



the CALVARY CRIER

June 12, 2024

A Note From Your Pastor



Gray Hair, Bifocals, and Hearing Loss

I recently noticed that my beard is almost completely gray. When did that happen? Not too long ago, I followed my Eye Doctor's advice to pick out new glasses: BIFOCALS. I realized later, this will only enable me to see more gray in my beard. What a vicious cycle! What did you say? You want to know about my hearing? At my last ear exam they tested my hearing and told me I'll need hearing aids in a few years. I'm not sure whether my ears have lost the ability to hear or my mind has lost the ability to process. Did I say that out loud? I don't know because I can't hear!

Seriously, I'm only 57 years old. Half the population thinks I am still young, the other half thinks I am old. Ok, I embellish. I'm sure more than half the population thinks I am old. I know my kids think it. Personally, I think I'm just right. But what do I know? I can't see, hear, or process like I could in my 20s.

I can see in my physical aging, which is, seriously, not bad, a spiritual undertone. I'm sure there are many more lessons to be learned from my physical aging, but there is one sticking out to me. I need the Word of God to "see" things correctly. Stated from the opposite direction, it is not possible to accurately see reality without the Word of God. His view is, after all, the only correct view. All other views will pass away, proven inaccurate. God's view will exist for eternity because it is absolutely correct.

In the same way, my physical eyes cannot see things the way they really are without some help, my spiritual eyes are insufficient, too. My spiritual eyes are marred with a sinful nature, which always seeks to satisfy self. My sinful nature distorts my perspective and understanding, sometimes totally blinding me. With my physical eyes, corrective lenses bring things into focus as they really are, not the way my aging eyes see them on their own. I need to see things as they are, not the way I want them to be. This is especially pertinent spiritually. Only God’s Word corrects our spiritual vision, bringing truth, God’s perspective of reality, into focus, so we see reality as it really is, not from a self-preferred vantage point. Yet, there is a significant difference between corrective lenses and God’s Word. Corrective lenses do not heal the physical impairment causing poor vision. Our vision dilapidates as our eyes’ lenses degrade, causing light to focus on the wrong part of our retina. Our glasses, corrective lenses, cause light to focus on the correct part of our lenses. Our bodily lenses are still deformed.

On the other hand, God’s Word corrects our spiritual eyes. Without belief in God’s Word, our spiritual eyes focus on the wrong things and understandings. Our perspective of reality focuses on the wrong things, usually appealing to self. The Word of God, through belief, actually corrects our spiritual sight. Unlike the glasses I wear, which sort of trick my vision, which is continually declining (annual eye exams), God’s Word is always accurate, never needing a renewed Rx. God’s Word actually CORRECTS my spiritual vision. “The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” (Matt. 6:22-23). The first thing to notice is that what we see (and how we see it) affects what we believe and how we live. Secondly, the extent to which our spiritual eyes are bad is also the extent to which our understanding is dark. Our thoughts and behavior correspond directly to what we “see.” This is why Jesus also stated, “...store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven... (Matt. 6:20).” If our spiritual eyes see things from God’s perspective, our understanding and behavior will be in line. Then, what we see, the treasures we store from a right perspective, will never fade or be destroyed. Here is the kicker: our hearts follow whatever we “store up.” To know better and not seek Scripture as our authority, even when we think differently from Scripture, reveals that we have placed something other than God as our “treasure.”

Pastor Robert

WORSHIP					
	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
ATTENDANCE (WEEKLY AVG.)	129	147	136	142	133
TITHES & OFFERINGS (WEEKLY AVG.)	\$6,355.00	\$7,122.50	\$5,439.80	\$7,571.00	\$8,236.75
	NEW MEMBERS		BAPTISMS		
	9		10		



Calvary Kids

We want to serve the children and their families of Calvary and the town(s) surrounding us. The most obvious way we do this is by offering Sunday morning and Wednesday evening programming. We have a couple of more low-key ways we work to put the Gospel and love of Christ in front of every child, to help parents in the labor of love that is guiding their children to Christ and a healthy relationship with Him and the church.

