

CAN I ASK THAT?

WHY I GIVE
TO MY CHURCH

CALVARY YOUTH



cq

CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH
QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2017 | JUNE, JULY, AUGUST



FROM PASTOR HANS

Hi all!

As you read this edition of the CQ, you'll notice something unique, even odd: The titles to all the articles are written in the form of questions. (No, Alex Trebek and the Jeopardy staff had nothing to do with this.)

When it comes to faith, I'm going to guess you have a few questions. (Maybe, a lot of questions!) Questions about the Bible, what people say about God, or things some Christians do? And, I'm guessing you rarely voice these questions because you've been led to believe that questions and doubts are signs of a weak or incomplete faith. Maybe at some point you mustered up the courage to voice your questions, but were given bland cookie cutter answers or, worse yet, you were made to feel clueless. And so, sadly, you don't ask anymore.

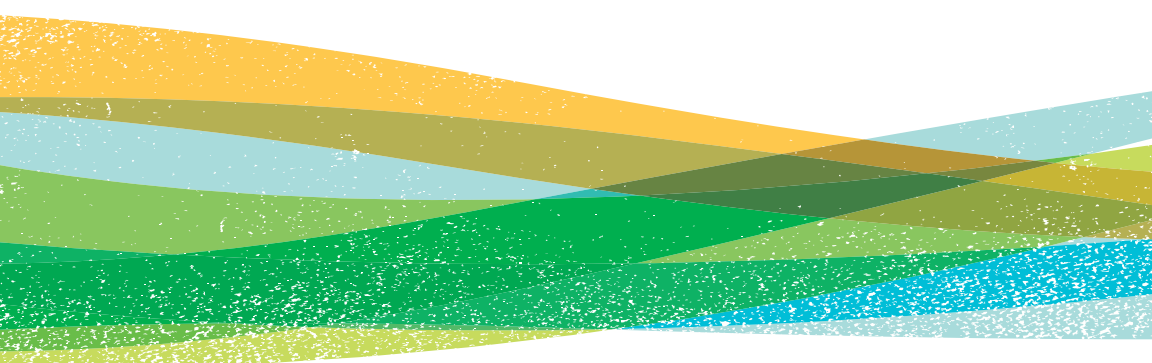
Folks, I want to let you in on a little secret — you are not alone. I have never met anyone (myself included!) who doesn't have more questions than answers when it comes to faith. And, I want you to know: At Calvary, questions aren't antithetical to faith. **Questions are a sign of a lively, curious and engaged faith!** A faith that yearns to know and experience God more intimately. The enclosed articles are written in the form of questions to remind you that at Calvary your questions are always welcome!

Calvary's summer worship series is entitled, "Can I Ask That?" We'll wonder together about all kinds of questions of faith. It will be a great time to invite those family members and friends who aren't so sure about faith or the church!

Folks, I'm so grateful to serve a church that makes room for questioners and doubters like you and me!



Pastor Hans



SUMMER 2017

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Why do bad things happen to good people? Did Noah really collect 2 of every animal? Every single one of us has questions, but unfortunately we often wonder, “Can I ask that?” Is it OK to question the Bible? Folks, at Calvary your questions are important. In fact, **we believe questions are signs of a faith that is curious, engaged and alive!** We designed our summer worship series around these questions, and called it “Can I Ask That?” It will be a great opportunity to invite those friends and family members who aren’t so sure about church!

What's Happening This Summer?

Calvary at the Lake Kickoff! – Memorial Day Weekend

Join us each Sunday for lakeside worship on the shores of Lake Carlos at Luther Crest Bible Camp. Worship at 10:45am and Brunch at 10:00am. In case of inclement weather, we move into the newly renovated chapel at camp. Invite a friend and neighbor, and we’ll see you at the lake!

Father’s Day Weekend – July 17/18

Invite your father, mentor or grandfather to church with you. We’re going to honor all those who have been father figures in our lives.

4th of July Weekend Celebration! – July 2

You’ll likely have company in town, so bring them to Calvary at the Lake! Brunch is served at 10am, worship at 10:45am, and after worship everyone receives a Calvary at the Lake glass filled with a root beer float.

Calvary’s Week at Luther Crest Bible Camp – July 9-14

Bible Camp has a huge impact on a young person’s faith life! So, we’ll celebrate all our young people who will spend the week at Luther Crest Bible Camp. Sign up for camp today. Calvary pays \$100 towards the total.

Luther Crest Musical Comes to Calvary at the Lake – July 16

Luther Crest Staff will perform their 2017 summer musical at our 10:45am service. Don’t miss it!

Calvary Youth Travel to Sky Ranch in Colorado! – July 15-21

We’ll recognize all Calvary Middle Schoolers and High Schoolers who will travel to Colorado for a week of experiencing God’s love!

