
CALVARY COMMENT

February 2025

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

English District

208 Woods Drive

Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

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STEWARDSHIP CORNER

HOW DO WE RESPOND?

Stewardship has several parts that can be summed up in a couple of words: opportunities, abilities, wealth. Stewardship is a response that flows from the treasures of the Gospel. God created and gave us the responsibility to be stewards of His creation.

Stewardship never starts with the steward. It always starts with the One who created and sustains everything: **God Himself**. The steward **responds** in faith and gratitude. It all seems so simple. Two basic questions should be reflected upon by each of us to steer our stewardship: **(1) How has God blessed us?** and **(2) How is God calling us to respond?**

So how is God calling us to respond? Our stewardship does include the offering plate. But it goes far beyond it as well. Using our time and ability in service at Calvary is part of our response. He is calling us with presented opportunities. We can use our abilities and wealth as our **"light shining before others"** (Mt 5:16) in managing what God has given us.

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Will it be a long winter or an early spring? In our local folklore, an answer to that question will be sought by observing whether a variety of rodents dragged from their dens will see their shadows or not. Not taken too seriously, these customs can be a bit of fun in February. But regardless of what the groundhog sees, astronomers can tell us that spring will officially begin with the Vernal Equinox on the morning of March 20.

In our liturgical calendar this year, we will have a "long winter" prior to the beginning of spring. That is, we will have a long season following Epiphany. Due to this year's late date of Easter on April 20, the start of Lent won't occur until Ash Wednesday's arrival on March 5. This means that we will have eight Sundays after Epiphany in 2025.

The extended number of Sundays after Epiphany brings us more opportunities to hear how Jesus reveals Himself as the LORD's Christ through miracles and by teaching about life in the kingdom of God. That leads up to the account of Jesus' Transfiguration, where He shows Himself to be divine by manifesting His glory for a short time prior to beginning His work of accomplishing salvation through His death and resurrection.

This revealing of Jesus' identity as the LORD's Christ is the emphasis of the Epiphany season. Our hymns of the season point to this. We might recall Christopher Wordsworth's familiar lyrics in "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise" (LSB 394) that focus on such revelation. There is repeated use of the phrase: *"God in man made manifest."* How was that shown? *"Manifest by the star to the sages from afar... Manifest at Jordan's stream, Prophet, Priest, and King supreme.... Manifest in pow'r divine, changing water into wine.... Manifest in making whole palsied limbs and fainting soul.... Manifest in valiant fight, quelling all the devil's might...."* And so on.

The incidents mentioned in that hymn are ways that Jesus revealed His divinity, the great mystery that God had become man and dwelt among us. But this revelation accomplished more than showing that this had taken place. The impact of Christ's Incarnation—God becoming man—was to bring salvation to fallen mankind. Hearing this revelation about Jesus' identity allows us to know just exactly who goes to the cross of Calvary during Lent. We will be told to pay attention to Him—**"This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"** (Lk 9:35)—even as He says that He must lay down His life and take it up again. We are to listen to Him, because this is how our needed salvation comes to us.

Even as we mark a long Epiphany season prior to Lent this year, we are also going through another type of "long winter" before the beginning of our eternal spring. We are still waiting for the great and final revelation of Jesus to take place. That day can't be determined in the same way that we can always calculate the Vernal Equinox. Nor can a groundhog tell us whether that day will arrive tomorrow or six weeks, six months, six years, six decades, or six centuries from now.

But as we listen to the truth and receive the benefits that Jesus does reveal to us in His Word, we can be ready for His great and final revelation—no matter when it occurs. That needed preparation is what we pray for, not just annually at the end of the liturgical year but also in our familiar Epiphany hymn: *"Grant us grace to see Thee, Lord, / Present in Thy holy Word—/ Grace to imitate Thee now / And be pure, as pure art Thou; / That we might become like Thee / At Thy great epiphany / And may praise Thee, ever blest / God in man made manifest."* (LSB 394:5)

STEWARDSHIP CORNER (Continued from Page 1)

As we respond at Calvary, our responses occur in the Christian world. Balancing our secular life with Christian values and blessings can sometimes be difficult. At Calvary, we reach out with the Word, so that others may know of His grace and salvation. How has God blessed us at Calvary? He has blessed us with many opportunities for hearing and studying the Word. He has also blessed us with opportunities to keep Calvary pleasing to Him through our responsive actions: giving 1-1 mission dollars, preparing the altar, baking cookies, assisting in all phases of the clothes closet. The list goes on and on. Some brief portrayals of those were published in last year's "Tell the Story" newsletter inserts.

