

Celebrate a tradition of service and our musical heritage

Sign Up and Serve October 11

As we enter the month of October, we look forward to a unique opportunity for our Calvary family: we will take "church" beyond Calvary's walls and out into our community.

October 11, Faith in Action Sunday, gives us a chance to "branch out and bear fruit," as we serve our neighbors in need.

On October 11, plan to wear your work clothes and be ready to serve! We will meet at our usual worship times (8:30 and 10:45) for a brief Sending Service, then work groups will head out to project sites to clean up public areas, help install storm (window) kits, assist residents with miscellaneous tasks in their homes and yards, paint and repair city park structures, wash windows, prepare soups and meal items, make baby blankets or quilts for those in need, spend time with nursing home residents or group home residents, and many other projects.

It is going to be a day of "church" like we've never had before and an opportunity for our body of believers to be a visible sign of Christ's love in our community. It will be exciting!

Between now and October 11, make sure you sign up for a service project of your choice. Sign up sheets are on the walls of the fellowship hall, and there are project choices for every age and ability level. We want to make sure we get every member of Calvary involved in this day of service! So, get your name on a project list as soon as possible so you can be a part of this day of "branching out."

History and Harmony November 1

On Sunday, November 1, our next Jubilee event, History and Harmony, takes place during our two worship services and at the Adult Forum.

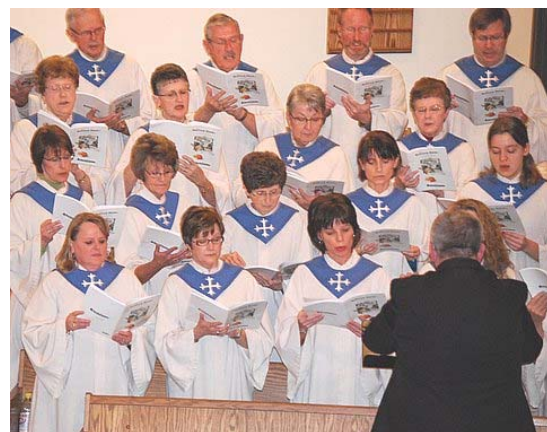
We will have an opportunity to learn the history and unique aspects of some of our favorite Lutheran hymns when we host Dr. Gracia Grindal at our worship services. Dr. Grindal is a hymn writer, poet, and Luther Seminary professor, and she will lead a narrated hymn sing that morning. She is a very engaging speaker (omit musician), and it will be a treat to sing favorite older hymns as we learn their history and meaning and explore some newer ones too.

It also seems very fitting to be able to focus on the hymns of our faith and our history during our Jubilee year, as we celebrate our roots and our fifty years of growth. We also celebrate that our musical tradition at Calvary is one of our best gifts.

We hope you will be able to share in both of these exciting Jubilee events that are taking place this month!



Sign Up and Serve October 11



History & Harmony November 1

Jubilee Feature: *Celebrating Calvary's People*

Calvary has a group of dedicated members who each has quietly provided a valuable service to the congregation for many years. Without these people, our spiritual lives would be poorer. Over the next few months as we approach our anniversary celebration we will feature one such special person.

We begin our series with Jim Hatlevig. Jim was the first to videotape our worship. He has provided this service for some 20 years, only rarely missing a service. Because he is in the balcony, we don't see him at work. Jim laughingly says, "I was the only one with a video camera. I thought all I had to do was push a button. It's become much more sophisticated than that." He continued, "I would come to church anyway, so I don't feel this burdens or restricts my life. I want to be here."

Interestingly, Jim is part of Calvary's only four generational family of members: his in-laws, children and grandchildren worship there, too.

Life Events

Congratulations to Kersten & Kyle Buskirk on the birth of their son, Kael James on Wednesday, September 9. Grandparents are Jim & Miriam Hatlevig and great grandparents are Mel & Phyllis Sucher.

Congratulations to Kristi Genoch and Matthew Bailey, married Saturday, September 12 at the Genoch home.

Congratulations to Amy Kalina and Christopher Braddock, married Saturday, September 12 at Weld Hall on the campus of Minnesota State University, Moorhead.

Congratulations to Mark Sailer and Erica Olson, married Saturday, September 19 at Calvary.

