



Abandoned

2018 Lenten Devotional

FROM PASTOR HANS

Dear Friends in Faith,

Our theme for Lent is “Abandoned.” You may be asking: Why such a dark theme? Well, we believe abandonment is a universal experience. Each one of us have felt left behind, forgotten, alone, or lost in life. We all wonder at times: Where are you God? Cancer strikes, parenting sends you over the edge, marriages crumble, friends deceive and loved ones pass. During Lent, as together we march toward Holy Week and the events of the cross, we remember that even Jesus felt abandoned. He called out from the cross, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me!?” And yet, that abandonment wasn’t the end of the story! The story of Easter reminds us that not even death would keep Jesus from you! God never deserts us. God will never abandon you!

On the following pages you will read the reflections of members of our church family and their experiences of abandonment. We asked each of them: Think of a time in your life when you felt abandoned. Where did you experience God in the midst of your abandonment? I am humbled and touched by their honest reflections. Each one reminds me of the Easter promise we all share: Nothing — nothing at all! — can keep God from you and me — not even death!

I pray that these reflections move you as they have moved me. I also hope they provide inspiration as you gather in Connect Groups throughout this season. In addition to this resource, weekly discussion guides are available on our website (www.calvaryalex.org).

I wish you peace as we journey together to Easter!



Pastor Hans



LENTEN WORSHIP SERIES

February 14–March 21

Our Lenten worship series is “Abandoned.” Each one of us have felt left behind, forgotten, alone, or lost in life. We all wonder at times: Where are you God? Even Jesus felt abandoned when he called out from the cross, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me!?” And yet, that wasn’t the end of the story! Easter reminds us that not even death can keep Jesus from you! God will never abandon you! **During Lent, we add a traditional Lenten service on Wednesdays at noon.**

Journey To Easter With Calvary

SPRING 2018

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THIS ISSUE

From Pastor Hans
Holy Week Schedule
Easter With Calvary
Lenten Devotional

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ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

February 14, at 12pm (traditional) and 6pm (informal)

On Ash Wednesday, ashes made from palm branches of the previous year's Palm Sunday are placed on the foreheads of worshipers with the words "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." We'll unveil a unique cross that will adorn the front of our sanctuary during Lent, reminding us that Jesus experienced the very same abandonment that you and I know.

FAITH FOR LIFE SPEAKER: CHAP CLARK / February 21, at 6:15pm



Chap is a pastor, teacher and much sought after speaker, trainer, and consultant. He has authored numerous books, including the award-winning *Hurt 2.0: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers*, *Sticky Faith*, and many others. Chap will focus on the abandonment youth today know all too well, and he'll wonder with us how God is calling parents to respond and how parents who have an authentic faith themselves have the best chance of leading their children to a lifelong faith in Jesus Christ.

HOLY WEEK DRAMA: MAUNDY THURSDAY & GOOD FRIDAY / March 29 & 30, at 6pm

Join us for our Holy Week drama, where we remember the events of that first Holy Week, from the joy of Palm Sunday to the utter humiliation of the cross.



EASTER SATURDAY WORSHIP

March 31, 6pm (informal)

EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP

April 1, 8am (traditional)
9:30am & 11am (informal)

NEW WORSHIP SERIES: BRAND NEW! / April 7-May 6

What happened on that first Easter was BRAND NEW! Nothing like it had ever happened before. And, those first followers gathered together in something that was likewise brand new: the church. Today, let's give everyone a Brand New perspective on faith. Maybe your faith needs a Brand New start?

MOTHER'S DAY WORSHIP / May 12 & 13

Grab your mother or grandmother and join us for this special worship service. All women in worship will receive a carnation. Whether you raised children or not, you play an important role in our lives and for this we give thanks!

CALVARY AT THE LAKE KICKOFF! / Memorial Day Weekend, May 27

Join us each Sunday this summer as our 10:45am service moves "out to the lake!" We worship lakeside at Luther Crest Bible Camp on the west shores of Lake Carlos. Come early and join us for brunch at 10am prior to worship.



Ash Wednesday | February 14 | Day 1

BRENT ISERMAN

When the fireman pounded on the door to our home at 5am and forced us to leave with only the clothes on our back, naturally thoughts of “Why” began to creep into our head. When I returned home, we learned that “The Flood” was not isolated to Grand Forks, my parents’ home had also been a casualty, and we (like thousands of residents in the Red River Valley) were looking for a place to live.

