

A letter from our Missionaries

Dear Fellow Servants in Christ,

On September 22 and 23 we had a couple of meaningful gatherings here in Tokyo. The Japan Evangelical Lutheran Association (JELA Foundation) is complicated to explain, but is the juridical person recognized by the Japanese government. It was established as the legal body to facilitate Christian mission, including education, social welfare and evangelism by the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC). Pastoral Harp Ministry, (the Lyra Pre-aria Program that Carol directs which teaches participants to minister in hospice and hospital using harp and voice) is one of the ministries.

This association celebrated the 100th year of existence on September 22. The JELA assisted in bringing back many retired missionaries to be part of this celebration. Approximately 40 missionaries were able to come back and be present for a meaningful communion service at the headquarters of the JELA. Afterward a nice lunch was provided. Many of the leaders, both ordained and lay of the JELC attended both events. Later that evening a program for dinner and reminiscing among the missionaries was arranged. I believe it was a very meaningful event, especially for those who had not been back to Japan for many years. The JELA continues to do the ministries listed above and now sends needed aid in healthcare, hygiene, education and nutrition to impoverished regions of India, Brazil and Cambodia.

Then on the next day, September 23, we also celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Japan Lutheran College. First a memorial ceremony was held in a public hall where over 800 people attended. Then a Holy Communion service took place at the seminary chapel where more than 600 people worshiped "together." There were so many people there that we had to open up a large classroom as well and have the video streamed in so all could participate "together" at two locations. Even then, the crowd in the classroom was an overflow crowd and the hall outside the classroom was utilized to accommodate the remaining participants. After the service was a reception for those who attended. Once again a very meaningful and very affirming day. Many of the missionaries of course also participated in the activities at the city hall and the school.

The most affirming aspect for this small Lutheran body in Japan was to worship together in one mass of believers. The average size church is only about 20-25 members, so coming together as one body really gave us a sense of unity and strength. I hope and pray that those who were there will take that feeling back home with them and invest it in each of their home congregations. Please see the pictures at the bottom of this e-mail. Hopefully this will give you some idea of the gatherings we had. For most of you coming from much larger congregations, it may be hard to understand how empowering it was to gather as we did. However please know how important and wonderful the day was for those who attended.

- Please pray for the Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Japan Lutheran College. We ask that students may learn about Christ in deep ways while they study here.
- Each year over 30,000 people take their lives in Japan. Please pray that those who are contemplating that would find adequate help.
- Please pray for our work with students, that we may be good witnesses to the Gospel.

Thanks for your support and prayers!! We envision you being blessed each and every day through our Lord and Savior.

Blessings,

Jim and Carol Sack



Pictured above, top to bottom

- Receiving the elements
- Communion service for Japanese Evangelical Lutheran Association
- Overflow crowd for the school communion service
- Chapel at Seminary on the 23rd

Birth. Congratulations to Mark & Amanda (Baumgart) Benson on the birth of a daughter, Avri Jo Benson, born September 10. Grandparents are Jerry & Brenda Dewar. Great grandmother is Marky Van de Streek.

Birth. Congratulations to Becky & Shane Hoefs on the birth of a daughter, Elyse Claire on Monday, November 2. Grandparents are Larry & Ruth Haugrud and Dale & Nancy Fehrenbach. Great grandparents are Roger & Carol Haugrud and Dennis & Sally Awes.

Baptism. Kael James Buskirk was baptized November 1. Sponsors are Megan Kirchenwitz, Annalise Shippee and Bethany Anderson, Michael Buskirk and Heidi Ogaard. Parents are Kyle & Kersten (Hatlevig) Buskirk. The baptism was officiated by Kael's great grandfather, Pastor Mel Sucher.

Baptism. Sunday, November 15 the children of Mark & Amelia Goers were baptized at Calvary: Brandi Lynn Wisnasky-Beck, whose sponsor is Tracy Bieger; Zachary Lee Wisnasky, whose sponsor is Shirley Kalina; and Patricia Louise Beck, whose sponsors are Rob McNair and Hayley Dennison.

