December 2026

The Calvary Corner

Calvary Lutheran Church, 112 South Park Ave, P.O. Box 187 Park Rapids, MN 56470, (218) 732-7284

Trusted Stewards

~ Liz Stone

We all have things we put off. Maybe it's an appointment we need to make, a project we need to finish, a conversation we've been avoiding, or paperwork that's been sitting on the counter for far too long. We tell ourselves we'll get to it tomorrow. Sometimes tomorrow turns into next week, next month, or even next year!

Recently, as I looked around my own home at some of the little things I had let slide, I heard the Holy Spirit speak to me, "Get your house in order." At first, I thought about all the things that needed to be done around the house. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that getting my house in order can mean much more than cleaning, organizing, or checking things off a list.

Getting our house in order can also mean taking a closer look at our lives, recognizing the many gifts and responsibilities God has given us, and asking ourselves if we are doing our best to care for them.

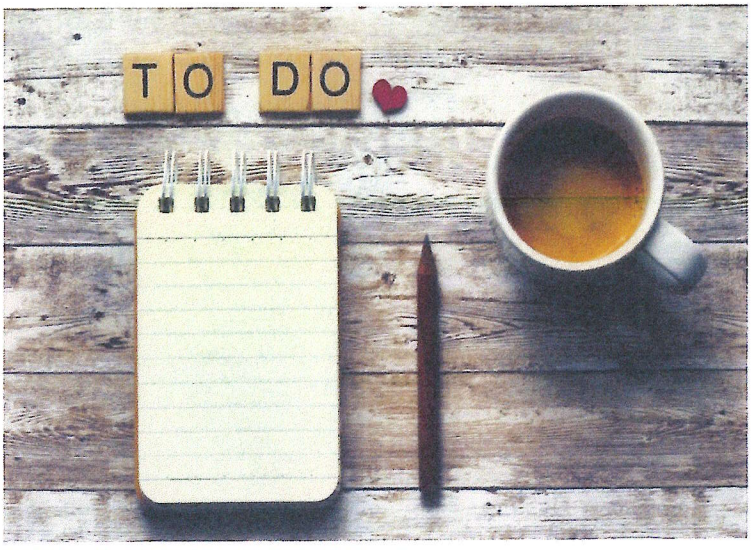
In Matthew 25:14–30, Jesus tells the Parable of the Talents. A master leaves on a journey and entrusts three servants with different amounts of money (talents). The first two put what they received to work and doubled it. The third servant, however, buried his money in the ground because he was afraid of disappointing his master. When the master returned, the first two were praised for their faithfulness, while the third was reprimanded for doing nothing with what had been entrusted to him.

Although this parable focuses on money, its message reaches much further. Think about all that God has entrusted to us: our families, relationships, abilities, time, resources, homes, and opportunities to serve others. These are gifts, but they also come with responsibility. How we care for them and what we do with them matters.

The first two servants showed their master that they could be trusted with what they had been given. They didn't simply hold on to it; they put it to work. The third servant did nothing with his share. When we look at our own lives, we might ask ourselves: Are we taking care of what God has placed in our hands? Are we making the most of the opportunities and resources we have been given?

Getting our house in order is one way of taking that responsibility seriously. It's not about being perfect or having more things to do. It's about being intentional with what we have. Jesus' parable reminds us that when we are faithful with what has been entrusted to us, we can be trusted with more responsibility.

What has God entrusted to you? Are you caring for it? Are you putting it to good use? Sometimes the blessings that come from doing so aren't monetary. They may be stronger relationships, new opportunities, a more generous spirit, more time, or the joy of knowing that what we have been given is making a difference in someone else's life.



