June 2024

150 YEARS—1873-2023

CELEBRATING MINISTRY OF CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH

This last month has brought lots and lots of rain and spring weather. The ground is soaking it all to make up for years of drought. God's creation is such an interesting thing. We have climate all over the world that varies and changes year to year, yet stays relatively stable while each day brings different weather. We also have the creation that lives with us each day. There are over 400,000 different plants and over 7 million flying, crawling, creeping, walking, slithering, swimming creatures—from the Blue Whale that can reach up to 110 feet long and weigh over 400,000 pounds, to the Myxozoa, an organism that does not grow bigger than .02 millimeters.

I have not seen a Myxozoa, as I would need a microscope, but I have seen a Blue Whale in the Pacific Ocean, in waters near the Channel Islands. It was magnificent and breathtaking as the whale was much larger than our boat! I felt the presence of God as we sat on the silent boat waiting for the whale to pass and not topple us over.

Whenever I am out in creation, I feel even closer to our creator. The beautiful diversity of colors, shapes, sounds, and feels, help me to see God in everything around me. It is one of my favorite places to read a devotion and pray. The first part of Genesis 1:31 says, "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." God's creation is good and creative and completely unique.

Spend time this summer in God's creation, whether that is in your very own backyard, a community park, or traveling to see something new. Take time to admire all that God has done. If you need a devotion to ponder out in creation, ponder on this poem by Wendell Berry from his book *Leavings*:

"Learn by little desire for all things

which perhaps is not desire at all but undying love

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"Learn by little desire for all things

which perhaps is not desire at all but undying love

which perhaps is not love at all but gratitude for the being of all things

which perhaps is not gratitude at all but the maker's joy in what is made,

the joy in which we come to rest."

+Peace

Pastor Hillary

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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 . June donations go to:

Blue Valley Community Action—Osceola

Meals from the Heart:

Meals from the Heart will be meeting at church on Saturday, **June 8 at 9:00 a.m.** If you'd like to help out, please bring treats like cookies or bars that can freeze well or an uncooked casserole with instructions on how to cook it included. All food items need to be in a disposable pan (like 8" x 8" foil pan for example) or similar. If you have questions, please talk to Cheryl Jones.

The Osceola Methodist ladies invite the ladies of Swede Home to a Salad Supper on Wednesday, June 12th beginning at 6 pm There will be special music provided

Note of change of date

So many have asked about the Don and Linda's tool, equipment and household sale—and have offered to help. Originally we set the date as Saturday, June 29. The county wide benefit for Alan Willits is June 29th at 11 am. We needed to change the date of the sale, and the only date the auctioneer had was Sunday, June 30 at 10:00 am. We did not want a Sunday sale, as worship is important to us, but we were unable to schedule another date before fall.

W.E.L.C.A. News

Summer will be arriving soon and it's time to start planning the Swede Home Ice Cream Social, to be held **July 21 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** Sign up sheets will be available for you at June Circle meetings. Please return sign-up sheets to Deb Hanquist or Cheryl Jones soon after your circle meetings. If you're not in a circle, please talk to Deb or Cheryl about how and when you'd like to help. If you are unable to work or bring food, cash donations are always needed. Thanks so much!

*Remember Ice Cream at Assisted Living at Covenant Home on Monday, 7/22 at 2:30 p.m.

*Thanks in advance to EVERYONE for all you do to make the annual Ice Cream Social a success!

*Summer Coffees after worship will be served by Miriam on June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. Ruth Circle will serve July 7, 14, 28, August 4, 11, 18 and 25.

*Thanks to Miriam circle for serving coffee after the Swede Home Memorial Day Service and to Ruth Circle for furnishing VBS snacks.

*Service for month of June is an offering to go to ELCA World Hunger Campaign.

*June Altar Care will be by Kay Jones and July by Diana Johnson.

*Flowers and Cheer in June will be Miriam Circle. July, August and September will be Ruth Circle.

*Meals from the Heart mtg on June 8 at 9:00 a.m.

JUNE CIRCLE MEETINGS

Ruth – 6/12 Janelle @ Gathering Grounds

Miriam – 6/13 Gloria

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.

~ Galatians 5:22

Grace & Peace to you,

Cheryl

Church happenings

Church happenings

- Pastor Hillary and Pastor Evan will keep the youth group updated regarding meeting dates. They use either text or email notification.

There will be a county benefit for Alan Willits on Saturday, June 29th starting at 11:00 am at the Osceola Fire station.

Al was the recipient of a heart transplant in January and is a well know Firefighter in Polk County. All proceeds will go towards expenses incurred by the Willits Family.