Condolences to the family and friends of Maxine Leraas, a member of Calvary who lived at the Frazee Care Center who died Thursday, August 27.

John and Kathleen Kallis and Jacob and Lindsey have transferred to Sion Lutheran Church in Lancaster, Minnesota.

New Members

New Member Sunday is October 25. There will be two orientation sessions for new members Wednesdays October 14 and 21 at 7 p.m. If you or someone you know is interested in joining our Calvary family, please contact the church office.

Thank you

Mike and I want to thank everyone for all the prayer support while I went through treatment for cancer these past six weeks. The results are positive. I am home now resuming my normal activities.

Peggy Avelsgaard

Faith in Action Sunday is October 11

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAITH IN ACTION ON OCTOBER 11:

- ⇒ Making soup for Meal Ministry
- ⇒ Making fleece blankets for Baby Bin***
- ⇒ Installing plastic storm window
- ⇒ Calvary Lutheran Cemetery
- ⇒ Calvary Lutheran pruning and trimming
- ⇒ Hedge at Calvary parsonage
- ⇒ Activities for special needs people
- ⇒ Roadside cleanup
- ⇒ Bingo and singing at Perham Nursing Home
- ⇒ Quilts of Valor sewing
- ⇒ Making bookmarks and cards by Sunday School
- ⇒ Paint storage building at Arvig Park
- ⇒ Paint boundary fence posts at Paul Miller Park
- ⇒ Stain new fence section at Paul Miller Park
- ⇒ Clean DNR lake access sites on 7 lakes
- ⇒ Cleanup gardens at Perham Food Shelf
- ⇒ Inside/outside household chores for Calvary members, others
- ⇒ Cleanup bike path at Arvig Park
- ⇒ Cleanup City of Perham parks and cemetery
- ⇒ Providing nursery care

*** Please donate any fleece that you may have at home that is at least 1-1/2 yards in size and suitable for a baby. Please call Liz Swanson 347-7926 with questions.



**ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25
12 NOON-FELLOWSHIP HALL**

If you had your portrait taken for the pictorial directory, please stop by the table in the fellowship hall to pick up your free directory or go to the church office during the week to get it. If you did not have a portrait taken, you can still purchase a directory for \$10. If you have not done so, please pick up your free 8x10 picture at Photo Magic.

Thank You to all who helped out with the photo directory! I couldn't have done it alone. . . Tina

Our response to the flu and other pandemics

Planning for our Congregation's Response to the H1N1 Flu or other pandemics, our Calvary Congregational Council had a conversation in May about the pandemic flu and other disasters and concluded the following:

We will give members of our congregation permission at any time, if they are anxious about spreading or receiving germs, to choose to share the peace in an alternative way, to not shake hands after the service and to not participate in communion.

If we feel there is a greater risk of disease transmission as identified by public health authorities, we might ask people to have no physical contact. At that time, we may even invite those who feel they are at greater risk of becoming ill to not attend worship until further notice.

It is possible we may be asked by the governor to stop having worship as a means of stopping the spread of the H1N1 influenza.

Faith in Action Sunday is part of Calvary's year long Jubilee Celebration. October 11, Faith in Action Sunday, following each service (8:30 and 10:45) which will be a "sending" service, Calvary members will go into the community to assist individuals, families, groups or agencies with specific needs. Needs may include yard work, roadside cleanup, help with household chores, cemetery and park cleanups, sewing projects and visitations.

Please sign up in the fellowship hall to participate in your favorite project—some of which are listed at left—by October 4.

Anyone in the community who has a need or knows of someone who needs assistance is asked to contact Reg Hansen, Director of Caring Ministries at the church office at 346-4780 e-mail Reg at reghansen@calvaryperham.com.

In this case, and even in intermediate situations, we will be prepared to use technology and other alternative means of communication to include people in our worship while they remain in their homes.

Those means of reaching out to people could include radio broadcasts, television broadcasts, Internet web casts, printed sermons on the website, group telephone calling networks, "The Wire" email network, and text messages.

Please let us know your thoughts and suggestions.