Transfers. Allen and Sandra Gundberg to Zion Lutheran of Amor; John & Kathleen Kallis, Jacob, Lindsey to Sion Lutheran Church in Lancaster, Minnesota.

First Communion. God's blessings on these young people who celebrated their First Communion December 15: *Carter Cresap, Sierra Edvall, Tucker Henderson, Ashley Hokanson, Isaac Honer, Leah Honer, Olivia Januszewski, Ali King, Hayden Kjelshus, Alexa Leiran, Leighton Rach, Blaine Richter, Eli Roe, Olivia McNair, Oakley McNair, Patricia Beck, Zachary Wisnasky, Brandi Wisnasky-Beck, Mara Leslie, Megan Leslie.*

Thank You. Larry & Carol Flynn want to thank everyone for your continued prayers and cards. Carol had more surgery November 9. Please keep the Flynn family in your prayers.

Upcoming Events You Won't Want To Miss!

DECEMBER 5
CHRISTMAS TEA

The women of Calvary extend an invitation to everyone to join us for a morning of fellowship, coffee and homemade Christmas treats of all kinds. Relax and let us do your Christmas baking for you.

There will be crafts, quilts, candies, breads and those wonderful cookie assortments to buy for gifts and for your families to enjoy.

Bring a friend and join us at Calvary from 9-11 a.m. on Saturday, December 5.

DECEMBER 6 BREAKFAST
PASTOR APPRECIATION-ENDOWMENT FUND

The "Pastor Appreciation-Endowment Fund Breakfast" is on December 6. Please join in this opportunity to share your appreciation and support for Pastor Phil and everything he does for us at Calvary every week of the year! Pastor Phil has designated the Sound & Video Ministry, Faith Chest for Youth, and the Endowment Fund as recipients for funding.

A basket is available to place cards and messages for Pastor Phil and a free will donation for the breakfast. Come to enjoy the food and fellowship as we honor Pastor Phil.

Something has happened here!

Pastor Gary Gilthvedt

Preparation for All Saints' Sunday this year led me to find and re-read the letter of call from Calvary Lutheran Church of Perham. The letter is dated April 9, 1967. It is the standard form for letters of call used by The American Lutheran Church in those days. But the most interesting, in fact poignant, part of the letter is the list of signatures affixed at the bottom. The Call Committee signatures include: Sherman Mandt, Mrs. Dorothy Johnson, Olaf Monson, Gerald Ness, Palmer A. Pederson, Mrs. Leon Beyer, John V. Knight, Larry A. Nelson, R. J. Johnson, and T. C. Hanson, District President. Risk-takers, all!

Some of these people are still among you. Some may have moved to other locations and churches. Some have been transferred to the Church Triumphant. All of them have been saints who strove to serve the church's mission and the church's Lord. There have been many others like them in Calvary's 50-year history. With memory burnished by retrospection, this is the first thing that comes to mind for me, and perhaps for you, too.

The second thing that comes to mind is the courage and hard work involved in starting a new mission congregation such as Calvary. The system of starting new churches was already then in need of refinement: the national church body bought land,

built a building, placed a first pastor, and handed the bill for the whole bundle to the local congregation. This was not a cool method. The congregation recognized that pretty quickly. The national church and district took a little longer. The Board of Missions owned up to the undue difficulty place on a fledgling congregation and offered to match all congregational dollars applied to the indebtedness. Refinancing and graduation from mission status soon followed, and coincided approximately with Calvary's 10th anniversary.

The point is that many people had to hang in there through pretty tough times and did so without breaking most of the Commandments. And it has brought results! That's the third thing that occurs to me. The membership of the church is six times what it was then. Last year your giving to missions alone was greater than an entire annual budget in the 1960's. The church staff then was one-horsepower but has expanded to eight or 10 positions that give focus and function to specific avenues of the church's ministry.

