September 2022

...In Sacred Places...

CELEBRATING MINISTRY OF CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

I (Pastor Evan) am always in awe of the Bible. Since I was young, I have been enthralled with the depth of stories and lessons—the simple, the complex, the direct, and the absurd. And I don't just mean this because I'm a pastor. In fact, I think I am a pastor *because* of my interest in the Bible.

It was my yearning to learn more about the Bible which drew me to explore studies of youth and family ministry while I was a student at Midland University. In those classes, my faith was fostered and a call to further learning grew. At the same time, I was discerning God's call for my life as an ordained pastor to the ministry of preaching the Word of God and administering the Holy Sacraments. Yet through all my discernment and learning, a core part of my faith and spiritual life was exploring— or wondering, or dancing, or wrestling, or dwelling—with the amazing Story of God revealed in the scriptures.

As Christians, we all are invited and called, even commanded, to love God and serve our neighbors. One way we can do both, at least in a way, is studying scripture and the many ways the Communion of Saints have understood themselves and God. When we ask deep, faithful questions, having been changed by the Spirit of God which comes through the Word, we join in an ancient tradition with the many believers who have gone before us.

As we grow in faith together, I am so excited to hear your deep, faithful questions and thoughts. In the next couple weeks, the gospel lessons include a number of parables from Luke 15 and 16 — some of my favorites of all of Jesus' parables, especially the rich man and Lazarus. May we continue to be blessed by God's word on this and everyday.

+Peace

Pastor Evan

Growing in faith Together

WELCA News Page 2

Youth Updates 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 September donations go to

Genesis House—David City

Contact information:
Pastor Evan Cell Phone 402-689-5495

Email: evan@pastorchristensen.com

Pastor Hillary Cell Phone 402-980-1102

Email: hillardy@pastorchristensen.com

Church: 402-764-5981 or cell 402-366-2091

Email: calvaryswedehomechurch@gmail.com

Welcome to Pastor Evan and Pastor Hillary. It has been great to have them at Swede Home—they have hit the ground running!!

Currently the plan is to have Pastor Evan and Pastor Hillary rotate Sundays. They are working out a schedule as to what days and who will be in our area accordingly. If you see one of their vehicles in the west parking lot—stop in and say hello!
Their plan is to soon visit the shut ins and members—if you would like a visit, give them a call, they would love to get to know you!

WILDER WATCH

Wilder gets his own schedule, 2 weeks at Genoa, 2 weeks at Rising/ Swede Home. If you would like to help with Wilder during worship service, let Kay or Linda know—and we will get you connected. Wilder Watch includes bottles and diapers changes!

W.E.L.C.A. News

Remember the saying that starts "Thirty days has September…"? We are so blessed to have some of our most beautiful days of the year during this month! Gorgeous sunrises and sunsets with pleasant hours in between.

Service this month: Columbus Women's Shelter.

Altar Care: Gloria Oquist; October will be Jean Waller.

Flowers & Cheer: September – Ruth Circle; October, November & December – Miriam Circle.

Thanks for serving summer coffees following worship. Sign-up is available for serving coffee this fall. Please join us for this relaxing fellowship.

Sunday, October 2 – "God's Work, Our Hands" highway pickup. Meet at Monty & Cheryl Jones' (13088 J Rd – highway 39) at 3:30 p.m. Food and fellowship following. Please remember to bring gloves. Many hands make light work. (Possible rain date Oct. 9)

Circle Meetings

	HOST	LESSON
Miriam, 9/8	Sandy Johnston	Diana Johnson

Ruth, 9/14, Deb Cramer @ 4th St. Coffee, Stromsburg

"I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble," says the Lord. ~ Proverbs 4: 11-12

Blessings,

Cheryl

Recipes

On October 10th, 2022 at 10:00 am there will be a Celebration of Life for long time member, Jan Ernst.

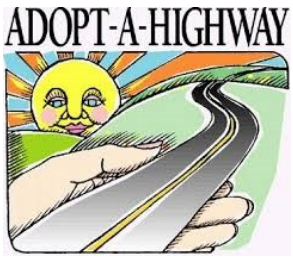
Jan passed away on July 3rd.

Burial will be at the Swede Home Cemetery and there will be a luncheon served following the service.

Memorials will be given to Swede Home Church

Mark your calendar:

Sunday, October 2 – "God's Work, Our Hands" highway pickup. Meet at Monty & Cheryl Jones' (13088 J Rd – highway 39) at 3:30 p.m. Food and fellowship following. Please remember to bring gloves. Many hands make light work. (Possible rain date Oct. 9)



This month's recipe comes from Ben Carlson. He made these Gluten-Free cookies for the ice cream social, and they were a big hit! Thank you Ben for thinking of our gluten-free members!