Obvious first.

Sunday mornings we offer Children's Bible & Life (Sunday School) for Birth - 5th grade. We put a lot of thought into how to make the Bible approachable for each age group, according to their developmental stages. For example, while Babies through Kindergarten are doing much the same curriculum, there's a greater emphasis on imagery (i.e. Bible story with pictures) and bonding with the youngsters, while pre-K and Kindergarten start working through simple Bible memory and use crafts and real-world examples to work through Christian principles. During the Worship Service, we have Children's Church for Birth - 5 years-old. Every week the children will hear a Bible story backed with pictures or a video, hear worship songs, work on light verse memory (one short verse per month), play, and color.

During the school year we offer AWANA on Wednesdays. We spend a lot of time working through scripture study in class and memorizing verses. As students enter Sparks (K) and beyond they will also start to learn the mechanics of their Bible - the books, where key passages are, how to find things, etc. (Bonus: This reinforces what 1st - 5th graders work on Sunday mornings!)

Coming soon:

New Prague **ENERGIZE** Sports Camp! This is our largest short-term children's outreach. There's plenty of running around and fun, but we spend a lot of time working through the Bible-based theme of the week and the accompanying memory verses.

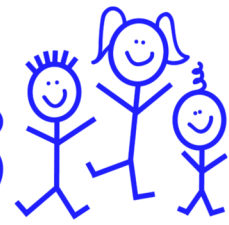
This year we'll be focusing on the theme **Super Savior!** We'll work our way through the incredible power and availability of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It's completely free and flyers will be available in July – **spread the word!**

Every Sunday, families have access to a take-home devotional! Three days of Scripture focused devotionals and discussion prompts can be found on the welcome table, or are available when you pick up your children from Children's Church. These are very simple, designed to help you walk through Scripture using definitions and context clues. They are written with elementary - middle school in mind so the questions are simple to understand, and offer an easy place to start your Bible studying journey!

Outside of the regularly scheduled programming, many of the social events on Calvary's calendar are selected with your kids in mind. Even things that seem geared towards adults like, say, a game night will have child appropriate options available. We will always try to let you know if things are not open to younger children, but never hesitate to find Katherine or another staff member and ask!

Thank you so much for your involvement and ongoing prayer for the Calvary Kids ministry. If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer (please do!) find Katherine Kaczor on a Sunday (likely requires a trek back to the kids' area) or reach out via phone (612.505.6143) or email (calvarykids@calvarychurchmn.org).

Calvary Kids



MINISTRY NEEDS

MISSION ENERGIZE is soon- please pick up a prayer card and pray for us during the week. If you'd still like to give, please see me!

ENERGIZE is right around the corner!! We need prayer, volunteers, word-spreaders, and snack donations! Please see me if you have any questions or want to donate!

Sundays:

Kids and volunteers! **Children's B&L** attendance is low and can be discouraging for volunteers who make their way there in the mornings - visit the incredible Bob Reed's class and bring your kids! Weirdly enough, even though attendance is down, to maintain the current age divisions and avoid grouping many ages/developmental stages, we need a few more hands during B&L hour.

Children's Church (during service) - needs more hands too! We're okay on leads, but we need people to play kitchen, color, and hold babies!

PRAYER REQUESTS

Wisdom and discernment for me as I make decisions and lead Calvary Kids. That I would see God's will clearly and walk in it well.

Full and glad hearts for all our Sunday volunteers as they love our kids.

Endurance and joy for our Sunday lead teachers as they serve more regularly, prep lessons, and pour their hearts out for Calvary's Kids: Kurt Stepka, Joan Lunde, Angel Skluzacek, Ali and Erik Wipf, Colleen Herrmann

A successful and well-attended Energize.

Discernment, wisdom, and endurance for the team helping me plan and lead both Energizes: Aron & Lizzie Yingling, Craig Larson

Courage and eloquence for our youth stepping up in leadership and teaching for Energize.

Adult volunteers to help lead and be examples for the youth in the Energize programs.

That God would be at the front, in the middle, and right behind everything we do in service of the children and families of Calvary, New Prague, and our surrounding towns.