A chicken wing feed, cornhole tourney, water games and a silent auction will be held. Start time will be 11:00 am Saturday, June 29th, at the Osceola Fire station.

Donations can be sent in care of the Osceola Fire Department Box 255, Osceola NE 68651. Please make memo "Willits Benefit". The event is being sponsored by the County Fire Departments.

The generous giving of the Swede Home Congregation again went beyond expectations. A special offering was held for 3 Sundays to give to the Nebraska Disaster Relief for recent tornadoes, and especially for the Jason Sunday Family who lost their home in Elkhorn. Through your generosity we are able to send $725 to Nebraska Disaster Relief and $1,000 to the

A Trip to the Modern Frontier—Youth Road Trip 2024

From the very early weeks of 2022, when Pastors Evan and Hillary learned of the many middle and high school students at Augustana and Calvary Lutheran, they made it is priority to get the youth of these churches to the ELCA Youth Gathering, which would take place during the July of 2024. The city of New Orleans would be host to over 20,000 Lutheran high schoolers and their adult leaders. Having took eight students to Houston in 2018, Pastors Evan and Hillary knew they wanted to get these kids to NOLA in 2024.

When they first shared "The Gathering" with the youth at Calvary and Augustana, there was much excitement. However, as details of The Gathering rolled out and individual summer schedules took shape, it became abundantly clear that our youth going to New Orleans just was not in the cards. Yet our students were inspired by the concept and wanted to do something on their own—the Holy Spirit was at work!

Initial planning began back in the Fall of 2023 (if memory serves correct) with a brainstorming session between Pastor Evan and Jarrett, Peyton, and Rylee (all of Calvary Swede Home). They talked about whether they should drive or fly; spend time in nature or the city; what type of service/mission projects they should undertake; and what other experiences would make for a great trip. These students also helped establish the time frame: that sweet-spot after school let out for the summer and before coaches could expect the athletes to attend non-mandatory weights and conditioning. Shortly after, it was decided that Oklahoma City would be the destination. As well, the Calvary Youth agreed that it would be awesome if youth from Augustana came, too. Pastors extended the invitation to the youth from Augustana and also got feedback and ideas. (Continued on page 4)

With much pre-planning done, this trip—which had come to be called "The Road Trip"—rested on the backburner until Tuesday of Holy Week, when an unexpected Ice Storm kept Pastor Evan at home and afforded the opportunity to get to begin work on putting the ideas into practice. Those ideas resulted in a wide variety of outings, activities, projects, and worship all inspired and based on Oklahoma City.

Of course, there is only so much time in the day, and everyone must inevitably rest. In the end, some activities had to be cut to make room for the many things that we done, seen, visited, and experienced on the Road Trip. On Thursday morning, Macy, Elle, Caylyn, and Layney (all from Augustana) met bright and early at the church to load their things onto the van. By 6:45 AM, the partial-crew made it to Swede Home were Peyton and Rylee, as well as the other two adult sponsors, Andrew and Emily (both from Calvary) joined the troupe. By 7:15 AM they were ordering Starbucks in York, and within minutes everyone had finally woken up! This was short lived, and it was a quite trip to Lindsborg, KS where the first scheduled event occurred, and the youth took a college visit to Bethany College.

A NOTE TO THE READER: An earlier version of this article devoted over 550 words to just the first 24 hours of the trip and was trending for this article to be over 3,000 words in total. Pastor Hillary graciously told Pastor Evan he was being too detailed. So, what follows is a vastly abbreviated attempt of the trip's itinerary with a brief description of the events.

May 23 – Thursday

- Visit Bethany College - Lindsborg, KS *Students participated in a guided meditation while walking a prayer labyrinth, toured campus, heard from an admissions counselor, and at lunch in the Cafe.*
- TopGolf *Top golf is a modern twist that combines a bowling alley and driving range with creative, casual dining. The youth agreed that TopGolf worked well for everyone to get to know one another since it was the first activity that allowed the mixed group from Augustana and Calvary to relax and just have fun while not meditating or sleeping in the van.*
- Worship & Devotion #1 *Pastor Evan used a curriculum that imagined Jesus' ministry as a road trip. The first session was getting the passengers and looked at Jesus calling his disciples.*

May 24 – Friday

- Worship & Devotion #2 *This session compared the "car sickness" we might get to the sin we all experience.*

- Volunteering at The Regional Foodbank of Oklahoma *We volunteered in the frozen meal prep area called "Hope's Kitchen." In total we packed 1,188 meals and another 1,000 snacks.*

