

LENT

NOW IS THE TIME

EASTER

A dramatic painting of a path leading through a tunnel of waves to a bright light. The path is made of cracked, dry earth and leads from the bottom center towards a bright, glowing light at the end of the tunnel. The walls of the tunnel are formed by massive, curling waves of green and blue water, creating a sense of being inside a giant's foot. The sky above the waves is dark and filled with stars.

the ultimate EXODUS

 CALVARY
LUTHERAN
Church

CQ

CALVARY QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

SPRING 2019 | MARCH, APRIL, MAY

FROM PASTOR HANS

Do you ever feel “stuck”? Not, like, stuck in the snow. But, “stuck.” Stuck in life.

Stuck in the never-ending phase of potty-training. Stuck in a difference of opinion with a colleague. Stuck, believing you’re not good enough, or that your age or health makes you less valuable. Stuck in political ideologies, anger, guilt, even alcoholism. Stuck in a crummy marriage. You know, stuck.

The book of the Bible called Exodus tells the story of a group of people—the Israelites—who were stuck. Living in a foreign land, Pharaoh had made them slaves in Egypt and forced them to make bricks day in and day out. They were stuck, disconnected from the life back home, believing there was no way out. Their story is called “the Exodus” because, guess what? God freed those Israelites! God freed them for another life—a life God promised them and always wanted for them. It wasn’t easy. In fact, the Israelites bellyached about how hard and unfamiliar things were sometimes. But, God persisted and, in the end, God freed them. Folks, God freed them because God doesn’t want a single one of us to live “stuck.” That’s just not the life God intended for us. Any time we’re stuck, God is working overtime to help us find an exit—an “exodus,” if you will.

During the 40 days leading up to Easter, our worship theme will be “The Ultimate Exodus.” All of us get stuck, yet God created us to be free! As we journey toward Easter, we remember that the story of the cross is God’s announcement to all the world that our sin, our death, the pain we experience in this life—all that has us “stuck”—none of that will ever be the end of the story for us. The Easter story is God’s ultimate exodus story, and ours too!

The articles in this CQ are stories of Calvary friends who know all too well what it feels like to be stuck, but they also have experienced the “exodus” God has given them and continues to provide them. I am so grateful for and honored by their willingness to share. Please, thank them when you see them.

I hope you will join us for worship over the coming months. Maybe you’ll consider inviting a friend who is feeling stuck these days? I think they are going to feel right at home with the rest of us who know what it feels like. Join us as we embark on an exodus journey and explore God’s freedom as maybe you have never known it before.

Stuck sometimes like you,



Pastor Hans

SPRING 2019

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THIS ISSUE

From Pastor Hans
Upcoming Happenings
Journey Toward Easter
Council President
Exodus Stories
Now Is The Time
Children & Student
Summer Ministry
Vacation Bible School
New Worship Series
"Go Fish"

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CAN'T BE
IN CHURCH?

WATCH WORSHIP LIVE ON OUR FACEBOOK FEED!



/calvarylutheranchurchalex

the ultimate EXODUS

THE "ULTIMATE EXODUS" WORSHIP SERIES March 6 - April 14

We were born to be free. Yet, a story of slavery runs through the heart of each of us—slavery to schedules, to our wealth, jobs, guilt, anger, political ideologies and ways of thinking. But, God gives us an Ultimate Exodus when God announces who we really are! As we walk through the Exodus story of God's people, you are invited to embark on your own exodus journey and explore freedom as you have never known it before!

EASTER

— AT CALVARY —



EASTER WEEKEND WORSHIP

SATURDAY, APRIL 20:

6:00pm - Easter Worship

SUNDAY, APRIL 21:

8:00am - Traditional Easter Worship

9:30am & 11:00am - Easter Worship

* Communion at all services.

upcoming happenings

NEW WORSHIP SERIES: "GO FISH" April 27 - May 19

Jesus' parting words to his disciples were to: "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone." Throughout this series we will learn what that mission looks like for us today!

