

NOW IS THE TIME

STORIES OF REBUILDING

EASTER



# LIFE UNDER

# CONSTRUCTION



CALVARY  
LUTHERAN  
Church

# CQ

CALVARY QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

SPRING 2020 | MARCH, APRIL, MAY

# FROM PASTOR HANS

Dear Friends in Faith,

We are under construction at Calvary! There is drilling and hammering. Steel beams and sheetrock. Plumbing and painting. And all this living under construction has me thinking.

As a kid do you remember looking at your parents and thinking: I can't wait until I'm all grown up. I can't wait until I'm done with school, purchase my own car, I have all my own stuff. I can't wait until I'm finally an adult and have it all together. I'll be the CEO, have the perfect spouse, drink fancy Starbucks coffee drinks driving my SUV to the airport where I'll board my private jet for glamorous vacations (OK, I have an overactive imagination). I can't wait for that day when I will have finally "arrived."

Well, you know what? I'm now an adult (at least age wise) and I don't feel like I've really arrived at anything!?! And I don't see an arrival gate anywhere in the distant future!?! Anyone else with me?

Here's what I know: None of us—let me say that again—none of us ever gets to a point in life where we've fully arrived. If we are honest, all of us feel like our lives are constantly "under construction." You with me?

A guy named Paul understood these feelings. He wrote a letter to a church he had started in Philippi, from—of all places—prison. While here, Paul writes: **"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."** (Philippians 1:4-6)

What's Paul saying? "Hey guys, we're all a work in progress. Me included!"

Inside the pages of this issue you are going to hear the "Life Under Construction" stories of people who call Calvary their church home. Just like your story and mine, their stories are real, authentic and sometimes a little messy...and that's ok with God! Why? Because God's not looking for fancy, polished finished products. Thank God for that!

A work in progress,



Pastor Hans

# UPCOMING HAPPENINGS

## SPRING 2020

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## THIS ISSUE

From Pastor Hans  
Upcoming Happenings  
Council President  
Now Is The Time  
Support Beams  
Adjust The Plans  
Expand The Toolbox  
Fixer Upper  
Know The Numbers  
Rebuild And Grow

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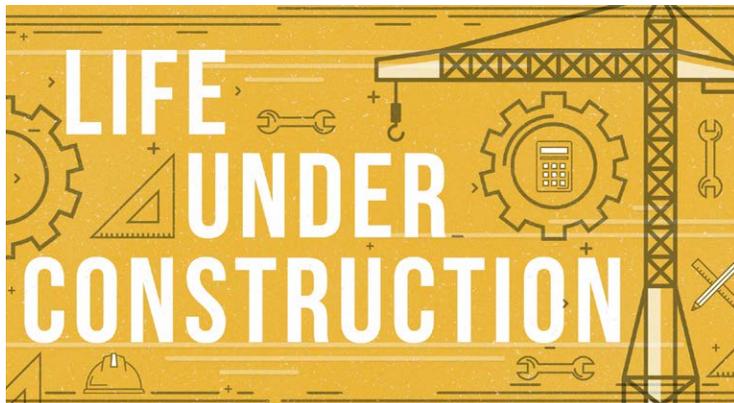
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**"LIFE UNDER CONSTRUCTION" WORSHIP SERIES** February 29 - April 1  
No matter how you look at it, our lives are constantly under construction. Nobody has it all together and that's ok with God. This series will remind us: We're all a work in progress!



**ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP** February 26, at 5:00pm & 6:15pm  
(5pm - Traditional, 6:15pm - Modern) During this unique service, all are invited to receive the sign of the cross in ashes on their foreheads as we "remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

**WEDNESDAY LENTEN WORSHIP** March 4-April 1, at 5:00pm  
One of the traditions of the church is gathering each Wednesday during Lent for a reflective service. This service will feature the Holden Evening Prayer liturgy led by an orchestral ensemble under Brad Lambrecht's direction.

**HOLY WEEK WORSHIP**  
Palm Sunday, April 4 at 6:00pm, April 5 at 8:30am & 10:45am  
Maundy Thursday, April 9, at 6:15pm / Good Friday, April 10, at 6:15pm



**SATURDAY, APRIL 11: 4pm & 6pm - Easter Worship**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 12: 8:00am - Traditional Easter Worship**  
**9:30am & 11:00am - Easter Worship**

**MOTHER'S DAY WORSHIP** May 9 & 10  
Grab your mother or grandmother and join us for this special worship service. We'll have photo booths 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 24  
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.

CAN'T BE  
IN CHURCH?