The “Why” turned to “Frustration” and then to “Anger”. We had made promises to our Grand Forks neighbors that we would be back the help sandbag the next day!? It would be a long road back to “Normal.” What no one talked about was the fact that no lives were lost in that disaster. Homes and businesses were rebuilt, and the community stood together as a testament of our resiliency. Our “Faith” had been tested, and we were stronger and more committed.

NATHAN THOMPSON

On a spiritual retreat, all of us participants were asked to write in our journals about all the ways Jesus had come to us that week. Relying mostly on myself, often feeling abandoned, this was a challenging assignment. The truth is Jesus was in me, with me, all around me—the problem was that I failed to see him. Jesus was right by my side yet I was relying too much on me. Jesus had not abandoned me—rather I had forgotten and neglected his promises. Are you feeling lonely, hurting, abandoned? Be assured that Jesus is right by your side. He will never leave you or forsake you. Jesus promises in Matthew 28:20, *“And surely I am with you always to the end of time.”* And Deuteronomy 31:6 promises, *“Do not be afraid or terrified because of this, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you or forsake you.”*

ELOISE HOMELVIG

I had a rabbit named Max. One day as I entered the garage, little did I know, a neighbor dog pushed open the door behind me, came in, and grabbed Max. Max squealed and I was terrified. I did not know what was happening until I saw his lifeless body. My brother walked in, saw what happened, and ran to get my parents. Dad came in, picked up Max and wrapped his arms around me; he told me Max was “gone.” Dad dug Max a grave and made a cross to put beside him. I felt God’s presence when my dad hugged me and cared for Max. I was no longer alone in my fear and I felt comforted as my dad held me close.

HANS DAHL

Divorce is a hard thing to talk about. Even when it is amicable, as it was in my case, it’s hard because it is the source of so much brokenness. Divorce is so much more than the severing of one single relationship. It has a way of shaking almost every relationship in your life and leaving you feeling unsure and alone – abandoned, really. This was my experience. But, there were those few — those friends and family members who weren’t going let me go. They cared for me when I was at my lowest. They were my stubborn and persistent supporters and cheerleaders. They loved me when I was unlovable. They were the hands and feet of Jesus for me, carrying me when I couldn’t carry myself, holding me tight.

February 18 | Day 5

HARRIET PEXSA

My Mom and I were best friends. We talked every night on the phone and went out for breakfast Saturday mornings after her hair appointment and then went shopping. Then one day she informed me that she had cancer. WHAT?! How could God give his faithful follower, who lived by his book, give her cancer! She informed me that she had asked her doctor how long she would live if she didn't do anything. He told her 3 good years, so she chose not to do anything, and she did have 3 good years.

She died Memorial Day weekend. The first Christmas after her death as I was putting up decorations, I came across the counted cross stitch nativity with "Peace" on it that she made for me. As I was walking down the hall feeling sorry for myself, a chill came over me and it felt like a butterfly was by my right ear. I looked down and the word PEACE jumped right out. I cried and hugged her little banner. I could feel Gods presence and her spirit with me. I pray you have Gods PEACE in your heart.

"I looked down and the word PEACE jumped right out. I could feel Gods presence and her spirit with me."

February 19 | Day 6

MARV LARSON

It was September 1977 and I was really excited to be coming to Calvary as their pastor. I was getting ready for my first service here and got a call from my brother saying my dad had had a heart attack and died. Where was God? Didn't he care about me? Didn't he want me at Calvary? Dad's funeral was held on Saturday and I came back for my first service at Calvary. Yes, God did care about me because I felt His presence more than ever before. YES! GOD IS GOOD!

February 20 | Day 7

LINDSEY KNOLL

About a year ago, there was a time where I felt alone. I thought I had no true friends, and that I wasn't doing enough for my family. I didn't know where I stood in life. I was always worried about what others thought of me as I walked by them. While I was constantly thinking about what others thought of me, I didn't realize I never did anything for myself. On one random day, a good old friend reached out to me to ask how I was doing. I had this weird feeling that I need to tell her everything, this was my reminder that God was sending me. So I told her how I was really doing, about how I felt so alone and afraid. She is the reason I am confident with who I am today. She took my blindfold off and helped me find my true friends. I could then finally feel loved by those who surrounded me.