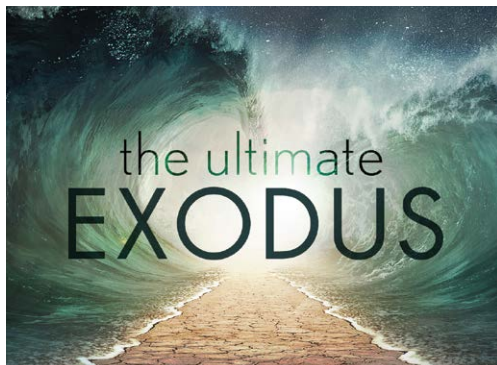
MOTHER'S DAY WORSHIP May 11 & 12

Grab your mother or grandmother and join us for this special worship service. We'll have photo booths ready and decorated, so bring your smiles! 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 26

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 enjoy brunch from 9:00am - 10:30am prior to worship.

JOIN US AS WE *Journey* TOWARDS *Easter*



OUR LENTEN THEME: "THE ULTIMATE EXODUS"

March 6 - April 14

We were born to be free. Yet, a story of slavery runs through the heart of each of us—slavery to schedules, to our wealth, jobs, guilt, anger, political ideologies and ways of thinking. But, God gives us an Ultimate Exodus when God announces who we really are! As we walk through the Exodus story of God's people, you are invited to embark on your own exodus journey and explore freedom as you have never known it before!

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP *March 6 at 5pm (traditional) and 6:15pm (informal)*

We launch our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday. During this unique service, ashes made from palm branches of the previous year's Palm Sunday celebrations are placed on the foreheads of worshipers with the words "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Remembering our mortality, we are marked by the cross of Christ and make our way to Easter—a day in which we remember the new life God gives to all!

WORSHIP WITH US DURING LENT

WEEKLY WORSHIP: *Saturday, 6pm; Sunday, 8:30 & 10:45am; Wednesday, 6:15pm*

During Lent, we continue our regularly scheduled worship. Our theme during Lent is "The Ultimate Exodus."

LENTEN WORSHIP: *Wednesdays, 5pm, March 6 - April 10*

The word "Lent" means "fortieth." During the 40-day season of the church year called Lent, you are invited to worship more often, as we journey toward and prepare for Easter. This unique service will include the Holden Evening Prayer service liturgy, led by an orchestral group under the direction of Brad Lambrecht. (*Last year we held a Lenten service at noon. In order to allow those working to attend and provide the opportunity for us to invite an orchestral group to lead us, we moved this service to 5pm this year.)

LENTEN DINNER: *Wednesdays, 4:15-6pm, March 6 - April 10*

Come, enjoy a warm soup and sandwich meal with your Calvary family. A free-will offering is encouraged.

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP

MAUNDY THURSDAY & GOOD FRIDAY: *April 18 & 19 at 6:15pm*

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

EASTER WEEKEND WORSHIP

SATURDAY, APRIL 20:

6:00pm - Easter Worship

SUNDAY, APRIL 21:

8:00am - Traditional Easter Worship | 9:30am - Easter Worship | 11:00am - Easter Worship

** Communion will be served at all services.*

Hello friends at Calvary!

My name is Deb Dittberner and I am excited to serve as the president of Calvary's council in 2019. I am a Family Medicine Physician and serve as the Chief Medical Officer for Douglas County Hospital and Clinic. My husband, Jay, teaches Communications at Alexandria Technical and Community College and is often seen playing one of his harmonicas in the worship band. We have three grown children – Emma, Will and Julia – and I often attend worship with my mother, Carol Dittberner. I have been a member of Calvary since 1995, and have had the honor of serving on Calvary's Council for 3 years now.



