

ANNUAL REPORT

— 2018 —



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



VALUES

- **Servant Leadership**
- **Joyful Generosity**
- **Intentional Relationships**



MISSION

**Welcome and inspire ALL
with grace, courage and love.**



VISION

**To be a connected and caring
faith community.**



TAG LINE

Reach up, Reach in, Reach out.



Calvary Lutheran Annual Meeting Agenda

February 10, 2019 - 9:15 am

Call to Order

Approval of 2018 Minutes

January 21, 2018 Annual Meeting

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NEW BUSINESS

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1. Church Council

2. Endowment Committee

3. Nominating Committee

B. Endowment Fund

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ADJOURNMENT

Calvary Lutheran Church Annual Meeting Minutes January 21, 2018

The Annual Congregational Meeting was called to order at 9:20 am by Pastor David Piper.

The opening prayer was given by Pastor David.

Tim Becker, Council Secretary, read the Congregation Annual Meeting Minutes from February 12, 2017 and Semi-Annual Meeting Minutes from November 5, 2017, on page 2 of the 2018 Annual Report. A motion to approve the Minutes was made with a second. Motion carried.

Pastor David reviewed the results, findings and conclusions from the Vitality Survey taken by members of the church in late 2017. The results of the survey revealed that the vitality and sustainability of our church is in good shape. There were areas for improvement noted which the church leadership will be looking into and addressing in the coming months and years.

Pastor David discussed an upcoming visit to the church by Doug Hill, an ELCA pastor from Colorado who specializes in congregation revitalization and strategic planning. Pastor Hill will be meeting with leaders and members on Friday and Saturday, January 26 and 27, 2018.

Kathy Miller, CLC Business Manager, reviewed the 2017 Treasurer's Report on pages 3-5 of the 2018 Annual Report. A motion to approve the Report was made with a second. Motion carried.

Frances Becker of the Endowment Committee, read the 2017 Endowment Fund Report on page 6 of the 2018 Annual Report. A motion was made with a second to approve the Report and make the distributions from the Endowment Fund as recommended by the Committee. Motion carried.

Pastor David read the Nominating Committee ballot on page 6 of the 2018 Annual Report. Nominated to each serve a three-year term on the church council were Bill Eldridge, Jon Johnson and Nancy May. Nominated to each serve a three-year term on the Endowment Committee were Brad Estes, Karen Pearson and Lloyd Sohl. Nominated to each serve a one-year term on the Nominating Committee were Vonna Cheever, Lowell Davis and Rand Schleusener. A motion was made with a second to approve all nominations. Motion carried.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made with a second. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Timothy J. Becker, Council Secretary

Calvary Lutheran Church
Congregation Semi-Annual Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2018

The Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting for 2018 was called to order at 9:30 am by Council President, Cheryl Chapman.

The opening prayer was given by Pastor David.

Cheryl gave a brief summary of some of the recent activities in 2018 and upcoming plans for Calvary:

- Revitalization and strategic planning;
- 2018-2019 Stewardship Program – “Picture the Possibilities”; and
- Tables of 8 coming in 2019.

Calvary Business Manager, Kathy Miller, presented the proposed 2019 Calvary budget and the 5-year spending plan. After discussion and questions, a motion to approve the 2019 budget and 5-year spending plan was made with a second. Motion carried.

Cheryl reminded the meeting attendees that the annual meeting of the church will take place in February of 2019 and to plan on attending for the important items that will be discussed, updated and voted upon.

A motion to adjourn the Semi-Annual Meeting was made with a second. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:10 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Timothy J. Becker, Council Member, for Jon Johnson, Council Secretary

Nominating Committee Ballot

Nominating Committee Members: The Nominating Committee met to fulfill its charge to place names of the Congregational Members in nomination to fill positions on the Church Council, Endowment Committee and Nominating Committee.

There are two (2) positions on the Church Council. Alphabetical Nominations: Jessica Gromer, Martin Kerkenbush. The Congregation will vote for two (2).

There are two (2) positions on the Endowment Committee. Alphabetical Nominations: Jennifer Baloun, Matt Odden. The Congregation will vote for two (2).

There are three (3) positions on the Nominating Committee. Alphabetical Nominations: Patrick Badiuk, Vonna Cheever, Reeva Mathieson. The Congregation will vote for three (3).

**Calvary Lutheran Church
Treasurer's Report
Comparative Historical Balance Sheet**

<u>Assets</u>	<u>12/31/2018</u>	<u>12/31/2017</u>
Cash & Cash Equivalents		
Checking	\$ 171,831	\$ 228,228
Memorials	68,684	65,977
Designated Funds	148,808	136,846
Wells Fargo Debit Card	1,206	0
ELCA Mission Investment fund	11,852	7,715
Organ Fund	10,396	10,368
We Care Food Certificates	5,525	5,525
Petty Cash	100	100
ELCA Mission Investment Fund - Capital Improvements	<u>308,627</u>	<u>305,327</u>
Total Cash & Cash Equivalents	727,028	760,086
Trust Fund (Endowment Fund) - see page 6		
Land, Building & Equipment		
Land	443,906	443,906
Building & Equipment	7,590,127	7,590,127
Pipe organ	<u>391,783</u>	<u>391,783</u>
Total Land, Buildings and Equipment	8,425,815	8,425,815
Total Assets	<u><u>\$9,152,843</u></u>	<u><u>\$9,185,901</u></u>
<u>Liabilities and Fund Balance</u>		
Misc. Accounts and Payroll Taxes Payable	\$8,125	\$5,125
Net Dedicated Funds Payable	218,697	202,822
Total Liabilities	<u>226,822</u>	<u>207,947</u>
Fund Balance	8,926,021	8,977,954
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	<u><u>\$9,152,843</u></u>	<u><u>\$9,185,901</u></u>

Calvary Lutheran Church
Treasurer's Report
Operating Receipts and Disbursements
December 2018 and 2017

	2018			2017		
	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	% Variance	Prior Year Actual YTD	% Variance	\$ Variance
Receipts:						
Regular Offering	\$811,638	\$1,014,942	-20.0%	\$836,774	-3.0%	(25,136)
Special Offering	25,342	\$34,551	-26.7%	28,486	-11.0%	(3,144)
Other Offering	45,220	\$39,689	13.9%	32,722	38.2%	12,498
Total Receipts	\$882,200	\$1,089,183	-19.0%	897,982	-1.8%	(15,782)
Disbursements:						
Witness	\$103,724	\$111,779	7.2%	94,062	10.3%	9,662
Worship	6,947	9,650	28.0%	5,413	28.3%	1,534
Education	24,872	54,420	54.3%	24,071	3.3%	801
Building	155,256	170,495	8.9%	163,377	-5.0%	(8,121)
Support	609,290	655,339	7.0%	594,685	2.5%	14,605
Administration	40,637	57,500	29.3%	41,143	-1.2%	(506)
Total Disbursements	\$940,726	\$1,059,183	11.2%	922,751	1.9%	17,975
Capital/Debt	\$357	\$30,000		1,326		(969)
Receipts Over (Under) Expenses	-\$58,883	\$0		-\$26,095		-\$32,788