Something has happened here!
And it is to be celebrated!



Calvary Worship Webcasts and Broadcasts

About 35 minutes of the 8:30 service from Calvary is now available as a video on Yahoo videos.

You can access the video from our calvaryperham.com website or by adding your name to our listserv snowbirds@calvaryperham.com. Each Sunday we will send you an email notice and a link so you can listen at your own convenience. We have had some nice comments back from people and are grateful that it's a way to keep in touch with you.

Right now, it is mostly the lessons and the sermon, but after Christmas we hope to have a music video and a sermon video that together will capture most of the service.

Remember, we also broadcast the 10:45 service weekly live on Radio KPRW 99.5 FM and the video is broadcast Tuesday at 9 AM on Channel 14 cable access. Thanks for your financial contributions that keep the radio broadcast alive.

Youth and Family Ministry at Calvary

HOLIDAY SERVICE PROJECTS

As the holiday season approaches, there are two service opportunities you and your family are encouraged to participate in. While these events have historically been "youth events" we are trying to break down the walls and encourage more family-centered, intergenerational service, so please know you, regardless of your age, are welcome to join us:

- Decorate St. James Manor and Briarwood for Christmas on Sunday, December 6 after the second service. This project will also incorporate an awesome group of our young people with special needs eager to spread some holiday cheer!
- Christmas carol at Briarwood (12:30p) and St. James Manor (1:00p) on Sunday, December 20.

Please let Rob know if you plan to be a part of these great outreach events, as we will plan to serve a light lunch before each event in the fellowship hall.

Faith In The Home

"Memorize His laws and tell them to your children over and over again. Talk about them all the time, whether you are at home, walking on the road, going to bed at night, or getting up in the morning."

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

So I have some bad news, and some good news.

First, the bad news: Fewer than 10% of parents who attend church regularly with their kids are reading the Bible together, praying (outside of meals) together, or engaging in any sort of act of service together. Even worse is that around 72% of youth will leave the church once they graduate high school. Only 28% of kids talk with their mom about their faith, and only 13% talk with their dads about it. I know it sounds like something we can blame society on, but it's not that easy. Scripture is pretty clear where the faith nurturing is supposed to come from; parents. Martin Luther said that we are "called to be the Bishops, Apostles and Priests" of our own home. The church is definitely important, but should be a supporting life partner, not a replacement.

Now, the good news: We can all help to change these statistics! But, it's going to take a commitment, and some time. When researchers asked Christian teens to identify things that influenced them to become and remain Christians, the top two answers were "Mom and Dad." In fact, they were two to three times more influential than any church program. I am sure many of you are aware of the Faith 5 Forty campaign Rob and I have been promoting, but please take a few moments to check out the display in the narthex if not.

CONGRATULATIONS MARY ANN!

At the recent Senior High Northwestern Minnesota Synod Gathering, which took place October 30-November 1 at Cragun's Resort in Brainerd, Mary Ann Kuebler was elected as the Conference 9 youth representative for the synod-level youth board. She replaces the outgoing representative Megan Shipman. Many thanks to Megan for the time and energy she gave to the synod youth board, and congratulations to Mary Ann as she begins her term of service. It is quite an honor to have a youth from Calvary represent our conference and we are especially fortunate to have youth willing to step up and get involved at the synod level.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT YOUTH UPDATE

There will be no confirmation or evening youth events Wednesday, December 23 or December 30 due to the Christmas holiday season.

Notes from our Christian Education Coordinator

This is really a great resource, especially for parents, like me, who have trouble just coming up with things on their own. Rob has made up a fantastic booklet that has 40 nights worth of Bible verse and devotional ideas. You can download the pages at the Calvary website, too.