Gluten-Free Butterscotch Chocolate Chip Cookies

1 Cup Granulated Sugar
1 Cup packed brown sugar
½ cup butter, slightly softened
½ cup vegetable shortening
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
2 cups Gluten-Free All-purpose flour
2 cups Gluten-Free uncooked old-fashioned rolled oats
1 tsp baking soda
¼ tsp salt
½ tsp baking powder
1 cup butterscotch chips
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
½ cup chopped walnuts (Optional)

In a large mixing bowl, combine sugars, butter, shortening, eggs and vanilla extract. Beat at a medium speed of electric mixer until light and fluffy.
In a separate bowl: add flour, oats, baking soda, baking powder and salt, mix well and add to the first mixture. Beat on low speed until soft dough forms.

Stir in chips and walnuts.

Drop dough by heaping teaspoons full 2 inches apart on to ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes, until light brown.

Cool completely before storing.

Growing in Faith

On August 3rd, Pastor Sarah officiated at the baptism of Riley Jane Oquist at Swede Home.

Riley was born on January 8, 2022 and is the daughter of Andrew Oquist and Sierra Northbird.

Sponsors are Megan Oquist and Angie Oquist. We welcome Riley into God's kingdom.

On Sunday, August 7, 2022 Jarrett Althouse and Koleton Udey affirmed their baptism vows and were confirmed by Pastor Sarah Ruch to be members of Calvary Lutheran—Swede Home.

We welcome them as they continue in faith and leadership in the church.

Blessings to them both

Confirmation

THANK YOU

To my church family

Thank you for helping me celebrate my 98th birthday and for all the cards and birthday wishes.

Thanks to Ben for his phone call!!

AND a special thanks to my family for serving coffee and cookies.

God Bless you all!!

LaVerne Stevens

thank you

The family of Tory Jones would like to thank our Calvary family for the many cards, prayers, food and memorials during this difficult time. A special thanks to the WELCA ladies for the lunch and Pastors Sarah and Murray for their comforting words.

Mark and Tammy Jones and family

thank you

Dear Cheryl and Swede Home Members:

Thank you so much for the gifts of food you brought from the church. It's one less thing to think about when your brain is foggy.

I appreciate all the support the church community has shown our family through the years!

Thank you

The "Ernst Children"

PERSONAL CARE KITS

In the past, we have sent Personal care kits to Lutheran world relief, along with the quilts our members had made.

We no longer have an active quilt group—but we can still assemble the kits. During September, we will have a free will offering basket available if you would like to contribute a monetary donation. Each kit costs approximately $10-$12, and includes items recommended by Lutheran World Relief. Out goal is to assembly 75 kits, and we will take them to Norfolk to be sent on with area church donations.

The plan is to have a "group" assembly party, following worship service one Sunday in October, or a later time of day if after worship doesn't work.

Please watch the newsletter and bulletin for more information.

A very special THANK YOU to Pastor Sarah Ruch and her family for the 18 months of ministry that she has shared with those of us at Swede Home and First Lutheran Rising City.

We are so grateful for the spiritual leadership she has shared with us during our time of transition.

Caleb, Aaron and Hannah will always have a special spot in the heart of Swede Home as they often shared their musical talents and acolyte service which added much to our worship services.

Pastor Sarah has accepted a transitional call to Sheridan Lutheran Church in Lincoln and will be serving as the Pastor of local outreach and missions.

Peace go with you Pastor Sarah— and thanks and blessings from your SWEDE HOME Family

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
Sandy Johnston, Council Secretary
Diana Johnson, Organist
Linda Fuhr, Secretary
LeeAnn Willhoft, Custodian

Council Members:
Todd Hanquist, Lynn Hofmann, Dan Oquist,
Kent Adelson, Sandra Johnston, Kris Udey, Randy Lott

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: hillardy@pastorchristensen.com

Pastor Brenda Pfiefly is on emergency call for Calvary, her contact number is 402-416-5434

Please contact Linda Fuhr, Church Secretary at calvaryswedehomechurch@gmail.com or text or call 402-366-2091,

Meet a Member –Hillary Christensen

(continued from previous column)

I grew up in a few different places, but none were far away from each other. My family moved from Ithaca to Omaha and finally to Wahoo, where I graduated high school. My parents, Don and Lois Fick, previously owned a funeral home in Wahoo and Ashland, and I grew up with two siblings, Karl and Carrie. Fun fact: in high school (2010) I went on a synod mission trip to Minneapolis with members of Calvary Swede Home. We shared a bus and made lots of memories!