**Calvary Lutheran Church
2019 Budget**

	2016 YTD 12/31/2016	2017 YTD 12/31/2017	2018 BUDGET	2018 YTD 06/30/2018	2019 BUDGET
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WITNESS					
ELCA OUTREACH	40,553	42,061	43,023	21,512	44,314
ELCA FUNDRAISING	18,300	18,300	18,300	9,150	
LOCAL BENEVOLENCE	10,360	19,531	31,107	3,214	49,000
DUES/SYNOD CONF	3,188	3,854	6,500	4,662	6,500
ADVERTISING	3,800	5,761	6,500	2,834	6,500
COFFEE HOUR EXP	5,438	4,554	6,350	2,585	6,000
TOTAL WITNESS	81,639	94,061	111,780	43,956	112,314

WORSHIP					
WORSHIP/MUSIC SUPPLIES	5,357	5,201	7,650	2,870	7,450
MAINTENANCE PIANOS	0	212	2,000	148	1,500
TOTAL WORSHIP	5,357	5,413	9,650	3,018	8,950

EDUCATION					
CHILDREN'S EDUCATION	16,068	18,579	41,420	10,755	36,005
FAMILY MINISTRIES	1,417	1,891	2,500	1,037	2,500
ADULT EDUCATION	1,265	983	2,500	2,266	4,000
CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS	0		1,000		1,000
SPEAKER NIGHT	1,040	1,491	5,000		2,500
NEW MEMBERS	448	1,128	2,000	685	2,000
TOTAL EDUCATION	20,238	24,072	54,420	14,743	48,005

BUILDINGS /GROUNDS					
UTILITIES	68,914	76,485	80,280	40,688	79,620
MAINTENANCE	28,811	35,700	51,875	34,792	61,875
INSURANCE	17,048	16,705	20,000	8,647	20,000
MORTGAGE P&I	93,012	23,253	0	0	
TECHNOLOGY	13,694	11,234	18,340	1,026	18,900
TOTAL BUILDING	221,479	163,377	170,495	85,153	180,395

SUPPORT					
MINISTERIAL SALARIES	157,604	163,045	168,944	82,247	169,970
PROGRAMMING/SUPPORT	266,220	294,044	338,814	145,425	348,935
PYRL TAXES/INS/PENSION	136,108	137,596	147,582	72,864	159,682
TOTAL SUPPORT	559,932	594,685	655,340	300,536	678,587

ADMINISTRATION					
OFFICE SUPPLIES	22,097	20,852	29,500	10,776	27,500
ACCOUNTING	2,690	1,172	5,000	399	2,500
ADDITIONAL OVERHEAD	14,722	19,119	23,000	6,982	23,000
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	39,509	41,143	57,500	18,157	53,000

OPERATING EXPENSES	928,154	922,751	1,059,185	465,563	1,081,251
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CAPITAL FUNDS					
ESCROW EQUIPMENT REPAIR	0	1,326	30,000	0	
TOTAL CAPITAL FUNDS	0	1,326	30,000	0	0

TOTAL OPERATING & CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS	928,154	924,077	1,089,185	465,563	1,081,251
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2018 ENDOWMENT FUND

The Calvary Lutheran Church Endowment Fund was established in 1985. In 2017, the funds were moved from Wells Fargo bank to the ELCA Endowment Fund. Oversight is provided and disbursements are established by a five member elected committee made up of Calvary Church members. All gifts to Calvary Lutheran Endowment Fund are tax deductible. Up to five percent of the fund's value at the end of the calendar year is available for distribution the following year. Final numbers for the fund's value on December 31, 2018 will not be available until mid to late February. Using the November 30 balance of \$452,791, approximately \$23,664 will be available for disbursement during 2019.

The Endowment Committee recommends that during 2019, 5% of the value of the funds as of December 31, 2018, be distributed. Since final numbers are not available, the recommendations are by percentage and will be applied based on the year end dollar value of the fund, as provided by the ELCA.

These percentages are as follows:

25% ELCA support:

Lutheran Outdoors	12.5%
Pine Ridge Program	12.5%

25% Community Outreach in SD

Church Response	13.75%
One Heart Campus	6.25%
Wambli Ska Wacipi	5.00%

50% Calvary Lutheran church (including capital improvements)

Senior High Activities	16.67%
Seminary Scholarship	16.66%
Middle School Trip	16.67%

Programs and services funded by the endowment during 2018, that are not listed here, were deemed to have adequate funding for 2019 from other sources or on hand at the present time.

During 2018, the committee met with Kathy McHenry, ELCA Lutheran Planned Giving advisor, to learn what services she can provide to the committee, the church as a whole and individual church members regarding planned giving. During 2019, utilizing available resources, the committee will be developing and implementing a plan for providing information and education regarding financial planning, estate planning, and planned giving to church members through a variety of programs and approaches. **Growing the Calvary Lutheran Church Endowment will ensure funding for important services and support valuable programs in the future. Planned giving can provide significant tax benefits to those choosing to give. We encourage everyone to learn more about the many possibilities available to meet your personal giving goals.**

Respectfully presented by the 2018 Endowment Fund Committee,
Harold Doerr, Frances Becker, Lloyd Sohl, Brad Estes, Karen Pearson

Church Council President

Cheryl Chapman

Thank you for your prayers and service to our church. We have grown together in our faith and commitment to become a caring and connected community, where we welcome and inspire all with grace, courage, and love.

In 2018 our programs with youth and family continued to be a community inspiration for many. Our Kin Ministry volunteers connected with many of our members who are not able to leave their homes and engage as they have over the years. We enjoyed new forms of worship and music to praise God and we continued to serve our community in many ways.

During our stewardship campaign this Fall, we “pictured the possibilities” of initiatives that will make a difference in our church and community. Through the generous efforts of our members, we increased our pledges by \$114,000, short of our \$158,000 goal. Our Church Council has reviewed the results and believe we can move ahead with the initiatives we discussed with a commitment to finding additional savings with creativity, frugality and additional generosity and volunteerism for our programs. As a result, here’s what 2019 is looking like:

- ***Year-Round Wednesday Services***—church services and meals will be “unplugged,” a relaxing and inspiring respite in the middle of summertime activities. Even if you are not a Wednesday night “regular,” you will have an option if you are out-of-town on weekends!
- ***Middle School Additional Support***—our children are faced with challenges every day—we will increase our opportunities for conversations that make a difference!
- ***Adult Activities and Events***—our adults ask for more ways to connect and reach out to others in our community—we ask you to speak up about your interests—watch for a survey!
- ***Mission Partners and Community Benevolence***—as we explore becoming an Anchor Church in our community, we want to increase our individual and collective generosity with our time, talent, and treasure!