Vacation Bible School. It’s FREE! – August 7-10

Calvary Vacation Bible School is free. We want all young people to experience the joy and love of God. Sign up at www.calvaryalex.org today!

Stock the Shelf Week! – August 19-27

We believe all kids deserve enough to eat, so we’ll disperse 100’s of “Green Bags” and ask you to help stock The Shelf at Alexandria Area High School before students head back to school.

“Better Connected” Rally Month Begins! – September 9/10

We kick off another exciting year with a worship series entitled “Better Connected!” At Calvary we’re going to get better connected because we believe the life God has for us is better when we’re connected.

Why Live Generously When No One Knows?

This spring, it has been inspiring to see the many people of Calvary giving so generously of their time and resources. It takes many hands and hearts to make Calvary a vibrant faith community where the love of God can be experienced. Many of the ways people of Calvary give on an ongoing basis are invisible and behind the scenes. We would like to highlight a few of those people and ministries in this CQ. As Paul said to the Corinthians, “now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” We want to highlight some of the invisible ministries that make Christ’s body at Calvary alive.



Meet Ruthie Schultz

Caring Adult / Weekly Youth Gathering, Breakfast at Katie's

“Wednesday mornings are one of the most gratifying times of my week because I have breakfast at Katie Christensen's with some of Calvary's high school students. Parents are the most important influences, for sure, but young people need as many caring adults in their lives as possible—another person to let them know that they are loved.”



Meet GERALYN & JIM ANDERSON

Friendly Visitors

“God has been good to us (giving us both the gift of life as well as three sons and family) and given us hope in down times (our parents deaths and illnesses as well as the death of our infant son). Also our parents were very giving people. They were helpful and kind to everyone, therefore we find it rewarding to be kind and giving to others also.”



Meet Lonnie Kriel

Musician for Communion at Care Facilities

“I believe time is the most valuable gift one can give. Spending quality time nurturing relationships, playing music, sharing stories, etc. energizes my soul! Count your many blessings!”



Meet Chuck Nettetstad

Volunteer at Woodland Elementary School

“It’s like the parable of the talents to me—we make a better world if we use whatever talent God has given us. I enjoy going to Woodland Elementary School and reading with a student each week. It’s not the big things, it’s the little things that make a difference...it’s helping one child get a strong foundation of education.”



Calvary's FREE VBS!

Calvary FREE Vacation Bible School is from 9am-12pm for ages 3 years old-5th grade. The theme is "Can I Ask That?"

This year, Calvary dives into questions of faith during VBS. We will explore how important it is to imagine, wonder, and ask questions about faith. It is often kids that ask the best questions! Don't miss Calvary's VBS 2017!

Are You Connected?

According to George Gallup, inventor of the Gallup poll, “Americans are among the loneliest people in the world.” In the western world, we place a lot of value on living life independently, and that comes at a cost. As Andy Stanley and Bill Willits have said, “Living life alone does not accurately reflect the One whose image we bear.” We want to be a community that does reflect the image of the relational God we worship.

*“Living life alone does not accurately
reflect the One whose image we bear.”*

At Calvary, we want to continue to create ministry opportunities that foster deep faith growth and lasting faith connections. There are a number of strong small groups at Calvary, but we have heard a desire for more. In response, a “Connect Team” has been meeting to consider how we can continue to build a small group culture at Calvary. The team that is working to serve you and prepare for our exciting fall worship emphasis on connections includes: Michelle Ahlquist, Lowell Einerson, Maddie Gray, Blaine Green, Joanna Green, Pam Miller, and Cindy Wagner. Contact one of them if you have questions.

Do You Talk About Mental Health?

Calvary seeks to be a resource for parents, concerned adults and families during the seasons of life. One way is to begin the difficult discussions around mental health and chemical use, especially important with the recent tragic losses in the Alexandria community. Recently Calvary began a conversation with parents of Confirmation students to discuss the impact that teenage depression is having in our community, what we can do about it, and why it’s important to be having these dialogues. During this conversation, we discussed what depression looks like in children and teenagers, including persistent feelings of sadness, irritability, decreased social interest, sleep disturbance, and self-harm.



Although it can be difficult to identify what is normal teen behavior and what is teen depression, it is always important to keep communication open with your teenager regarding their experience and feelings. Calvary wants to be a strong voice for all issues families deal with—even the difficult to talk about issues. Our community is also beginning this conversation

about mental health, chemical health and suicide prevention as professionals recently met to brainstorm next steps. Stay tuned for more information.

MELISSA WINTER & MARY HAMMARGREN



Photo by Missy Jones Photography

How Do I Find Courage for a Career Change?

