CELEBRATING OUR MINISTRY

CALVARY SWEDE HOME & FIRST RISING CITY

That's Risky

A few weeks ago, we read a text in the Gospel of Luke (10:1-11, 16-20) about the seventy or seventy-two people who were sent out ahead of Jesus. Jesus said that he was sending them like "lambs in the midst of wolves." It was a risk for these followers of Jesus to go out and preach the good news of Christ, some would welcome them, excited at the prospect of learning more about the Messiah, while others would not welcome them, ask them to leave, or run them out of town.

This past month we took six youth on a trip to Colorado for rest, rejuvenation, service, and adventure. For four of the youth, they were invited on this trip even though they were not members of Calvary, three of them had never been on a trip like this before, and for all eight of us, it was a risky new thing. We went white water rafting, stayed on top of a mountain, traveled to an unknown place to volunteer, and had deep discussions about our faith. It was a short but fulfilling time of discipleship and growth. If you would like to read more about the experiences of our youth, look further into the newsletter for a detailed article.

What places can we go to experience God and share the Good News? How can we be like the seventy or like our youth? The month of August is when summer starts to slow down, schools start back up, and activities begin to pick up. Take a risk, share the good news of Christ through love and care of our neighbor. If others welcome it that is great, if not, dust off your feet and try again. Exude the love of God this fall and take risks for God!

+Peace,

Pastor Hillary

Announcements

The Evangelism and Outreach Team oversees a nonperishable food and personal care item collection.

August donations go to:

Blue Valley Community Action—Osceola

Donations are always welcome for the Little Food Pantries located in the county

Christmas in July

On Sunday, July 27 we celebrated Christmas in July at our worship service with a morning of Carols and Scriptures. We were renewed in our faith that God sent his only Sou so that we might be saved. We rejoiced in the Good News the angels sang

"Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth, Peace and Good Will. "

In honor of LaVerne Steven's 101th birthday on August 12, her family plans to host an after church coffee on **Sunday, August 3.** Please join in the celebration!

W.E.L.C.A. News

*Thank you to everyone who helped with and attended the ice cream social on July 20! We couldn't have done it without: 51 workers; 30 gallons ice cream; 22 dozen cookies; 9 pans brownies; 4 angel food cakes; and MANY vases of beautiful flowers! Whew! Special thanks to Kay & Bonnie for their leadership! We also enjoyed serving at Midwest Covenant Home Assisted Living and Plaza Apartments on July 21. Thank you to Mary Stevens for arranging that and to all who were helpers that afternoon. Thank you to Kay Jones for taking ice cream to Osceola Assisted Living.

*Service for month of August is Thankoffering number 2. This goes to support women at home and around the world. If you'd like to give an offering but are unable to attend circle, please mail your check to Bonnie Carlson, 12929 Twin Pines, Rd., Osceola, NE 68651. Thank you.

*Altar care for August is Ruth Circle. September will be Sandy Johnston.

*Flowers & Cheer in August & September by Ruth. Thank you, Linda, for watering the plants. October, November & December flowers will be by Miriam circle.

*August coffees after church are by Ruth Circle. There will be opportunities to sign up for fall and winter coffees soon, beginning in September.

*WELCA Biennial Convention will be at Carol Joy Holling September 26-28. Early Bird registration offers a $25 discount if you register by August 22. This year's theme is "Wrapped in God's Love". Watch for registration forms in the church entry or talk to Cheryl for more info.

AUGUST CIRCLE MEETINGS

Hostess

Ruth – 8/13 9 am Deb C @ 4th St. Coffee Stromsburg

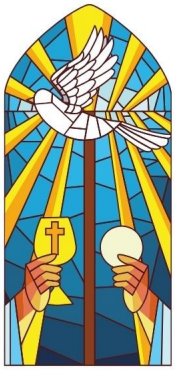
Miriam – 8/14 10 am at 4th Street Coffee, Stromsburg

Church happenings

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

Communion Class

We will be offering a communion class at First English Lutheran Church. If you believe that your child is ready, please let Pastors know. We will hold class and have a tentative date of October 26th for First Communion.



STARTS SEPTEMBER 7TH
AT FIRST ENGLISH IN RC

We are looking for another teacher on Sunday Mornings.
Please let Carla or Cindy know if you are interested!