Calvary has many ongoing needs. It takes our faithful, responsive stewardship of ourselves—our abilities and our dollars—to keep moving forward. *"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*(2Co 9:7)

Thus we go back to the questions that drive our lives of stewardship: (1) *How has God blessed us?* and (2) *How is God calling us to respond?*

Upcoming Dates

Sunday, April 13

Palm Sunday – Holy Week Begins

Sunday, April 20

Easter Sunday

Saturday, May 3

LWML Philadelphia Zone Spring Rally

Sunday, May 4

2nd Quarter Voters Assembly Meeting

Thursday, May 29

**Ascension Day Divine Service at
Mount Calvary – Lititz, PA**

Thursday—Saturday, June 26–28

**English District Convention
Ann Arbor, MI**

2025 LENT WORSHIP SCHEDULE

To mark Lent at Calvary, additional worship services will be held during the weeks of that season:

MAR 5	Ash Wednesday Divine Services	10:30am/7:00pm
MAR 12	Lent Midweek Prayer Offices	10:30am/7:00pm
MAR 19	Lent Midweek Prayer Offices	10:30am/7:00pm
MAR 26	Lent Midweek Prayer Offices	10:30am/7:00pm
APR 2	Lent Midweek Prayer Offices	10:30am/7:00pm
APR 9	Lent Midweek Prayer Offices	10:30am/7:00pm
APR 17	Holy Thursday Divine Services	12:00pm/7:00pm
APR 18	Good Friday Services	12:00pm/7:00pm
APR 19	Vigil of Easter	7:00pm

All are invited to participate in these services as they are able.

The Lent Midweek Prayer Offices will focus on the Passion Narrative recorded in the Gospel of Luke.

CALVARY CLOTHES CLOSET

Our **next opportunity** to serve our neighbors through the Calvary Clothes Closet will be on **Saturday, March 1 from 11:00am –12:30pm.**

Most important during early-February to mid-February are continuing donations of clean, lightly worn, warm clothes. If it were not for your ongoing generosity, this outreach to our neighbors in need wouldn't be possible.

In late-February, organization and set-up of the clothing will take place. Be sure to check the Sunday bulletins for updated scheduling information about times and dates.

For more information about the Calvary Clothes Closet, please call Polly Pass (717-579-0296).

LWML/LADIES AID SOCIETY NEWS

SPRING RALLY - MARK YOUR CALENDARS: It's not too early to think about Spring and the Philadelphia Zone Spring Rally. Calvary LWML Society will host this event on **Saturday, May 3**. Look for future announcements about registration, rally speakers, and gathering of items for a special mission project.

MITES COLLECTION: Mites to support mission projects can be brought to monthly LWML meetings or placed in the wooden container in the Narthex. Thank you for your continued financial contributions that quickly add up!

NEXT MEETING: Our next monthly meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, February 15 at 9:30am** in the Education Wing Meeting Room. The group will review the study "God Sees Our Story—Therefore Rejoice!" from the Winter 2024 issue of *Lutheran Women's Quarterly* and hold a business meeting.

THANK YOU FOR PRAYERS

Gordon and I thank the congregation for lifting us up in prayer during our surgeries and recovery, which continues.

There is great comfort in knowing that our Christian brothers and sisters are bringing our names before our Lord.

We look forward to returning to worship with you as time and recovery allows.

