

Calvary News Update – December 2018

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church • 341 Hamline Avenue South, St. Paul, MN 55105 • (651) 698-6138
Rev. Joe Marsh • A Member of The American Association of Lutheran Churches (TAALC) • www.calvarystpaul.org

‘During Dark Days the Light Shines Brightest’

“Most of the men and women who were relaxing on yoga mats at a Minneapolis meditation center one recent weekend are not Sunday churchgoers, but they belong to the fastest-growing religion in the United States – none at all.... Nearly one in four Americans now declare themselves unaffiliated with any organized religion. The share of adults who identify as “none” has more than doubled since the 1990s – to 56 million and climbing. That’s now more than the membership of all mainline Protestants combined.” StarTribune, November 11, 2018, “The Unchurched of America.”

Well, that’s discouraging...or is it? Haven’t the true followers of God always been a minority?

How many believers (of the true God) were there in Noah’s day? It was a pretty small group – only Noah and his family.

In Luke 18, Jesus ended one of his parables with these words, “when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

In Matthew 7 – in the “Sermon on the Mount” – Jesus said, “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”

In the Old Testament we are told that God intentionally chose one of the most insignificant nations on earth to be his chosen people, the Israelites. They were a small nation constantly under threat and attacked by their larger, more powerful enemies. Yet, as long as they remained faithful, God protected and provided for them.

In America, Christianity is more and more under attack. As individuals we may often get the idea that we are the only ones left and that the odds are stacked against us. However, that can be a positive thing.



During World War II’s Battle of the Bulge, U.S. General Tony McAuliffe told his troops: “Men, we are surrounded by the enemy. That means we have the greatest opportunity ever presented to an army. We can attack in any direction we choose.” Right now, in this deteriorating situation we have a great opportunity. We have what people want and don’t know how to get. We have forgiveness, hope, peace, joy, a reason for living today and the confidence to face death and eternity. Outside of Christianity, who has these things? No one that I know of.

There is an old saying, “With God on my side, I can never be outnumbered.”

The shepherd Dave, Gideon, King Jehosaphat, Moses and all the great people of God throughout time have all depended on God’s strength and power instead of their own. We are no different. The only time we are outnumbered and outgunned is when we forget who we belong to.

Thank God for these troubled times. His power, his love, his strength shines best when the future and the present look bleak.

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven.”

– Pastor Joe

Want to Hear it Again?
Share it with a Friend?
SERMONS ONLINE
www.calvarystpaul.org



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

4:00 pm • Monday, December 24



Year-end Update from the Halls in Albania

It has been a busy several months! Here's an update on what's going on in Peshkopi.

CHURCH MINISTRY: A generous grant has allowed us to pursue some much needed updates on the church building, including installing central heating in the residence and insulating and painting the entire building. Bible study followed by dinner at our house was a big hit in August and September. We are starting to max out our space! Between the children's program on Saturday and the adolescent program on Wednesday, 30-40 kids come to the church building every week for an hour of games and Christian teaching. It is a good base that we hope to build on!

ENGLISH COURSES: We decided to try something different this year. Rather than using a textbook, we are working together to develop thematic units and to employ different methods of teaching, including using audiovisuals and playing a lot of games. We regularly remind ourselves that our goal is to help students deepen their understanding and use of English, because for many of the students, much of the content is review. Over 60 students come to courses each week, including a class on Saturday morning open only to kids from villages (because they have to travel 20-30 minutes to come), in which we have 28 enrolled, and the adult courses that both of us teach. Our focus is building relationships with the students and hopefully, showing them a positive example of Christianity.

Editor's note: Dan & Dawn Hall need your prayers and support to bring the Gospel to Albania, a culturally-Muslim country where many have never even heard about Jesus.

You can donate at:

<https://www.givetransform.org/hope-albania.html>

INTERNS: We started an intern program in September. Three young Albanian Christians are helping run and expand the current ministries of the church. They will also help us launch some new outreaches as the year progresses; we especially hope to find a way to reach out to the high schoolers.

Both Endri and Ela have been members of the church in Peshkopi for several years. Ela met Denis at Bible School last year and they got engaged, so at the beginning of November, we had the pleasure of being part of their wedding, which was the *first wedding service ever* in the church here in Peshkopi. It was followed by a traditional Albanian wedding celebration (dasem) with food and dancing, but with a different flavor, since the bride and groom and many of their friends in attendance are believers!



Dan and Dawn Hall at the wedding of interns Denis and Ela.



Sunday, December 2: Prepare the Way! Welcoming the Season of Advent at Lyngblomsten. Everyone is invited at 10:00am for a special ceremony of prayer, music, and treats, plus lighting the Advent wreath and the chapel Christmas tree. No reservations needed! 10:30am Sunday Worship follows the Advent lighting ceremony. The wreath lighting and service will be held in the Newman-Benson Chapel at Lyngblomsten, located at 1415 Almond Ave, in St. Paul.