Rising City News

Council Meeting July 13,2025

Present: Wally and Luanne Kilgore, Lee and Cindy Lorentzen, Ken Potter, Rogene McMeekin, Carla Potter, Pastor Evan.

Pastor Evan asked for prayer requests and opened the meeting with prayer.

Ken motioned to accept the minutes of the June meeting and Rogene seconded. Motion carried.

Cindy motioned to accept the treasurer's report. Carla seconded, motion carried.

The pastor's report was presented.

OLD BUSINESS

Carpet will be installed July 28-30. The furniture will be moved after service the 27th.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion was held about Sunday School. Another teacher will be needed. It will begin on September 7th.

Communion class will be held for 5-6 students. The class will be 3-4 hours and parents will be encouraged to attend.

God's Work Our Hands project will be a collection of school supplies collected August 3-September 14. Noisy offering will be collected on the 14th.

Christmas in July will be July 27th. Lessons and Carols will be shared. Lee and Carla will be readers.

The printer in the office is no longer needed and will be offered to the congregation for free or a donation.

Old song books will be recycled and moldy ones will be burned.

Lee motioned to donate $300 to Lutheran Disaster for flood victims. Information will be presented to the congregation if individuals would like to donate

A thank you was read from synod for our mission shares.

Next meeting is August 10, 2025 Lee motioned to adjourn and Ken seconded, motion carried. The meeting was closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully, Cindy Lorentzen

Ice Cream Social—2025

After months of planning, advertising, purchasing supplies, churning gallons of ice cream, baking bars, cookies and angel food cake, cutting and arranging bouquets of flowers, setting up tables, greeting friends and neighbors from near and far, serving the treats Swede Home is known for, visiting, giving tours of the church, face painting, bouncy house, cleaning up, putting away tables and chairs – all to do again next year! The 2025 ice cream social has been a qualified success

The official number registered was 231, but many of the workers did not get through the registration line – so we estimate at least 250 attended. In addition, approximately 35 residents, staff and Swede Home volunteers gathered at Midwest Covenant Home for the social event.

All in all, over $ 2,700.00 was received in donations. At the end of the year, WELCA members designate the distribution of these funds to many local organizations such as the back pack program, local schools ELCA projects, Genesis House ESU 7, just to name a few.

The list of volunteers is long – know that each and every one of you are appreciated for sharing your time and talents. We could not do this without you!

With Sincere Appreciation, the Ice Cream Social Committee,

Kay Jones, Bonnie Carlson, Cheryl Jones, Deb Hanquist, Mary Stevens & Linda Fuhr

The parking lot was full, and cars lined both sides of the road! The Bouncy House was a hit with both the youth and the young at heart (adults enjoyed bouncing after the kids went home!) Thanks Carter for bring fun to the social, Thanks Riley for the facepainting. The picnic tables were full all evening long—as people enjoyed the ice cream and treats and visiting with friends from near and far. Many of the youth and adults helped in the serving ling and preparations.

See page 6 for more pictures!

The flower gardens have been beautiful this year with the bountiful rains.

Thanks to members for sharing flowers for worship service and the ice cream social

WORSHIP PRACTICES AS LIFE PRACTICES—CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Our investigation into practices of worship brings us now to the Canticle of Praise. Canticles are biblical texts which the church sings as part of worship and prayer. Both the Old and New Testaments contain canticles. Many Lutherans have celebrated the Sunday assembly with two canticles. The first is "Glory to God," and it is found in Luke 2:14:

> *14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,*
> *and on earth peace among those whom he favors!*

"Glory to God" has been sung in Latin (*Gloria in excelsis Deo*) since at least the 6th century AD. Prior to that, it seems a Greek translation was used in some from during daily liturgy as early as the 4th century AD. This means that when we sing these words in the present age, our voices join the chorus of so many saints who have come before us, and we too will be joined by the faithful yet to come.

In contrast to "Glory to God," our other canticle of praise is much, much younger. We sometimes refer to it by the refrain, "This is the feast," but its title is "Worthy is Christ." Written in 1975 for the publication of *Lutheran Book of Worship* (the green hymnal), this hymn draws from imagery in Isaiah 25 and the book of Revelation (5:12; also 5:9, 13; 7:10, 12; 19:4, 6–9)

> *12 Singing with full voice,*
> *"Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered*
> *to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might*
> *and honor and glory and blessing!"*

For nearly fifty years now, Lutherans and others—it has since been included in other denominations' hymnals—have faithfully professed Jesus' triumph over sin and death which is summarized through the refrain and verses of "Worthy is Christ."

