trips to the area throughout high school before becoming a camp counselor in college, when he spent four successive summers working with youth at camp. “I realized through that experience that I was really passionate about outdoor ministry and really interested in pursuing that as a profession,” Berkas said.

The next step in his journey came through acceptance in the ELCA’s young adults in global mission (YAGM) program, which is funded in part by mission support. Berkas, who

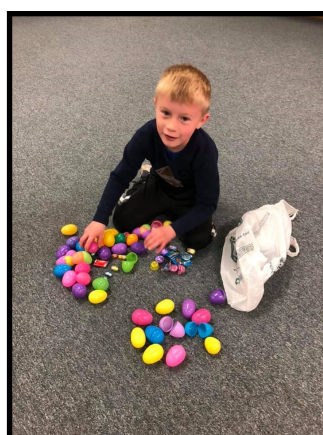
grew up in Madagascar while his parents served as missionaries there, applied for YAGM because “it was my own opportunity to see God at work in various ways around the world and to be formed and transformed by our companions.

A highlight of Berkas’ YAGM year serving alongside companions from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa was a weeklong camp in Cape Town. The experience affirmed in Berkas the importance of “outdoor ministry and creating space for you people to come that’s outside of their normal context...and to send them back renewed and refocused.”

After returning home, Berkas served for five years at the ELCA churchwide organization, stewarding the relationships between ELCA missionaries and their sponsoring congregations. His experience with the many facets of nonprofit management would later be an asset when he accepted his current position. “While I love so much of what I was doing [to support Churchwide global ministries], where I feel most called is going back to that canoe trip after eighth grade and thinking about how formative that was for my life,” he said.

Today, Berkas is site director at Wilderness Canoe Base—another ELCA camp in the boundary waters—where he gets to give young people the same experience he had as a camper. “I feel a deep call to this type of ministry,” he said. “I’m grateful for the way that all of this has worked together to shape where I am.”

FUN TIMES!



Thank you for everyone who helped with the community Easter Egg hunt on April 20th.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANK YOU



We have had such amazing contributions to our donation drive in partnership with Columbus Public Schools. This effort began in response to a Zoom meeting with 60 superintendents across flood ravaged areas in ESUs 1, 2, 3, 7, and 8. During that call, we discovered what needs our educational partners had in their communities. Roads were impassible during that time, and deliveries were difficult. The donations we collected were meant to support them, as

well as areas in and around Columbus/ESU 7. Since we started collecting donations on Tuesday, March 19, deliveries have been made to the North Bend, Valley, St. Edward, Genoa, Spencer, Schuyler, Niobrara, and Columbus's United Way, Family Resource Center, Paws and Claws, and Simon House. The generosity of 34 ESU 7 staff members and even their families, volunteering their time to man the donation site is appreciated beyond words.

We will continue with that effort for the remainder of this week at which time the items remaining will be transported to

the other donation centers in Columbus. Clean up and recovery is just getting started, so at any point in the upcoming weeks should there be a need for specific items again, we will send out a call for help. The generosity of this ESU 7 community is overwhelming.

I cannot say thank you enough to those of you who have given of your time, resources, physical help, thoughts and prayers to not only our donation drive, but to your communities as well. We are #NebraskaStrong and I am confident we will continue to help in whatever ways we are able.

My sincerest thanks,
Larianne



Clayton Watts invites you to his high school graduation from Shelby-Rising City High School on May 11 at 2pm with a reception following at Rising City Community Hall. 600 Main St, Rising City.

Jacob Adelson graduates from High Plains Community School on Saturday, May 11th at 3:30 p.m. All are welcome to join us at our home (484 128th Road) at 5:00 p.m. for an open house celebration!

You are invited to **Brody Ienn's** open house following the 2 p.m. graduation ceremony on May 11 at Osceola High School. Open house will be at Ienn's home: 340 S. Nance Street.

MEET A MEMBER

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

Kent Adelson, Council President
Diana Johnson, Organist
LeeAnn Willhoft, Custodian

Council Members:
Todd Hanquist, Lynn Hofmann, Kay Jones, Kent Adelson,
Sandra Johnston, Dan Ienn, Fran Lott
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



Clayton Watts grew up in Osceola, living there until his freshman year in High School, when he, his mom and brother moved to Rising City. Clayton's parents are Tina Watts and Corey Watts. He has a younger brother, Ceagen as well as two step-brothers, Jackson Kilgore and Bryce Reed, and two step-sisters, Kalli Kilgore and Ella Lemburg.

Clayton is a Senior at Shelby/Rising City High School, and will be graduating in May. He plans to attend Central Community College to get his precision ag degree and he would like to be able to eventually take over the family farms.

He loves the outdoors, and being outside hunting or fishing is definitely the most relaxing thing for him. Clayton is passionate about his family's farm, and feels it has taught him how to work hard and has helped to shape him into the person he is today.

Clayton really enjoys teaching Sunday School at Calvary. He enjoys working with the kids and watching them grow in their faith. He enjoys knowing everyone at church and having the small town feel. Clayton really liked going on the youth mission trips the last couple of years. He especially liked helping with the Denver Metro Ministries, where the mission trip will be going again this summer.



REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS



Dorothy Ehlers
Melissa Forsberg
Denny Johnson
Linda Johnson
Lenore Kessler
Shyanne Krol
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:

Rick and Kathi Jones
May 1
Bill and Venida Carlstrom
May 2
Brady and Katrina Hanquist
May 5
Ed and LeeAnn Willhoft
May 7
Mark and Penny Udey
May 19
Craig and Sarah Johnson
May 30

ZION:

Adam and Amber Rediger
May 20

BIRTHDAYS

CALVARY:

01—Bob Dittmer
01—Jennie Mandigo
03—Tom Hofmann
05—Dave Udey
08—Lewellen Nielsen
08—Vance Toline
07—Megan Johnson
12—Karen Gestrine
12—Cheryl Jones
15—Ty Twarling
16—Tammy Jones
16—Steve Oquist
26—Greg Dittmer
27—Krystal Berggren
28—Kit Waller

ZION:

09—Michelle Blair



ZION WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

May

Communion Assistant: Dawn Kush
Usher: Cal Bittinger
Greeter: Teresa Bittinger

Readers:

May 5th: Ken Kush
May 12th: Gina Schoch
May 19th: Dawn Kush

Acolytes:

May 5th: Krayton Schoch
May 12th: Axton Martin
May 19th: Harley Martin

CALVARY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

May

Assistant Minister— Anita Haack
Scripture Reader— Caroline Nielsen
Ushers— Lew and Caroline Nielsen
Acolyte—Kylee Krol
Altar Care— Mary Anna Circle
Bell Ringer— TBD

May 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 9:30a Join the Conversation Bible Study 7:00p Church Council	2	3	4
5 8:30a Zion Worship 9:15a Calvary SS 9:30a Benedict SS 10:30a Calvary Holy Communion Worship	6	7	8 9:30a Join the Conversation Bible Study 6p Confirmation 7p Men's Bible Study 7p Ruth's WELCA Circle	9 2p Mary Anna's WELCA Circle	10 9a Miriam's WELCA Circle	11
12 8:30a Zion Holy Communion Worship 10:30a Calvary Worship	13	14	15 9:30a Join the Conversation Bible Study 6p Confirmation	16	17	18
19 8:30a Zion Worship 10:30a Calvary Holy Communion Worship	20	21	22 9:30a Join the Conversation Bible Study 6p Confirmation	23 9a Quilt Day	24	25
26 8:30a Zion Worship 10:30a Calvary Worship	27 9a Memorial Day Service, Swede Home Cemetery	28	29 9:30a Join the Conversation Bible Study 6p Confirmation	30	31	

Know God, Love God, Share God's Love

COUNCIL NOTES

Calvary Lutheran Church
 Know God, Love God, Share God's Love
 Minutes
 April 4, 2019

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

- Pastor opened meeting with book *Called by God to Serve – Reflections for Church Leaders* by Robert F. Holley & Paul E. Walters
- Present: Pastor, Todd, Lynn, Kay, Kent, Sandy, Fran, Dan
- Agenda: moved by Sandy to approve, seconded by Dan - approved
- Minutes of March 7, 2019: moved by Kay to approve, seconded by Fran, approved
- Pastor's report: moved by Todd to approve, seconded by Kay, approved

CELEBRATING GOD'S WORK IN PROGRESS (Old Business)

- Nebraska Brass – Sunday, March 17, 2019 @ 3 pm. 30-35 in attendance.
- Secretary position – Mandi Kobus will start the week of April 15. Pastor has job description and it was reviewed by council. Position description outlines 10-15 hours/weekly as well as responsibilities. All thought job description was appropriate.

DISCERNING GOD'S WILL (New Business)

- Building committee – tuck pointing needs to be done. Water leaked and made bricks pop out by elevator door.
- Lawn mowing – talk to Mark and Penny about mowing again this year.

CARING FOR GOD'S BLESSINGS

- Treasurer's report – motion to accept by Dan, seconded by Sandy, approved

Treasurer's Report

March, 2019

Beginning Balance **\$3,085.97**

Offering:

General Offering	13,056.00
Sunday School	56.00
Lent—Backpack Program	572.00
Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services	5.00
ELCA Mission Share	225.00
Zion Benedict March Share	3,757.81
Total Offerings:	\$17,671.81

Expenses:

Vanco eCheck Monthly Fee	8.79
Website Upgrade	70.46
Teacher Appreciation	180.81
Postage Expense	220.00
Church Mutual (2nd of 2 Payments)	3,005.50
ELCA Mission Share	1,520.00
Zion Benedict (January Share)	1,867.95

Utilities:

Church	1,448.95
Parsonage	343.37

Salaries:

Pastor	2,291.19
Mileage	222.85
SECA	227.85
Portico Benefits	1,055.86
Continuing Ed Expense	143.13
Diana	445.41
LeeAnn	236.64
Bri	0.00
Supply Pastor Annette Minderman	171.11
Substitute Organist	50.00

Total Expenses: **\$13,537.12**

Balance as of March 31, 2019: **\$7,220.66**