A few months ago I received the heart-wrenching news that my friend was losing her battle with cancer. The doctor had given the family 48 hours. This friend had always supported and encouraged me, and I recall thinking, “I just wish there was something I could do.” And that’s when God spoke directly to me! Now, as some of you know I love to sing—especially at the 10:45am service and at Calvary at the Lake! So on this day I did something I never thought I could do. With the family’s permission, I took my guitar to my friend’s bedside. Together we sang, cried, reflected, laughed, and some even danced.

When I left the hospital, I told God I wanted to do this for a living. I want to provide therapeutic

music to those who need it most. Through research, prayer, and a lot of conversations with my mentors, I began a program to become a Certified Music Practitioner. I can’t wait to be able to use my God-given talents this way! We all have talents and I believe sharing them with others is all a part of God’s plan. He will give you the courage—trust me!

SARA SEVERSON, Calvary member and founder of Blissful Serenity, LLC

When Is The Next Food Day?

I have been involved with the Minnewaska Area Schools Backpack Attack program for several years, receiving food bags from United Way packing events held at Calvary. The food sent home is slightly different every time but consists of non-perishable and easy-to-prepare food items. Children discretely pick them up on distribution days, and for many this food sustains them through the weekend. Low income, a lack of resources or transportation, and rationed food shelf visits prohibit some families in our community from obtaining enough food to make it through the month. I have witnessed children receive their bags with eager delight in their eyes. I see the greatest need for feeding our youth on days that are not backpack distribution days. The children come to me with bleak faces and quietly ask, “When is the next food day?” I am thankful that our community has embraced this program for children who otherwise would not be able to advocate for or receive food on their own.

AMBER KIRKWOLD, School Social Worker



Why Do We Give to Our Church?

We write this as the season of Lent and Easter concludes, a time when we are reminded of God's generous love. On behalf of the blessings God has bestowed on us we are able to give financially in thanksgiving and be stewards of God's kingdom.

We offer financial support to our church cheerfully with an open heart not as an obligation. The rewards of giving are tremendous; we see relationships formed, connections made, and the lost found in our neighborhoods, community and world. Our giving gives us a sense of contentment and wholeness in our faith. It is better to give than receive. To fulfill our financial commitment we utilize the auto giving program offered at Calvary. The benefits are; convenience, no offering envelopes, our commitment is made even if we miss worship and is readily available to carry out God's work at Calvary.

RICH & JENNIFER RENTZ



Where Is Your Church in the Wild?

When I was in college I wanted to join the Peace Corp. I ended up falling in love, starting a career, and having children. Great things in life! The Peace Corp thing never happened. One year ago however, I had the opportunity to join a group of students from St. John's University and College of St. Ben's on a medical brigade through an organization called Global Brigades.



I was so impressed with this organization and their goal to partner with communities to get them to a point of self-sufficiency. This experience has helped me to be very excited to partner with the NPH community in Guatemala as a part of the Calvary 2018 delegation, now as a part of Calvary and our Mission to be a church in the Wild: in our home, church, community, and world. I want to share my God given talents to be part of a church in the Wild.

JULIE ANDERSON



Bill pictured with confirmand, Hunter Rebrovich

Do Adults Really Matter to Young People?

Bill Bolm enjoys looking for ways to connect with young people and encourage their faith. “I’m a fan of these awesome kids and I just hope they see their faith as something that goes beyond their Confirmation day.”

This past year Bill gave all the male confirmands a devotional that he hoped would encourage their continued faith journey. These and many other students reflect on Bill and the impact he continues to have on their journey. “Bill is a really nice guy who has helped me grow in my faith just by being there and being someone that I can talk to about faith,” Hunter Croonquist said. Scripture makes it clear faith is caught more than it’s taught! Paul said, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). Thanks to Bill and all those caring adults who are partners on this lifelong faith journey helping kids catch faith! It really matters!



Who Is Calvary’s New Business Administrator? Katie Rentschler

I am thrilled to be joining the Calvary family as the new Business Administrator! I was born and raised in Alexandria, where my husband, Tom, and I are happily raising our sons Russell (2) and Henry (8 months). I received my bachelor’s degree from Concordia College in Moorhead and my master’s in leadership from Augsburg College in Minneapolis. After more than a decade working in fundraising and volunteer management for the American Cancer Society, I am excited to use the talents God gave me to support the church’s financial, human resources, and operational needs, as well as provide leadership for the growth that Calvary will continue to experience. God is doing amazing work through all the people at Calvary, and I look forward to meeting many of you in the coming weeks as I begin my new role. My door will be open and chocolate will be given to all visitors! *(Katie will begin her work at Calvary on June 5.)*

KATIE RENTSCHLER

Who Are These Luther Crest All-Stars?