I know how hard it can be to start something like this when you're not used to it, especially with teens that have a lot of activities. But knowing that kids who are engaged in faith activities at home and with family are 60% less likely to engage in high risk behaviors might help you find some time. I kind of compare it to flossing; even if you can't do it every night, can you at least do it two or maybe three nights? I have spoken to a number of families who are doing it, and they all really enjoy it. Some are mixing things up, doing it in a different order, at dinner instead of bedtime, even doing it on the run. I know that I, personally, have even done it in the car! I have learned about things that are lows for my kids, and even my husband, that I wouldn't have known about if we didn't do this.

Please know, too, that you don't have to have kids at home to be involved in this. This is for **anyone!** Married couples without children, grandparents, singles...we would love for everyone to try it out.

Then, let me know how it's going. I would love to hear your Faith 5 Forty stories!

God's peace,

Tracy Bieger

Student Haikus



At confirmation class recently the students wrote haikus related to the Spirit as they discussed the 3rd article of the Apostles Creed. A haiku is a Japanese poetic form that consists of three lines, with five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second line, and five syllables in the third line. Here are a select few, some profound, some a little more light-hearted. Enjoy!

*The Spirit is the
Passion of the Christ and Son
Of the Lord our God*

*Our God is the word
He will save us and the soul
Don't diss the Spirit*

*The Holy Spirit
Known as the breath of our
God
And also the wind*

*The Spirit helps me
To make right choices for me
So I live life right*

*Pray to the Spirit
Believe the Holy Spirit
Praise to the Spirit*

*The Spirit is here
Around us, watching over
The Spirit is here*

*The Spirit is cool
The Spirit is really cool
It is the bestest*

New Adult Study

"Listening To God" will be led by Jeff Tweeton Wednesdays December 2, 9, and 16 at 7 p.m. and then resume Sundays between services beginning January 10.

Women's News

Christmas Tea. The women of Calvary extend an invitation to everyone to join us for a morning of fellowship, coffee and homemade Christmas treats of all kinds. Relax and let us do your Christmas baking for you. There will be crafts, quilts, candies, breads and those wonderful cookie assortments to buy for gifts and for your families to enjoy. Bring a friend and join us at Calvary from 9-11 a.m. Saturday, December 5.

Christmas Party. All women are welcome to attend the Potluck Christmas luncheon at noon, Wednesday December 9, 2009 in the Fellowship Hall. Bible study led by Pastor Phil and a short business meeting will follow.



Men's News

Men's Pheasant Hunt rescheduled for Saturday, December 5. The group will leave Calvary at 8 a.m. and return by 3 p.m. Contact Dan Miller if you have questions, 346-6965. The group will leave Calvary at 8 a.m.

Faith Chests. Pastor Phil is organizing a team to make Faith Chests. These small chests will be made for gifts for our newly baptized children to store their baptismal candle, banner and other faith treasures. A committee was formed by Lee Mindemann, Jim Nordbeck, Mark Olson and Kal Schellenberg.

Nativity. Ron Anderson will need help getting three trees from his property to church. Let him know if you can help. We will set up the nativity in early December but he will need to know who will help by the next meeting.

Advent Service of Silence December 15

An invitation to "Be Still And Know That I Am God."

Psalm 46:10

Busyness is a way of life for most of us. In this season of Advent we feel more breathless than ever adding special events and preparations for Christmas to our usual hectic lives.

You are invited to make some quiet time in your life to enjoy our beautiful sanctuary in candlelight and stillness.

Come, and experience our annual Service of Silence, on Tuesday, December 15 between the hours of 5 and 7 p.m. Come any time during these hours and stay for a few minutes or the entire time.

A booklet will be available with suggested Bible readings, hymns and prayers for your meditation. Communion and anointing will be offered to those who come to the communion rail.

Have any of us declined to do something because we would lose the quiet time or prayer time that we have set aside for ourselves?

December Music Ministry at Calvary

Christmas Cantata December 13. Our Senior Choir will be presenting the Christmas cantata, *Comfort and Joy*, penned by Randy Vader and Jay Rouse, last presented at Calvary in 2004. This time instead of using the CD accompaniment, we will have live accompaniment provided by our senior choir accompanist, Stacie Muench. It is a wonderful musical work with a strong message of the real meaning of Christmas. It will be presented at both worship services. Be there!