"Mixtape" at Factory Obscura *This was a wacky art exhibit of 6,000 square feet of hand-crafted interactive art. It was an other-worldly light, sound, and touch experience (if the youth followed the rules, there should not have been any smelling or tasting involved…)*

(continued on page 5)

- Oklahoma City Memorial *In 1995, the deadliest act of domestic terrorism in the US occurred when a bomb detonated outside the Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City. 168 souls, including 19 children, were lost as well as hundreds of others injured. The Memorial in the space where the building stood pays honor to the victims and encourages visitors to remain vigilant against violence.*
- Shopping *Originally the plan was to visit local shops in Automobile Alley; however, many sidewalks were closed, and we only stopped in a single boutique. Being a group of mostly high school girls, a trip to the local mall was decided by a democratic vote which overruled Pastor Evan.*
- Worship & Devotion #3 *This session took a look at the "fork in the road" that Jesus faced while preparing for his eventual death. We too are called to believe in Jesus Christ with our whole heart and serve in all ways.*

May 25 – Saturday

- Worship & Devotion #4 *The final session was on "The Destination." We know that death is not the end for Jesus' Road Trip, but rather it is resurrection and ascension. So too do we experience new and eternal life with God though Jesus.*
- National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum & Chuck Wagon Festival *This was a BUSY day at the museum with so many visitors for the Chuck Wagon Festival. Still, the youth and adults enjoyed exploring the many exhibits and art installments (as well as some very tasty food!)*
- Worship at Life. Church *Life.Church began in 1996 and is an American evangelical multi-site mega church that has over 40 campuses in eight states and claims more than 85,000 weekly worshippers in total.*
- Fancy Dinner *The crew dressed in their nicest dresses (well, Andrew and Pr. Evan wore polos…) and headed to* The Hutch on Avondale*, for a fancy dinner out.*

May 26 – Sunday Worship at All Saints Lutheran Church *The Road Trip concluded with worship at a congregation that recently came from the merger of three Lutheran Congregations in 2022. Bishop Becca of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod presided and preached at this service. Following worship, the group joined in packing "hope bags" and a meal.*

ANOTHER NOTE TO THE READER: The above is just over 600 words, so Pastor Hillary was wise in encouraging Pastor Evan to practice brevity—a skill he is still learning.

It is hard to believe just how much was packed into this trip, especially with it being the first one of its kind that the youth (or Pastor Evan) had planned. They learned things they definitely want to recreate, things to let go of, and new things to see/do/try for the next one. And that is the thing that is certain—everyone who went on the trip agreed it needs to happen again! Pastors Evan and Hillary hope this to be true, and they hope that it grows in the years to come.

Shared ministry can be a challenging endeavor, but taking a risk like these six youth and two adults from Augustana and Calvary did on this Road Trip helps show how creative, formative, and impactful it can be, too—thank you for embarking on this Road Trip and starting something great! Pastors are deeply grateful for the councils of Augustana and Calvary committing to help make this trip possible by offsetting costs so it stayed as affordable as possible. Pastors are also grateful for those who held the travelers in prayer while they were away. And, of course, thanks be to God for inspiring this opportunity, opening doors, stirring hearts, providing safety and security, and for changing lives through the stewardship, fellowship, and worship of this adventure!

+Peace,

Pastor Evan

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Nebraska Synod, ELCA
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Stromsburg, NE 68666
Church Phone: (402)764-5981
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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
Amy Harris and Janet Nielsen, Music
Linda Fuhr, Church Office Manager
LeeAnn Willhoft, Custodian

Council Members:
Andrew Adelson, Jennifer Fjell,, 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

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

The Jones Family reunion will be held at church Sunday, June 9.

There will be coffee fellowship following the church service as usual.

Memorial Day Service

There were 60 people present to honor those who served their country and are at rest at Swede Home Cemetery. The Stromsburg Legion Honor Guard gave the 21 gun salute to begin the service.

Sandy Johnson led the liturgy, PR Hillary gave the message, Ryan Jones welcomed the group and read "Flounders Field", Duane Oquist read the "Gettysburg Address" and played taps. Rick Jones read the roll call of the deceased. Veterans. Coffee and rolls were provided by Miriam Circle following the service.