Luther Crest's Maddie Gray and Luke Monke-Lundberg can do it all. They lead games, preach sermons, plan programs, facilitate CPR training, teach environmental education classes, drive the bus, lead worship, recruit and equip summer staff, provide input on Luther Crest's remodel projects, and simply inspire the Christian faith in countless kids. In addition to their leadership at camp, Maddie and Luke are also actively involved at Calvary. Maddie serves on the Connect Team and Luke has jumped into the worship band and the Children's Ministry Advisory Board.

Where did these two all-stars come from? The son of two ELCA pastors, Luke grew up in Moorhead, MN. While he remembers growing up in the church, he admits he took a step back in high school. Then, in his junior year of studying philosophy at Concordia College in Moorhead, Luke started helping with a student worship group called SNAC (Sunday Night at Concordia). Someone recognized his heart for the Christian faith and natural leadership ability, and asked him if he ever thought about working at camp. He signed up, loved it, and has remained full-time at Luther Crest ever since.

Maddie grew up in St. Cloud, MN, the daughter of educators. A member of Atonement Lutheran Church, she loved going to Luther Crest as a youth. She also went to Concordia College and studied pre-law. During her summers, she worked at Luther Crest as a camp counselor. After graduating in May of 2014, she was on the verge of going to law school. As Luther Crest's summer season came to a close, a need for a new Program Director emerged. Maddie was invited to stay an extra month after that summer, and then invited to be full-time starting in January of 2015.

Luke and Maddie love God, love people, and love camp. Luke mentioned that the staff's excitement for camp is unmatched. This passion for God has a contagious effect, which stays with the kids throughout the year. Maddie comments, "Our jobs rock. We get to be outside all the time, and we get connected with churches all over the Midwest."





How Are Calvary Youth Active in Service?

This past year Calvary's youth participated as Sunday school teachers, Wednesday Faith Forward leaders, Wednesday Confirmation guides, backpack attacks, babysitting for church activities, caroling for the homebound, care packages for military and college kids, school kit packing, worship leading as musicians, ushers and communion assistants, the Holy week drama, Habitat for Humanity, VBS leaders and more!



Russ Oorlog recently led a group of 30 students at Luther Crest as they worked to prepare the summer worship area. This is what Russ had to say... **“These teens are the best kids to work with; they raked leaves, picked up all the twigs and painted all the benches!”** Russ was unanimously claimed by the youth as an honorary youth group member as they thought he was the best to work with! So much gets accomplished and fun relationships get built when we share our gifts and work together. Go team Calvary!



Were You There?

At Calvary, the Holy Week story was brought to life through a Maundy Thursday and Good Friday drama. For many actors and actresses in the cast, this was actually a difficult experience.

Dave Peper, who played one of the scribes, said, “I really had a personal struggle violently striking a cross that symbolizes Jesus, and cheering and jeering as the cross was raised after the crucifixion. Being in character is one thing, but it was difficult to actually hit a cross and later celebrate nailing Him there knowing how very wrong it is.”

Even so, the experience had a profound impact on all those involved. Peper was moved by one particular unplanned moment. “At the end of the service on Maundy Thursday, all of the cast could have gone downstairs to change out of costume, but not a single one of us left. It felt like we HAD to stand in back and listen to the ‘Were You There?’ hymn until it was done. Very powerful. Very moving. I felt Him there with us. I can't explain it any other way.”

Roger Schultz, the Director of the drama, worked as a theater professor at Texas A&M for many years before returning to his childhood home of Alexandria. He poured countless hours of work into the production, which he describes as a way to grow in his own faith. Roger demonstrates that when we emulate Jesus, we get to know Him better. Monica Peterson, Assistant Director, reflects how the project created community. “I saw God form this group of people into a family. I saw God as each person has come out of their shell to become the ‘character’ they portray; each important to the overall story.”



What Is The Building Exploration Team Up To?

The Building Exploration Team began our work with a careful look at our building to see what's working and what's not. We continue discussions surrounding Calvary's mission, vision and values and how any facility changes must support those principles.

The team identified two core ideas that will guide our work. First, changes must support our vision of inviting everyone to worship, connect and serve. Second, changes must offer flexibility so that all spaces are able to support multiple uses. We are in the process of visiting other churches and interviewing our church's program staff. This spring and summer we will continue visiting with staff, leaders and groups. Early this fall we will seek congregational input to this process. This is an exciting process!

DAVE AHLQUIST



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JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

Saturday: 6pm Praise Worship

Sunday: 8:30am Traditional Worship

10:00am Brunch at the Lake

10:45am Calvary at the Lake

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