Pops Series Event Saturday, December 19. At 7:30pm, Andrew Miller will direct *From Age To Age*, a 25-voice choral ensemble comprised of singers from across the state of Minnesota. The ensemble is committed to presenting quality choral music to communities and to populations outside the metro area. The ensemble contributes a significant portion of its proceeds to carefully chosen humanitarian organizations that promote lasting and sustainable global change. It currently supports The One Acre Fund which helps starving Kenyan families lift themselves out of poverty by teaching sustainable agricultural practices; and The Central Asia Institute (Three Cups of Tea) which builds schools in rural areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan, promoting peace through education.

Faure's Requiem. On December 20 and 21 at 7 pm both evenings, the PHS Carnegie Hall Choir and members of the PHS Symphonic Band will be presenting *Requiem* by Gabriel Faure, in our sanctuary, with myself also accompanying on our organ. This is what the choir will be presenting at their trip to Carnegie Hall in January. Because of the excellent insight of those who helped choose our organ almost 20 years ago, we have the best instrument in town to accompany this piece.

Ensemble Offerings. At the writing of this article I also know that on December 6 Sweet Assurance will sing a lively advent song for you and the Youth Choir is working on a lively advent song for December 20.

Music for Christmas. Tracy Bieger will be playing flute duets with me at the 5 pm Christmas Eve service, and Jane Stowman has offered to play piano/organ duets with me at the 7 pm service. If you are interested in sharing music during the Christmas season, please let me know. Perhaps someone in your family will be home for Christmas and would like to share, and we would love to have them!

May the true reason for this season, our Lord Jesus Christ burn brightly in your hearts and shine through you in all you do. Merry Christmas!

Russ Bunker, The "Music Man"

Some words of appreciation

People of Calvary,

I would like to thank you for your generosity towards seminary support! Amanda, Wyatt, Charlotte and I have moved to Kodiak, Alaska for internship year.

Everything is going very well! The days are getting short and the nights are getting cold, but we really like it here!

Thanks Again! Blessings, Joe Johnson

Calvary Lutheran Church, thank you so much for the use of your building for the Red Cross Blood drive. Your hospitality is appreciated more than you know. The space and cleanliness help to make this blood drive a wonderful success.

Co Chairs Bonnie Sweere and Carol Schmitz

I would like to thank everyone for making my 91st birthday a wonderful memory. Your cards, wishes and attendance meant so much.

God bless you. Earl Miller

News from Stephen Ministry

The regular monthly meeting of Stephen Ministers was held on Monday November 9 at 6:30. Terri Olson led the opening devotions as well as providing a delicious dessert treat.

The focus of the in-service training portion of the meeting was on the importance of peer supervision to Stephen Ministers. We concentrated on what types of questions to ask during supervision in order to identify any problems and concerns that may exist in the relationship between the Stephen Minister and the care receiver.

We currently have 19 available Stephen Ministers who are serving 12 care receivers.

We do have Stephen Ministers available, so if you know someone in need of a caring Christian listener, contact Pastor Phil or Reg Hansen at 346-4780.

A care receiver need not be a member of Calvary, although most of them are.

Needs for Christian Care

Every day you see people who are hurting; those who have lost a job, lost a loved one, gone through a divorce, or are battling a terminal illness.

Stephen Ministers are God's representatives who bring his love to those who are hurting.

God is waiting to make a difference in their lives through you!

If you want to find out more about how you can be involved in this one-to-one care giving ministry, contact Reg Hansen, Stephen Leader at 346-4780.

More blessings than I ever expected

Here's what one Stephen Minister has to say about Stephen Ministry: "At first I wasn't sure about all this care giving stuff. I mean, didn't I love others enough already?"