This year was our first year without a mortgage on 5311 Sheridan Lake Road. It was time to pray and discover what is next for us as a church. With the help of Pastor Doug Hill, we began exploring our values and what we are called to do in our community, our state and beyond. Many of our members joined in planning sessions and then a group further took these values to generate guiding statements. Our Vision Committee took your input and identified our values as Servant Leadership, Joyful Generosity, and Intentional Relationships. These values resulted in a vision to be a caring and connected faith community with a mission to welcome and inspire all with grace courage, and love.

These statements will inform our future work in developing goals and action plans for our next steps. Join us in 2019 as we develop the Strategic Plan for the next 5 years. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Council President in 2018—let’s continue to Reach Up, Reach In, and Reach Out!

Cheryl Chapman
Council President

Co-Pastor's Annual Report

Pastor David Piper

Vision: To be a connected and caring faith community.
Mission: Welcome and inspire ALL with grace, courage and love.
Tag line: Reach up, Reach in, Reach out
Values: Servant Leadership, Joyful Generosity and Intentional Relationships

As we look at 2108 in the rear-view mirror, it was a good year here at Calvary Lutheran. I just want to thank you for all you do, for your serving in the community and here at church. I ask you to join me in thanking your council and your staff for all they do also. We really are blessed to have a great staff and a caring council.

At the end of the school year Amy Hansen, Paige Kadlec and Bergie Osterloo decided to step away from doing Wednesday kids choir to spend more time with family. We thank them for all they have done. At the same time Deb Martin retired from teaching music at Meadowbrook. Deb stepped into that role and we welcome her taking even more of a role on our staff. (Deb is also the band leader for Wednesday night.) We truly have been blessed with the right people at the right time.

We also spent time on visioning in the church and I just want to thank all those involved. We came up with great vision, mission statements and a tag line. I cannot wait until we start and implement the strategic process

I also want to thank you for being a generous congregation; because of your generosity many people around Rapid City, the state and around the globe have been helped. Over \$114,000 flowed out of this congregation to help people. Some of that money was budgeted from general offerings, and some was specifically earmarked by you to go right back out. Rapid City people and organizations received over \$43,000 of that. We really are making a difference and we are hearing from our partners that they appreciate all you do. You can see more of these numbers in the CIA (Calvary In Action) report. Once again thank you for all you do!

It has been a great year and it is an honor to be one of your pastors. I am excited to see what 2019 brings. Blessings and thank you!

Blessings,
Pastor David

Co-Pastor's Annual Report

Becky Piper

Vision: To be a connected and caring faith community.
Mission: Welcome and inspire ALL with grace, courage and love.
Tag line: Reach up, Reach in, Reach out
Values: Servant Leadership, Joyful Generosity and Intentional Relationships

Leading Forward: A lot happened in 2018, including the creation of the vision, mission, tag line and values. I want to thank all of you that were involved in that hard work: congregation members, staff, the vision team, council and Pastor Doug Hill for his continued guidance in our process. By the time of the annual meeting, our congregational goal setting session will have taken place. Pastor David and I will facilitate the strategic planning process in order to reach our congregational goals, with the help of council, staff and other key leaders. Everything that we do as a congregation will come from the above statements as they become our way of living and serving together.

Worship: 2018 brought an increase in hours for Deb Martin on our worship team. It's an honor to have her coordinating the children's music for Wednesday nights, as well as offering Blue Grass worship on the 1st Saturday night of each month (2 exceptions). She will also continue to be the coordinator for Wednesday night worship, including when we are able to offer more services. Albin Spreizer continues to coordinate music for our weekend worship services, as well as increase congregational participation through choirs, chimes and special music opportunities. In 2018, we saw an average of 544/weekly worship attendance. We also celebrated 43 baptisms.

Congregation Care: Thanks to Tom Martin, our Kin Ministry program has greatly expanded in 2018. We currently have 24 volunteers who are connected with 24 people. At the end of 2018, we also began an experiment in extending our worship services through live-streaming to Peaceful Pines and offering holy communion 1/month. We are excited to see how this can better care for our members and other folks. Our consistency with our hospital visitation team continues to be a highlight, despite issues with names appearing on the hospital visitation list. The best policy is always to contact the church if you have a loved one in the hospital.

Education: Calvary continues to provide excellent education programs for children to youth. Our Education team is always looking for ways to better connect families to their faith. We are implementing a change in our confirmation program in order to match the structure of the school system. In order to move from an 8th-9th grade confirmation to a 7th-8th grade confirmation program, this spring we will confirm both our 8th and 9th graders. Hannah Fleming, our confirmation coordinator, has been working hard in order to implement these changes that have been requested by families for a number of years. If you have any questions about the change, please contact me.

Blessings,
Pastor Becky

Custodian
James Jennings

It has been another busy year at Calvary Lutheran Church. Cleaning and maintaining the facility is very challenging for me. On December 1, 2015, the Church Council hired a part time custodian (Wayne Rosby) to help with the cleaning and maintenance of our church. Wayne has been here over three years now and is a huge asset to Calvary.

Here are a few facts about our church building:

The facility has: 642 light fixtures with 1442 light bulbs.

The heating system is as follows; 14 heat pumps, 7 forced air gas furnaces, and 15 electric heaters.

There are 36 heating units which require 83 filters that must be changed every 3 to 4 months.

7 restrooms with 25 toilets, 23 sinks and 2 showers.

The church is 52,769 square feet with over 32,000 square feet of carpeting.

410 windows (with fingerprints).

85 stained glass windows.

Office Manager
Lee Ann Henry

As Office Manager, I do a variety of jobs including the weekly bulletin, monthly newsletter, keep the membership records current, correspondence, filing, write reports, answer the telephone and welcome people who come into the church office. I would also like to thank the many volunteers who help in the church office doing a variety of jobs throughout the year. You are appreciated! You can find more information on church activities by going to our website – www.calvaryrapidcity.org.

Education Staff Support
Judy Frost

252 students (3-year-olds through 9th grade) are currently registered for the 2018-19 education year. In addition to the registration database, I do record keeping for the Confirmation student covenants and youth summer camping and impact trips. 32 High School youth attended the annual Ski Trip in January and 34 attended the ELCA National Youth Gathering in Houston in June. Eleven Middle School youth attended a Week of Hope Mission Trip in Loveland, Colorado last summer. Our Education Mission project last year was Kids Against Hunger, where 21,168 meals were packed by Calvary students. I also provide a variety of graphic communication pieces and education materials including brochures, registration forms, curriculum booklets, education calendars, handbooks, letters, postcards and other projects for the Education Staff. It is a pleasure for me to be a part of Calvary's staff and I look forward to the year ahead.