Women's Ministry at Calvary

Wednesday, September 16 was a busy day for Calvary women. Nine of us attended the Cluster 9 Fall Gathering at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Parkers Prairie. The theme for the day was "God's Word Is Our Great Heritage." The morning devotions by Dawn Reisig, Synod authorized Pastor, centered on Colossians 3:15-17. We were encouraged to Read, Meditate, Pray, Listen and Feel God's presence as we study God's Word both individually and collectively. This is in keeping with our Synod-wide emphasis on the Book of Faith initiative this year. We also enjoyed singing several old favorite hymns together.

The Heritage theme was carried out in the presentation by our speaker, Ann Zemke, gifted author and artist, whose message was "The Brave Journey of an Orphan Train Rider." Her story was conveyed against the background of her beautiful handmade quilt which told the life story of her grandmother, using the words of her grandmother's diary.

This story along with pictures are beautifully depicted in a book titled "They Named Me Marjorie" and is available in our church library. Check it out!

After a lovely lunch, we returned to our Fellowship Hall for a Mini General Meeting. During our discussions about long-term activities, we elected Terri Olson as our Leader, or Coordinator, for 2010. Copies of the Secretary's minutes are available from the Circle chairs or Executive Board members. It has been said that "Women's work is never done," and it is so with the women's work at Calvary! In order to be well equipped for service, let us take to heart the word of St. Paul in Colossians 3:16:



"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God."

Phyllis Sucher, Co-Secretary

What's Happening in Men's Ministry



The Fishermen hosted a second ATV trip. On Saturday September 12 the All Terrain Vehicle outing began in the Calvary parking lot at 7:30 a.m. and moved to the Tamarac Wild Life Refuge. As usual there was the hearty breakfast provided and cooked by Uncle Joe. The weather was beautiful, the fellowship was exceptional and the 45 mile ride was enjoyable except for a few minor mechanical problems. Lunch was prepared on the shore of Rock Lake north of highway 113. The day ended with a great dinner at Ice Cracking Lodge. The Fishermen of Calvary plan and sponsor a major activity each month to promote fellowship and encourage men to become more involved in the church. Watch for the announcements of the activities and join in.

Pheasant Hunt. Dan Miller and Craig Swanson are organizing a pheasant hunt for October 31st. They will be back by 3 pm for those of you that are Trick or Treating. Let them know if you want to participate.

Join Calvary's Grill Team! Would you be interested in being on Calvary's "Grill Team" for Calvary's 50th Anniversary Celebration? Contact Jill Shipman at 346-5395 or ships@arvig.net.

Men's Breakfast. Men's Breakfast group meets in the Matthias Room at 7 a.m. the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. We welcome you to join us for a hearty breakfast and Bible study centered on the next Sunday's lessons.



Women's News

Charity Circle Wednesday, October 7 at 9:30 a.m. in the Matthias Room.

Faith Circle Wednesday, October 7 at 1:30 p.m. in the Matthias Room.

Peace Circle Wednesday, October 14 at 9:30 a.m. in the Matthias Room.

Java Jams meets Fridays at 8:30 a.m. in the Mary Room. This is an informal study and we welcome anyone to join at any time. Questions? Call Jill Shipman at 346-5395.

Kitchen Cleaning. Join us on Tuesday, October 20 at 9 a.m.

A Saturday Bible study will begin Saturday, October 24, and will meet at 9:30 a.m. in the Matthias Room. We meet for five weeks (ending November 21), take a holiday break, then the next 6 weeks start again in January, and take us to Lent. This study, "Jesus, the One and Only," by Beth Moore is a study of the life of Jesus, based on the book of Luke. It is a study combined with video series taped on location in Jerusalem and throughout Israel. Come get to know Jesus as if you had walked with Him during his earthly days of ministry. Please contact Tracy Bieger at 346-4780 to register.

Marriage Encounter

How Does God Love Us? One way is through the nurturing love a married couple gives to each other. The next Lutheran Marriage Encounter Week-ends in Minnesota are October 16-18 in Duluth and November 20-22 in Brooklyn Center. Please register a month in advance. For more information, contact Dick & Judy Dehnel at 952-432-3105, Pete & Phyllis McMahon at 763-561-1575 or visit www.godlovesmarriage.org.

Congratulations!