The rubrics for our liturgy encourage singing one canticle or the other during certain Sundays or seasons throughout the year. This is based on the themes of each song which underline various festivals or celebrations. No matter which we sing, we sing praises to the Lord our God with words we find in the Word of God.

In recent weeks I have often found myself singing the arrangement of "Glory to God" that we have been singing this summer. Not only is it a catchy tune, but it has also served as a reminder that we are to give glory to God in all we do. As well, Christ's victory over the cross is an encouragement for us each day, each moment. Nothing, no power or person, has the final authority except for God. May we be inspired by these songs encountered in scripture, and may we be encouraged to allow God's Word to guide our ways, nourish our faith, and draw us ever closer to Christ.

THANK YOU

Dear Calvary Lutheran/Swede Home

Thank you for all that you do as God's people in and around Stromsburg. Thank you also especially, for your continued participation in mission share. Through you, and because of you, so much good work is done in the world and so many lives are changed, out of God's deep love made real through you. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!!

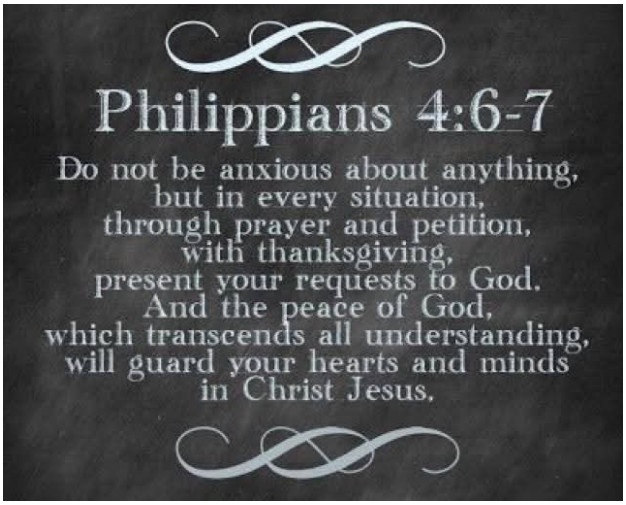
I hope to see you and thank you in person as part of the synod on the road again experience on September 13 in Marquette. And please know that your congregation is prayed for daily by your faithful siblings in Christ, near and far.

Thank you for sharing God's love and Christ's light with the world.

God's Blessings and peace,

Timothy

Nebraska Synod ELCA



Back Pack blessing on August 3 at both Calfary and First

First English is collecting school supplies in the months of August & September.

What is needed:

- Crayola Crayons (16 or 25 count)
- Crayola Markers (10 count)
- Crayola Colored Pencils
- Expo Dry Erase Markers
- Elmer's Stick Glue
- Elmer's Bottle Glue
- Scissors (5 & 7 inch)
- Spiral Notebooks (Wide or College rule)
- Loose leaf paper
- Red, Black, & Blue Pens(no gel)
- Large Pink Erasers
- Compostition Notebooks
- #2 Pencils
- Earbuds or Headphones
- Chlorox wipes
- Pocket folders
- Pencil boxes
- Backpacks
- Trapper Keepers that zip shut

Calvary Lutheran Church
Nebraska Synod, ELCA
950 129th Road
Stromsburg, NE 68666
Church Phone: (402)282-1830
www.calvaryswedehomechurch.com
Email calvaryswedehomechurch@gmail.com
Facebook "Swede Home"

Every Member of the Congregation—Ministers
Andrew Adelson, Council Chair
Jenn Fjell, Council Vice Chairman
Missy Althouse, Council Secretary
Amy Harris and Janet Nielsen, Music
Linda Fuhr, Church Office Administrator
LeeAnn Willhoft, Custodian

Council Members:
Andrew Adelson, Jennifer Fjell, Dan Oquist,
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 Administrator at calvaryswedehomechurch@gmail.com or text or call 402-366-2091, If you have not done so, follow **Swede Home** on our Facebook page.