CALENDAR

- JUNE 10-13 - MISSION ENERGIZE (AUSTIN)
- JUNE 16 - FATHER'S DAY
- JUNE 23 - MISSION55 BAKE SALE
- JULY 4-5 - OFFICE CLOSED
- JULY 7 - NO B&L OR CC
- JULY 8-13 - XJ CHICAGO TRIP
- JULY 14 - NO KIDS B&L - BLOCK PARTY TRAINING
- JULY 18 - BLOCK PARTY (VOLUNTEER!)
- JULY 20 - MEN'S BREAKFAST AND WORKSHOP (RSVP)
- JULY 29 - ENERGIZE
- OCT 3-6 - MEN'S RETREAT

SCAN TO VISIT THE
CALVARY CALENDAR



A Letter from Your Elders

Dear Calvary Church,

In this, Calvary's first newsletter, the Elders of Calvary want to make you aware of a few things and prayerfully request something of you.

The first thing for which we want you to be aware is that Calvary is doing well. We are not claiming perfection or that there aren't areas needing improvement. That said, we are conscious of a difficult economy and challenges to the church culturally and legally. Some of this letter will address our dealing with these issues.

The second thing for which we want you to be aware is the purpose of our Calvary Church newsletter, The Calvary Crier. We want the newsletter to keep you informed, to help you know each other and our activities, and to provide some devotional thoughts on, mostly, a quarterly basis. The plan is to have our annual meeting, followed by 3 editions of the newsletter through the year. Please be patient with us as we develop the process, product and balance of the extra workload.

The third thing for which we want you to be aware is the upcoming events. Each of these events need prayer and help. Please sign up for them on the church app or contact the church office to sign up.

- From June 10-13, some of our folks will be in Austin, MN on a mission trip. They are doing "Energize" there with a sister church.
- On Sunday, July 14 we will have training for each Block Party position. This will be from 5:00-6:30PM at The Depot. If you have young kids it may be prudent for one parent to watch the kids at home, while the other parent attends the training to learn both their and their spouses position
- The Block Party is Thursday, July 18. We know this is a tiring event, but the Lord will give us the energy to complete it. Be praying for the people of New Prague, that the Lord will draw many to Himself through this ministry effort!
- From July 29 – August 1 we are doing "Energize" New Prague.

The fourth thing for which we want you to be aware is the upcoming process related to our annual meeting. Here are the dates and meetings:

- On **Sunday, July 28** we will distribute several items of information for which we will vote at the annual meet-

ing. These items will include the proposed 2024/2025 budget, proposed bylaw changes, Elder candidates and building update.

- On **Sunday, August 11** we will have a "Town Hall" meeting at 5:30PM at The Depot. We realize that a meeting of any length immediately after morning service can be challenging, especially for families with young children. Consequently, we have chosen the early evening. The town hall will provide time for discussion and questions, pertaining to the items for vote at the annual meeting.
- The annual meeting is **Sunday, August 25** at 5:30PM at New Prague Middle School (where we meet on Sunday mornings).

Concerning the budget, we have been prayerfully monitoring this year's giving and expenses, as well as the increased costs of everything in our economy. We have also consulted with our Chairman of Finance and others. Everything costs more. For example, McDonalds medium-sized French Fries have increased from \$1.47 to \$5.49 (the McDonalds down the street from our house). At varying levels, groceries, utilities and other necessities have also increased in price to their current costs. Everyone is experiencing a financial squeeze, as a result. Additionally, we are keeping up with new laws and how they will or may impact Calvary Church, including financially.

Our request of you is two-fold. First, please do not take from your regular "tithe" when contributing to benevolence, missions or other non-general budget items. The general budget is how we pay the bills and other expenses. In other words, please make donations to such things as benevolence and missions above and beyond your regular "tithe."

Secondly, please prayerfully consider whether you can increase your regular giving. Any increase would be helpful during this economic situation.

We praise God for how richly He has blessed us and we are asking Him to use us to bring many to Him through Calvary Church throughout New Prague.