Then I finished my Stephen Ministry training and met with the person for whom I provided care. Now I know what Christian love is all about!

I didn't expect the wonderful gifts of love and friendship that God gave me through my caring relationship. What a wonderful ministry this is!"

A new training class for Stephen Ministers is now being planned. Please consider this ministry opportunity. For more information, contact Reg Hansen, Stephen Leader at 346-4780.

TWIGS: Together Winning In God's Service

TWIGS is a caring ministry of Calvary Lutheran Church. We strive to meet ongoing needs of individuals and families in our community that cannot be met through traditional resources.

The cards on the tree in the fellowship hall are always changing as we receive new need requests, and as needs are met through sponsorship. This past month TWIGS sponsorships included:

- ◆ A donation for **food cards** for a family who had lost their mother.
- ◆ A donation for **Pharmacy** prescription needs.

- ◆ A donation for our **general fund** to be used for unsponsored needs.
- ◆ Donations for **Kids Adventure** tuition.

Below is a thank you message from a mother whose child is now attending Kid's Adventure school: "I am grateful that you are helping me with my daughter's tuition at Kids Adventure in Perham. Thank you very much for your support and we are so grateful that there are people out there willing to help families like mine. Again thank you and God bless..."

Thank you for supporting TWIGS ministry...the help given to our neighbors through your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Jubilee Highlight Net's Special Service



Jeannette Kupferschmid, after almost fifty years at Calvary, takes an active role in almost every significant mission of our congregation. Her value to us is inestimable. But there's one program, not well known by most members, that is close to her heart. It is one of unique service, one that she has led for almost forty years. As she says, "It's been a few years."

She leads devotions once a month (except January, February and March) at the Perham Memorial Home. Here they sing hymns and read scripture and devotions. She plans and leads each service. This special program at first served only Lutherans, but it grew; now the staff brings everybody. Why does she continue? "I get more than they do," she responds, "See their faces! They think it's wonderful. It's appreciated."

This is a very special way for Calvary to live its mission statement, "... to serve God through service to all people."

Thank you. Larry Hauer is doing very well after his knee surgery. He left for Florida, feeling great and looking taller!! We are thankful this season for all the care and kindness shown by the folks here at Calvary. Thank you for keeping "Hauer Dad" in your prayers and for paying him cheery visits. And to the Men's Breakfast Group, a great big thank you for getting him to therapy when he couldn't drive! You are all blessings!

*Merry Christmas!
Mara Hauer-Priebe*

Christmas Poinsettias



If you wish to share Christmas poinsettias, please bring them to Calvary by Thursday, December 10.

Financial Report

General Fund receipts for November to date through the 22nd were \$32,411 or 89% of the budgeted revenues of \$36,454. There is one more Sunday remaining in the month.

Building Fund receipts for November to date through the 22nd were \$10,543. This already exceeds the amount needed to make the mortgage payment of \$5,832. The excess will help to eliminate the deficit in the Building Fund.

Actual results for October for the General Fund, was an unfavorable variance of \$1,031. Total receipts for the month were \$29,027 and expenses were \$30,059. The Building fund receipts for the month were \$4,697, which were behind the budget by \$1,135.

Year to Date through October, the General Fund has a net unfavorable variance of \$19,866 and the Building Fund is unfavorable by \$8,009. Currently our combined deficit for both funds continues to be significantly worse than last year. Based on the receipts so far for November, it appears that we will be able to make up some ground on these deficits. We need to carry this momentum into December, in order to eliminate the deficits before the end of the year. Please review your offerings and if you are able, consider helping us with additional offerings.

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

Social Ministry Committee Happenings

The Social Ministry Committee met on Tuesday, November 10 together with the Youth and Family Ministry Committee to discuss this year's Thanksgiving basket distribution program. It was decided that baskets would be prepared and delivered by the youth to Calvary members in need as well as to those in need in our community. Under the direction of Rob McNair, the youth delivered 24 baskets this year.