After high school I attended the University of Nebraska Kearney. During the summers I worked at Carol Joy Holling Camp in many roles: first as a counselor, then service project coordinator, and finally site coordinator. In 2014 I graduated with a degree in music education. I was a substitute teacher for one year before behind hired as an elementary music teacher in Elkhorn, where I taught for two years before leaving for seminary.

Evan and I met as college volunteers at a middle school lock-in at Bethany Lutheran Church in Elkhorn. We became friends and worked at Carol Joy Holling for a few years before we dated. We were married in 2017 and enjoyed one year of marriage before we each answered God's call to seminary and ordained ministry.

We have one son, Wilder, who was born in January. He came a month and half early, but was of a healthy weight and with strong lungs. He is seven months old now and loves to roll around, eat new foods, and try his best at scooching across the floor. He will smile at almost anything and really enjoys people watching!

Evan and I love to go camping. Our favorite place is southern Utah, especially Arches National Park and the Moab area. Another hobby that we enjoy together are board games. We love to play all different types and love to teach them to others. I also enjoy quilting and cross stitching. Most of all, I am an avid reader! My favorite books are any of the books in the Harry Potter series. If the weather is nice, you may find me lying in my hammock reading a good book.

Finally, I am passionate about my family, God, and serving my neighbor. I love to lead worship, and I especially focus on being creative in worship, Bible Study, and serving the community. I am so excited to be called to Calvary, and I cannot wait for all the ways we will grow in faith together.

We Reach to all our faith family in prayer and celebration

Remember in your prayers

Melissa Forsberg
Janice Forsberg
June Larson
Elaine Toline
LeRoy Hoyer

Jan Wells-Bachman
Austin Hinkle
All who are shut in and need prayers and support

- Genesis House and Living Waters Rescue Mission, Blue Valley Action, & Denver Metro Ministries
- Houses for Health recipients.
- Bishop Brian Maas and the Nebraska Synod staff Bishop-Elect Scott Johnson
- Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and all ELCA congregations and members
- Brody Ienn in service to our country
- Pastor Sarah and family as she ends her transitional ministry with us and goes where God Calls
- Our leaders as they face COVID19 decisions
- 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)

PICTURE DIRECTORY

Fran and Linda are in the process of updating the church directory, and hope to include pictures. To start, we are asking you send to the church either by email or mail::

- Email address, landline phone, ALL family cell numbers you would like included
- A family picture, or individual pictures of each member of your household (not sure what we will have room for, individual is preferred) Pictures can be either texted to Linda or emailed to church, or brought to church to be scanned

Anniversaries

September

8 Paul and Deborah Ernst

12 Becky (Willhoft) and Brandon Nielsen

18 Jessica and Dustin Noble

22 Steven and Kris Udey

25 Jim and Bonnie Carlson

26 Mickey and Krystal Berggren

Birthdays

September

01 Josh McCarville
03 Piyper Berggren
06 Clay Nielsen
07 Amanda Johnson
12 Kelsey Dittmer
13 Scott Walgren
15 Kerri Klein
17 Koleton Udey
19 Shelly Glatter
20 Jim Carlson
21 Jackie Walgren
22 Penny Udey
22 Clark Yungdahl
23 Loree Adelson
27 Don Paulson
30 Kailie McCarville
30 Heidi Smith

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the members who continue with their financial support for Swede Home Church. In these trying times, we realize even more the words "to give as you are able" God's Blessing

AUGUST

Assistant Minister – Lynn Hofmann
Scripture Reader – Sandy Johnston
Ushers – Layne and Deb Hanquist
Altar - Gloria Oquist
Acolyte – Jarrett Althouse
Bell Ringer – Colby Nelson

September 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 10:30 am Worship Service with communion	5	6	7	8 9 am Miriam Circle At Sandy Johnston's	9	10
11 9:00 am Worship Service	12	13	14 9 am Ruth Circle @4th Street Coffee 7 pm Men's bible study at Wayne Johnson	15	16	17
18 10:30 am Worship Service with communion	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 9:00 am Worship Service	26	27	28	29	30	

Pastor Scott took some time to answer some questions about himself and some reflections during his transition from Midland University's Campus Pastor to Bishop of the Nebraska Synod.

Where are you originally from?

I grew up on a family farm in Wakefield, Nebraska, just across the road from where my great-grandparents first farmed when they moved to Nebraska in the early 1900s. I was baptized and confirmed at Salem Lutheran Church in Wakefield.