February 21 | Day 8

BETHANY PERRY

Growing up I was the person who looked for the approval of others; whether that meant changing my style of music or hanging out late at night without permission. I wanted to fit in so badly I would break my own personal boundaries to satisfy the approval of others. I eventually found myself drowning in emptiness even though I was around people. The empty cloudy feeling kept growing each night, I eventually used alcohol to try to cope. This of course only made it worse.

One day I saw the light of Jesus in my brother who was passionately seeking a relationship with God. I decided I wanted that Light. I made the decision one night to not go out with “friends” but to seek out a Pastor who would help me pray.

I accepted God that night into my heart through many tears. Since then God has been breaking down walls and showing me what a beautiful and important person I am through His approval; which is now the only approval I seek. I see the light everywhere I go and I choose to be a light in all that I do.

February 22 | Day 9

DAVE WERP

My wife and I have always felt blessed, raised in a rich Lutheran tradition and even meeting each other as Sunday school teachers at the church our families attended. Church remained central to us after marriage and with our children — a foundation for our faith and social lives. We were fully involved and grew with a wonderful congregation in Cottage Grove. However, in 1995, after relocating to Europe as a family on a work assignment, our church connections lapsed, and we had great difficulty finding a church that felt like home. While our faith remained, our church involvement was minimal for years. We felt isolated, and being in Europe during the events of 9/11 while two of our sons remained in the US was just one reminder of what we had lost. When we finally discovered Calvary, we knew we had found our new home for the spiritual and social connections that make life so much more meaningful and peaceful!

February 23 | Day 10

BRUCE LUEHMANN

I was in the Chicago airport on my way home from a week of business travel when I received a message from my wife that my father had suffered a heart attack in Texas. I booked the next flight which wasn't until early the next morning. I called my mother during a stopover connection and she informed me that my dad had passed away. On the final flight I wanted to cry and felt like I should, but I had nobody to talk to or lean on. I prayed but I felt really alone on that flight. Once I arrived in Texas and saw my mother and her strength, I felt better. I knew her faith was strong and that God was with her and our family. God is always present with us.

February 24 | Day 11

FINN DAHLSEID

I am lucky to have gone to school with my best friend for a couple of years. We always had fun together at school. Then in fourth grade he decided to be home schooled. When I found out that he wouldn't be in school with me anymore, I felt really sad. It was hard to know that I wouldn't see him everyday anymore. We made school really fun for each other. When I told my mom, she helped me by giving me lots of hugs and talking with me. I felt God's presence because God gave me my mom to help me feel better.

February 25 | Day 12

SPENCER JACOBSON

"I'm fine." I do not know how many times I said that lie, as a reassurance to family, doctors, coworkers, and even more heinously, myself. Multiple long relationships came to unsatisfactory and unsavory ends, most all at once. In even the darkest moments, however, I could feel God calling, gently pushing and prodding me. This call coaxed me out into the cold dark wilderness before dawn almost every weekend. The warm hand of God reached out from the wilderness as the sun rose, and gripped the inner workings of my soul. God's gentle guiding hand gave me the strength to keep pushing on, knowing that the guidance to keep pushing through. Taking a deep breath of fresh morning air, I smiled. "I am fine."

February 26 | Day 13

PAIGE GOOD

In July of 2009, my husband Matt and I had already weathered a couple of storms as business owners and humans. We were healing and back on our game, or so we thought. I started to feel that the lump in my neck was not normal as so many doctors had told me. I found a doctor that would listen to me. She scheduled surgery immediately and I had a total thyroidectomy. Surgery went well. And I went home the same day. I recovered easily. Matt went back to work, and I went to the doctor to be checked. She looked at me and said, “I am so stunned to say this, but you have papillary cancer.” I was shocked.

To have to call your husband, your parents, your sisters to tell them this kind of news was brutal. I felt completely defied and abandoned by God. I heard a clear voice telling me to fight, that He was with me and that I had what it took to be healthy again and live a full life. And I am. These moments that I can literally hear Him and know He is with me make me know that when I feel abandoned or alone, This is when He knows I need Him the most. And I am thankful.

