
CALVARY COMMENT

January 2025

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
English District

208 Woods Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

The Rev. Luke T. Zimmerman, Pastor

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STEWARDSHIP CORNER

PUT YOUR HAND TO THE PLOW

In the Creation Account, we read how the Lord God made human beings to be stewards of His image.^(Ge 1:26-28) By being tied to Christ's birth, death, and resurrection, human beings have now become **stewards** of His Word. That stewarding includes both keeping that Word pure and spreading that Word, especially the Good News of salvation. Jesus describes this life of discipleship in Luke's Gospel by calling it putting one's hand to the plow.^(Lk 9:62)

When plowing a field, one has to look forward. How do we steward His Word? It requires us to look forward:

- Reading, learning, and studying God's Word
- Passing God's Word on to others
- Taking opportunities to be shining lights through our actions done in our vocations, our relationships, our homes, our neighborhoods, our schools, even here at Calvary.

Such stewarding of God's Word in these ways is nearly endless!

(Continued on Page 2)

New Year's Day brings with it the custom of making resolutions. These often are done after evaluating matters from the previous year that could use improvement. Those might include adjusting one's budget and spending habits or limiting how many hours are spent on trivial pursuits compared to quality time with family members or friends. Others might set goals to pursue further education opportunities or to seek out a new career. Then there may be more personal improvement ideas, such as increasing physical activity or enhancing relationships.

No matter what resolutions are made on New Year's Day, they all have one thing in common: the issue of resolve. Achieving desired changes or improvements requires determination or purpose. A person's will needs to be driven toward making adjustments, so that they can be carried out. Other factors may determine whether one's resolutions will ultimately come to positive results. But without resolve, those suggestions can be guaranteed to remain unfinished, unfulfilled ideas.

Perhaps many of us won't make New Year's resolutions about issues in our lives this year. But if you participate in our Divine Services that take place during the first full week of January 2025—January 5 Sunday service or January 6 Epiphany service—you will make at least one resolution of sorts.

We might not immediately think of it as a resolution, but consider the prayer that will be offered during Confession and Absolution. Following a petition for forgiveness of sins rooted in Christ's sacrificial death, we will ask God the Father for something more: *"By Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life."*

Note how the prayer asks for improvement; that is, we are requesting that our knowledge of God and His will be increased along with our obedience to what God speaks in His Word. But that prayer also identifies a major factor that will play into having the resolve to make this happen. In these matters involving God and His will, we aren't left to our own determination or purpose. If that were so, there will only be failure.

Improvement in spiritual matters must involve divine action being done in and among us that creates new resolve. That's why the prayer doesn't have us pledge our changes or adjustments to what we think, say, or do. Rather, it identifies what must be granted to us so that knowledge of God and His will can be increased along with our obedience: *"By Your Holy Spirit...."*

But we shouldn't think that this is a vain request. The Scriptures disclose details about the Holy Spirit's work in people: *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."*^(Jn 14:15-17) *"It is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*^(Php 2:13) *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."*^(Ga 5:22-23)

We should anticipate this being done within us. That will include new resolve that is Spirit-wrought, so that we might have an increase in our knowledge about God and His will and an increase in true obedience to His Word. Such a result can be ours, as we are recipients of the Holy Spirit that comes to us in the ways that our Lord Jesus has promised.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER (Continued from Page 1)

Stewarding God's Word does not occur in a vacuum. It happens in the midst of challenges brought forth in a fallen world. But as one of our Synod's pastors reminds us: *"For the Church of Jesus Christ the answer to every challenge always boils down to this: Be faithful. Be faithful to the Lord, faithful to the vocations He has given us, faithful to one another in love."* [Heath R. Curtis](#), LW 2017

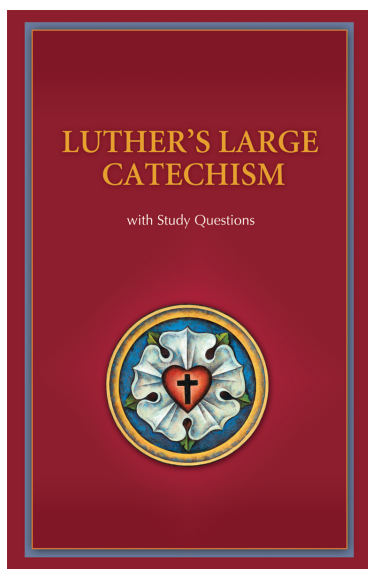
For the Church to carry out its task of stewarding God's Word, it takes all of us praying and taking opportunities to use our abilities and resources. The Good News flows outward when we *"put our hand to the plow."*

Let us continue to steward this aspect of God's creation, the Holy Gospel.

TUESDAY EVENING MIDWEEK STUDY

Study of the Large Catechism will begin on January 7. The Large Catechism addresses chief aspects of the Christian faith: God's law (the Ten Commandments); God's identity and His gracious, saving work (the Apostles' Creed); man's interaction with God (the Lord's Prayer); and ways that salvation is delivered to individuals (Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar).

This course will involve guided reading of the text, followed by discussions of its content in class sessions. To ensure that enough class materials are prepared, please inform Pastor Zimmerman about your intent to participate.



LWML/LADIES AID SOCIETY NEWS

HAPPY NEW YEAR! One of the best ways to start 2025 is to attend our next regular meeting on **Saturday, January 18, 2025 at 9:30am** in the Education Wing Meeting Room. Pastor leads a Bible study from the LWML *Quarterly* magazine before our business meeting. You can count on leaving before noon. Hope to see you on the 18th!

🎵 CALVARY'S MUSIC CORNER 🎵

Thank you to all our cantors and musicians who used their talents to enhance our Advent and Christmas worship services!

