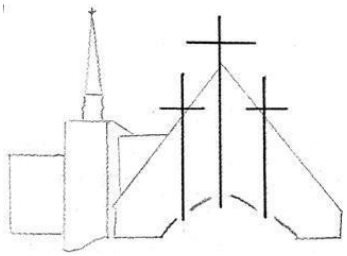


Calvary Notes

July 2026

A Publication of Calvary Lutheran Church, Moline, Illinois

From the Pastor,

A few years ago, while my doctor was reviewing my bloodwork as a part of my annual physical, she became concerned about my elevated A1C number. With diabetes in my family history, she advised me to lose weight and cut down on carbohydrates. My chart now listed me as "pre-diabetic." She asked if I thought I could do it without other help. I confidently said yes. A year later, with the A1C number still elevated, she repeated the advice and prescribed metformin. With renewed commitment to improve my diet and exercise more, I was confident I could get my A1C under control. The next year, with still elevated A1C, she doubled my metformin and told me if the A1C went up any higher, she would have to put the label "diabetic" in my chart.

I have since kept the A1C number below the diabetic range, but not by much. In truth, my effort to exercise more and change my diet has been half-hearted at best. (Afterall, there are potato chips and donuts in the world.) I have been living in the delusion that things will get better even without real change. But that is not how things work. Without adapting my lifestyle, without change, diabetes will be a part of my future and all the consequences thereof.

Our congregations find themselves in a similar situation. We are, currently, getting by. And even though St. James is currently in a stronger financial situation, I still would not call the long-term prognosis for either congregation exactly rosy. Our worship attendance is low. Our offerings are keeping us just out of the red – usually. But we may be just one unexpected negative event from tipping the scale. It is delusional to believe that we can keep on going and doing things as we currently are, and things will get better. They won't get better and likely will get worse.

And so we are faced with a choice. Do we continue as we have been and suffer the consequences (like closing), or do we seek real change in order to continue the mission to which we have been called? Certainly change is uncomfortable. But it can also be life-giving.

What are some of the possible changes?

- Perhaps we embrace the "evangelical" part of our name and reach out to the people around us with the good news of God's love and invite them to be a part of the ministry. (Historically as Lutherans that does not seem likely.)
- Perhaps more of us are inspired by God's call to be generous givers and make significant increases in our financial support of the ministry. But even that is probably only a temporary solution.
- Or perhaps we embrace real change in the way we see ourselves. Maybe it's time to stop identifying ourselves as "Calvary" or "St. James" or any other name, and see ourselves as parts of the one body of Christ, utilizing our unique gifts for the benefit of the whole body.

There are significant decisions ahead for us. Our willingness to take seriously the need to change may be the only thing that allows us to not only survive, but thrive, as God's people in Rock Island and Moline.

I'll conclude with a real-life example.

Last summer, as you may recall, I had the opportunity to officiate at a wedding at one of the congregations from my first call. That congregation, Mt. Calvary, was part of two-point parish. A few years ago, the other congregation left the ELCA, leaving Mt. Calvary in a precarious position and without a pastor. At the same time, another congregation in the area closed. Geographically between those two congregations was a three-point parish (Samuel's, Messiah and St. Paul) that was also struggling and unable to support a full-time pastor.

Recognizing that things could not continue as is, the leaders of those congregations sought creative ways to change. The result was a cooperative ministry between all four congregations under the gifted leadership of a part-time synodically authorized minister (SAM) who is also a full-time elementary school principal. These four congregations continue to worship each Sunday, but not in each building each week. Instead, they alternate between buildings, two each week.

Certainly it was painful for many people to not be worshiping in their own sanctuary weekly. But the result of this arrangement is fuller (from a range of 15-40 worshipers in four buildings to 50-60 worshipers in each building), more inspired worship together than they had separately. These collaborating congregations are thriving in their worship and mission because they were willing to embrace real change.

As you are aware, I will be retiring soon. Decisions will need to be made about the future of our congregations. This will be an opportune time to consider real changes that will bring new life and vitality to our ministry.

In Christ,

Pastor Knowles

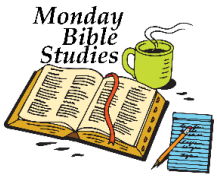
During the month of June, we have received the following words of thanks....

❖ Thank you for your recent gift to YouthHope! Your contribution of $205 helps fuel our mission to passionately and persistently pursue at risk kids and teens through authentic relationships to lead them to Jesus. The youth of the Quad Cities need the hope of Christ more than ever.

----- Esther Joy King, Exec. Dir.

❖ Thank you for your continued support of the mission and ministries of Churches United. We have received your $165 donation to Moline/East Moline CareLink. This enables us to keep helping those needing rent and utility assistance in this area.

-----Blessing, Rev. Jay McCowan, Exec. Dir.