Brandi Nelson, daughter of Kermit and Lori Nelson, was selected to represent Minnesota at the 2010 Special Olympics National Games this summer in Lincoln, Nebraska. Her event is gymnastics and only 2 kids from each state are selected so this is a big honor for Brandi and her family.

Luther Crest

CHARITABLE GIVING

October 8. Luther Crest, along with the partners through our Charitable Gifting-Grant, will sponsor two Charitable Gifting Workshops, October 8, 2009. The first will be at 10:30 a.m. finishing with lunch and the second will be at 4:30 p.m. finishing with dinner. Learn how you or our family could participate in leaving legacy gift or immediate gifts to Luther Crest or your favorite charity. For more information, contact Dave Holtz, Luther Crest executive director, daveh@luthercrest.org

SNOWSNOE WEEKEND

November 14-15. Make your own traditional snow-shoes, and be ready to use them this winter and for many more to come! We begin Saturday morning, 9:00-9:30 am, with departure noon Sunday. Lodging, meals, and all supplies are included. For more information, contact Luther Crest at 320-846-2431 or visit www.luthercrest.org

CHRISTMAS IN BRANSON

November 29-December 4. We travel by motor-coach, staying in hotels en route in St. Joseph, Missouri and in Branson. Includes lodging, 13 meals and eight Branson shows, as well as worship, daily devotions, Christian fellowship and bus fun! We conclude our trip with the Concordia College Christmas Concert in Moorhead.

Two new adult faith enrichment opportunities!

Advanced Adult Study: Seekers
Tuesdays 8:30-9:30 am

We're doing something new at Calvary. We are organizing a group more like a college or seminary level class. We will read some good books and you can expect homework each week so we will be prepared for a serious discussion. Our first series first met September 29 and meets from 8:30-9:30 AM Tuesdays in the Matthias Room. We will read *A People's History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story* by Diana Butler Bass, published March 3, 2009, cost \$20. Our adult education budget will cover half the cost so we ask that participants pay the other \$10. That should take us 8-10 weeks and then we will try a new book as the class decides. If we have enough people asking, we may add another evening venue as well. Please contact Tracy Bieger at 346-4780.

Parenting Study: Love and Logic®
Three sessions starting November 1

This is a philosophy founded by Jim Fay and Foster W. Cline, M.D., and is based on the experience of a combined total of over 75 years working with and raising kids. It provides simple and practical techniques to help teachers and parents have less stress and more fun while raising responsible kids.

Rob McNair will lead three sessions exploring this parenting approach starting on Sunday, November 1 after the second service. Whether you are struggling with toddler temper tantrums or how to get your teen to do chores, there will be lots of ideas presented on how to handle these and other tough situations.

Please contact Tracy Bieger to sign up for this great opportunity. Childcare will be provided. Join us for one, two or all three sessions!

Children's Ministry Happenings

Faith In Action Sunday October 11

The Sunday school kids are highly encouraged to participate in family friendly service projects for Faith in Action Sunday, but there will be a card-making activity at the church starting at 9:40 a.m.

Sunday School Grades 5-6

5th & 6th Grade Parents. I need signed consent forms for your child to participate with the curriculum online. If you have any questions regarding the safety of the website, visit www.mygrapple.com, and click on "Parent Safety Information."

Youth & Family Ministry

Pumpkins for a Purpose.

"Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain..."

Matthew 13:8

Many thanks to Rich and Carol Bucholz for another successful pumpkin harvest. Your time, energy, and generosity are greatly appreciated. This project has quickly grown into a Calvary tradition that everyone looks forward to each fall. Last year money generated from this project went to support the Feed My Starving Children event hosted in Perham as well as the recently established Backpack program that helps to ensure students in our community have enough to eat over the weekend. In addition, some of the funds were saved over the last few years to help students attend the ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July.

Thank you Rich and Carol for being our "good soil" in which we can grow and flourish. The spiritual grain you are producing is abundant!

Youth Gatherings. The Sr. High Synod Gathering (Grades 9-12) is Friday, October 30-Sunday, November 1 at Cragun's Resort in Brainerd. Cost is \$90. The Middle School Synod Gathering (Grades 6-8) is November 21-22 at Arrow Wood Resort in Alexandria. Cost is \$60. Sign up with Rob.