February 27 | Day 14

TRINESSA SPANSWICK

“Wait, where is my baby?”

All of a sudden I realized I’m being wheeled out to my car, just discharged from the hospital, but I’m empty-handed. He’s in the hospital, but, I have to leave. I had never experienced this with any of my other kids. It was this feeling of being alone, helpless, lost and it was almost surreal. I felt completely abandoned. As my husband checked us in to our hotel room, I stared out the window at the hospital, fighting back the tears. But, I prayed and God reached out through my girlfriends and family who had been through this situation before. There was light at the end of the tunnel and God will make that possible! I’m fortunate to have brought my baby home, as some don’t. HIS love shines through! My baby is home growing healthy and happy. Praise God!

February 28 | Day 15

KRISTIN ASCHE

My kids are loved from the bottom of their toes to the tops of their heads. Although we tell the story often, my kids haven't yet realized that we have this opportunity to love them because someone else, their birthmothers, placed them for adoption. I dread that moment — the moment they inevitably ask, "Why didn't she want me?" Often I pray for God to give me the right words to respond to that very tough question. I feel at peace in knowing that He will help my kids to understand how much they are loved even when they feel so alone.

March 1 | Day 16


KENNEDY HODGSON

On my first day of 3rd grade I was going to a new school, I felt lonely. I used to go to Woodland then I changed to Lincoln. I got onto the bus and I felt scared I wouldn't know anyone. Then someone said hi to me. It took me awhile to recognize the person, then I remembered her from my old school. A familiar face made me not feel alone. That changed me, because now I am not as nervous because there is always a possibility I will know someone at new places.

March 2 | Day 17

KARI KOOS

My husband and I had just gotten married three days before he left with the Army Reserves to prepare to go to Iraq. Getting married is supposed to be one of the happiest times in your life, which it was but it was also filled with feelings of sadness. Throughout his deployment I had many worry filled moments when I felt lost and abandoned, my best friend was gone and I wasn't sure what was going to happen from day to day. God worked through my family and friends to show me that I wasn't alone. They helped me to smile and laugh through a very hard time in my life and let me know that somehow everything would be okay.



“Nothing in all creation
can separate us from
the love of God in
Christ Jesus our Lord!”

ROMANS 8:39

March 3 | Day 18

KRISTIN OSTLUND

We always dreamed of having a family, so we were elated when we found out we were pregnant with our first child. However, that joy turned to sorrow when our son was stillborn on Christmas Eve. How could God allow such tragedy to strike our family?

The years that followed were filled with feelings of great abandonment — we withdrew from family, friends, church, and especially God. Then our daughter was born 3 years later, and we began to see life through new eyes. The immediate love we had for this new baby girl helped us realize the love our Heavenly Father has for us all, no matter what life holds. He loved us through our grief and continues to love us each and every day.

March 4 | Day 19

KATIE CHRISTENSEN

I'll never forget the feeling as I watched the only familiar human connection I had drive away after helping me move into my new home, in a new community in a far away state. There I sat utterly alone. For those of you born in more recent decades, realize I also had no phone. Not only did I not have a cell phone my land line wasn't even connected yet. I was cut off. Tears came and I began to question why I would remove myself from everything I knew and loved.

I tried but struggled to feel God's presence even though I'd been raised to believe God was always there. Then one soft knock at my door. A woman from the new church I would be serving, who would become a dear friend, showed up to welcome me and invite me to dinner. I was no longer alone. She shared the gospel with me that day through her time, presence and food. I will forever be grateful for what I experienced and learned about what it means to share God's love and presence with others.

March 5 | Day 20

JESSICA PAULSEN

“Please God, not this time.”

That was my prayer going into my 4th maternity leave. Postpartum depression, anxiety, isolation, and baby blues are all-too-common dark clouds shadowing what should be the happiest time in a mother’s life. It’s easy to feel abandoned in the sense that the rest of the world keeps on going, but you are sleep-walking through hormones, exhaustion, loneliness, and overwhelming emotions that make you feel disconnected.

God worked through my friends and colleagues in a big way: they formed a meal train that lasted for six weeks! Every smiling face on my doorstep, every minute they spent crafting food for my family, and every encouraging note lifted my soul and erased feelings of abandonment and isolation.