Edward Herrin	December 1
Jacquelyn McCann	December 1
Carrie VanSickle	December 1
Stephanie Wehmas	December 1
Jack Schultz	December 2
Sissel Brandon	December 3
Martine Bunting	December 3
Jamie Gruchow	December 3
LaVonne Martinson	December 3
Madeline Brandt	December 4
Kora Crist	December 4
Kim Eix	December 4
Waylon Tolle	December 4
Kim Vredenburg	December 4
Kevin Brauer	December 6
Terry Young	December 6
Robin Larson	December 6
Jill Johnson	December 7
Brett Jordahl	December 7
Johnna Krabbenhoft	December 7
Cathy Steffen	December 7
Kevin Vaadeland	December 7
Kevin Lund	December 8
Charlie Manners	December 8
Luke Manners	December 8
Rosemary Moody	December 8
Joann Walker	December 8
Zach Breitweser	December 9
Cailey Carey	December 9
Nancy Hammerstrom	December 9
Lowell Schellack	December 9
Max Crist	December 10
Dave Domeier	December 10
Stuart Gray	December 10
Ayla Pachel	December 10



Mary Berdahl	December 11
Carole Carey	December 11
Theanne Pritchett	December 11
Guy Reich	December 11
Alicia Dennis	December 12
Marge Herr	December 12
Olivia Vaadeland	December 12
Renee Brauer	December 13
Hudson Lembcke	December 13
Bonnie Miller	December 13
Jeff Burkman	December 14
Shelly Leshovsky	December 14
Audrey Anderson	December 15
Kaden Boyd	December 15
Kevin Huot	December 15
Kasey Krautkremer	December 15
Marcus McKeever	December 15
Scottie Petersen	December 15
Amie Hoverson	December 16
Sandy James	December 16
Emily Johanning	December 16
Tina Ridlon	December 16
Ryan Strasburg	December 17
Adam Thompson	December 17
JoAnn Manlove	December 18
Jennifer Michaelson	December 18
Zachary Nelson	December 18
Rachel Oppitz	December 18

Clark Arneson	December 19
Jerry Gorden	December 19
Kyle Kniss	December 19
Maggie Randall	December 19
Corey Kent	December 20
Gregg Mykland	December 20
Dan Blasey	December 21
Christopher Goplerud	December 21
Kyle Goplerud	December 21
Dylan Hensel	December 21
Kandie Erickson	December 21
Jeffrey Dickinson	December 22
Peggy Hewitt	December 22
Jerry Perpich	December 22
Barb Carlson	December 23
Jeremy Nordick	December 23
Esther Simon	December 23
Jenna Smith	December 23
Morgan Kelly	December 24
Jayne Mills	December 24
Myah Schultz	December 24
Connie Frisby-Griffin	December 25
Mary Meyers	December 25
Wayne Larson	December 26
Marie Luetmer	December 26
Creedence Tolle	December 26
Cooper Clark	December 27
Tori Hilmanowski	December 27
Adam Bruce	December 28
Joan Huot	December 28
Dick Longtine	December 28
Derrick Ellingson	December 31

No gift ideas? Check out the Quilters Corner in the church office. There are plenty of different designs, patterns, and colors on display. The minimum donation requested for the quilt goes 100% to the Lutheran World Relief mission project and provides funding for at least three more quilts. As you wrap the quilt around you, know that others in the world have received a quilt that has been;
"tied in faith, sent in hope, and wrapped in love".



Coming in January!

Vitalant Community Blood Drive @ Calvary
January 4th, 5th, & 6th, 2027

Looking for volunteers willing to help with calling & making appointments.

Contact Kim Hoff @ 218-280-6335

Somewhere around 2005, a group of people at Calvary decided to start a social group for people 55 and older and called it **Older Wiser Lutherans or OWLS.** It took place once a month with different programs, dinners and a lot of fun events that took time to plan and carry out. After a couple of years, the monthly meetings got less and less until finally we started going out for breakfast every first Tuesday of the month. Breakfast worked well until Covid happened. When things got back to normal, restaurants downsized and were open fewer hours and many quit serving breakfast, or just a few days a week. So, we changed it again and go out for breakfast every other month and lunch on the opposite months. All men and women are welcome as singles or pairs.