Where did you receive your education?

I was one of 18 out of a class of 32 who attended Wakefield Public Schools from Kindergarten through 12th grade – small-town Nebraska education in all its glory. I received my Bachelor of Arts in the Classics from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1998 and my Master of Divinity from Luther Seminary in 2003.

Tell us about you. (family, pets, hobbies, etc.)

My wife Kristin and I met at Luther Seminary and were married in 2004. Kristin is a Deacon with specialties in youth and family ministry and lifelong faith formation. We have two daughters: Ainsley (15) and Alanna (14) who are students at Fremont Public Schools. We also have a black lab mix named Jack who's been with our family since we adopted him in 2009.

My immediate family all live in Nebraska. My parents built a house in Wakefield 10 years ago, and they are both enjoying retirement together. I have two younger brothers: my middle brother and his wife are educators at Wakefield Public Schools and currently live out on the farm where we grew up, and my youngest brother is a banker with Pinnacle Bank in Columbus, where he lives with his wife and daughter.

I'm an Enneagram 7, which means I'm usually managing about 3 hobbies too many just to keep things interesting. I'm a voracious reader, particularly in the science fiction, fantasy, and horror genres. Before feeling called to ministry, I was a music major with plans to become a band director or a professional trombonist, and I've tried to keep active in local community bands over the years. Since moving to Fremont I've been playing in the Omaha Symphonic Winds and with the Midland University Concert Band as needed. I've also played guitar for a number of years and I enjoy a lot of artists in the folk or singer/songwriter genre. I love to putter around our house; mowing, redoing some of our landscaping, building a bookcase for our youngest daughter, and generally trying to keep a 100 year-old brick colonial functional.

When did you realize you were called to ministry, specifically Word & Sacrament ministry?

I was a summer camp counselor at Carol Joy Holling during college, and one night during my second summer on staff, Pastor Roger Sasse asked if I'd ever considered going into the ministry. Like a lot of people, I hadn't up to that point, but I couldn't stop thinking about it afterwards. I'd begun to realize that I didn't have the passion it would take to be a professional musician or a music educator, and the more I thought about ordained ministry the more it seemed as though God was pulling me in that direction. I've very rarely felt as though ministry was not where I was supposed to be.

What has been your greatest joy professionally? Greatest challenge?

My greatest joy has been the privilege of accompanying people through all sorts of life experiences and doing my best to help them see what God might be up to in all of it. Baptisms, weddings, funerals, ordinations, anniversary celebrations, congregational recognitions – I've always been fascinated by the idea that God is *doing something* in the world in those moments, and ministers get to be witnesses to God's action in a lot of special ways. I keep a record of those events, and every time I open up that book to make another entry I spend a bit of time looking through the pages and remembering some of the special events that have been part of the ministry I've been lucky enough to carry out.

As to challenges, I've had plenty, some of which have come about because of my own mistakes or ignorance and some of which came about through other forms of dysfunction or simple bad luck. The hardest challenges to face have been the moments when something I've said or done has deeply hurt another person. It's one thing to acknowledge that a situation or circumstance isn't great: it's another thing to acknowledge that I've caused pain and suffering and have no excuse or justification. Letting people down is a miserable experience for most of the ministry leaders I know; it certainly has been for me. At the same time, I've learned something through each challenge I've faced, either about myself or about some other element of ministry in God's church; one thing I've definitely learned is the value of owning your own mistakes and apologizing for them.

What is your favorite hymn?

There are so many I'd love to put here! I've loved "Gather Us In" ever since I first heard it at the Lutheran Center in Lincoln way back in my college days, as well as "Day By Day" and "Thy Holy Wings." But in the end I'd have to choose "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" as it was arranged for acapella choir by F. Melius Christiansen – if you haven't heard the version that the St. Olaf Choir recorded for their "Great Hymns of Faith" CD series, it's worth a listen.

Aside from the Bible, what other books have influenced your life?

On the fiction side, I'd definitely lift up *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien; I first read it during high school and have probably read it close to 20 times over the years. *American Gods* and *Neverwhere* by Neil Gaiman are also on my list of favorites, as well as pretty much everything Stephen King has written over the years, particularly *The Stand* and *Insomnia*.

On the theological/non-fiction side, two theologians who have definitely shaped my theology, life, and ministry have been Gerhard Forde and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* by Gerhard Forde was a defining text for me during most of my seminary education, and Bonhoeffer's books *Discipleship*, *Life Together*, and *Ethics* have grown in influence for me in the years since seminary. I'd also raise up *A Failure of Nerve* by Edwin Friedman – this is a book about leadership and family systems theory that I've read and reread every few years since becoming a pastor, and one I may begin again this fall as I settle into this new calling.