Family Ministries/Website/Facebook

Kellie Meissner

Milestone Ministry is one of my favorite ways of helping parents pass on their Christian faith. I love how it brings an awareness of God's presence into the home while also bringing the events of our everyday lives into the congregation. With Milestones we celebrate with all children/parents ages birth to 12th Grade. I've also had a fun year with Family Events: starting off the year with Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace, Souper Bowl Food Drive, Valentine card making party, Nerf Games, Prayer/Praise Wall, Be Prepared DVD series, Easter Event – Stations of the Cross, Family Summer Picnic, Clothe-A-Kid, Trunk or Treat & Feeding SD Food Drive, Veterans Day Memorial Wall, Operation Christmas Child and Christmas Caroling. I continue to work on the church's website, Facebook pages and announcements. I look forward to learning new ways to advertise Calvary Lutheran on social media. Thank you for the opportunity to serve this wonderful congregation.

3 Year Olds – 5th Grade Education Program

Sonia Sykora

In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus said..."Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching** them to obey everything that I commanded you."

The education program at Calvary calls all of us to hear and respond to His great commission and call to **teach**.

I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the education volunteers who continue to be faithful to the Christian Education Program at Calvary. We continue to encourage parents to pass on their faith, knowing that faith formation primarily happens within the family. With this in mind, we have many parents who teach each week in their child's classroom, knowing that scriptures have taught us that the family is the "cradle of faith". We are blessed to have so many wonderful families who make Wednesday evenings here at Calvary exceptional.

These were the numbers in 2018:

- Wednesday School registrations – 169 children (down from 184)
- Wednesday School parent volunteers – 160 adults
- Vacation Bible School preschool registrations – 28 preschoolers (up from 22)
- Vacation Bible School youth & adult helpers – 12
- Third Grade Bibles – 26 (up from 19)
- 5th Grade First Communion – 25 (down from 35)

Wednesday & Saturday Worship/Children's Music ***Deb Martin***

Saturday Night Worship Music

Saturday Worship looked a bit different this year as there was a request for an alternative type of service. The music included a small number of musicians (2-4) leading worship on Saturday evenings. A bluegrass group was formed in October and has been practicing 3-4 times per month. This group leads Saturday Worship the first Saturday of each month 10 times per year, excluding Lent and Advent.

Children's Music

The children in preschool through grade 5 are offered music as part of their Wednesday School experience. They come to the music room for 15 minutes on Wednesdays for devotions, singing, and prayer. The children are divided with the preschool-2nd grade in one group and 3rd-5th in another group. Music is presented 6 times at worship between September and April on Wednesday evenings.

Wednesday Worship Team

The Wednesday Worship Team consists of 7-8 regular weekly musicians. The group rehearses Monday evenings and plays at worship on approximately 27 Wednesdays September through April. We follow the education calendar. The team also provides the music for Confirmation Sunday. There were 18 musicians that participated in 2018. The worship team enjoys sharing their talent with the members of Calvary and greatly appreciates all who come to worship and sing on Wednesday evenings.

Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord. Ephesians 5:19 (NIV)

Wednesday Evening Meal Ministry ***Karla Mitzel***

The Wednesday Evening meal ministry provides an opportunity for friends & families to gather at Calvary for dinner & fellowship. Dinners are served for 26 weeks between September & May on Wednesdays when education classes meet.

At least 40 volunteers are involved with the meal each week to set up, prepare, serve & clean up. The High school, Confirmation, Pre-confirmation groups often help as part of their service project requirements. The Hospitality Committee has also reached out to other ministry groups & families to volunteer.

An average of 450 meals are served per week at an average cost of \$1550. Meal costs rely on being covered by donations collected at dinner. We are not included in the annual budget. Thank you to the congregation for financial & volunteer support. If you would like more information or to see the menu, visit our blog thenewchurchsupper.com

Cornerstone Mission Meal

Reeva Mathieson

Calvary Lutheran has supported the Cornerstone Mission by serving a monthly meal every third Friday of the month for over 20 years. Each month a group of volunteers from Calvary prepare the meal and another group serves the meal. We serve an average of 125 people each month. Sometimes the weather dictates the number of people being served. The cost of the meal is between \$450 and \$470 on average. The meal is paid for by the generosity of the Church members who donate money each month to make it possible. It is important for us to help the people in our community who are in need of some help. We are thankful for the people that donate financially and the volunteers that donate their time to keep this mission going.

Worship & Music Director

Albin Spreizer

We had a very good year and hope to continue the strong trends. Choirs were stable in rehearsal and presentation. We continue to offer men and women's chorus rehearsals. This is effective for rehearsal time and enables us to combine into a mixed choir, as well as, offering the separate ensembles in worship. Living Prayer is the mixed group for more difficult work and is also regularly attended. We have good flexibility and variety in this set up. Chimes is very stable now and moving to more challenging work. These rehearsals are very positive and productive. A very dedicated group for certain. We continue to have solo singers as part of regular worship and gives these people a chance to bring music they are wanting to sing. We benefit from differing offerings.

Saturday service has been in transition and continues to evolve. We now offer a Blue Grass service the first Saturday of each month, except Lent and Advent. Thanks to Deb Martin for creating this fresh venue for worship. The remaining Saturdays will continue in the current format but I hope to refine the music thematically, into four seasons with the music reflecting each part of the year. Retaining a quieter sense of worship, but with relatively new music focused on prayer and gratitude.

I am seeking more voices and some instrumental additions. This will take some time and trial. I feel the scenario is now stable for creating a long term service that speaks to the congregation on Saturday evenings.

I would like to move into summer concerts for the organ, played by nearby college students on break from their music educations. We can offer some money for their travel and give them a chance to play and hone their skills. Otherwise we are sharing the sanctuary with more concert offerings and will continue to do so. The church instruments get a lot of use and are in very good shape. The organ maintenance is still under warranty, but will soon require budget for regular tuning and repairs. Probably around three thousand dollars a year, based on David Cools estimate. I do hope the summer concerts could begin to cover that expense.

In summary, we are on budget and seem to be offering effective music based on the feedback received from our congregation. Thanks for all your support.

Pre-Confirmation/Confirmation

Hannah Fleming

Pre-Confirmation (6th & 7th Graders): 58 students are currently registered for the 2018-2019 pre-confirmation program with several parents serving as teachers and providing classroom support. We are using a new curriculum (Echo the Story from Augsburg Fortress). This curriculum offers imaginative ways for students to engage in the Bible using storytelling, creative reflection, PowerPoint presentations, hands-on learning, video clips, and dialogue. Teachers are encouraged to make the lesson their own and present it in ways that positively impact our students. Our students helped make Christmas cookies that confirmation students took to two assisted living facilities.