On **December 1st**, we will be going to the **Great Northern Cafe** for breakfast at **9 am**. I only ask you to do one thing; call me and RSVP so I can alert the restaurant.
Chris Luckeroth @ 218-255-7467.

Calvary Happenings

Junior & Senior League

(Jr. League: Grades 6-8 / Sr. League: Grades 9-12)

December 2nd	Senior League (6-8)
December 9th	Jr. League (6–7:30)
December 16th	Senior League (6-8)
December 23rd	No League–Merry Christmas

 = White Elephant Christmas Party

What to bring for a White Elephant Christmas Party:

Something really ugly, or extremely out of date. Gifts can be purchased at garage sales or secondhand stores. Many of the gifts can be found from within your home. When purchasing your item, remember to pick up something outrageously funny! Gifts may not exceed $5.

Looking Ahead

Thursday, December 17th
Blue Christmas Service @ Hubbard Methodist @ 7:00 pm

Saturday, December 19th
Christmas Program Rehearsal @ (2:00 – 4:00)

Sunday, December 20th
Christmas Program @ 10:30 Service

We want to extend an invite to the entire congregation to join us, as the children of Calvary share the Good News of Jesus' Birth at worship on December 20th.

There will be NO Sunday School or Nursery on the following dates: December 27th OR January 3rd

Thursday, December 24th
Christmas Eve Services @ 3:30, 5:30 & 10:00

Friday, December 25th
Christmas Day – NO Services

Peace comes when you accept that not all things are yours to understand.

Message from the Calvary Finance Core

Are you at least age 70 ½ and do you own an IRA? If so you're eligible to make an IRA Qualified D (QCD)!

What is a QCD you ask? We've got the answer for you! A QCD is a special, tax-smart way to support your favorite charitable organizations (think CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH) with tax-free distribution from your IRA. Many members at Calvary like you, have found this to be a wonderful way to give.

Here's how it works:

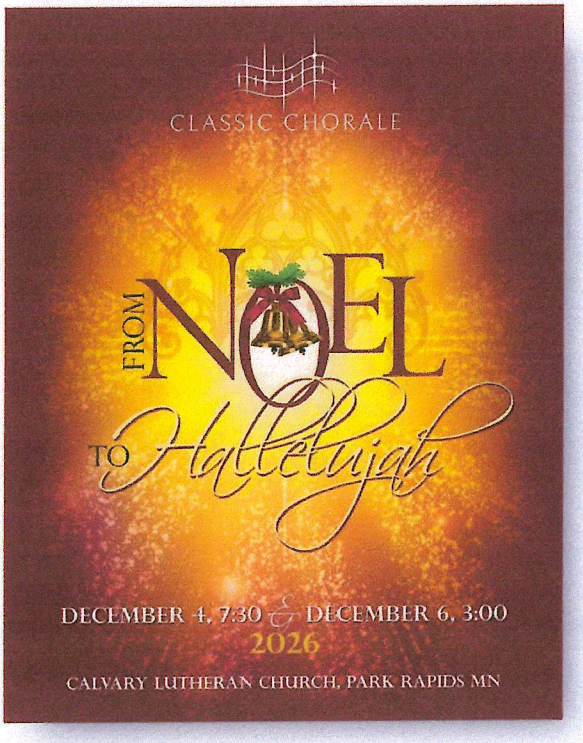
- The gift (donation) must be from an IRA (not from a 401K) or other qualified plan account.
- It must come directly from the IRA administrator to Calvary Lutheran Church – (checks must be made payable to "Calvary Lutheran Church").
- You must be at least 70 ½ at the time of distribution.
- For donors aged 73 or over, QCDs can count toward and satisfy annual required minimum distributions (RMDs).
- You can donate any amount up to $111,000 ($222,000 per married couple) in 2026 without including the QCD in gross income on your tax return.
- You may enjoy a tax benefit from a QCD whether you itemize or take standard deduction.

