

Calvary Lutheran Church
Presidential Mid-Year Address

Greetings,

I am Mark Harmon, your elected President of the Congregation and serve as the Core Chair of the Executive Committee, thus leading the Church Council. My volunteer job at the church includes working with the staff, our clergy, different Core leaders, listening to the members of the church and thus faithfully serving God, our Church, and most importantly you.

This is my second non-consecutive term, and yes... I enjoy it a lot.

Why am I here speaking? I have had recent conversations with people in our church community that have expressed interest in a mid-year update to what is happening around the church. So, this is my mid-year address.

At any point of the week, you can drive by the church and see that there are multiple cars in the parking lot, and I know, we know, the COMMUNITY knows that Calvary is a happening place.

Thanks be to God!

This year's mission has been identified as, "Welcome to the Table." The different Cores have worked on projects to encompass this theme and incorporate our Core Values.

The different Core committees in the church and numbers that I would like to highlight.:

- Caring and Outreach - Led by Sara Forsberg
 - Can anyone guess why the number 128 is relevant to Caring and Outreach? I will tell you - that is the number of COMPLETED mission from Hard Hat Ministry in this calendar year
- Family Ministry Led by Gretchen Pederson
 - The number for this committee - 12 - 12 months of the year Suds of Service is conducted where members of Calvary pay for all people's laundry at a local laundromat.
- Finance Ministry - Led by Tony Platz
 - 1.39 million - that is the mortgage balance REDUCED from 1.75 million
 - Because there are financial and numbers people... I will give them a second bonus number in the form of a fraction: $\frac{2}{3}$. 2/3rds of every payment we make to the bank goes directly to the principal. ~Praise the Lord! ~
- Learning Core - Led by Erika Randall
 - 100 backpack tags that were handed out at Rally Sunday to our students to kick off the school year. Those reminders of Christ and our Church were prayed over by us to be with our kids as they take their educational journey.
- Resource Core - Led by Joe McKinnon
 - 7200 square feet of parking lot expansion
- Worship Core - Led by Shalom Grandy
 - 375 - this is the number of attendees in church over last weekend for Rally Sunday
- Youth Core - Led by Nicole Brandt
 - 30 youth and chaperones combined traveled to Mississippi to deepen their faith on the annual youth mission trip
- Innovation Core - Led by Stuart Larson
 - 2 Current Surveys - one sent to new members and one to all members of the congregation will be coming soon.

Other Notable numbers:

- 2500 - \$2,500 a month are utilized to uplift and support people in need through the Pastor's Discretionary Fund team
- 2025 this is the year that Calvary Lutheran Church will begin its first annual Park Rapids Community meal
- 110 people have traveled to Puerto Rico for mission work with PR2PR
- We have 12 staff members of our Church
- 160 students come to Calvary for Release Time
- 350+ quilts made by Calvary Quilters

- 19 is the number of years SAM Dana Kocka has been our Youth Pastor
- 43 is the number of years that Pastor Steve has been ordained, to include 15 of the years serving faithfully at Calvary Lutheran Church

I have two other numbers I plan to share, but before that... you need to know that annually we are always looking for new volunteers to Chair our cores. We have a nominating committee that ponders, makes calls, and prays to find people to fill positions. Almost always, there are common themes among prospective new Core leaders; they share, "I don't think I am good enough; this job seems too big, I don't think I have the time, or can you ask someone else."

Sara Forsberg, of which I have permission to share her name, co-chaired Caring & Outreach with the late Glenn Anderson, who was a talent that is beyond measure. Glenn wanted to step back as the co-chair. Sara spoke to me.

There was worry;
I did my best to reassure.

There was doubt;
I did my best to embolden.

There may have been a tear or two...
and if I recall, I think Sara may have cried too ;-)

But on a serious note, she mustered up the courage to confidently lead a widely diverse committee that I believe shoulders no less than 27 sub-missions throughout our community Church. And she does it great.

We all come to church for many reasons. Some for the message, some for the fellowship, the youth, Marleen's Oreos (perhaps that's my reason), but yet, some need to find a place to just belong. A place to take a break from the noise of an overwhelming world that is never quiet. We all have our reasons.

If you are at a place where you want to be more involved, please reach out to our Core leaders, our office staff, the clergy, myself. Every year there are openings for new leaders. Every committee has a seat for you. Each group and ministry have something to offer from a hammer to a coffee cup.

Lastly, I want to leave you with these last numbers. 2 and 3.

2 - I am proud to announce that as of September 11, 2024 enacted by the Bishop Bill Tesch, Affirmed by your Church Council, and lifted up from our congregation - it is my honor and privilege to announce that Liz Stone going forward is our second Synod Appointed Minister, effective immediately.

With SAM Dana Kocka and SAM Liz Stone, we are preparing Calvary for new and exciting visions, dreams, and accomplishments into the future. So, 2 SAMs.

Finally, the number 3

3 could only summarize the reasons we are here today as we further our own faith journeys:

- (1) The Father
- (2) The Son, and
- (3) The Holy Spirit

Amen