As a long-time member of Calvary, it is wonderful to see how quickly the ministries of Calvary have grown over the past few years. We are serving our community in remarkable ways. More and more are attending worship and getting connected in small groups. Our financial health is solid. We are considering a building project. God is doing great things here! But here's something we know: With growth comes change, and change isn't always easy. I deal with this regularly in my work in the health care system. At our monthly council meetings here at Calvary, we spend a lot of time researching and discussing change and studying best practices around change in growing churches. I wanted to share with you a few things we've learned about the shifts that take place in churches as they grow; shifts needed for sustained health and growth:

- 1. As churches grow, they become less complex and more focused.** Many churches operate from a position of complexity when it comes to how they are structured, how they make decisions, how they train and empower volunteers, etc. Narrowing your focus brings clarity, especially for those new to the church and staff. It allows all to answer the questions, "What do we do here?" At Calvary, we have sought to focus on just three things and do these three things well: Engaging people in worship, connecting them in small groups, and serving our community and beyond.
- 2. As churches grow, they focus all programs around their mission.** Our mission is to lead all people to a lifelong faith in Jesus Christ and so before any new ministry starts, we ask: Does this support our mission? Sometimes churches make decisions based on the personal preferences of certain groups, but we have had to learn to make every decision with our mission at the forefront.
- 3. Thriving churches provide a clear path for involvement.** Over the past year, we have sought to clarify the steps people can take to get engaged. To that end, rather than new member classes, we now offer "Next Steps" gatherings. These gatherings are not to indoctrinate, but to make it easy for people to move from simply worshipping to engaging in a Connect Group or a service team.

If you knew how much time our church leadership spends studying and praying about such things, I think you would be surprised. I'm so proud of our leadership, their focus and their faithfulness, and am honored and humbled to take this leadership role in 2019. I can't wait to see where God leads us this year!

Deb Dittberner, Council President

"WE NEED TO *deliver*
YOUR BABY *right now.*"



The words that changed my world, and, at 12 weeks premature, brought us our precious child. The operating room was eerily quiet as the team of NICU staff worked for several minutes to get my child breathing. I laid there not even knowing if it was a boy or a girl. Finally, the little cry emerged and he was whisked away.

Henry was just 2 pounds 6 ounces at birth, and for the next several days he proved that he was a strong little boy. But I was anything but strong. The anxiety of the situation was crippling, and I had earth-stopping panic attacks that left me unable to breathe. How could I be in two places at once—with my husband & son in Alexandria and in the St. Cloud Hospital with my micro-preemie baby? How could I afford to keep my job and pay our hospital bills? And the most terrifying of all...would my newborn baby live to see tomorrow? And yet all the while, God never left my side. God was present with me in the moments I couldn't breathe, when I felt like a failure to everyone, and when I didn't know how to go on. Most of all, God was with Henry. He made progress each day, growing and developing outside of my body the way he should have within my womb. I witnessed God's miracle of new life before my eyes, and ultimately let go of the anxiety that ruled my world. After 60 long days in the hospital, we brought him home.

Today Henry is a thriving, healthy two-year-old. You would never know that he almost didn't survive his birth and fought for every moment of his early life. God continues to use Henry to remind me that there are beautiful blessings inside dark times, and I am beyond grateful for my sweet little miracle man.

Katie Rentschler



Henry



Katie & Tom Rentschler, Henry, Russell

"A DAY Etched IN MY MEMORY Forever"

November 1, 2014, the day that I added a title to my already titles of wife, mom, daughter, sister, boss, friend, and child of God—Widow, at the young age of 52, was my new unwanted title.

The loss of my husband Randy was sudden and very unexpected leaving us shocked and at a complete loss as to how we were going to move on as a family. His death left me with the deepest pain I have ever experienced and left me uncertain how to move forward. I found myself at the complete mercy of God to carry us. Being sad, scared, worried and unsure of my future, God's amazing gift of hope was something that overshadowed all the negative emotions. Even as I shed tears of sadness, I always had the sense of knowing that God would not leave me and that I would not walk the journey alone, ever.