First English Lutheran Church
Nebraska Synod, ELCA
840 Butler St Rising City, NE 68658
Church Phone: (402)542-2217
Email : firstenglutheranchurchrc@gmail.com
Facebook "First Lutheran Church Rising City Nebraska
Every Member of the Congregation—Ministers
Council Chair: Wally Kilgore
Vice Chair: Ken Potter
Secretary: Cindy Lorentzen
Council Members:
Lee Lorentzen, Carla Cook, Rogene McMeekin
Luanne Kilgore, Church Office Manager

Additional Ice Cream Social Pictures!!

Children's Sermon at First-Rising City

We Reach to all our faith family in prayer and celebration

Remember in your prayers

Kathi Jones
Janice Forsberg
Melissa Forsberg
June Larson
Beth Jones Wienck
Jan Wells Bachman
Rich Schneider
Bryce Anderson
Cheryl Hubka
Jim and Donna Sterns
Tristen Cleland

Carey Clauff
Colby Nelson
Clerrisa Udey

- 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

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

August Swede Home

Assistant Minister— Linda Fuhr

Reader— Linda Fuhr

Ushers – Rod and Kay Jones

Altar Care— Ruth Circle

Acolyte

Bell Ringer –

Anniversaries

August

12 Gary & Jean Waller

19 Dan and Lisa Oquist

24 Andrew and Emily Adelson

27 Randy and Fran Lott

Birthdays

August

02 C- April Neujahr
03 C- Riley Oquist
06 F Luanne Kilgore
07 C- Patty Teig
07 C- Ryan Fjell
09 C- Jennifer Fjell
09 C- Kiley Nielsen
10 C- Dennis Hinkle
10 F Kayla Steinike
11 C- Amy Harris
11 F Taylor Potter
12 C- LaVerne Stevens
21 C- Jarrett Althouse
21 C- Brita Jones
21 F Lee Lorentzen
22 C- Tim Althouse
24 C- Megan Oquist
25 C- Kelby Neujahr
27 F Eileen Krumbaugh
29 C- Emily Adelson
30 C- Brody Ienn
31 C- Steve Udey

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**

The Sign-up sheets for 2025 are on the ushers counter. Please consider when you can serve

August 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
• Sunday the 3rd , Back Pack blessings at both churches • Sunday the 3rd, Calvary Council following worship • Sunday the 3rd, Special coffee honoring LaVerne Stevens 101th birthday					1	2
3 8:45 Rising City Worship 10:30 Calvary Worship *	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 8:45 Rising City Worship 10:30 Calvary	11	12 7 pm Men's bible study	13 9am Ruth Circle at 4th Street Cof-	14 10 am Miriam Circle at 4th Street Coffee	15	16
17 8:45 Rising City Worship 10:30 Calvary	18	19	20 7:30 pm Women's bible study at church	21	22	23
24 8:45 Rising City Worship 10:30 Calvary Worship	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 8:45 Rising City Worship 10:30 Calvary						

Calvary Lutheran Church of Swede Home hosted six high school students on a Youth Group Road Trip this year. Those attending this trip were Rylee Hofmann, Peyton Hofmann, Madi Zerr, Gahvi Lesiak, Jacey Dubas, and Isaac Meyer. Joining them as adult leaders were Pastors Hillary and Evan Christensen. The purpose of the Road Trip was to provide the high school students a time of rest, renewal, and unique opportunities to connect with God, their faith, and with one another.

We departed Swede Home early Wednesday morning and headed toward our cabin nestled in the mountains about 45 minutes west of Colorado Springs. On Thursday we went white water rafting on the Arkansas River.

Thursday afternoon was a time of rest and fellowship after the adrenaline filled morning. Board games were played and many, many laughs shared. Friday morning, we volunteered at "God's Pantry," a local food pantry, donation center, and thrift store in Colorado Springs. During this service opportunity some of us sorted donated clothing into items to be put on the racks and those that will be sent overseas to those in need. Others spent time tidying up display shelves and placing newly donated items onto the floor.

After our service project we returned to our cabin to get ready for Friday evening's activity: Fancy Dinner. This has become a staple of the Swede Home Road Trip where, on the final night, the youth and leaders dress their best and share a meal at a nice restaurant. For the high schoolers it is a fun time to dress up and try new, gourmet foods one wouldn't normally get to try. Many of the students this year commented it might have been the nicest meal they've ever had! For the adult leaders, Fancy Dinner is a way that we can say thank you to the youth for a fantastic trip and celebrate our time together.