DISTRICT CONVENTION NEWS

The English District Convention will be held June 26–28, 2025 in Ann Arbor, MI. At that meeting, elections for various District offices will be conducted, as well as other items of business.

Each congregation is eligible to send a pastoral delegate and lay delegate to the Convention. We will select our delegates at the February 2025 Voters Assembly meeting.

Our congregation will also participate in the nominating process for District President and Vice-President. Consideration of nominees for these offices will also be on the business agenda for our February 2025 Voters Assembly meeting.

Upcoming Dates

Saturday, March 1

Clothes Closet: 11:00am—12:30pm

Wednesday, March 5

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

Sunday, April 13

Palm Sunday Divine Service: 10:30am

Thursday, April 17

**Holy Thursday Divine Services:
12:00pm & 7:00pm**

Friday, April 18

Good Friday Services: 12:00pm & 7:00pm

Saturday, April 19

Easter Vigil: 7:00pm

2025 EPIPHANY SERVICE

On **Monday, January 6**, we will celebrate the Epiphany of Our Lord with guests from our sister congregation, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church – Lititz, PA.

Divine Service will be held at **7:00pm**. Rev. Christopher Seifferlein will be the preacher for the service.

A dessert social will follow afterward. Look for a registration sheet in the Narthex to indicate your ability to provide a dessert for the social.

CALVARY CLOTHES CLOSET

Our **next opportunity** to serve our neighbors through the Calvary Clothes Closet will be on **Saturday, March 1**.

While March may seem far off, it will take several weeks to put new donations in order, which hopefully will be received from you. Our supply of clothing was diminished after our October distribution, including most of our coat supply.

It will be late-winter/early-spring during our distribution, so contributions of clean, lightly worn warm clothing suitable for that time of year would be preferable.

Please remember this outreach of our church to help our neighbors in need. We pray that God will permit us to put this all together and allow us to make this offering once again.

Look for more details about how to help in future bulletin announcements.

PARISH CASH FLOW REPORT

January 1–November 30, 2024

INCOME

General Offering	\$ 220,679.13
Mission Offering	12,486.25
Building Fund	19,865.80
Plate Offering	4,303.86
Memorials	243.77
My Neighbor Fund	0.00
1-1-1 Project	407.00
Initial Offering	200.00
Church Seasonal Service Offerings	5,270.15
Building Use	200.00
Refunds	0.00
Other Income	60,932.81
Thrivent Choice Dollars	467.00
Lutheran Witness Subscriptions	253.56
Sunday School	45.00
Youth Group	625.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 325,979.33

EXPENDITURES

Pastoral Expenses	\$ 95,927.37
Personnel Expenses	35,881.89
Real Estate Expenses	44,585.53
Operating Expenses	49,015.01
Ministry Expenses	6,914.56
Mission Expenses	18,750.00
Mortgage Expenses	80,188.70
Non-Budgeted Expenses	81,101.73
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 412,364.79

NET CASH FLOW – \$ 86,385.46

NOTES: Other Income includes contributions to the Education Wing Roof Replacement Fund Drive and the Robert Wallick Estate Gift that was designated for the Endowment Fund. Mortgage Expenses include payment of remaining Renovation Funds collected in 2023 toward the principal of renovation loans. Non-Budgeted Expenses include transfer of the Robert Wallick Estate Gift to the Endowment Fund (\$35,000) and payment of the Education Wing roof replacement project (\$44,430).

2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES

New sets of offering envelopes have been placed in the mailboxes found in the Education Wing.

Please collect them to use when making contributions to the church in 2025.

INSTALLATION OF PARISH OFFICERS

Members elected to parish offices in November will be installed during the Divine Service on January 5.

Thank you to all members whose time of service as a parish officer has concluded and to all members who will serve the congregation in 2025.



OPERATION BARNABAS

LCMS MINISTRY TO THE ARMED FORCES

MILITARY SHARE PROGRAM

Our last distribution was held on December 18, when we served 43 families, totaling 114 people. Our next distribution is scheduled for January 15.

Bob Ardner and Jeff Douden met with Pam Hicks from the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank on December 11 for our annual audit. Our program was found to be in full compliance.

NEW INITIATIVE IN PLANNING: VETERANS SUPPORT DINNER

The Operation Barnabas Committee and the Evangelism Committee have started discussing a Veterans Support Dinner, which is being planned for the Memorial Day time frame. Details will be provided as plans are more fully developed.

ONGOING INITIATIVE: MOVE OUT BOXES (CURRENTLY SUSPENDED)

This project is on hold until we receive a response from the Veterans Office at the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg.

ADOPT-A-CHAP PROGRAM

Calvary has adopted Chaplain Aaron Bell and his family. The Bells attended Calvary for several months while awaiting orders for his next duty station.

Mailing Address

Chaplain Aaron Bell
4978 Jamestown Ct
Columbus, OH 43220

Personal Email: naphshi@gmail.com

Military Email: aaron.bell@marines.usmc.mil

HONOR WALL

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

CHRISTMAS DECORATION REMOVAL

Thank you to all who helped on December 22 to decorate the church for our parish's Christmas celebrations!

The conclusion of Christmastide will mean removal of Christmas decorations. That has been scheduled for Sunday, January 12 after Divine Service.

All help will be greatly appreciated.

CALVARY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
208 Woods Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
Address Service Requested



Next *Calvary Comment* Deadline is Sunday, January 19, 2025.
Please send info to CalvaryComment@Verizon.net.



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Romans 10:17 ESV



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DISTRICT E-NEWSLETTER

Do you want to see what sister congregations in the LCMS English District are doing in their locations? Would you like to see where Bishop Miskus or other District leaders are visiting? Do you have interest in learning about District programs?

News from around the English District can be obtained by subscribing to the **Servant-to-Servant** e-newsletter:

<https://englishdistrict.org/enews>