Blessings,

Joyce and Gordon Moul

PARISH CASH FLOW REPORT
January 1–December 31, 2024

INCOME	
General Offering	\$ 241,024.24
Mission Offering	12,955.00
Building Fund	24,379.06
Plate Offering	4,643.12
Memorials	243.77
My Neighbor Fund	0.00
1-1-1 Project	503.00
Initial Offering	220.00
Church Seasonal Service Offerings	10,291.15
Building Use	400.00
Refunds	0.00
Other Income	61,182.81
Thrivent Choice Dollars	526.00
Lutheran Witness Subscriptions	315.86
Sunday School	45.00
Youth Group	1,025.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 357,754.01
EXPENDITURES	
Pastoral Expenses	\$ 104,547.34
Personnel Expenses	38,884.04
Real Estate Expenses	46,883.19
Operating Expenses	54,662.83
Ministry Expenses	7,424.32
Mission Expenses	20,750.00
Mortgage Expenses	82,766.53
Non-Budgeted Expenses	81,101.73
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 437,019.98
NET CASH FLOW	– \$ 79,265.97

NOTES: Other Income includes contributions to the Education Wing Roof Replacement Fund Drive and the Robert Wallick Estate Gift that was designated for the Endowment Fund. Mortgage Expenses include payment of remaining Renovation Funds collected in 2023 toward the principal of renovation loans. Non-Budgeted Expenses include transfer of the Robert Wallick Estate Gift to the Endowment Fund (\$35,000) and payment of the Education Wing roof replacement project (\$44,430).

CALVARY ALTAR GUILD

The Calvary Altar Guild will meet on **Sunday, February 9** following Divine Service. This meeting is open to anyone interested in serving on the Altar Guild and all current members.

We are in need of additional Altar Guild members. Please speak to Lynne Wicker (717-432-3118) for more information or with questions about this way of serving at Calvary.

Thank you for your service with this important task. God bless you all.



MILITARY SHARE PROGRAM

Military Share food distributions continue on the third Wednesday of each month. We are currently serving 46 families, totaling 114 people. Our next distribution is scheduled for February 19.

On December 11, 2024, Jeff Douden and Bob Ardner met with Pam Hicks in order to reconcile our Central Pennsylvania Food Bank account regarding the \$2,500 Elks Club grant. More information will be provided as this process is completed.

NEW INITIATIVE IN PLANNING: VETERANS SUPPORT DINNER

This initiative has changed significantly due to recent developments. Details will be provided as adjusted plans become fully developed.

ONGOING INITIATIVE: MOVE IN/MOVE OUT BOXES

Following the retirement of Bill Reed, the Harrisburg YWCA no longer has a specific homeless veteran program. But the Operation Barnabas Chapter has decided to partner with the Harrisburg YWCA's Transition in Place (TIP) program, which often houses veterans along with their spouses and children.

The TIP program houses veteran recipients for a year in a VA-approved apartment complex. Case management is provided in that year in hopes of the veteran being able to take over the lease the following year. Our past partners from the American Legion Auxiliary will be contacted to see if they will continue their support of this form of assisting veterans in our area.

ADOPT-A-CHAP PROGRAM

Calvary has adopted Chaplain Aaron Bell and his family. The Bells attended Calvary for several months while awaiting orders for his next duty station.

Mailing Address

Chaplain Aaron Bell
 4978 Jamestown Ct
 Columbus, OH 43220

Personal Email: naphshi@gmail.com

Military Email: aaron.bell@marines.usmc.mil

HONOR WALL

Any member of Calvary who is a veteran and would like their name added to our Honor Plaque, please speak with either Bob Ardner or Jeff Douden.

CALVARY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
208 Woods Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
Address Service Requested



Next Calvary Comment Deadline is Sunday, February 16, 2025.
Please send info to CalvaryComment@Verizon.net.

🎵 **PARISH MUSIC PROGRAM NOTES** 🎵

Greetings to my Fellow Parishioners:

I must start back in December since I missed the January Comment deadline. A big thank you to all my cantors who participated in the Christmas Eve pre-service music. Hard work and dedication allowed you to sing three musically different anthems.

Transitioning into January, but not quite. On December 27, I fell in my home resulting in multiple bone breaks and my not being with you for an extended period of time. I had the schedule for cantors planned ahead, with processions and cantors lined up. Thank you for following the plans without my leadership. I also thank Briana Smith on flute and Robert Lustrea on trombone who were able to lead the congregation in worship along with Anna Knych on the organ.

Thank you to many members of the congregation for cards, texts, emails and prayers too numerous to count. Without your support, I wouldn't be this far along on this difficult journey. It's only been three weeks as a temporary shut-in but this was never on my radar. I look forward to being in your midst as soon as my shoulder will allow.

Karen Appel
Parish Music Director



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