Holley Arvig, chair, turned the committee's attention to the Congregational Focused Ministries. Four of the six ministries were represented at the meeting and the two who needed to be absent submitted their monthly reports by email. It is most gratifying that the committee members take their responsibilities seriously.

Most people who experience loss during the year have a particular difficult time when the holiday season approaches. To be of assistance, the committee decided to present an appropriate gift to members of Calvary who have experienced a loss during the past year. Calvary's youth will wrap and deliver the gifts.

Calvary's Parish Health Center is receiving shared leadership from Mary Ringsven, Vi Bergman and Sandy Rusten on a rotating basis. They are doing a great job of keeping all parts of their ministry operating while they are searching for a registered nurse to provide leadership.

This is a volunteer position, but specific training will be provided through Concordia College.

Fix It Ministry reported that their major project last month was delivering and installing plastic storm window kits as part of Faith in Action Sunday.

Liz Swanson reported that TWIGS (Together Winning In God's Service) received three very welcome donations from St. Henry's Parish.

She also reported that TWIGS volunteers prepare 43 bags of food each Friday and take them to the elementary and middle schools and place them in backpacks for children to take home with them so they can maintain a healthy diet over the weekend. This is done in a very private manner and has proven very beneficial.

Habitat for Humanity dedicated the home that they built in Wadena. Les Gunderson reported that the dedication occurred in October and the family is currently living in it. Habitat will be constructing an additional home in 2010.



Justice Journeys

TRASH & TREASURE SALE

Saturday, January 23, 2010



Make time for family time

By Rob McNair

Last month I wrote an article related to teen sexual behavior and the media influences adolescents are exposed to. At the beginning of that article I wrote, "I know there are a few middle school girls known in the community that are suspected to be pregnant (at least the students talk as if they are)..." and I received feedback that this line upset some people for two reasons. One, the use of the words "middle school" gave the impression that I was connecting sexual promiscuity with Prairie Wind Middle School and/or the Perham school system in general.

And two, by making a reference like this I have instigated a rumor mill that will ultimately bring harm as people try to figure out who these allegedly pregnant teen girls are. I by no means was trying to make a disparaging remark about the schools or any children in our community, and knowing that my words were interpreted like that by even one person makes me distressed.

In retrospect I see I should have been more careful with my words and used a different example to illustrate the point I was trying to make. I apologize to anyone who took offense and seek forgiveness.

Continued on page 7

Dear disciples of Christ at Calvary,

Blessed Advent! With the beautiful weather of the last month, it's hard to believe that Advent is already here. But even without the unseasonable weather, it's hard to get into this season of preparation. It's hard to hold back from jumping straight into the Christmas season when Christmas displays and even Christmas carols have been around since Halloween.

But we have much at stake in waiting a few more weeks for the celebration. It will mean much more to us if we take our time for Advent preparation and waiting, for penitence and repentance on the way to hope. We need to prepare our souls and spirits for the good news of Jesus' coming or we will miss it in the frantic consumerism of Christmas.

Advent is a "Little Lent" in that we are called to repent of our sins and prepare for our salvation which is to come. We don't have everything we need. And by that I don't just mean more "stuff." We are called to grieve for those things which are not yet what they should be. So, find an Advent devotional book. Come to the Service of Silence on December 15. Find ways to back away from the busy-ness to listen for God's unexpected coming---to you. Amen, come Lord Jesus, come!

Make time for family time—Continued from page 6

However, I stand firm in the belief that parents are the primary teachers of their children and need to be intentionally engaged with them in regard to their faith, sexuality, and a host of other issues like drinking, drugs, and depression (to name but a few). Now that is not to say that parents must constantly lecture their kids and try to control their behavior, but rather we must spend time listening to our kids as they are experiencing these profound challenges that weigh heavily on them. They are fighting against all these pressures that are trying to influence their behavior. And the abstinence approach of telling kids to "just say no" will not work and I would contend never has. It certainly didn't work for Adam and Eve. If it did work, we wouldn't need God's grace and mercy through Christ Jesus, as we'd be able to resist all our sinful temptations.