Confirmation (8th & 9th Graders): 28 students were confirmed last year. We currently have 54 registered students and 18 adult guides. We started a new curriculum, *Here We Stand*; it offers students and adults the opportunity to learn God's word in both large and small group settings and make life applications. Our goal is for students to have fun, form friendships and learn at the same time. Pastors David or Becky Piper led the large group introductory teaching time followed by a small group setting with their guides. 44 students and 11 adults attended the annual confirmation retreat in September, 2018. Confirmation groups and their guides visited the elderly at two assisted living facilities in December, 2018 where they shared God's love and Christmas cheer with our older generation. They visited, shared Christmas cookies, and sang Christmas songs.

New Confirmation Program: After thoughtful discussions and prayers, we started a new Confirmation Program! Our new program is a 3year experience for students in grades 6-8. It is designed to enhance their faith formation through the study of the Bible and Luther's Small Catechism in both large and small group settings on Wednesday nights. 6th graders will take pre-confirmation lessons while confirmation education starts in 7th grade until students are confirmed in April of their 8th grade year. They will then transition to high school youth group in the Fall of 2019.

We planned a Catechism Retreat for the current 8th graders at Calvary scheduled for January 26-27, 2019. 8th and 9th graders will be confirmed on April 28, 2019. 8th grade confirmation is at 8:15am and 9th grade confirmation is at 10:15am during worship services.

Middle Youth Trip: 11 middle school students and 4 adult chaperones went on a Week of Hope mission trip to Loveland, Colorado in July, 2018. Students learned and shared Christ-like empathy and compassion for others as they addressed the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of disadvantaged children, youth, and adults. 2018 was climaxed with fundraising activities for our 2019 mission trip to Omaha, Nebraska.

Thanks for your ongoing support to the confirmation program. Stay Blessed! Hannah Fleming

Volunteer Coordinator/New Members

Cassie Larsen

2018 went well. I have now been working at Calvary for two years. In 2018, I hosted two new member luncheons, one on March 18th and the second one on September 16th. We had 62 new members join in March which was very exciting. We had 29 new members join in September.

We are still providing Pizza Ranch chicken for our monthly congregational potlucks. Our potlucks are growing each month. The Hospitality Committee is now helping me recruit volunteers for Wednesday evenings.

Visitation/Kin Ministry/High School Youth

Deacon Tom Martin

VISITATION: Our visitation rotation has been wonderful again this year. We are visiting the hospital on a very regular basis, and we are getting out to see the nursing/assisted living homes very often as well.

KIN MINISTRY: We are in our second year of our new visitation program called Kin Ministry. We have trained and equipped over 24 members, who in turn are visiting 24 of our homebound members. This has enabled us to see more of our parishioners on a regular basis.

It's more important than ever to embrace new solutions and to foster meaningful relationships while sharing God's love. It's time to reimagine our outreach ministries and build new connections with those that are becoming isolated. Taking the time to sit down and having meaningful conversations with those in our church family is essential to the health and growth of Calvary. **Thank you for loving others! Tom**

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP: This year offered a High School experience that has been rewarding for the students and for the adult volunteers. 2018 gave us a chance to learn, explore, share and participate. We have grown to know each other, as well as to know Christ better. We have matured in our relationships and grown stronger in our bonds to one another. We have truly discovered the Godly blessings of one another!

In January, the High School Youth Group attended the Ski Trip to Big Sky, Montana. Loads of fun and laughs for everyone. We stay at Hope Lutheran Church in Bozeman, Montana every year and have made wonderful relationships with Pastor Steve, Dar, and staff.

We conducted a meaningful Peer Ministry camp at Outlaw Ranch in June.

We worked hard to raise funds for the important impact trips throughout the year. the National Youth Gathering Trip to Houston, Texas in July of 2018. Both were HUGE SUCCESSES!!

Moving on, we have begun our planning for the Ski Trip to Big Sky, Montana in January, as well as the Mission Trip to Nashville, Tennessee in July of 2019. We had great attendance on Wednesday nights, and terrific support from the congregation all year. **Thank you for loving students! Tom**

Calvary Lutheran Church Women

Mary Ann Kretschmar

Phoebe Circle and Naomi Circle are two women's groups that meet each month September through May for Bible study, fellowship and coffee at Calvary Lutheran. Phoebe Circle meets the second Wednesday each month and Naomi Circle meets the third Wednesday. Both meet at 9:30 am. A total of about 30 women belong to these two groups.

Twice during the year, in December and May, the two Circles meet together for brunch and a Bible study led by a guest pastor. The Bible studies are centered around a lesson each month in the *Gather for Faith and Action* magazine. Members take turns hosting and leading the study. Occasionally, guest leaders are invited to lead the lesson.

Each Circle donates their monthly offerings at the end of the year to local charities or programs within the church. In 2018, donations from Naomi Circle went to Passages \$200.00 and Wellfully \$200.00. Phoebe Circle donated to Love Inc. \$350.00 and the Hope Center \$350.00. Both groups also gave a total of \$215.00 to Woyatan Community Reentry Services. Naomi Circle donated \$92.00 and home baked bars to the Cornerstone Mission for the April meal.

Visitors and new members are always welcome to join the monthly meetings for coffee, getting to know fellow Calvary women and spending time studying God's Word. Contact the church office at 342-9043 if interested in being a part of this important ministry.

Calvary Quilters

Nancy Steever

We made 190 quilts in 2018; selling some at our annual quilt display so that we may purchase needed supplies and keep our machines in good condition. Quilts were delivered to Corner Stone Mission downtown, the Women and Children's Home, Mommy's Closet, Habitat for Humanity, New Beginnings Home, Love, Inc., LSS, Fountain Springs Nursing Home and the Daddy-Daughter Dance. We also donated several lap quilts to the Blood Bank to keep donors warm and comfortable. We made 68 scarves for the children in Kyle which were delivered by the Calvary In Action Committee. We make a yearly donation to Lutheran World Relief to assist in the shipment of quilts to other countries.

Our quilting group has grown to 23 active members meeting on Thursdays 9:00 am – 12:00 noon; we have kits available if your wish to sew at home. We welcome new members; no experience necessary; there are many ways one can lend a helping hand other than sew. Contact Nancy at 348-8238 for more information. We are thankful for your loyal support!

Altar Guild

Jerri Oines

The 26 members of Calvary Lutheran's Altar Guild provide the service of communion preparation throughout the year for the members of, and visitors to, Calvary Lutheran. Four teams serve three months each year (either Saturday nights or Sundays) for a total of six days. Business meetings are held the first Tuesday of January, March, May, September and November.

Tasks completed in 2018 include:

- Over 9400 people were served communion in 2018; this included 1200+ over Easter weekend and 1880+ for Christmas.
- The altar was stripped of paraments on Maundy Thursday and first communion was served to 227 fifth graders.
- 28 ninth graders were served for first confirmation, with 334 people total.
- Candles for use on Christmas Eve services were cleaned, distributed and picked up.
- Altar paraments and linens were created, cared for and changed, as dictated by the church calendar.

Altar Guild is always looking for new members to share in the service this dedicated group of volunteers provides. It is a wonderful way to make new friends at Calvary, as well as work behind the scenes in the preparation of the sacrament.