The Berndt Family (October 2014)

Grieving for me involved journaling my thoughts, fears, and accomplishments. I have found comfort, healing, and peace through this manuscript and I have been able to grow in my faith, search for a deeper relationship with Jesus to heal my brokenness from the loss of my husband. Never in our 28 years of marriage did I ask or wrestle with the question of "what if" Randy wasn't here. It was uncharted and rough waters. Seeking understanding and reconciliation of why God would take my husband from me was way beyond what my human mind could comprehend. Reading daily scripture, praying faithfully for God's grace and wisdom along with clinging to my inner strength and strong friendships, God has been faithful and loving to me and my family.

It was at the deepest point in my grief journey and the climbing out of the valley of death that I totally relied on God's strength and faithfulness to me. I had to surrender and give God complete control over me and my life. He showed up in a big way then and continues to every day.

Jana Berndt

Matthew, Tyler, Jana, Emily, and Mitchell



Falling

OFF COURSE

The day before Thanksgiving 2017, my husband Bill was airlifted to St Cloud Hospital after a 20 foot fall off a shed his construction company was building. We believe God was watching over our

family that day, because even though he suffered serious injuries, he could have died. Bill suffered 5 fractured ribs, a concussion, and disc injuries in his neck. Recovering at home was a long process with many issues such as loss of strength and numbness in his arms.

At an early Doctor's appointment we received some bad news. He would need surgery on his neck and was on weight lift restrictions after that for an entire year. This was devastating news to Bill's construction business as he actively worked on all of the projects with his employee. We left feeling shocked, scared, sad, and lost. Bill's company financially supported our family, and we weren't sure what was going to happen.

Through this recovery, we had fear for the future and sometimes questioned why this had to happen. Bill tried to restructure his business and hire someone for the work he couldn't do, but applicants for the job didn't come. One day, Bill received a phone call from a company he had worked for previously and was asked to interview for a new sales position they were creating. Bill didn't think he would have interest but decided he should meet and hear about it anyway. After the meeting, and much prayer, he decided this just felt right and chose to take the job last summer.

Looking back, we felt God was there helping to guide us. Before the accident, we were very stressed with juggling Bill's construction business, busy family life, and my job. This journey has been a blessing in disguise in many ways. Bill loves his new job and we now have more family time and less stress. This experience has truly deepened our faith. We do not know what the future holds for us, but things are good and God will be there for us along the way.

Elissa Koep



Bill & Elissa Koep, Sophie, Ava and Dalton

Walking THROUGH SORROW

Our son John had struggled for a long time. During that time, I found myself feeling very crazy with worry about him. My husband and I spent a lot of nights on the phone with him talking and assuring him that he was such an amazing person. Al-anon would remind me that I needed to let go and let God be in control of the situation. It was a roller coaster of trusting that God was in control and taking that control back, trying to do whatever we could to get him the help he needed. In the end, we were not in control at all. January 8, 2019, marked two years since John passed away.

The one thing that I knew when John passed away was that we have a God who loves us and that John's faith was strong and he was in heaven. About two weeks after John passed away, I had a vision while I was sitting in church of God taking John to heaven. For me it felt like God was reassuring me of where John was. While in the middle of difficult times, we don't always see that God is walking with us. But God works in ways that are often not easy to see at the time, but looking back makes them clearer. From those hard times, I have some amazing memories of John and time that we spent together that I will forever treasure. There were experiences that helped me to grow as a person and have shown me faith opportunities that I was not aware of. I see these as gifts from God.

To say that losing your son is painful is really an understatement. Our life has been changed. Our family will forever have a sadness that he is not here with us—we miss him so much. There will continue to be days of tears, but we were given a gift in John, he touched the lives of so many people, he stole our hearts and filled our life with joy. We know God walks with us, he loves us, he loves John. That is freedom.

Pam Miller



John Miller



Dave and Pam Miller

"WHILE IN THE
MIDDLE OF
DIFFICULT TIMES
WE DON'T ALWAYS
SEE THAT GOD IS
WALKING WITH US."