What is your definition of leadership?

Right now I'd say this: leadership is identifying and using the gifts God has given us to support, draw out, develop and enhance the gifts God has given to others, all for the sake of the inbreaking of God's presence in the world. It's more than this, of course, but that's been sort of a developing idea for me over the last few years, both through some really good professional development experiences and a lot of personal reflection.

How have you been preparing for your role as Bishop of the Nebraska Synod?

I've been praying. A lot. Aside from that, it's been a lot of juggling priorities as I've also been closing out my time at Midland and taking some planned vacation time with our family. I feel very fortunate that the Nebraska Synod has the financial capacity to allow me to shadow Bishop Maas for a few weeks; this is not the case in some of the synods of the ELCA, and I think it's going to help me get up to speed much more smoothly than it would have been otherwise. Now that I'm in a place where I can focus my energies entirely on one call instead of two, there will be a lot of reading, a lot of meetings, and a lot of listening as we settle into this new way of doing things.

What are you most looking forward to as Bishop of the Nebraska Synod?

I'm excited about seeing the panoramic view of all that we do together and figuring out how to be a vocal supporter for the good work that's already afoot in the Nebraska Synod. That's just one part of it, however: I'm excited to work with our strong Synod staff, and to help encourage and raise up new leaders in the church, and to learn more about what ministry looks like on the synodical and churchwide level after spending most of my career in local ministries in congregations and campus ministries. As an Enneagram 7, boredom is one of the things that I tend to avoid – I know that boredom will not be a problem for quite some time in this new call, and that's exciting as well!

Know God, Love God, Share God's Love

Council Notes

There was no August Council meeting, they will meet next on September 11 following the worship service.

Even so, August was a busy month. Just to recap:

- A family baptism for Riley Oquist was held on Wednesday August 3
- August 7—Jarrett Althouse and Koleton Udey were confirmed. Both young gentlemen were the servers of the Sacrament of Holy Communion
- August 7—the last Sunday for Pastor Sarah Ruch, a coffee following the church service honored the confirmands and Pastor Sarah
- August 14—the First Sunday for Pastor Hillary and Pastor Evan. Following service, the Stevens family hosted a 98th birthday celebration for LaVerne. We rejoice the day the Lord has made
- August 21—Pastor Evan was in the pulpit and we celebrated Holy Communion
- August 28—Leroy Hoyer was here for worship service and the Hanquist Family hosted a special coffee for Hank's 92nd birthday. God is good all the time, All the time God is Good
- Men's Bible Study met at Wayne's and both the Ruth and Miriam Circles meet—so many ways to worship our Lord.

Serve the Lord—Praise the Lord

Treasurer Report continued:

- Church Utilities: we did a Propane Pre-pay with CVA for locked in fuel pricing
- Transfer from Memorial also covered the Elevator Entrance Décor that the church paid in May in the amount of $ 150.00

Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance, July 2022	**$ 11,544.65**
OFFERINGS:	
General Offering	11,961.00
ELCA Disaster Relief	5.00
ELCA Mission Share	350.00
First Lutheran for May Share	2,232.60
	14,548.60
EXPENSES:	
Vance eCheck Monthly Fee	9.69
Fellowship expense	16.00
Polk County News subscription	35.00
Cody's Computer Contract	34.99
Office supplies	36.78
Office Net, Copier contract & Usage	116.00
Noyd Repair, 3 church AC serviced	132.65
Postage Expense	220.80
Mowing and Trim	356.25
Office chair, Paid by Memorial fund	490.06
Lorray Smith Estate: Mission Giving	
Mission Heart, Inc Central City (June)	1,000.00
Brian Maas Leadership Fund (July)	1,000.00
Synod Mission Share	1,560.00
First Lutheran June share	2,259.56
UTILITIES:	
Church	9,188.82*
Parsonage	130.18
SALARIES:	
Pastor Sarah Ruch	2,163.20
Portico Benefit Services	1,072.87
Commuting Allowance	366.91
SECA	215.14
Mileage	93.85
Cell Phone Allowance	32.50
Supply pastor Vicars Christensen	251.88
Withholding 2nd quarter lay persons	595.45
Diana	476.24
LeeAnn	241.50
Linda	560.38
	12,581.36
BALANCE AS OF June 30,2022	**22,656.70**

* see column to the left for some explanations

*This page is only seen by Calvary Members