This year we dined at The Ristorante del Lago at the historic Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs. Everyone started with gourmet sodas or Italian cremes before sharing charcuterie boards and wood fired pizzas. Then came our entrees of handmade pastas and sauces. It was quite the feast, but the highlight was when our server shared that her coworkers and manager commented on how respectful we were and the joy we exuded in sharing this meal together. It was clear to them that we were there to celebrate our time together.

As a literal "icing on the cake," our meal ended with a surprise! As a thank you for being fun, inspiring guests who were truly enjoying all the restaurant offered, they prepared desserts of castagnole (doughnut) and lemon blueberry cassata (cake). It was truly and incredible ending to a wonderful and memorable meal.

We departed the mountains Saturday morning. On the way home, we made a final brief stop at "Garden of the Gods" to explore just a little of the red rock formations which tower over the many trails around the park.

While all the activities were certainly exciting, they were not the primary focus of our time together. We spent time each day worshiping, praying, and studying the Bible with one another. A theme of "Abide" guided our time together. John 15 served as our guiding passage, mainly when Jesus says, "Abide in me as I abide in you… I am the vine, and you are the branches, those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit." We learned that when we abide (obey, follow, remain steadfast) in Christ and his words, that we experience a closeness with God. When we're close with God, we also experience those fruits of the Spirit (such as those we read in Galatians 5: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). And, when we are bearing these good fruits through our close relationship with God through abiding in Jesus and he in us, we will find that others are encouraged in their faith through our faithful living. So, really, we have this cyclical spirituality happening, in which our faith inspires others who in turn will inspire us, all of us being built up together as a community of faith who love God and serve one another.

Overall, the youth and pastors had an incredible trip full of faith, prayer, adventure, laughter, growth, and so, so many memories. Thank you to all who supported us on this Road Trip through both fervent prayer and generous donations. As well, we give thanks to God for holding us safely through the trip and providing such blessing of an opportunity. May we each abide in our Lord as he abides in us.

Council Notes

July 2025 Calvary

Church Council met on July 7, 2025 at 6:00 pm

Present: Missy, Jen, Dan, Andrew, Randy, and Pastor Evan
Absent: Kris and Jarrett

Youth retreat is coming up.
Cross Generational Ministry planning - Meeting was postponed this month.
Tree trimming at the church and parsonage will be done at some point. There are several trees that are nearing their life span and may need to be replaced. More to come.
Parsonage update: a few items need to be done and carpet will be ordered/installed.
Meet the council members will be featured in the Newsletters. Be on the lookout.
Calvary Lutheran Church was a beneficiary of the Arlan Lindholm's Estate and was presented with a donation of $50,000 which will be used to replenish the parsonage expenses/help it grow by purchasing a CD. Council will designate a future tithing offering

Calvary Lutheran Church Treasurer's Report

	June 2025
Beginning Balance	**$6,555.54**
Offerings:	
General Offering	10,737.00
ELCA Disaster Relief	5.00
Facility Use Offering	150.00
ELCA Mission Share	500.00
First Lutheran R. C. June Share	6,131.53
	17,523.53
Expenses:	
Vanco eCheck Monthly Fee	9.73
Office Supplies	12.91
Text Messaging System-monthly fee	25.00
Harland Clarke Check Order	27.65
Cody's Computer - Contract Agreement	39.99
Polk County New - Annual Subscription	45.00
Emergency Mission	100.00
Kitchen Supplies	107.80
Synod Assemble; Laypersons lodging	313.66
NE Synod ELCA Mission Share	1,595.00
First Lutheran R. C. June & July Shares	3,123.01
Utilities:	
Church	977.63
Parsonage	86.51
Salaries:	
Pastors Hillary & Evan Christensen	3,131.64
Portico Benefit Services	1,853.29
Commuting Reimbursement	162.50
SECA	297.05
Mileage Reimbursement	198.42
Cell Phone Reimbursement	65.00
Synod Assembly Lodging	203.88
Amy & Janet	258.57
Lay/Music Mileage	315.00
LeeAnn	250.73
Linda	498.69
	13,698.66
Balance as of June 30, 2025:	**$10,380.42**
Transfer to Thrivent Choice Spiritual Growth:	**$ 43.00**