March 6 | Day 21

LYDIA OLDENKAMP

One day this last Fall, my Grandpa was rushed to the hospital. He has a disorder called MS and his blood thinned out and pooled in his leg from medication. We prayed and prayed and remembered that God was with us. That night I got all teared up but settled myself down, knowing God's always got our backs. We got reports from family and patiently waited for the results. The next few days we got a heads up from our grandma. His blood had thinned out, we found out, so nothing too serious. I know God was a part of that, because whatever the problem, he always makes it right.

March 7 | Day 22

DYLAN NELSON

Before Christmas this year, big things happened in my life. I don't want to dive in on specifics but I felt as though I was abandoned. I didn't want to talk to anyone about them and didn't want to divulge my personal secrets either. As work, school, and life in general piled on, I saw that these confrontations in my life weren't fading — they probably won't go away. I don't remember specifically speaking to God about these things, however I do now know that as I look back, that I was praying subconsciously to God. These feelings of gratitude and love towards God was what kept me going, I knew that I was loved and that I would always be comforted through God's love.

March 8 | Day 23

KARI KOOS

Life can get pretty crazy sometimes, especially with four kids. Just trying to keep up with all of the energy they have is hard some days and then you also have to think about work, meals, laundry, schedules, etc. It can get pretty stressful and it can lead to feelings of abandonment in the sense that you feel like everything rests on your shoulders. When this happens to me, God works through my four beautiful children and my husband to help show me that I need to slow down and remember what really matters. Their smiles, laughter, and love help me realize that there are more important things in life than all the stuff that we all worry about.



March 9 | Day 24

MATT & RONNA BERGHOFF

Navigating the adult dating scene with dinner or coffee seemed pointless after so many failed attempts that one more date seemed exhausting. As we spent time with our friends, prior to knowing one another, all we could do was compare their beautiful accomplished lives to our lost, single and abandoned selves, often questioning God about our paths in life and if that “soulmate” would ever appear to us. Finally, the day came and we met; but hurdles were in the near future and our paths would quickly diverge in different directions, again, questioning why God would put this person in our path only to take them away so quickly.

Through God’s work of keeping our hearts and mind open towards patience we were able to navigate many months of being apart. There were many times of doubt that were quickly answered by a letter in the mail, phone call, text or package that showed both of us the amazing timing of God and his work. Even when we didn’t fully understand his plan while feeling lonely and lost, he was beside both of us the entire time building, creating and growing our relationship even when we weren’t aware.

March 10 | Day 25

MASON HUEBNER

A time when I felt alone and forgotten was when I was in Third grade. I constantly got bullied at school. I thought that no one cared. Teachers kept "promising" me that they would fix it, but it kept happening. My mom was always there for me and I realize now that God was using my mom to help me get through this, so I wouldn't feel alone. God and my mom were always there for me, so I wasn't ever really alone.

March 11 | Day 26

HANS DAHL

I knew my mother wasn't always in the best of health, but I never realized as a young boy how sick she really was until my parents made a trip to the Mayo Hospital. My mother suffered from a number of health concerns that led to one hospital stay after another, and eventually those nasty concerns would take her life. I remember how, in an instant, I felt all alone, abandoned not only by my mother but by God as well. I was so mad at God. And yet, slowly, through the patience and listening ears of loved ones, I realized something: God hadn't taken my mother from me. God was there weeping with me, holding and encouraging me. God promises to never let us go!

March 12 | Day 27

KEYANNA BARKER

About a year ago I swerved to avoid a deer and rolled a car. At that time I thought I would have a lot of issues and lose a lot of friends over it. I prayed to God and in return he sent me two best friends to help me through the traumatic time. These friends stood by my side and made sure I didn't feel alone and had that I had everything I needed while I was recovering. Without God's guidance and help I wouldn't have realized and value of friendship and the help that is available when you need it the most.

March 13 | Day 28

JOHN SEVERSON

My mom passed away suddenly in 2004. I was 23 years old and just starting out in the “real world” after college. The gift of having an adult relationship with my mom and her being a grandma to my future kids vanished in an instant. I was angry at God and envious of my peers who had that gift. I still have those feelings periodically, especially during the holidays now that I have my own children. However, I’m reminded that God is right there with me in my grief and anger and loves me unconditionally at my best and at my worst.