If you would like more information about the Calvary Lutheran Altar Guild, please call Jerri Oines at 605-342-1444.

Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee is a group of congregation members and staff with the goals of better connecting people and helping Calvary Lutheran Church become a more perfectly welcoming church. The committee also helps the staff with building a volunteer network to participate in church services and church ministries, such as ushering/greeting and Wednesday night meals. In the 2017/2018 church season, the church served nearly 10,000 meals on Wednesday night.

The committee helped with the first of many planned annual ministry fairs to showcase the ways people serve in the church and to assist those seeking ways to serve. The committee is welcome to any ideas or any help from the congregation and/or the staff.

Calvary In Action Committee

We, on the Calvary In Action Committee, along with all of our congregation, were hard at work during 2018. We served meals at the Cornerstone Rescue Mission, placed hats and scarves on the presidential statues downtown, packed meals for Feeding South Dakota and also financially supported our mission partners.

Here are some of the highlights of 2018:

January- We collected cereal and non-perishable protein items for Feeding South Dakota and socks for the Hope center.

February- We had Mary Mortenson from Prison Congregations of America. We will miss Mary as she retired in December and look forward to meeting Renae Griggs. We also raised enough to buy about 900 bus tickets for the women's shelter.

March and April-We collected enough toiletries to make 1000 toiletry kits for the Hope Center. Mommy's Closet -we sent diapers, clothes and formula over to help.

June and July- We collected cereal and protein for Feeding South Dakota. We recognize that this is a crucial time of year with school not being in session.

August and September- We collected \$2320 for the Clothe-A-Kid school clothing drive.

October- We hosted the Woyatan Lutheran Church and Jon Old Horse. We are always excited to build relations with our neighbors.

November- December- We helped 67 head start kids on Pine Ridge and Kyle have a warm Christmas. We are thankful for you quick and generous response.

We have heard from you that you as a congregation that you want to make a bigger difference in a few places and be less scattered. We will be more involved at Woyatan and other places but if you see something that you are passionate about and Calvary is not involved, I encourage you to reach out to someone on the Calvary In Action committee or Pastor David.

Money from the local benevolence budget and your additional generosity was also sent to:

- \$6,053 – Lutheran Social Services
- \$3,803 – Lutheran Outdoors
- \$2,500 - WAVI
- \$2,000 - Hope Center
- \$1,000 - Church Response
- \$1,334 – Habitat for Humanity
- \$7,350 – Woyatan
- \$1,600 – Community Re-entry
- \$3,000 - Lutheran Campus Ministries
- \$1,000 - Western SD Community Action
- \$1,000 - Kenya Project
- \$1,000 – St. Dymas

Also, there was help to people who dropped in looking for assistance!
Thank you for all you do!!

STATISTICS FOR 2018

New Members – 2018

March 2018... Iler & Loleen Anderson, Krystle, Alexandria and Zander Audiss, Allen & Else Biesman, Channing, Kellan, Kegan and Leona Bethke, Caleb, Sara, and Sawyer Chapman, Darlene & Everette Fite, Bill Gabbert, Caleb, Lindsey and Hudson Hansen, Doris Hoffman, Don Kaelber & Mary Ann Clark, Roy & Malorie Kottwitz, Nicole, Ruby and Jace Musfelt, John, Tricia and Nora Nelson, Trent, Gina, Chase, Peyton and Finley Nelson, Gary & Nancy Opheim, Ryan, Nicole, and Ava Pletan, Aaron, Samantha, Sawyer and McKinley Roeber, Shaun, Ashley, Quinn and Spencer Skavang, Pat, Amber and Tatum Staedtler, Chad, Kristen, Haleigh, Gavin and Kelsey Timmer, Tammy Wellnitz, Jerred, Joey, Madisen and Reagen Younie

September 2018... Shawn & Sarah, Rhiannon and Layla Ball, Craig & Pat Karli, Rubi and Elizabeth McDaniels, Hal & Corey Rolfson, Jeremy & Amber, Macy and Kylee Muth, Jill Guericke, Joel, Burke and Vera Simonyak, Karl & Gail Simonyak, Donald Sims, Dee Smidt, Suzanne, Ryan and Sara McCarty, Ben & Ashley, Adalyn and Paisley Wagner

Transfer Outs – 2018

Troy & Lynette Weinkauff, Ernie & Terry Lehmkuhl, Paul & Lori Wire, Kelsey, Susan, Meredith and Michael McDaniel

Confirmands – 2018

John Beck, Tyson Morrison, Nicholas Sliper, McKenna Chmielewski, Charley Heuchert, Kaydra Jaragoske, Samantha Mueller, Aislinn Perkins, Abigail Strahl, Cassidy Teeslink, Hayden Widvey, Haley Brockel, Conner Knudsen, Bransen Kuehl, Charlie Larson, Sam Lesselyoung, Haiden Studer, Derek Yanders, Drew Scherbenske, Hunter Tillery, Kylie Caroline, Bryanna Herman, Olivia Hovet, Emily Kandolin, Elle Neiffer, Jaeden Rice, Danielle Richer, Haleigh Timmer

Deaths – 2018

Jodi Kurry, James Reed, John Sharkey, Steven Stephenson, Linda Buzzetta Torgerson, Harry Paulsen, Pam Baumberger, Anthony Graziano, Judy Graff, Leanna Bussell, Henry Williams, Marilyn Brooks, Alleen Jenner, Dick Pearson, Ray Anderson

Weddings – 2018

Jeremy Ofstad & Alesha Gillespie, Joshua Sheets & Lauren Larson, Anthony Sterkel & Andrea May, Spencer Ray & Tori Adams, Zak Prpich & Megan Anderson, Dan Palmer & Tom Chase, Nathan Zvejnieks & Kelsey Johnson, Harley Lunt & Kallan Westergaard, Colby Johnson & Kylie Varns

Baptisms – 2018

Colton Mack, Arlen Dalen, Reid Waterson, Gemma Doerr, Zabrina Forsyth, Elizabeth Forsyth, Skylic Forsyth, Emily Wiechman, Tatum Staedtler, Lisa Mueller, Samantha Mueller, Hudson Hansen, Luke Rouse, Ridge Theel, Rhett Theel, Spencer Skavang, Ellen Kettering, Sawyer Chapman, Hunter Maier, Haylie Maier, Ava Fish, Addison Emery, Zoey Hermanson Applegarth, Austyn Nolan, Judah Cook, Leo Mueller, Eli Hewett, Lyla Johnson, Justin Brown, Leonardo Graziano, Elliott Murphy, Logan Kottwitz, Lennon Rivera, Sibby Buntrock, Jude Kading, Paisley Wagner, Knox Miller, Johanna Anderson Busse, Adrianna Anderson Busse, Cru Grahek, Bastian Hook, Mackenzie Schreiber, Brecken Schreiber

