Calvary Comment

December 2026

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
English District
208 Woods Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

The Rev. Luke T. Zimmerman, Pastor

Church Office Phone:
717.697.9771

Church Office Email:
office@calvarymechanicsburg.org

Parish Website:
www.calvarymechanicsburg.org

UPCOMING DATES

Wednesday, January 6
Epiphany Divine Service: 7:00pm

Sunday, February 7
Voters Assembly Meeting: 12:15pm

Wednesday, February 10
Ash Wednesday Divine Services:
10:30am & 7:00pm

Wednesdays, February 17, 24, March 3, 10, 17
Lent Midweek Services:
10:30am & 7:00pm

Thursday, March 25
Holy Thursday Divine Services:
12:00pm & 7:00pm

Friday, March 26
Good Friday Services:
12:00pm & 7:00pm

Saturday, March 27
Easter Vigil: 7:00pm

The Church's prayers during Advent anticipate divine actions that will bring relief and restoration to the LORD's people. That is seen in phrases found in the Collects for the Sundays in Advent: *"Come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance.... Make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds…. Lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation…. Come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy."*

These are petitions offered by individuals who aren't content with what they presently experience. That sentiment exists in people who desire that the LORD's will be done and His promises fulfilled, particularly those promises that point to an existence that will no longer be marked by all sorts of negative incidents.

It is certainly true that the themes of Holy Week and Easter establish the heart of our Christian faith, relating the works of Christ that bring about salvation. But Advent is the most pointed in anticipating what is to come for Christians. We openly speak about Christ's ultimate agenda: *"He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end."* We also express our belief in what is yet to be, as we confess at the end of the Creed: *"I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."*

That hope is a central theme in Advent, even when there are mentions about judgment when Christ does return. This is voiced in the hymns of Advent, as worshipers prepare their hearts and minds for Christ's glorious arrival. Here's a sampling of what we will sing during this season:

As judge, on clouds of light, / He soon will come again /
And His true members all unite / With Him in heav'n to reign. [LSB 331:4]

Soon will come that hour / When with mighty power /
Christ will come in splendor / And will judgment render, /
With the faithful sharing / Joy beyond comparing. [LSB 333:3]

So, when next He comes in glory / And the world is wrapped in fear, /
He will shield us with His mercy / And with words of love draw near. [LSB 345:4]

Oh, brighter than that glorious morn / Shall dawn upon our race /
The day when Christ in splendor comes / And we shall see His face. [LSB 348:4]

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high, / And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh; /
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, / And death's dark shadows put to flight.
[LSB 357:6]

The message of Advent prepares us for that event. It bolsters our faith in what will be fully accomplished for us by our Redeemer. That ultimate work will be beneficial for those who have been recipients of His redemptive activities. So in Advent, we will again focus our hearts and minds on what will result for those who place their hope and trust in Jesus Christ. Then at its end, we will pray on Christmas Eve: *"Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge."*

2026 ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Advent Midweek Services will be held on three Wednesdays in Advent: **December 2, December 9, and December 16**. Morning Prayer will take place at 10:30am. Evening Prayer will take place at 7:00pm. These services will focus on themes of preparation for Christ's return.

Our celebration of Christ's birth will include holding services on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day. **Christmas Vespers** will take place on **December 24**: pre-service music will begin at 6:30pm; the service will begin around 7:00pm. **Christmas Divine Service** will be held on **December 25** at 10:30am.

We will also commemorate the **Epiphany of Our Lord** on **January 6**. Divine Service will be held at 7:00pm. A dessert social will follow. Guests from Mount Calvary Lutheran Church - Lititz, PA will be present.

NOVEMBER 2026 VOTERS ASSEMBLY MEETING SUMMARY

At its November 1 session, the Voters Assembly of Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church took the following actions:

2027 VOTERS ASSEMBLY DATES
Agreed to hold its 2027 quarterly meetings on the following Sundays: February 7 (Q1), May 23 (Q2), August 1 (Q3), and November 7 (Q4).