WATCH WORSHIP LIVE ON OUR FACEBOOK FEED!



/calvarylutheranchurchalex

# FROM CALVARY'S PRESIDENT

It has been a year of projects at our house, as we've remodeled a bathroom and our kitchen. Maybe that's why I love our Lenten theme, "Life Under Construction." It fits my life, but also fits the really hard work our council is doing to live out our mission: to lead all people to a lifelong faith in Jesus Christ.

Think about this: Vibrant, healthy, growing churches are always "under construction." Not literally, thank goodness. Figuratively, a vibrant church is always a "work in progress." Constantly remodeling and evolving. Never stuck or preoccupied with being right. Unfortunately, too many churches get stuck and, inevitably, they decline. (In fact, one study projects the ELCA will see a 98% decline by 2041). Friends, that's not Calvary. Never has been. An "under construction" mentality is in our DNA. And, today, Calvary's council has this same mindset!



For example, we are now a church where nearly 800 people attend each week. But, we have learned sustaining growth and building resilience requires our special attention in 4 key areas of "construction" during this unique phase of our growth:

1. Growth happens primarily through what happens in **worship service** experiences. So, we continue to invest in music, technology, worship series and preaching. Our building project offers a second worship space, but we also see opportunity to expand our reach by increasing the quality of our weekly online worship experiences, for example.
2. Resilience happens when the majority of worshipers are in **small groups** that are very well run and authentically care. Connect groups continue to grow in number. We are striving to better equip leaders and make it easy for all to form or find their group.
3. Resilience happens when we hire increasingly **specialized staff** who are gifted, experienced, and independent. Another key to resilience is adapting Pastor Hans' role, focusing his work on preaching, vision casting, and strategizing with and caring for the staff. We are simply too large for him to be everywhere all the time.
4. Growth happens when we become more formal and deliberate about creating simple, easily accessible **ways for newcomers to engage** in small groups and service. When guests find their circle of belonging, Calvary becomes home.

We're a work in progress. We're constantly under construction...always building our capacity to care for, reach out to, walk with and minister to one another and those needing the hope-filled love of Jesus.

I love our church!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deb Dittberner". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Deb Dittberner, Council President

PS: To learn more check out this great article by Tim Keller: <https://bit.ly/2GQ4DbV>

## NOW IS THE TIME: A FAMILY LEGACY

Calvary's building renovation and expansion project is in full swing! Things are definitely looking different inside and out as we progress in our goal to create more space and the right kind of space so that all might know a lifelong faith in Jesus Christ. You can see the latest updates at [www.calvaryalex.org/buildingproject](http://www.calvaryalex.org/buildingproject).

We want to highlight one of our amazing Calvary families working as sub-contractors on the project. Bill and Andrew Olson, a father/son duo, are owners of Bill Olson Plumbing in Alexandria. They are doing all the plumbing work for the project and have given generously to lessen the financial cost of their work.

We asked Bill and Andrew to tell us a little bit about why they wanted to be involved in the project...

In business since 2005, Bill never imagined being able to take on a job like this. With Andrew and one employee, Calvary is one of their largest projects. With four generations of their family who worship at Calvary, "we want to be part of the history at Calvary, and give back to our church," said Andrew. "I want my kids to have a place where they want to hang out, where they feel safe." The expansion of Calvary Preschool is close to his heart with a daughter currently attending and a son who will in a few years.

Bill added that it feels good to have his son share that heartfelt sentiment about his church. "Calvary's been a wonderful place for us since we started attending in 1986. We just want to give something back to the church and to the community since Calvary helps bring in the community." When asked about the work itself, smiles crept in and chuckles started. "The plans look really good on paper. But it is complicated with all the additions put on over time" said Andrew. "Some days it's a head scratcher, and I'm sure the best is yet to come" said Bill with a laugh.

Sounds like our faith—messy, complicated, unexpected. And worth it all in the end.

*Calvary's Construction Communication Team*



*Bill and Andrew Olson*

## BUILD THE SUPPORT BEAMS



On a 'normal' October day, my friends went to their teen son's parent teacher conferences. The teachers raved about what a kind and compassionate person Robbie was—always willing to help out and listen to others. He was involved in swimming and golf, had good grades and seemed to have it all. When they arrived home from the conferences, they found that their son had committed suicide. They were shocked. Their friends and family were shocked. "Why Robbie?!" I grew up in North Dakota, and Robbie's dad and aunt were in 4-H with me. Robbie was the same age as my oldest son. My heart sank and tears flowed when I read the news that Robbie was gone. While I didn't know Robbie, the thought of losing a child felt crushing. Why, God?