*Lowell & Nancy Einerson
with their grandchildren*

MY Wilderness EXPERIENCE

"You have a cancerous tumor." As I sat there with my family and let those words sink in I wondered what this means. I was now entering the wilderness of someone with cancer. There were so many questions that could not be answered initially or immediately. How do we treat this, what will I have to endure and what is my prognosis? The answers were surgery, chemotherapy, and a 60 percent chance of returning in 2 years. My only real future was reduced to waiting for test results, sitting in waiting rooms, and worst of all observing the effect on my family.

My journey through this wilderness and not knowing what dangers lurked there were accompanied by God's peace which was a direct result of the prayers of so many friends and family. Thank you, Calvary friends, for giving me the gift of peace and healing through your prayers. Oh yes, I did have my doubts and fears but I was able to overcome this with a feeling of inner peace. It has been 3 years since my initial diagnoses and my tests and scans are all normal. I feel I have come out of the wilderness with a new empathy for people with cancer and the importance of prayers for peace as well as healing. I cherish more now than ever the gift of time with family and friends and I have a future. I have a future with the absolute assurance of God's presence to help me get through whatever curves life presents to me.

I received this poem from a patient of mine when she heard I had cancer. It's been on my fridge ever since. I do not know the author. To me it means that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Lowell Einerson

A Promise

THERE WILL NEVER BE A ROAD
THAT YOU WILL WALK WITHOUT HIS GUIDANCE,
A MOUNTAIN YOU WILL CLIMB WITHOUT HIS SUPPORT,
A HURT YOU WILL ENDURE WITHOUT HIS COMFORT,
A SIN YOU WILL COMMIT WITHOUT HIS FORGIVENESS,
A BURDEN YOU WILL BEAR WITHOUT HIS HELP,
A FEAR YOU WILL FACE WITHOUT HIS STRENGTH,
A REMORSE YOU WILL SUFFER WITHOUT HIS GRACE,
THERE WILL NEVER BE A DAY, THAT YOU WILL BE...
WITHOUT HIS LOVE.

Breaking THE Chains OF GRIEF

Grief does not care who you are, or who you've lost. It's going to enslave you into a dark, sad place no matter the circumstances.

I lost my big sister, Nicole in a boating accident at the age of 27. At that time I was so overcome by grief that I became imprisoned to the anger and questioning of God. It was an all-encompassing dark place filled with "Why did the God I trust take someone who was in the prime of her youth?" Someone so full of joy and beauty and was supposed to have a long life ahead of her. Someone who I still need in my life. Why did He take her from me?

The morning of her funeral, among the fog of tragedy I found myself thinking "this is the day the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it!" And then thinking: How silly is that—that in this moment of emptiness and pain, I am supposed to Rejoice?! How can I rejoice when I am so empty, and filled with grief? It was in that moment I realized the same God that created today, created me too. And if I am here, He made me strong enough to make it through it. You see, in that moment rejoice wasn't the traditional Lutheran song and dance, it was God telling me to just breathe and give the moment, the day to Him.

It's been 8 years, and those moments of sadness and pain still strike. The chains of grief never really go away, they just shift their focus. It's easy to surrender and to still become a prisoner of the grief and anger. It's easy to not want to rejoice happily in the day. Those moments will always come, and it's still hard sometimes to be able to be at peace with the memories. However, through faith I know that Christ will always help us break away the chains.

Naomi Linde



Naomi (Getz) Linde and Nicole Getz



Naomi (Getz) Linde & Kris, Harper

FROM LONELINESS TO THE *Joy* OF *Family*

My journey into adulthood started when I became a mom, and I was still a kid myself. I had plans and dreams to go to college just like everyone else, but I would never ever change a thing.

It was definitely hard at times to keep up with being a single mom working two jobs to make ends meet. My mom and step-dad are very important to me and my daughter, and they helped shape us to be who we are today. They stepped in and helped me raise my daughter when I needed them the most, they helped me through the ups and downs of being a mom at a young age and gave me the confidence to be a great mom. One of the hardest parts of being a single mom for me was trying to be a mom who was there for my daughter Karli, but I also knew I needed to work very hard to give her everything she needed.