PARISH BUDGET ADOPTED
Adopted the 2027 Parish Budget with a budgeted expenditure total of $362,952. This is an increase of 2.54% from the 2026 budget.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Executive Board (2027–2028 Term)
Congregational President: Ray Miller
Financial Secretary: Karen Appel
At-Large Member: Robert Lustrea

Executive Board (2027 One-Year Transition Term)
Secretary: Amy Stauffer
At-Large Member: Jim Wicker

Board Members (2027–2028 Term)
Board of Deacons: Jeff Douden and Tom Watson
Board of Trustees: Grant Dietrich and Trent Dietrich

LCMS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT RATIFIED
Pastor Zimmerman presented the Synod constitutional amendment adopted at the 2026 LCMS Convention. Following his overview, the Voters Assembly voted unanimously to ratify the change.

ENDOWMENT FUND UPDATE
The Treasurer provided an update regarding the Endowment Fund.

UPDATED CHURCH GOVERNING DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

You can download electronic copies of our newly revised Congregation's Constitution and Bylaws *(adopted May 3, 2026)* and newly adopted Standard Operating Procedures Manual [SOPM] *(adopted August 2, 2026)* from our church website:

https://www.calvarymechanicsburg.org/News%20&%20Links/church-policies.html

LWML/LADIES AID SOCIETY NEWS

THANKSGIVING COLLECTION: Because of your tremendous response to donate stuffing for the Thanksgiving food baskets that are provided to guests of New Hope Ministries' Mechanicsburg Center, we were able to deliver 350 boxes!

ZONE FALL RALLY INGATHERING: Thank you for your generosity in providing blankets, books and stuffed animals for "Project Night-Night," the recipient of our Fall Rally ingathering at Martin Luther Chapel in Pennsauken, NJ. These items are included in comfort bags for children living in shelters. The LWML members who were able to attend delivered the items on November 14.



NEXT MEETING: Our next monthly meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, December 21 at 9:30am** in the adult education room. If you are unable to attend, Mites to support LWML Missionary Grants can always be put in the wooden box located in the Narthex.

CALVARY MEN COMING TOGETHER

During 2026 our focus continued acknowledging God in all our ways *(Pr 3:6)* and encouraging one another to stay in the Word with daily devotions (e.g. *Portals of Prayer)*. The message board was placed in the Social Hall with reminders of many potential "paths" in our daily life.

If you missed our last meeting, you missed the English District Board of Directors Chairman provide encouragement. That day he was one of us, as we remembered how one man sharpens another *(Pr 27:17)*.

Our paths for 2027 will focus on practicing what we have learned and heard from God's Word, Bible Classes, Pastor's sermons, and daily devotions and our spiritual experience *(Php 4:8-9)*.

We will not meet on December 26. But we will resume meeting on Saturday, January 23, 2027 at 9:29am. Mark your calendar now and bring your sharpening tools.

PARISH CASH FLOW SUMMARY
January 1—October 31, 2026

INCOME	
General Offering	$ 261,476.32
Mission Offering	17,689.23
Building Fund	17,725.98
Plate Offering	3,739.39
Memorials	154.90
My Neighbor Fund	0.00
1-1-1 Project	486.76
Initial Offering	230.00
Church Seasonal Service Offerings	3,681.00
Building Use	300.00
Refunds	0.00
Other Income	52,661.68
Thrivent Choice Dollars	447.00
Thank Offering	963.00
Lutheran Witness Subscriptions	273.15
Sunday School	103.03
Youth Group	488.98
Endowment Fund	954.88
Capital Improvement	4.90
TOTAL INCOME	***$ 361,380.20***
EXPENDITURES	
Pastoral Expenses	$ 91,293.23
Personnel Expenses	33,082.00
Real Estate Expenses	53,993.63
Operating Expenses	48,525.07
Ministry Expenses	4,658.17
Mission Expenses	18,800.00
Mortgage Expenses	50,795.89
Non-Budgeted Expenses	29,996.95
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	***$ 331,144.94***
NET CASH FLOW	***$ 30,235.26***

Full financial reports are provided to congregational members at the quarterly Voters Assembly meetings.