Please contact your IRA administration ASAP to request a qualified distribution to support Calvary Lutheran Church missions that you love most! Paperwork Must Be Dated PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 2027.

Thank you for your support to Calvary Lutheran. To learn more, call Tony Platz @ 218-255-0911

Join us on **Sunday, December 6, from 1:00-3:00 p.m.** for a special **Family Advent Event** designed for families with children through 6th grade. Together, we'll prepare our hearts for Christmas through Advent wreath-making, a festive craft, cookies & treats, and a family devotion focused on the hope & joy of the season. We'll also have a special activity designed especially for our littlest attendees. Come enjoy an afternoon of faith, fellowship, and fun as we begin the journey to Christmas together. We hope to see you there!

Calvary Happenings

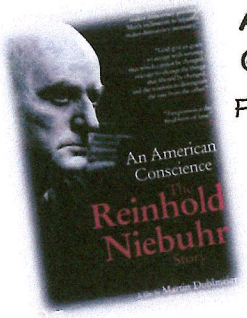




You are invited to the Classic Chorale Christmas Concert on **Friday, December 4th @ 7:30 pm** and on **Sunday, December 6th @ 3:00 pm** at Calvary Lutheran Church under the direction of Samantha Carlson. Featured soloists include the local attorney Sara Swanson and Menahga School choir director, Logan Gerdes.

Bring along your score for the Hallelujah Chorus and sing along with the choir for the final selection!

Free will offering is appreciated.



Adult Education on Sunday's @ 9:30 am in Fellowship Hall

Facilitator: Pastor Steve Norby

January 3rd – Part 1,
January 10th – Part 2
January 24th – Part 1
January 31st – Part 2

Reinhold Niebuhr was one of the most influential pastors of the 20th Century. He authored ***The Serenity Prayer*** and has been studied by pastors, theologians and political leaders.

We will watch 30 minutes of a 60-minute tape and take time for discuss. Part 2 finishes the documentary with 30 minutes for discussion.

If others are interested, we can schedule a time during the week for a full showing with a discussion.

Annual Meeting Notice
January 24th, 2027 @ 11:35 am

Agenda

Approve 2026 Annual Meeting Minutes

Approve Spending Guide

Ballot/Selection of officers

Other Business (for discussion Only)

Reports

Adjourn Lord's Prayer

~ Memorials & Honorariums ~

In Memory of.... Diana Eischens

Charlotte & Marty Peterson — Pastor's Discretion
Jo & Al Judson — Mission Quilters

Adult Education Series

Facilitators: Gail Bach, Cindy Martens & Patty Stephens
Open to ALL Adults
"Somehow: Thoughts on Love" by Anne Lamott.

"A warm, witty and spiritual exploration of love as a transformative and sustaining force in the face of despair." This is Lamott's twentieth book which was released on her 70th birthday in April of 2024. She looks at love through various lenses guided by her Christian faith.

Session Dates: January 7, 14, 21, 28 & February 4 & 11
Time: 5:30pm - 7:00pm
Place: Luther Room

A light soup supper will be served along with tea, hot chocolate and apple cider.

Cost of Book: $10.00 (if you wish to purchase)
Free, if you will be giving the book back after the 6-week study.

Sign up by contacting the church office @ 218.732.7284
For specific questions, contact:
Cindy Martens 507.273.7211 or Patty Stephens 218.552.1737

GENERAL FUND (Operational) MONTHLY FINANCIAL- **Monthly Goal: $62,945**

2026	Income	Expenses	Difference
Dec '25	$196,645	$ 65,993	$130,652
January	$ 61,088	$ 69,124	($ 8,036)
February	$ 77,922	$ 63,066	$ 14,855
March	$ 74,832	$ 65,929	$ 8,903
April	$ 43,510	$ 70,379	($ 16,653)
May	$ 61,245	$ 57,583	$ 3,661
June	$ 43,906	$ 60,819	($ 16,913)
July	$ 40,007	$ 60,327	($ 20,319)
August	$ 53,647	$ 55,616	($ 1,969)
September	$ 42,543	$ 64,981	($ 22,438)
October	$ 45,095	$ 59, 890	($ 14,795)
November			
December			

BUILDING FUND INCOME
October Total: **$ 5,449**
Monthly Mortgage: **$10,429**

December Faith & Literature Book Club – "A Christmas Gathering"

Tuesday, December 8th, @ 10:00am – 11:15am in the Luther Room.