MONDAY, JUNE 29 AT 10:00 AM

MOVIE – "GODSPELL"

We have concluded our Monday morning study of the gospel of Matthew and will be taking a break for the summer. Before we break, however, we will wrap our study of Matthew by viewing the movie, "Godspell." This 1973 rock opera is based on the gospel of Matthew. Anyone who wants to view the movie (102 minutes) can join us in the Upper Room on Monday, June 29 at 10:00 am.

JOINT WORSHIP SERVICE

On July 19 at 10:30 - we will welcome St. James to worship with us. This was a recommendation of the Vision Team to have more joint services together. In August, we will gather at St. James for worship. For more information, please check the table in the narthex.

JULY EXERCISE BEGINS

Thursday, July 2

Faithful Flexors will begin on Thursday, July 2. If you haven't tried our exercise, come and give it a try. It is low impact with a great group of gents and ladies.

BLOOD DRIVE – JULY 14 FROM 3:00 – 6:00 P.M. SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

This drive will be held at Salem Lutheran, 1724 15th St. in Moline. We are being joined with some of the other RIM churches. You can go online at Impact Life to make your appointment, scan the QR code on the poster or contact Pam Gross. Our goal is 20 donations.

AUGUST DEADLINE - July 14

Please have your articles to me no later than July 14th. You may email them, place them in my box or call the church office.

HABITAT LUNCH - JULY 15

We will be serving a Habitat Lunch on July 15. Please watch the announcements for more information. The organizer for this event is Bruce & Val Daniel.

CALVARY CARETAKER CREW (CCC) WEDNESDAY, JULY 15

CCC will NOT meet in June but will meet in July on Wednesday, July 15 at 9:00 a.m. Come and join us to do some light cleaning and/or yard work. After working for an hour or so we will enjoy food and fellowship.

HAPPY HOOKERS –July 29

Happy Hookers will meet at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 29. Come and join us for laughter, food and great fellowship.

MOWING HELP

Looking for HELP with mowing church lawns. Contact Gary Gross or Joe Geerts about scheduling and access to mowers. Thanks, Gary Gross

COLLECTING PET FOOD FOR JULY & AUGUST

The Service Committee will be collecting pet food for our 4-legged friends to donate to QCAWC in Milan for the month of July & August. They really need wet and dry kitten food, Purina Fancy Feast wet and Kitten dry as they have a lot of kittens to care for; along with Purina Cat Chow and Purina Dog Chow. We will have a table set up in the narthex We will also be accepting monetary donations. Organizer is Bruce & Val Daniel.

WELCA PROJECT FOR SUMMER/ FALL

At the May meeting, we decided to help THE THRID PLACE QC (a daytime homeless shelter) in Rock Islnad that does NOT provide food; though they do provide coffee and snacks; plus a place to relax, socialize and get warm or cool depending on the time of the year..

For those of you that go to Yard Sales over the summer, they are looking for small tents and backpacks. Please do not spend a lot of money, but if you find something you would like to donate, you may bring your items to church and store downstairs in one of the Sunday school rooms. Just be sure and let the office know, so in the fall we can deliver them.

Beginning in September, we will go over a list of items they are in need of and will be asking church members to help with donations.

Count your blessings and remember your gifts this summer. As you are enjoying the summer activities that may take you away from your church family on Sundays, please remember your weekly gifts to Calvary. Just like when we vacation from home, our monthly bills still come in and need to be paid. You could mail your envelope in or drop it off when you will be out of town.

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HUMJOR

A new study says that virtual meetings dampen creativity. I think they're wrong. Lots of people in virtual meetings are figuring out very creative ways to make it look like they're actually paying attention.

A golfer asked the pastor playing with him, "How do you let off steam? Say, if you miss a shot and your ball goes into a stand trap?" The pastor replied, "I just repeat the names of some of my congregation members….with feeling."

Puzzle!

Use the Scripture verses below to locate the places in the puzzle. (If a verse mentions more than one place, only one appears in the puzzle, so choose carefully.) Circle each place as you find it.
Answers go: → ↓ ↘

Genesis 2:15
Genesis 11:9
Genesis 35:1
Exodus 13:18
Ruth 1:1
1 Kings 18:19
1 Chronicles 11:4
Isaiah 23:1
Isaiah 23:2
Isaiah 23:3
Jonah 1:2
Matthew 3:6
Matthew 4:18
Matthew 26:36
Luke 24:13
John 2:1
Acts 8:5
Acts 11:22
Acts 17:16
Romans 1:15

S I D O N G N I L E S O
J J O R D A N R I V E R
E S G A A R C A N A A M
R A E T B D C D B E O O
U M T H B E T H E L F U
S A H E T N E A T N G N
A R S N Y O M N H I A T
L I E S R F M T L N L C
E A M D E E A I E E I A
M F A R S D U O H V L R
G H N O A E S C E E E M
I J E M B N A H M H E E
T O W E R O F B A B E L

Answers: Garden of Eden, Tower of Babel, Bethel, Red Sea, Bethlehem, Mount Carmel, Jerusalem, Tyre, Sidon, Nile, Nineveh, Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, Gethsemane, Emmaus, Cana, Samaria, Antioch, Athens, Rome