After all the struggles and inspiring moments of motherhood, I finally met my husband Corey. I honestly think that God brought Corey to me at the right time; he saved me from my loneliness and showed me what a family really is. I not only gained a husband, but another daughter named Taylor. A couple years later, our son, Liam joined this world and our family was complete. I know that God opened doors for me and my family, and left us complete, happy and whole.

Exodus to me is knowing that I started out in a dark place, scared and alone, not knowing what I was going to do at times or what was going to happen. It feels so good to know that I'm not alone in this journey. I know that I can put all the scary stuff behind me and I can embrace my relationship with my family and God.

Katie Hicks



Karli, Katie and Taylor



Katie and Liam



© 2018 JLG Architects

Now

IS THE TIME

In January 2019, the congregation voted to support taking the next steps in the proposed building renovation and expansion project. Currently, the Building Planning Team is busy interviewing builders so that more can

be refined on the total project estimate. In addition, the Financial Feasibility Team is working to set up the parameters for a potential financial appeal which could begin this summer.

The congregation will be asked to reconvene on May 19, 2019 to hear updates on what has been more defined during this period, including cost estimates, design considerations, and the framework of an appeal process. The building and financial teams will once again conduct forums leading up to this meeting, so watch for those dates in the coming weeks. You can learn more about the building project at www.calvaryalex.org.

This proposed renovation and expansion is a response to God's call to make room for everyone so that all might know a lifelong faith in Jesus Christ. We are excited about the possibilities this project brings to allow us to continue living out the vision God has given our church – to worship, connect, and serve all with the love of Christ!

Miriam Svobodny, Alicia Bertram and the Building Planning Team

children AND student OPPORTUNITIES SUMMER 2019

We're already looking ahead to the summer (warmer weather sounds great, right?!) and we can't wait for the many opportunities that we have available for Calvary's children and students!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

For the youngest Calvary kids through elementary school (3 yrs - 5th grade), Vacation Bible School this summer will be August 5-8 from 8-11am. Last year, we had over 200 kids come to learn more about what God is #FOR. This year, we can't wait to welcome kids as we POWER UP—learning about how God fills us with the fruit of the spirit. Sign up at www.calvaryalex.org/kids.

BIBLE CAMP

For elementary school students (K - 5th grade), Luther Crest day camp is set for July 8-11. For overnight camp, we encourage students to find a friend and pick a week to attend camp! Luther Crest is focusing this summer on stories about Jesus loving the unlovable, serving the servants and accepting the outsiders! Sign up at www.luthercrest.org.

MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL

For middle school and high school students (Impact, Elevate and FUSE ages), there will be opportunities to continue to meet with your small groups once a month for fun activities that can be chosen as a group. Examples include swimming, campfires, or playing a game, like kickball, at a park.



HIGH SCHOOL

For high school students (FUSE age: 9th grade and up), we are planning a houseboat trip up to Rainy Lake in northern Minnesota the week of July 8-12! Details are available on the Calvary website, at www.calvaryalex.org/students.



Ages 2-4, during the 10:45am Sunday service.



K-3rd grade, between services Sunday mornings.



4th-5th grade, between services Sunday mornings.



6-9th grade on Wednesday after 6:15pm service.



High school students participating in small groups.



POWER UP

RAISE YOUR GAME

SAVE THE DATE!
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
AUGUST 5-8, 8-11AM

Register at www.calvaryalex.org/kids

NEW WORSHIP SERIES



GO
FISH

APRIL 28-MAY 19

Jesus' parting words to his disciples were to:

"Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone."

Throughout this series we will learn what that mission looks like for us today!



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SUNDAY, APRIL 21: 8:00am – *Traditional Easter Worship*
9:30am & 11:00am – *Easter Worship*

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

Saturday: 6pm Relaxed Worship

Sunday: 8:30am Traditional Worship
10:45am Modern Worship

Wednesday: 6:15pm Modern Worship

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT CALVARY!



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