March 14 | Day 29

NOLAN WEISZ

Probably the biggest time of “abandonment” for me, is more so finding where God is leading me. I’ve always felt a strong sense of God, but have struggled with transitions. Careers, location, relationships. The big ones. How do I navigate this? Where is God amongst all of my questions? Life often feels so fast that it’s easy to lose focus on all the wonder God is doing in my life.

I find God best when I slow down and take time for us. I often sit at a piano and just play and pray. I find that He has never left and He never will. I hear the words, “Fear not, I am here. I will never leave you or forsake you. Don’t you worry about tomorrow. It’s already in my hands.”

March 15 | Day 30

CAROL HILDEBRANT

I felt abandoned at the time of my divorce... abandoned by my husband and God. Left with 5 children even though I prayed that he loved me and would stay. I felt so alone but the prayers were not in my best interest so God said NO. God led me to jobs to support my family and loving friends and family to help me move forward with my most precious gifts — my children. There were many times I literally felt Gods arms around me.



“God lets joy
emerge from the
ashes of adversity
through trust and
thankfulness.”

March 16 | Day 31

TOM ANDERSON

I must admit that when I was first asked to write about a time in my life when I had been abandoned, I really had to think when that time might have been. It is not that I have not faced bad times in my life — my father died suddenly when I was a teenager, the brother I shared a bunk bed with inexplicably took his own life, and my mother suffered a life-ending stroke. Not to mention the times that I have felt totally helpless in trying to bring understanding to a family, who had life tragically taken from them, who I was asked to serve as a funeral director. At the end of the day, however, I cannot remember when I have felt abandoned.

I have an understanding that our God lets joy emerge from the ashes of adversity through trust and thankfulness. Virtually every time when I have been down, I have had friends and family come to me and pick me up — never letting me get to that feeling of abandonment. So, I am really thankful for the friends in my life who have been there when I needed them. It is through those friendships that I have been saved from that abyss of abandonment.

March 17 | Day 32

SARAH SUCHY

As we reflect on our journey into parenthood, it was with excitement and naivety that we began the adventure. After the first few months of excitement wore off, we realized our oldest wasn't making the milestones she was expected to and we began a series of appointments and testing. Those days were some of the darkest and scariest days for us as we had no idea what would we would find or what normal would look like for her or our little family.

It was shortly after those tough, dark days, we realized God had not only been with us, but was busy hand picking a team of incredible people who would support her and our family. As she started to make growth, we celebrated every step along with these incredible souls who walked with us. God's handiwork has helped her to grow and develop in amazing ways we never expected.

March 18 | Day 33

HANNAH PETERSEN

As I entered week 42 of pregnancy, I began feeling a little lost. I had several friends due at about the same time, and they had all been snuggling their babies for at least a week! We had planned for a natural delivery, but as each day passed, I continued to pray that we would meet our baby the way that God planned.

As week 43 began, one of my biggest fears became reality — I was induced. I surrendered to the process, and after 30 hours of labor, our baby's heart rate plummeted and required emergency cesarean to save his life. The road to meet our baby was not easy, but God hugged us throughout the whole process and blessed us with the most amazing gift: a healthy, beautiful, 10 pound baby boy.

March 19 | Day 34

HEIDI NELSON

It was my first time traveling outside the U.S., and I was robbed. Thankfully, I wasn't hurt, but I was without cash, my ID, credit cards or anything. Feeling completely alone, I sat at my hotel wondering what I was going to do, and how I was going to get home. I prayed for help — and then these blessings kept showing up. I was grateful to be in an all inclusive hotel, where my needs were met, and where I met a wonderful couple from St. Cloud, Minnesota! I felt a connection with home through them and they were a much needed support to me. They gave me a phone card to call home to fix the mess I was in. I was able to connect with my parents, who helped me get everything in order to get back home. At a time when I was really helpless, God sent me help, protected me and calmed my fears.

March 20 | Day 35

EVAN ZABEL

When I first started school I felt very uncomfortable because there were many kids that I did not know. I felt like there was the whole world watching me. Then I remembered that God was with me. So I walked into those doors knowing that God was with me here and everywhere else on this Earth. Even now when I get nervous I know that God is with me. And when you get scared like me just remember that God is with you everywhere. Never feel scared because God is with you.