Youth Wednesdays. Confirmation classes for students grades 8 and 9 are Wednesdays from 6 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. There is a free will offering meal for students at 5:30 p.m. We encourage parents to contact Jill Shipman or Missy Graham if you can help with this weekly meal. After confirmation, grades 7-12 are invited to the Loft for Wednesday Night Alive which is another opportunity for fellowship and faith during the week.

Sunday Morning Rap. Join us Sunday mornings for Sunday Morning Rap, when youth in grades 7-12 meet Sundays at 9:40 a.m. during the school year. Get yourself to The Loft for a cool faith focus and fellowship including donuts, cappuccino and hot chocolate! This year we will focus on The Parables Of Jesus.

Worship Helpers. Youth serve as worship helpers the first Sunday of each month. Check the web site to see when you're on the schedule. Questions? Contact Rob.

Stephen Ministry at Calvary

Stephen Ministry Monthly Meeting

On Monday September 14, Stephen Ministers gathered for their monthly meeting of education and supervision. There were 14 in attendance.

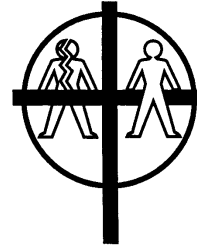
Bob Sloneker was the program presenter. He talked about the impact of divorce on the lives of those involved and offered practical suggestions of how we as Stephen Ministers can assist people who are experiencing the impact of divorce. Bob also explained the Beginning Experience program which is a support group for divorced and widowed persons. Beginning Experience helps people understand the importance of healing before seeking or entering into another relationship. We are grateful for Bob's presentation and for his ham and turkey salad and most of all for his banana desert.

Stephen Ministers: The After People

People often ask, "What exactly is a Stephen Minister?" One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the After People. Stephen Ministers are there:

After the phone call you hoped you'd never get...after the divorce papers are served and the bottom falls out of your life...after the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you've held at bay come crashing in on you...after the doctor says "I'm sorry but there's nothing more we can do..."after the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, "Welcome to your new home"...after the last child honks the horn, waves and drives away, and the house seems suddenly empty...after the gavel goes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away...after the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible...after you find a pink slip with your final paycheck...after your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the "After People." They are ready to come alongside you—or your friends, neighbors, coworkers or relatives—and provide comfort and support as long after as needed.



Caring and Sharing Ministries

Justice Journeys Silent Auction

It's here...the 7th Annual Mission Silent Auction! You may have noticed the wonderful collection of things at the beginning of our Auction September 27. Thanks to all who donated their talents to help make this event a success. The Silent Auction continues Sunday, October 4 with bids closing at 10:45. The Justice Journeys Team will be preparing fresh hot caramel rolls to enjoy as you shop...proceeds will go toward short term mission projects.

Common Hope Mission Trip

Looking for the adventurous! The Justice Journeys team is currently planning it's 2010 trip to Common Hope in Guatemala. At this printing – we are looking at the week of March 13 – 20, 2010 for a team of 10-12 and will need to make a commitment by mid-October with a \$200.00 deposit due at that time. Cost for team members is \$1200 for ten day trip, \$1000 for eight day trip. We can chose the length of our trip. Airfare is additional (about \$500-\$600) and is to be paid about three months in advance with the balance one month before the trip. Scholarship funds are available to offset costs – please contact Carla at 218-346-6486 if interested.

TWIGS—Together Winning in God's Service

We strive to meet ongoing needs of individuals and families in our community that cannot be met through traditional resources. Below are some needs we were able to meet this past month:

- ⇒ New eye glass lenses were paid for a high school student.
- ⇒ Piano Lesson fees were paid for a music student.
- ⇒ Pharmacy prescriptions were paid.
- ⇒ Swimming lessons were paid.
- ⇒ A gift of \$200 was given to an area mom who has been unable to work in the later part of her pregnancy.

Several needs are on the tree in the fellowship hall waiting for sponsorship including sponsorship of two 4-year-olds for Kids Adventure.

All donations flow through Calvary and are tax deductible.

Thank you for supporting this ministry – your generosity and love for our neighbors in need is appreciated.