Comfort Bag Handoff on November 2

Pictured above *(L-to-R)* are Kim Smith, Auxiliary President, Airika Pollard, Bob Ardner, Liz Bentzel and Sharon Yost, Auxiliary members.

OPERATION BARNABAS
LCMS MINISTRY TO THE ARMED FORCES

MILITARY SHARE PROGRAM

Our Military Share food distributions continue each month on the third Wednesday. In November, we served 42 families totaling 112 people. Our numbers can change monthly based on individual family situations and those families who did not attend the distribution.

During this Holiday season, the Operation Barnabas Chapter is giving each of our Military Share families "extras" for their holiday meals. Please see the bulletin for a list of these items that you can donate for our recipients.

ADOPT-A-CHAPLAIN PROGRAM

The Operation Barnabas Committee continues to encourage the congregation to support Chaplain Aaron Bell through regular communication and prayer.

Please consider sending a note of encouragement.

Chaplain Bell's Personal Email: naphshi@gmail.com
Military Email: aaron.bell@marines.usmc.mil

HONOR WALL

Any Calvary member who is a veteran and would like their name added to our Honor Plaque should speak with Bob Ardner or Jeff Douden.

COMFORT BAG PROGRAM COMPLETION

This project has been completed thanks to the Auxiliary at the Mechanicsburg American Legion Post and a nine-year-old little girl.

After initially agreeing to fill 20 backpacks for us, the Auxiliary learned that we were able to purchase 48 backpacks, and they immediately agreed to fill all of them for us. During this time, Amari, a nine-year-old student, learned about this project and wanted to help. She contacted friends using social media to help her fill the backpacks. With the help of her parents, she was able to fill 22 backpacks for the Auxiliary.

On October 27, at the Legion Post meeting, 48 completed backpacks were presented to Bob Ardner, who presented a framed thank you letter from the Operation Barnabas Committee to Amari.

On November 2, Jeff Douden, Bob Ardner, and members of the Legion the backpacks gave the backpacks to Airika Pollard, Coordinated Entry Specialist from the Lebanon VA Hospital. *[See picture at left.]*

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208 Woods Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Address Service Requested



Next *Calvary Comment* Deadline is Sunday, December 20, 2026.
Please send info to CalvaryComment@Verizon.net.

PARISH MUSIC UPDATE

For 2026, I have reworked the program for our pre-service music on Christmas Eve to be inclusive of all our musicians. There will still be carols sung by members of the congregation. Some choral music will be presented by the Cantors. There will be involvement of parish children the children. Also included this year is participation from our in-house flutist and trumpeter. Please plan to attend beginning at 6:30pm on Christmas Eve. I think you may be surprised to see how many members and children of our parish participate in Calvary's music program.

As Parish Music Director, I'm thrilled to see the progress made this past year. I am hopeful music will continue to be a growing ministry in Calvary. Lutherans have always stressed the importance of music in our worship services.

There is always room for more singers and children advanced enough in their music studies to be a part of not only our time of pre-service music but also to participate in worship services throughout the year. I am so grateful to the parents who encourage their children to sing or play an instrument to give God the glory.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Karen Appel
Parish Music Director

NOTE OF THANKS & APPRECIATION

Joyce Moul appreciates and thanks her church family for cards, emails, and words of encouragement during her unexpected diagnosis, surgery, and now treatment for breast cancer.

YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY & LOCK-IN: DECEMBER 11 & 12

The Board of Youth will be holding its final event for the year: a Youth Group Christmas Party & Lock-in.

The event will be held at church. It starts on Friday, December 11 at 6:30pm and ends on Saturday, December 12 at 9:00am. Dinner, snacks, and breakfast will be provided.

This event is intended for the older youths. Participants should bring their own blankets, pillows, and sleeping bags/air mattresses.

A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex for youth to register and for any parents to indicate their willingness to stay overnight. Any baking ideas for everyone to do can also be suggested.

Any questions can be directed to Essence Dietrich (717-712-4742), who is the event coordinator.