Very soon after Robbie's death, his family started Robbie's Hope—a foundation driven by teens to help end teen suicide. They soon learned that HOPE is an acronym often used in relationship to mental health—Hold On, Pain Ends. They want to end the stigma of talking about mental health. They want to reduce the suicide rates by making sure teens know that someone cares. God cares about you in the midst of your construction. He may be doing a small remodel, or tearing down walls so he can build you up. It's okay to not be okay in the middle of the construction. It's okay to reach out for help and connect. Robbie didn't reach out... he helped others with their struggles but he had his own overwhelming pain nobody knew about.

If you are struggling, please reach out to someone you trust. God's not done with your construction project yet.

*Mavis Frueh*



*Cameron, Miles, Mavis, and Dallas*

## ADJUST THE PLANS

As a kid, I was always a girl with a plan. I would have my first day of school outfit picked out in July and I felt like I knew exactly what I wanted to do when I “grew up.” I attended Gustavus Adolphus College with a plan to go straight to medical school after I graduated. Taking any time off seemed like an outlandish idea, and I was convinced it would slow me down. But, while I was studying in Sweden during the spring semester of my junior year, my plan started to change.

Traveling and living in a foreign country alone gave me a lot of time to reflect. I realized that, maybe, I wasn’t ready to apply to medical school that summer, so I decided to wait a year—which meant that I would be taking a year off between Gustavus and medical school.

I think God may have told me I needed this pause in between. Away from the rush and commotion of campus life, I have been able to rest and allow God to guide me in the direction I want my life to go. He’s reminded me how much I love living in Alexandria, being close with my family, and being a part of the Calvary community. Here, I’ve had the opportunity to work with a group of insightful sixth grade girls during Elevate and have bonded with others in my Connect Group who are at similar points in their lives.

This rest and reflection prepared me with a stronger medical school application, which led to my acceptance at a school that aligns with my values and goals. Although this wasn’t my original plan and I felt like my life was “under construction” for a period of time after graduation, I am much more confident in myself and what I want to do when I “grow up.”

*Alyssa Welle*



## EXPAND THE TOOLBOX

Fifteen years ago I was retired, and I felt a nudge from God to deepen my own faith toolbox. It turned out that our church in South Dakota was looking for people to be trained for something called Stephen Ministry. This is a wonderful program where lay leaders give one-on-one care to people experiencing things like grief, cancer, long-term care, or terminal illness. When I learned about it, I thought, *you know what, I think I can do that. I want to do that!*

When Calvary started the Friendly Visitor program I knew I wanted to be involved. I started visiting Janet, first in her home, and I continue to visit her now in a care facility. Being faithful and consistent with our visits builds a strong foundation for our relationship. Janet doesn't talk much anymore, but the last time we met she smiled and made eye contact with me the whole time.

Marlene has been my friend for so long, and it also felt right to be her Friendly Visitor when the need arose. Recently, I visited her and we talked, checked-in, and laughed together. She was happy, and I was so happy too! I always try to end visits by holding hands and saying a prayer. Sometimes I'll bring communion or visit with the person's spouse. I don't always feel like I have the right words to say, but I try to think of the verse from "There Is a Balm in Gilead":

***If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul,  
you can tell the love of Jesus, who died to save us all.***

You just do your best to figure out what they need. Mostly that's just a friendly face, but God is certainly guiding our time. I love the Friendly Visitor program and I plan on doing this as long as I can. I believe I receive even more joy than the people I visit.

*Ann Pulscher*

*If you are interested in becoming a Friendly Visitor, we encourage you to contact Angie Larson at [angie@calvaryalex.org](mailto:angie@calvaryalex.org).*



## FIXER UPPER

When the judge said, “Marshalls, take the defendant into custody,” and my wife wept in the front row of the courtroom, I hoped my demolition was finished. On HGTV’s “Fixer Upper,” host Chip Gaines’ favorite day is demo day. For me, my self-induced demolition was a painful and terrifying process, begun with a drunken black-out on a commercial flight and completed with a 10-month federal prison sentence.

Because God had been in my life from the beginning, I was a remodel project and not a complete teardown. My structure was sound, but I had neglected God’s blessings and covered that foundation with the rust, peeling paint, and golden rod colored linoleum of alcoholism, selfishness, pride, and materialism. I was more than willing to take credit for His works and graciousness. My relationship with The Lord was shallow, at best. Holidays, Sunday School for my daughter, when my parents were in town to “impress” them, and occasionally on a convenient weekend was the extent of my commitment to my faith. Thankfully, my foundation was strong enough that when I was potentially losing everything, I turned to God. I didn’t read Job on the night I was arrested because I was a great Christian. I did it because I was raised and loved and supported by Christian parents in a faith community, and because I was scared.