The Backpack Program: Satisfy The Hunger

Thank you Calvary once again for your generous donations. During the month of September we were able to send home 30 food bags per week with preschool, elementary, middle school and high schools students in the Perham School District. That number will increase to at least 42 food bags during the month of October. When told she would be finding this food in her backpack, a 3rd grade girl said, "We could really use some extra food at our house." A 1st grade boy was very excited to be able to take food home for his younger sibling as well as himself! Thank you from hungry children in Perham.



Quilters and Sew-ers! You can join the quilting from home. If you can't come on Thursday morning, you can sew quilts at home. Call Leona Rothiger 346-6633 if you could take pieces already cut and laid out and sew them at home at your own convenience. Or join the quilting crew on Thursday mornings anytime from 9 till 12 noon.

A new Grief Support and Education Group for Parents and Grandparents who have lost a child (of any age) to death. We meet the second Thursday of the month, 5:30 to 6:30 pm at the New York Mills Public Library meeting room. A light supper is provided and there is no need to preregister. For more information call Lakeland Hospice and Home Care at 888-820-7885.

Hospice Red River Valley needs volunteers to assist patients by giving wheelchair rides, taking patients to coffee, reading to patients and/or just be a friend/sitting with them so the caregiver can take a break. Hairstylists also needed to provide haircuts for patients. Training and ongoing support provided. Scheduling visits is flexible. Please contact Muriel Leach at 847-9493 or mleach@hrrv.org.

An evening of readings and conversation. Merrie Sue Holtan will do a featured reading along with author, Dean Hulse, for the Tom McGrath Visiting Writer's Series, MSUM, Thursday, October 15, 7:30 p.m. King Hall Auditorium (110) Hulse is a freelance writer and an activist for land use, renewable energy, and sustainable agriculture and has written his memoir, *Westhope: Life as a Former Farm Boy*. Holtan, a freelance writer and communication studies instructor at MSUM, has authored the biography, *Power and Stride: The Nancy Burggraf Story*, including a DVD documentary of Burggraf's life. Both writers graduated from the Masters of Fine Art in Creative Writing program at MSUM.

All Star Revue!

Sunday, October 4 at 3 p.m. at First Lutheran Church in Detroit Lakes there will be an "All Star Revue." This will be a musical variety show with area vocal and instrumental soloists and ensembles, including Russ Bunker and Paul Heisler. Tickets for the All Star Revue are \$8 for adult, \$4 for students and you can be purchased from Russ or the church office.

Financial Report

General Fund receipts for September to date through the 20th were \$25,672 or 70% of the budgeted revenues of \$36,454. There is one more Sunday remaining in the month.

Building Fund receipts for September to date through the 20th were \$5,761 or 99% of the amount needed to make the mortgage payment of \$5,832.

Actual results for August for the General Fund, was a net favorable variance of \$4,024. Total receipts for the month were \$37,116 and expenses were \$33,092. The Building fund receipts for the month were \$5,843, which were ahead of budget by \$11.

Year to Date through August, the General Fund has a net unfavorable variance of \$19,484 and the Building Fund is unfavorable by \$7,402. Currently our combined deficit for both funds continues to be significantly worse than last year. We need to have a few positive months to build up our cash balances and to avoid a significant shortfall later in the year. Please review your offerings and if you are able, consider helping us with additional offerings, which will help us work toward eliminating these deficits.

Thank you for your continued support of Calvary's general and building funds.

Calvary Missionary Support



Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.—Matthew 28:19

Calvary has been one of the congregations sponsoring missionaries Carol and Jim Sack for a couple years now. They are missionaries in Tokyo. Tokyo is a city of over 12 million people of which only 1-2% are Christians. Although 96% are affiliated with a Buddhist or Taoist temple, only about 30% are actually religious. In this context, the Sacks are extending our reach to the unchurched.

James is a professor of theology at the Japan Lutheran College and Theological Seminary. He also is providing education in pastoral counseling. Carol works integrating music with palliative care at the hospice there and helps her church provide for the needs of the homeless of central Tokyo. She wrote recently of the challenge of wanting to teach people to minister to the dying while many that are interested are not Christian.

Since the course is grounded upon the idea of "Music-as-Prayer," I simply could not teach the content without the faith component. The entire course is based upon a "spirituality of the Psalms."