2018 Calvary Lutheran Church Staff

Pastor David Piper...Co-Pastor; **Pastor Becky Piper...**Co-Pastor; **Tom Martin...** Deacon, High School Youth Coordinator, Kin Ministry; **Kathy Miller...** Business Manager; **Lee Ann Henry...**Office Manager; **James Jennings...**Custodian... **Wayne Rosby...**Custodian; **Sonia Sykora...**3 year olds - 5th Grade Coordinator; **Hannah Fleming...**Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation Coordinator; **Kellie Meissner...** Family Ministries Coordinator, Web Site/Facebook Coordinator; **Judy Frost...** Education Staff Support; **Al Spreizer...**Director of Music & Worship/Choir Director; **Jacqueline Spreizer...**Choir Accompanist; **Amy Hansen & Paige Kadlec** 2017-2018 - **Deb Martin** 2018-2019 Wednesday School Music Leaders; **Bergie Osterloo** 2017-2018, **April Magnuson** 2018-2019 Wednesday School Accompanists; **Gayle Simons...**Children's Library Coordinator, **Deb Martin...** Wednesday Night Praise Band Coordinator; **Karla Mitzel...** Hospitality Coordinator, Keenagers; **Vickie Hancock...**Wednesday Evening Meal Support Staff; **Cassie Larsen...**Wednesday Meal Staff Support, New Members, Volunteer Coordinator

2018 Church Council

Cheryl Chapman – President; **Jeff Schleusener** – Vice President; **Jon Johnson** – Secretary; **Tim Becker** – Treasurer; **Patrick Badiuk, Bill Eldridge, Reeva Mathieson, Nancy May, Doug Thrash**



South Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now."
- *Philippians 1:3-5*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The words of St. Paul to the Christians in Philippi express what I also feel as I pen what will be my last of twelve letters for your inclusion in your congregation's annual report – that feeling is gratitude. I am grateful for the privilege of having served as your Bishop. Thank you for entrusting this holy office to me. What a joy it has been to partner with you in this special way for these 12 years! I've loved the ordinations, anniversaries, installations and all the in-between visits along the way.

Most of all I am grateful for your partnership in God's mission. Because of your faithful daily work of ministry, the word of God is proclaimed, people are washed in the waters of Baptism. Through your hands, people are fed with God's forgiving love at the table of Holy Communion every week all around our state.

It is also my privilege to express gratitude to you on behalf of the tens of thousands of people across the state and around the world who are served by your generous mission support. Because you give, the Gospel goes out not just from your congregation, but from countless other faithful ministry partners who could not do it without you.

Now, I know that this is a different kind of year we are facing, especially in our rural communities where a variety of forces are depressing farm incomes and making life difficult for many of our families and, in turn, congregations. Know that I will do what I can in this office to continue to advocate for just policies that respect the holy work that our farmers do to feed the world. I know that God will continue to do amazing things through your work and generosity in the worst of times just as God has in the best of times.

As you meet in your annual meetings, I am holding you in prayer. Please also hold me and your entire synod staff in prayer as together we discern what God is calling us to do next. We've been well-served, I believe, here in South Dakota with fine synodical leadership over the years. I do not doubt that God will continue to be faithful in this regard by calling a new Bishop and Synod staff who will serve you and the Gospel with faithfulness, creativity and joy.

Thank you and may the of light of Christ shine on you all!

Your Bishop,

Pastor David B. Zellmer

LSS Campaign for Hope

For nearly a century, LSS has served in partnership with individuals, churches, organizations, communities and you—South Dakota Synod of the ELCA. Your support resurrects hope. It's what the LSS Campaign for Hope is all about.

We are touched by the generosity and support of the many Congregations and the SD Women of the ELCA in support of LSS and the commitment to fundraising \$1,175,000 for the Campaign for Hope. LSS representatives have only presented at a few congregations so far, but have been warmly welcomed to share the stories of those we serve—**Thank you.**

We are currently scheduling Congregations and WELCA visits for 2019, and would welcome the opportunity to share in fellowship and to offer an update of how you can Resurrect Hope. To learn more about the Campaign for Hope or to schedule a visit, please reach out to an LSS Development Director at **800-568-2401.**

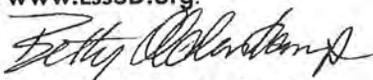
CampaignForHope.LssSD.org

A Future of Success, Not of Suffering

LSS serves people of all ages, faiths, races and economic status with professional, confidential and affordable services. LSS touched the lives of those we **serve 48,690 times** last year. As a premier human service agency, we strive to care for, support and strengthen those who need, bringing a future filled with hope—a future of success to people of all ages, families of all kinds and communities of all sizes.

- The agency continues to strengthen its use of standardized assessment tools to measure client outcomes. The use of dashboards and automated reports provide the tools for leadership to monitor outcomes data more frequently and implement programmatic adjustments when necessary.
- LSS continues to improve its capacity to deliver trauma-informed care. **97% of youth** in Psychiatric Residential Treatment, and **100% of youth** in Foster Care, showed a reduction in trauma symptoms upon discharge.
- **80% of refugees** resettled were employed in a full-time position within eight months of arrival. **97% of individuals** who secured employment kept their jobs for 90 days. The average starting wage was \$12.20 per hour and 97% had access to benefits.
- **89% of youth** and **94% of parents** completing Functional Family Therapy reported increased overall family functioning. **75% of youth** had no new violation during the course of treatment.
- Youth who participate in the Arise Shelter Care are successful. **90% of youth** are discharged to safe and stable housing.

I want to express gratitude on behalf of all those we serve. We sincerely appreciate your support and partnership. Every kindness and resource that we receive is utilized to create possibilities and a future filled with hope for those who we serve. For more information on LSS services and those we serve, visit www.LssSD.org.



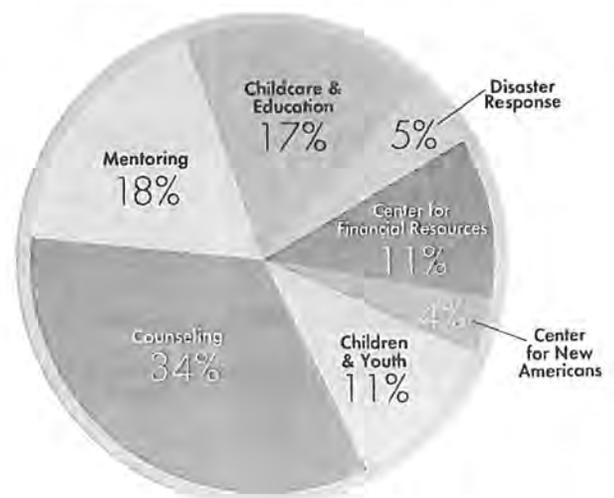
Betty Oldenkamp, LSS President/CEO

SD Congregations Committed to Support the Campaign for Hope

December 19, 2018

Calvary Lutheran, Rapid City
Custer Lutheran Fellowship
Custer Lutheran Fellowship Women of the ELCA
Emmanuel Lutheran, Groton
First Lutheran Women of the ELCA, Sioux Falls
Hope Lutheran Women of the ELCA, Sioux Falls
Medary Conference Women of the ELCA
Renner Lutheran Women of the ELCA
St. Mark's Lutheran Women of the ELCA, Sioux Falls
Savo Lutheran Women of the ELCA, Frederick
South Canyon Lutheran, Rapid City
SD Synodical Women of the ELCA
West Nidaros Lutheran, Crooks
West Prairie Lutheran Women of the ELCA, Lennox
Wilmot Lutheran Women of the ELCA
Zion Lutheran, Bridgewater
Zion Lutheran WELCA, Hartford