We Reach to all our faith family in prayer and celebration

Remember in your prayers

Monty Jones
Kathi Jones
Duane Jones
Lois Fick
Janice Forsberg
Melissa Forsberg
June Larson
Beth Jones Wienck
Jan Wells Bachman
Alan Willits
Rich Schneider
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)

Join the Stromsburg Community as they celebrate their annual Swedish Festival June 15 and 16

Anniversaries

JUNE

02 Amy & Drew Harris

03 Evan and Hillary Christensen

03 Yancy & Kim Krol

06 Dennis & Betty Hinkle

10 Roxanne & Jerome Czarnick

16 Tim & Missy Althouse

Birthdays

JUNE

02 Ethan Fjell
03 Gloria Oquist
05 Marj Johnson
05 Sandy Johnston
07 Jedediah Adelson
10 Talia Frank
11 Becky Nielsen Willhoft
16 June Larson
19 Jonathan Hanquist
19 Aaron Oquist
19 Erik Oquist
21 Wendy Shafenberg
21 Trent Stevens
22 Vince Krol
23 Craig Brouillette
28 Deborah Ernst
28 Olivia Nielsen
28 Abigail Jones
29 Gary Waller
30 Mike Neujahr

June

Assistant Minister - Kay

Scripture Reader – Bonnie

Ushers –

Altar – Kay

Acolyte –

Bell Ringer –

We thank all those who agree to help with the worship service each month. **Please let Jean Waller or Carolyn Nielsen know if you can help**

June 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 11am Graveside Service for Mark Udey
2 11 am Worship Service	3	4	5 7 pm Book study at church	6	7	8 9am Meals from the Heart assemble meals at church
9 10:30 am Worship service Council follows 1 pm Jones family reunion	10	11 7 pm Men's bible study at Wayne's	12 See block below for the 12th schedule	13 9am Miriam Circle—Gloria Hosts	14	15
16 10:30 am Worship Service	17	18	19 7 pm book study—date may change	20	21	22
23 10:30 am Worship Service	24	25	26 **June 12th activities** 9 am Ruth Circle at Gathering Grounds 6pm Methodist Salad Supper 7pm book study	27	28	29 11 am Benefit for Alan Willits at Osceola Fire Hall
30 10:30 am Worship Service						

Council Notes

June 2024

Church Council met on May 5, 2024, following worship service

Present: Kent, Dan, Randy, Andrew, Jennifer, Missy, Kris, Pastor Hillary
Absent: Jarrett

- Highway Signs are still in discussion.
- Parsonage update - Cabinets are being finalized. Windows have been ordered and have siding but waiting for window installation.
- Maternity/Paternity leave - 6 weeks for Pastor Hillary and Evan would preach every Sunday but would be at church part time.
- June 2nd church service will be an online service at 11:00 am due the Synod Assembly
- Church Council meeting is moved to June 9th.
- Special offering for Nebraska Synod Disaster Relief and the Jason Sunday family (RE: Elkhorn tornadoes) will be open for 2-3 Sundays.

Treasurer's Report

	April 2024
Beginning Balance	**$23,812.97**
Offerings:	
General Offering	9,241.00
NE Synod ELCA Disaster Relief	5.00
ELCA Mission Share	450.00
	9,696.00
Expenses:	
Vanco eCheck Monthly Fee	9.73
Light for Pulpit	17.91
Weebly Custom Domain-Annual Web Fee	19.95
Office Supplies; envelopes & seals	21.08
Emmanuel Zion Lutheran, Albion; Palms	28.51
Water Pressure Tank & Line repairs	33.32
Cody's Computer - Contract Agreement	39.99
Economy; Game Day	45.68
Text Messaging Flocknote	48.00
Eakes Office Supplies; Copier Contract	207.33
Bedient Pipe Organ Co 4 of 4 Installments	280.00
Noyd Repair, LLC - Sunday School Furnace	308.95
Synod Assembly Registration; Lay Persons	390.00
Starlink Internet Equipment	716.35
Lent Offering to the Backpack Program	2,622.00
NE Synod ELCA Mission Share	1,595.00
First Lutheran R.C. April Share	2,052.74
Augustana Genoa April Share	2,989.67
Utilities:	
Church	1,186.26
Parsonage	574.60
Genoa Parsonage	121.64
Salaries:	
Pastors Hillary & Evan Christensen	2,684.96
Portico Benefit Services	1,266.80
Commuting Reimbursement	158.34
SECA	236.24
Mileage Reimbursement	194.27
Cell Phone Reimbursement	38.00
Amy & Janet	258.57
Lay/Music Mileage	301.50
LeeAnn	250.73
Linda	360.16
Tax Withholdings Lay First Quarter	663.24
PMA Leroy Hoyer	275.13
	19,996.65
Balance as of April 30, 2024:	**$13,512.32**
Transfers to:	
Improvement Fund; Parsonage Remodel:	11,500.00
Thrivent Choice Grant Account:	359.00

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

CALVARY Lutheran church
Nebraska Synod, ELCA

950 Road 129th
Stromsburg, NE 68666

Return Service Requested

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**