Coffee, tea and Christmas "goodies" will be served!

Our December "read" is the book of your choice.

Please bring the book of your choice and share why it is one of your favorites! In addition, if you have any books on your shelves that you have been thinking about donating somewhere, here is your chance! Any books we collect will be donated to the Akeley Regional Community Center.

ARCC is an emergency shelter that provides a safe living space to regional victims of domestic violence. The staff at ARCC are currently working on adding to and organizing their existing library! Books are greatly appreciated!

All Tuesday Faith & Literature Book Club Members are invited as well as anyone interested in joining our monthly group! If you love a good discussion and are looking for a fun, friendly, inclusive group, please feel free to come and check us out! New members are always welcome! Our overarching question each month is, "Where Do We Find God in This Story?" We read books across all times and genres. We are always open to book suggestions!

Monthly Council Minutes are posted on our website, www.calvaryparkrapids.com

If you are no longer interested in receiving the Calvary Lutheran Monthly Newsletter, please call the church office @ 218-732-7284 and we will remove your name from the mailing list. Thank you.

Calvary Lutheran Church
112 Park Avenue South
P.O. Box 187
Park Rapids, MN 56470

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U.S. Postage/PAID
Park Rapids, MN
56470
PERMIT #7

Christmas Eve Services @
3:30, 5:30 & 10:00



Address Service Requested

Lead Pastor - Steve Norby
SAM / Education & Youth - Dana Kocka
SAM / Media Specialist – Liz Stone
Treasurer – Wayne Pearson
Office Coordinator - Debby Hanneman
Worship Coordinator - Sandy James
Custodian - Collin Current
Custodian – Ronnie Benton
Organists - Sandra Lichter, Mary Nepsund, Shalom Grandy
Adult Choir & Bell Director - Mary Nepsund
Nursery Coordinator – Gracie Eischens/ Emilie Allen
Bethel Cemetery – Jim Ertl

Calvary Church Council
763-286-8535 Clark Arneson, President
218-255-3052 Monica Foster, Past President
218-790-3489 Richard Gilbery – President Elect
218-616-2087 Wayne Koop, Secretary
651-206-3673 Wayne Pearson, Treasurer
612-708-6548 Sara Forsberg, Caring & Outreach
612-827-8236 Gretchen Pederson, Family Ministry
218-255-0911 Tony Platz, Finance Core
218-616-0429 Lynn Litzau, Learning Core
218-556-4674 Joe McKinnon Resource Core
206434-1950 Renee Brauer, Worship Core
320-894-3199 Nicole Brandt, Youth Core
701-430-7466 Stuart Larson, Innovation Core

Mission Partners: Iglesia Luterana San Lucas, Eagle Pass, Texas/ Mission Partner in India/San Pedro Lutheran in Toa Baja, Puerto Rico

Calvary's Office Hours
Monday-Thursday 8:00am-2:00pm
Phone-218-732-7284
Office Email: calvarylutheranpr@gmail.com
Website: www.calvaryparkrapids.com

Find us on: facebook

http://www.facebook.com/calvarylutheranchurchparkrapids

e-m@il prayer.chain

Join Calvary's e-mail prayer chain to share, receive & pray for the needs of others. Contact Lin Norenberg at 218-255-3414 or lindanorenberg@gmail.com

Calvary Lutheran Church, at the Crossroads of Grace and Service, shares Jesus Christ with others so that all may discover and experience God's Hope.