Are You Listening?

This year during Sunday Rap, which happens in the Loft on Sunday mornings from 9:30am to 10:30am, we are going to be focusing on the parables of Jesus. I have often wondered why Jesus relied so heavily on parables. I mean, why not just come right out and say what you mean? Why tell these stories that are sometimes more difficult to figure out than a Rubik's Cube? (That's a reference for those of us who grew up in the 1980's.)

Currently I am reading through the book of Ezekiel as part of the Book of Faith initiative, and I think that reading through the Old Testament has shed some light of why Jesus would use parables. First, the harsh truth is that no one ever really listened to the prophets, at least not in the long run, and the Gospels tell us that most people figured Jesus to be a prophet. Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and on and on they came speaking the word of God, only to be ignored and disobeyed. I imagine Jesus came expecting the same kind of treatment and so the parables are a more creative way to get us to think, help us to remember, and lead us to the truth.

Second, the life of a prophet was a perilous affair because the prophet was usually told by God to say some pretty harsh things to the misbehaving king and/or religious leaders in an attempt to get

She writes of a student who found a particularly meaningful passage for a man who had closed himself off. He was inspired to learn more and asked to be baptized before he died. He had found a faith that helped him shed his fear of death so that he passed with peace.

It is often said that a missionary's job is to work oneself out of a job. This is one of the rare times I could feel that I had really done my job.

Missionaries rely on the power of the prayers of God's people back home. Here's how we can pray for our missionaries: Pray that God would open doors in Tokyo for the gospel message to be heard. Pray that the Sacks would discover those doors and have boldness in witnessing (Ephesians 6:19). Pray for their spiritual and physical protection—from illness, for safety in their home and as they travel and from stresses, worries, temptations or relationships that might hinder their ministry. Finally pray that if it is the Lord's will, they might see some fruits of their labor to gladden their hearts and encourage them.

We don't always know the end result of our mission work, but God's work uses our hands. We can support our missionaries through our annual budget and through our prayers.

By Rob McNair

them to change their ways. The unfortunate consequence of this was that the prophet's life was usually threatened. In 1 Kings 18:4 it is stated matter of fact, "Jezebel was killing off the prophets of the LORD." The imprisonment and beheading of John the Baptist is probably a more familiar example of a prophet paying the price for speaking the truth so plainly. Yes, speaking the word of God has always been a dangerous profession and again, I imagine Jesus would have expected this. Certainly the parables make us think and help us remember, but I also wonder if Jesus didn't utilize parables to buy himself a little more time before the religious leaders could end his life. Trying to figure out the allegory and symbolism within his messages not only took time, but also made it harder for the religious leaders to prove Jesus was speaking directly against them. This is probably related to why Jesus often commanded his disciples "to tell no one" after performing a miracle, as he wanted to maximize his time here in this world.

The first parable that we looked at was the parable of the sower ([Mark 4:1-20](#), [Matthew 13:1-23](#), and [Luke 8:1-15](#)). What I found interesting was that this parable is begun with Jesus saying, "Listen!" And it is concluded with Jesus saying, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

Continued on page 7

Dear disciples of Christ at Calvary,

We are starting the fall season with great excitement. Jesus calls us into mission to our community and world and we are answering the call. You read in the newsletter about Sunday School and Confirmation, youth group, Community Outreach and Twigs, men's and women's ministries, Jubilee celebrations and Faith in Action. Our worship brims with energy and lively music. It is a joy to serve with you as we participate in God's work in the world.

I'm hearing reactions from many of you about the recent votes on the ministry of partnered gay and lesbian persons by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Your responses are all over the map, and show once again that we are a diverse congregation, each shaped by our own experiences and faith. At Calvary, we have members celebrating this decision and others who are grieving deeply. I know many of you are having conversations about this vote with your friends outside the ELCA, some of whom are deeply critical of these choices. Some have said they are embarrassed that others would make them feel "less Christian or no longer believing in the Bible." Some of you are considering leaving Calvary and the ELCA. I hope that you will take your time before you make decisions about responding to the ELCA vote to get accurate information, come to a session to discuss the issue, or talk with me individually. I am available to you by phone or in person.