Let Us Pray for One Another:


















Please pray each day for the following people of Calvary who have special needs: Lorenda Brown, Fred Hall, Sandy Hall, Jack Lightfoot, Chris Steiner-Lightfoot, Norm McClure, Carole Sunde, Bill White and Kay Witt. Please pray for Pastor Joe Marsh, for God's powerful guidance. Also please pray for other family and friends: Pastor Tom & Mary Aadland, Debbie & John Amacher, Rita Schenk, Dawn Stewart, Marcie Ann Coville, Dan & Dawn Hall. If you know one or more people on the "other family and friends" prayer list in this newsletter, and you think that their names should continue on the list, please let the church office know not later than Dec. 19 so that those names will not be removed from the list.



**What's Going On?
Newsletter
Submissions to
Calvary office by Dec. 19
celc341@msn.com
or 651-698-6138**

Sunday Morning Fellowship Serving
 December 2018
 Mary Jo Marsh
 Judie White

DECEMBER 2018

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| <p>2</p> <p>9:00 am Adult Bible Class 10:00 am Worship Service 11:00 am Coffee & Fellowship <i>Ushers: Bob & Gretchen Fett</i> <i>Reader: Bob Witt</i></p> | <p>3</p> | <p>4</p> | <p>5</p> <p>8:30 am Prayer Meeting</p> <p> 7:15 pm • Choir Practice</p> | <p>6</p> <p> Quilters 9:30 am</p> <p>Recovery Meeting Noon-1:00 pm</p> <p>AA Meeting - 7 pm</p> | <p>7</p> <p>Recovery Group 7:00 pm</p> | <p>8</p> <p> Advent Decorating 9:30 am</p> <p> Anna Downing</p> |
| <p>9 CHRISTMAS TEA</p> <p>9:00 am Adult Bible Class 10:00 am Worship Service 11:00 am Christmas Tea <i>Ushers: Karol Holmquist / Bob Fett</i> <i>Reader: Mike Johnson</i></p> | <p>10</p> | <p>11</p> | <p>12</p> <p>8:30 am Prayer Meeting</p> <p> 7:15 pm • Choir Practice</p> | <p>13</p> <p>Recovery Meeting Noon-1:00 pm</p> <p>AA Meeting 7:00 pm</p> | <p>14</p> <p>Recovery Group 7:00 pm</p> | <p>15</p> <p> Securon-Lighthouse</p> |
| <p>16</p> <p>9:00 am Adult Bible Class 10:00 am Worship Service 11:00 am Coffee & Fellowship <i>Ushers: Bob & Gretchen Fett</i> <i>Reader: Betty Anfinson</i></p> | <p>17</p> | <p>18</p> | <p>19</p> <p>8:30 am Prayer Meeting</p> <p>Newsletter submissions due to Calvary office: celc341@msn.com</p> <p> 7:15 pm • Choir Practice</p> | <p>20</p> <p>Recovery Meeting Noon-1:00 pm</p> <p> Quilters 1:00 pm</p> <p>AA Meeting - 7 pm</p> | <p>21</p> <p>Recovery Group 7:00 pm</p> | <p>22</p> |
| <p>23</p> <p>9:00 am Adult Bible Class 10:00 am Worship Service 11:00 am Coffee & Fellowship <i>Ushers: Bob & Gretchen Fett</i> <i>Reader: Bob Witt</i></p> | <p>24</p> <p> 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</p> | <p>25</p> <p> A Blessed Christmas</p> | <p>26</p> <p>8:30 am Prayer Meeting</p> <p>Newsletter Mailing</p> <p> 7:15 pm • Choir Practice</p> | <p>27</p> <p> Mary Jo Marsh</p> <p>Recovery Meeting Noon-1:00 pm</p> <p>AA Meeting 7:00 pm</p> | <p>28</p> <p>Recovery Group 7:00 pm</p> | <p>29</p> |
| <p>30</p> <p> Holy Communion</p> <p>9:00 am Adult Bible Class 10:00 am Communion Service 11:00 am Coffee & Fellowship <i>Ushers: April Taylor</i> <i>Reader: April Taylor</i></p> | <p>31</p> <p> Jack Anfinson</p> | <p>(Jan) 1</p> <p>2019! Happy New Year!</p> | <p>2</p> <p>8:30 am Prayer Meeting</p> <p> 7:15 pm • Choir Practice</p> | <p>3</p> <p>Recovery Meeting Noon-1:00 pm</p> <p>AA Meeting 7:00 pm</p> | <p>4</p> <p>Recovery Group 7:00 pm</p> | <p>5</p> |

Address Service Requested
Time Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church
341 Hamline Avenue South
St. Paul, MN 55105
(651)698-6138



Christmas Tea

Sunday, December 9

~ Following Worship Service ~



EVERYONE is INVITED!

Christmas Season Fellowship and Fun for All!



Bring your fancy hats and teacups. Each table will be decorated by volunteer individuals.

Let Mary Gardner know if you would like to decorate a table.



Bring a Friend!



Advent Decorating

Saturday Dec. 1

9:30 am

Coffee & Cookies included!

Please have year-end monetary contributions in by Dec. 30 to be credited for the 2018 tax year.

Please remember to let the church office know if your *address, phone, or email address changes.*

Let us know at: 651-698-6138
celc341@msn.com

It's Easier than Ever to HEAR THE GOSPEL!
at Calvary Lutheran



Do you find it hard to hear the service? We've got some great new hearing devices you will want to try. They are easy to use and inconspicuous. Think: Transistor radio and earphone. And another device actually works wirelessly with many hearing aids.