HOW YOUR GIFT SERVED





LUTHERANS OUTDOORS IN SOUTH DAKOTA CONGREGATIONAL REPORT

CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP

In April, 2018, Rev. Layne Nelson resigned as the LO Executive Director. Layne had served in this role since 2008. He accepted a call to be the Senior Pastor at East Side Lutheran in Sioux Falls.

As of January 1, 2019, Paul Hanson has been called to be the next Executive Director. During the past three years, Paul has served in various roles with LO (Operations Director, Interim Joy Ranch Director, and Interim Executive Director.) Before employment with LO, Paul has worked for both Luther Crest Bible Camp and Pathways Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, both in Minnesota.



KLEIN RANCH

A new Kitchen was finished and able to be used this past summer! A beautiful, roomy addition to the current Dining Hall filled with new kitchen equipment allows food preparation to be performed easily.

This past summer, Klein Ranch served 138 campers.

Teri Geyer continues serving as the Klein Ranch Camp Director. This has been her fourth summer working for LO in this role along with her Kairos studies as she continues her quest to be an ordained minister.



OUTLAW RANCH

On the weekend of July 6-8, 2018, Outlaw Ranch celebrated its 60th Anniversary of ministry. Nearly 100 people gathered to celebrate. The celebration included the dedication of the new trail system. Also, six past Directors of Outlaw Ranch were together to share their experiences over the years.

This past summer, Outlaw Ranch served 755 on site campers and 308 Day Campers at local congregations.

Matt Rusch continues to serve Outlaw Ranch as the Camp Director. He has been in this position for five years.



NESODAK

On Sunday, July 15, nearly 150 people gathered for the Dedication of the Shoreline property on Lake Enemy Swim. The additional 600 feet of shoreline adjacent to NeSoDak was made possible by the multitude of gifts and pledges that were made in a two year period. The shoreline will be used for future development of the waterfront area at the camp.

This past summer, NeSoDak served 837 on site campers and 1,099 Day Campers at local congregations.

During 2018, NeSoDak began the transition to becoming a seasonal site. Late November, the camp was made winter ready and no programming is happening until it reopens in April. This seasonal style of program will continue into the future at NeSoDak.



JOY RANCH

The "Mack House", future place of summer staff housing at Joy Ranch, will be completed by May of 2019. This house will have seven bedrooms and will be a large improvement over current summer staff housing. This staff housing project could also lead to a future partnership with Lutheran Volunteer Corp of the ELCA.

This past summer, Joy Ranch served 605 campers.

Joy Ranch saw new leadership during 2018. Dusty Rodiek resigned in late 2017. In September 2018, Jake Hanson, who currently had been serving as NeSoDak's Camp Director since 2015, was named Director for both NeSoDak and Joy Ranch. This exciting opportunity for Jake creates new responsibilities in fundraising and staff leadership for the future.

A message from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Dear siblings in Christ,

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully. As communities of Jesus that nurture life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world, we are confident about who we are in Christ and what God is calling us to do. Whether worshiping wherever two or more are gathered, engaging in lively conversations about faith, or rolling up our sleeves and getting to work, we strive to share God's grace and love in Christ for all people and creation. This reflects the vitality we find in Jesus Christ, our own spiritual life and our desire to participate in what God is doing today.



Within each community of Jesus there are leaders who strive to model an attitude of servanthood, trustworthiness, humility, patience and listening first while striving to work with others in healthy ways. These leaders teach all ages, motivate believers, build consensus, share a vision, discern direction and facilitate action. Their attention is focused on growing disciples who are sent into their daily life to love and serve others as friends, neighbors, parents, citizens and workers. Together we recognize the importance of growing disciples and multiplying leaders who serve inside your congregation and beyond your walls.

As our congregations plan their work for the coming year and how to use the resources God has entrusted to them, I invite you all to think about the relationships that bring you vitality and the leaders you nurture for God's mission in the world. While you make many decisions, remember you are not alone. We are all partners in sharing the gospel. Together, by God's grace, we can do what God is calling us to. May you go forth to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.

Serving together in Christ's name,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart, and with all
your soul, and with all your mind,
and with all your strength.

Mark 12:30

Reflections on understanding a living and vital faith

In Mark 12:28 Jesus is asked by a scribe: "Which commandment is first of all?" Jesus responded with "the Lord is one," and went on to say, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). These words are very similar to those that served as Israel's central confession of faith (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Joshua (22:5) later reminded the people of Israel to observe these words. With this text as a guide, how do we begin to explore the ways we will nurture a living and vital faith in each person and the congregation?

Within the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, congregational vitality is defined as "communities of Jesus where there are life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world." These are three important dimensions of our work together. But it is the way in which we bring our heart, soul, mind and strength into our life and work that shows how the light of Christ shines in and through us. Our heart is the way we feel and sense God's presence in and through emotions. The soul is our mindful awareness of the presence of God within us and the world. This awareness encourages us to find meaning and purpose in life, both individually and as a community of faith. The mind is how we learn our beliefs, perspectives and practices that shape our understanding, knowledge and expressions of faith. And strength is the way we use our abilities, passions and skills to shape and live a life of faith.

The vitality of our faith as Christians, and as a church in the Lutheran tradition, finds meaning and purpose in Jesus' words from Mark 12:30. As we engage our strategic directions for the future, we find both power and insight by reflecting on what brings us vitality. Please consider the following:

Heart

- When are the times you feel or sense God is present?
- How are these experiences different when you are with others rather than alone?
- How do these emotions bring vitality to your faith and relationship with God?

Soul

- What Scripture passages give you an awareness of life or "living faith"?
- How does this awareness of a living faith help you find meaning and purpose in life?
- What about your life experiences brings a sense of vitality to your faith?

Mind

- What motivates you to continue growing in your relationship with God?
- What have you found helps you learn more about God?
- Where do you find vitality through your learnings and spiritual practices?

Strengths

- What God-given abilities, passions and skills have you discovered in your life?
- How does your faith guide you in using these?
- What about using these abilities, passions and gifts gives you vitality?

May your responses to these questions help you gain new insight and vitality into your relationship with God, each other and the world.