March 21 | Day 36

ARVIDSON FAMILY

“Why me” is what I kept asking when our third daughter was born 10 weeks early and fighting for her life. What did I/we do wrong, we attend church, pray at night and this is what we were given. We felt abandoned by God to fight this battle alone. We prayed for help, forgiveness to just let this little life live. And then God answered our prayers, our baby girl started to get better slowly but it was a sign that he was with us! And he continues to be with us as she heals and grows stronger every day.

March 22 | Day 37

SHARON COLLINS BRIDGES

It was 22 years ago that my husband was in a fatal car accident leaving me alone to raise our 3 children ages 9, 7 and 19 months. My days were busy trying to make sense of our new world, but after the kids were asleep in bed, in the quiet, I felt very alone. There were definitely times I said to God, Why me? Why us? But as I prayed, I would feel my tension start to recede. I would feel a sense of calm and an understanding that God is with me. That he is there everyday and through everything, then and now.

...“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:20

March 23 | Day 38

ROBYN SNYDER

I was 24 years old, living almost 6 hours from my family, trying to be a grown up, independent woman. But I was in an abusive relationship. One night as I crouched on the floor being kicked all over my body, picked up and thrown, I felt alone and abandoned, wondering what I had done to deserve such treatment. Looking back now, I know God was with me sending earth angels as trusted friends who encouraged and supported me in the weeks ahead. God sees the end from the beginning. He knew I would be fine, that I would survive — and not just survive, but thrive as that grown up, independent woman.

March 24 | Day 39

DUSTIN SCHLICHTING

I was young, living in a rented trailer home in a city I moved to 6 months earlier to start a business. There have been few times in my life where I felt less sure of myself. At the same time my grandfather was losing his battle with cancer. Then I got the call from my mom that she was now battling breast cancer. Within days of that call my grandfather passed away and I felt like everything was falling apart. God had a plan though. He sent the right people to me when I needed them. My good friends became great friends. My girlfriend became my wife and my mom is still with me today.

JULIE BURMEISTER

Why did this happen? This kept going though my mind the day that my father passed away after a 3 month battle with cancer. I had been praying daily for him and upon his passing, I felt angry and unsure about everything because God had not listened to me. He had abandoned me and he did not care about me. I stopped praying, stopped going to church and put my faith on hold. I went through day to day life living the movements but not living. A few months later, a friend convinced me to join her at a church service. I sat in the church and was overwhelmed by the feeling of love and support just by being there. I started to go regularly and each time I felt more like myself again. The feelings of being forgotten and lost started to fade and a new trust in faith developed which I have been building on since.

CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

We are in the thick of a search for a second pastor. After prayer and conversation, the Council and Call Committee decided on a new title for our next pastor: “Executive Pastor.” We seek a pastor who, in addition to traditional pastoral responsibilities, will oversee our programmatic staff, including our caring ministries, youth and family, and next steps ministries staff. A position overview is available at www.calvaryalex.org. With the nationwide shortage of pastors, we (especially Pastor Hans) are/is spending numerous hours recruiting as we search for the best possible pastor we can find — someone who will make Calvary and Alexandria his or her home for many years to come.

Pastor Hans has had great initial conversations with wonderfully qualified candidates. We imagine a first round of interviews in early April at the earliest. We are thankful for Pastor Nathan who is serving as our interim pastor and has agreed to stay as long as we need. Please pray for our team and the next pastor God will lead to serve with us as we lead all people to a lifelong faith in Jesus Christ!

The Call Committee:

Lisa Knoll (Chair), Brooke Zabel, Wally Stukel, Joe Bridges, Mark Christenson, Nolan Kriel, Michelle Ahlquist (alternate), Pastor Hans, Katie Rentschler.



EASTER SATURDAY WORSHIP

March 31, 6pm (informal)

EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP

April 1, 8am (traditional)
9:30am & 11am (informal)

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

Saturday: 6pm Praise Worship

Sunday: 8:30am Traditional Worship

10:45am Celebrate Worship

Wednesday: 6:15pm Worship on Wednesday

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