I ended up having nothing to fear. I lost a career, perceived financial stability, and my freedom, but I didn’t lose anything important, and I gained so much more. I never lost the love or support of my wife, daughter, and parents, and I gained sobriety. I have better perspective of my priorities and where my blessings truly come from. Most importantly, I have a deep love for and relationship with God and a trust that He will always be with me. The demolition was a difficult process, but the improvement was worth the pain.

I see the type of faith community at Calvary that helped provide my foundation, and that is one of the reasons I am so excited to be part of your building project with my employer providing the painting services. I was moved by the number of young families with children that were at the Christmas Eve service our family attended this year. The commitment your congregation is making to future generations will enable those generations to have a firm foundation in Christ to steady them in difficult times.

*Jason Anhorn, son of Roger & Linda Anhorn*



*Jason, Jessica and Presley*

## KNOW THE NUMBERS

Everyone's life is constantly under some form of construction; whether it be working on building your faith, personal growth, career goals, etc. A couple of years ago our family decided to take on the project of becoming debt free. With a little—or depending on whom you ask—a lot, of help from our families and friends watching both our two boys, Riley and Hudson, along with our four legged family members, Ashley and I were able to take on multiple part-time jobs to help towards this goal. To help reach this goal we committed to a budget (YNAB app!) and went through Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University offered by Calvary (Sign up now!).

If the challenge of digging out of debt was not enough, during this time we became engaged and committed to cash flowing our wedding and honeymoon. While our journey was not easy and we were not perfect, through the power of prayer and hard work we are incredibly grateful that as of January 31, our family was able to do our own debt free scream. Being debt free will allow us to live out our dreams of changing our family tree and becoming more generous than we could have ever imagined. Living debt free and having a budget as part of our new normal has afforded us the opportunity to comfortably pledge money towards Calvary's general fund and the new building project as well as support other efforts near and dear to our hearts, such as the Faith Rose 5K event to raise awareness on pregnancy and infant loss.

With God's grace and continuing to use all of the tools at our disposal our family has now taken on the task of buying a new home and doing our own little construction projects as we move forward with another of life's exciting projects.

*David and Ashley Hammer*



*David, Ashley, Riley, and Hudson*

*Photo by Licia Marie Photography*

## REBUILD AND GROW

All of us at one time have experienced chaos and a need to rebuild. As mentors of a recent Habitat for Humanity home build we experienced first-hand “life under construction”; an active deed of love. On build day we worshipped with a short devotional, opening our hearts to God and the work set before us. We connected with others who volunteered out of selfless love and support. We listened and shared our own stories of “life under construction”. Most importantly, we witnessed people serving, being “God’s hands reaching out to others.” Each individual brought their own tools, their talents, and with the guidance and support of crew leaders the tools of the trade were provided. We all felt valued. Calvary’s core values of worship, connect, and serve were exemplified.

Amidst the dust, clutter, and chaos of the build, joy and excitement trumped the laborious work. Walls were built for support and stability, a roof to shelter, and windows placed to bring in light. As the home came to fruition we were exhilarated with hope as a new beginning and future evolved for this young family. As we reflect back on this “life under construction” experience we were reminded of God’s words found in Luke 10:27 “love your neighbor as you love yourself” and Philippians 2:4 “look out for one another’s interests, not just for your own.” Witnessing tears of thanksgiving and abounding excitement at the home dedication we knew God had answered this family’s prayers. We were grateful to have the opportunity to not only participate in the build but to witness joy, God’s love, and love for others. Author Anne Lamott said it best, “Gratitude begins in our hearts and then dovetails into behavior. It almost always makes you willing to be of service which is where joy resides.”

*Rich and Jennifer Rentz*

***If you would like to get involved with Habitat For Humanity Faith Builds, we encourage you to contact Angie Larson at [angie@calvaryalex.org](mailto:angie@calvaryalex.org).***



# EASTER — AT CALVARY —

## EASTER WEEKEND WORSHIP

**SATURDAY, APRIL 11:** 4pm & 6pm *Easter Worship*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 12:** 8:00am – *Traditional Easter Worship*  
9:30am & 11:00am – *Easter Worship*

## JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

**Saturday:** 6:00pm *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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