To learn more, you can go to the ELCA website which has lots of information. Journey Faithfully Together is the study document that leads us through the Biblical reflections and arguments in this issue. You would learn much from reading it. <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements-in-Process/JTF-Human-Sexuality.aspx> You can read what our Synod Bishop Larry Wohlrabe writes: <http://larrywohrlabe.blogspot.com/2009/09/on-what-basis-did-elca-assembly-act.html>

In Bishop Wohlrabe's blog, he compares this vote to the vote almost 40 years ago in 1970 to ordain women into the LCA and ALC, the two predecessor churches of the ELCA. It was very controversial at the time, and the argument was similar. There were specific scriptural verses prohibiting women in ministry, and others that affirmed women in ministry. It was also becoming apparent that God had given women the gifts and seemed to be calling women into pastoral ministry. Those three components are also part of this conversation about accepting into ministry in the ELCA gay and lesbian persons in lifelong, committed relationships. There are seven specific texts in scripture that prohibit homosexual behavior. But a variety of other texts mitigate the force of the traditional Biblical prohibitions. Examples: Jesus' bias toward outsiders, Jesus' redefinition of Old Testament notions of "uncleanness," God's unconditional love for sinners, Jesus' command to love the neighbor unconditionally, the early church's decisions to include Gentiles and others (e.g. the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts) formerly considered "unclean," etc.

Looking back, I can't imagine being without women in ministry in the church. Calvary has been blessed with the strong ministry of two ordained women, Marilyn Breckinridge and Karin Moberg, and we have strong women leaders leadership in our council and all other levels of our congregation. I know that at first that was uncomfortable for some of you.

We don't expect that all of our members need to agree on everything. This vote does not require any particular response from us. And the power is certainly in our congregation's hands. When we call a pastor, the call committee and the congregation have total control of who we call to be our pastor.

Let's keep talking and praying about this issue. I'm not discouraged by this debate. You have been very civil in your conversations, respectful of others, and genuinely seeking to learn from each other. We trust that finally the church is in God's hands, and that God will help us to find a way to walk together in unity.

Pastor Phil Holtan

ARE YOU LISTENING? From page 6

The use of an exclamation point beginning and ending this parable is significant to me. That one character speaks volumes, regardless of the meaning of the parable. That "!" means to me that Jesus desperately wants to be heard, that Jesus desperately wants us to hear what he has to say. To me it also conveys a sense of urgency, as Jesus knows he doesn't have a lot of time on this earth. He knows full well his days are numbered.

I am currently reading "Stories with Intent" by Klyne Snodgrass which is a book about the parables. In it, the author writes, "the parables of Jesus awaken insight, stimulate the conscience, and move us to action." In addition, he writes that Jesus (as well as all the other prophets I think) were "trying to get God's people to stop, reconsider their ways, and change their behavior." Two thousand years later these stories continue to challenge us to do just that. But as the author picks up on, listening to Jesus is not enough. Hearing the word of God is not enough. For more than 4,000 years people have heard the word of God, but who is willing to let His word change you and move you to action? This is the kind of listening Jesus was looking for. The author concludes, "Any hearing that does not result in productive living in relation to the Father is not valid hearing." I think my wife would agree and has similarly concluded on many occasions that any hearing that does not result in immediate action in relation to her request is not valid hearing. She can ask me to take out the garbage, but if I do not take it out, then obviously she is going to feel like I did not hear her or listen to her. I imagine Jesus felt the same way and perhaps this is the meaning of Jesus bracketing the parable of the sower with exclamation points. Jesus isn't seeing anybody, in particular the religious leaders, moving or changing in relation to what he is saying. So while Jesus yells out "Listen!" what he is really shouting at us is, "Move! Act! Change! Do something that shows you are listening!"

My hope this school year, especially meaningful as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Calvary, is for all of us to do something that shows we are listening.

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Calvary Lutheran Church exists to be an example of Christ's love through service to all people, helping everyone to learn and experience God's love in the struggle and triumphs of daily life.

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*The harvest is
plentiful,
but the laborers
are few;
therefore ask
the Lord
of the harvest
to send out
laborers
into his harvest.*

Calvary Pumpkins for Purpose Service Project at the Rich & Carol Bucholz farm

Matthew 9:37-38