I think we need to have honest conversations with our kids, acknowledging that life is filled with temptations and listen to what they have to say. And I can assure you they have things to say, but the trouble we have today is finding the time to talk with them.

Research shows that one of the key factors of resiliency in youth (i.e., the ability to withstand pressure and stress) is eating dinner together as a family. The dinner table was once the center of the home, the time where families gathered together every night not only to eat, but probably more importantly to talk, share, and engage.

At the Annual Meeting, Congregation President Kitty Krueger and I promised that our church council would come up with a plan for our members who choose to express their discontent with ELCA social policy by withholding gifts to the ELCA. We have just finished preparing a form that will do just that. It's a form you can stop by our church office to sign. Your signature will assure that your offerings to Calvary's General Fund will be tallied in a separate category so that when 10% of our general fund offerings are sent to the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, your portion would be placed into a fund that does not support the ELCA. We will begin the program January 1 and your form will function for one year and then can be renewed as often as you like.

We are anxious that you would have a choice in this matter. Just remember though, what could be the unintended consequences of your choice. 81 percent of the ELCA churchwide current operating budget consists of mission support funds--for new mission starts, global missions, struggling congregations in difficult settings, and so on. You will have to decide if withholding support from those ministries is an appropriate way to voice your disapproval.

Remember also that it was not officers of the ELCA who made the decision about gay clergy, but delegates from all the synods of the ELCA, including our synod. In other words, it was your representatives. It was we who are members of the ELCA who voted. I realize that many of you disagree with that decision, but it was not "them" who decided. It was "us," the members of our body of Christ called the ELCA.

Pastor Phil



The importance of this tradition has never been fully recognized or appreciated, as today it is something that has become expendable as family life has become busier than ever with sports, activities, jobs, and other commitments.

The loss of this bonding time may well explain why kids in general are having more difficulty dealing with the pressures and stresses in their life. The number of kids taking medications for issues like depression and anxiety is at an all-time high and suicide is now the third leading cause of death among youth. And when your kid goes off to college, suicide becomes the second leading cause of death. These statistics tell me that there is something wrong in our culture, that our kids are ill prepared to handle the trials of daily living. I believe our kids are suffering as our time together as a family is sacrificed to accommodate more and more activities outside the home. Yet parents are lead to believe that their kids will be socially stunted if they don't participate in every available opportunity. My daughters are in first and second grade and we receive information about 4-H, gymnastics, swim lessons, little league sports, dance, camps, beauty pageants, and on and on. These are all noble activities but it can quickly become overwhelming and I am left with the sense that if my kids don't participate they will be somehow left behind. But I have been reassured recently when my daughters have repeatedly communicated during our nightly devotional time that the best part of their day is simply "coming home."

We need to slow down. We need to reclaim family time. We need to find the time to eat together and talk, just as Jesus often did. We need to remember that one of our sacraments involves gathering together around a table for a meal. Coming together for a family meal is an age-old tradition, and to lose it is to lose a vital spiritual practice that strengthens our kids. I hope we all work harder to preserve it.

God Bless, Rob McNair

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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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Advent Worship Services
Sundays – November 29, December 6, 13, 20
8:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.

Women's Christmas Tea & Bake Sale
Saturday, December 5—9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Christmas Cantata – "Comfort and Joy"
Calvary's Senior Choir, directed by Russ Bunker
Sunday, December 14--8:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.

Advent Service of Silence
(Silent Meditation and Prayer)
Tuesday, December 15--5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
(Enter and leave as you choose)

Children's Christmas Program
Sunday, December 20--10:45 a.m.

Christmas Eve Worship Services
Wednesday, December 24--3:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship Service
Thursday, December 25--10:00 a.m.

1st Christmas Worship
Sunday, December 27--8:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.