

February 2025

Mount Calvary Lutheran Church & Preschool

2055 S. Franklin St. Rd
Decatur, IL 62521
217-428-0641

Pastor Brett Hinrichs
office@mtcalvarydecatur.org



Office Hours

Monday - Thursday

8am - 12noon

For God

so loved the world,
that he gave his
only
begotten
Son,
that whosoever
believeth
in him should not perish,
but have everlasting life.



John 3:16

Join Us Sundays

Worship Service

at 9am

Christian Ed. Hour

at 10:30am

*But you, O Lord, are a God
merciful and gracious, slow to
anger and abounding in steadfast
love and faithfulness.*

Psalm 86:15

A Message from Pastor Hinrichs

*“This is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us
and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.
Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

-1 John 4:10-11

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

As you know, the month of February is upon us and that means that Valentines Day is right around the corner. This means that for the next few weeks, men and women from all over the country are going to be frantically looking (some at the last minute) for some special way to show their love to their significant other.

In 2012, the late Pastor Ken Klaus, who was the Lutheran Hour Speaker at that time, asked ladies about the *best* Valentine gift they had ever received. As they thought about those gifts, they smiled and spoke fondly of how that gift made them feel loved. Now, when he asked about the *worst* gift they had received, many burst into laughter and immediately began listing them off! “A five-pound box of candy: the kind he loves and that she hates.” “An ironing board.” “Jumper cables.” “Ten years of no gift at all!”

Now while jumper cables or a five-pound box of candy may be good gifts for some people, for those who received them, these items missed the mark when it came to saying, “I love you.” So if giving the right gift is so hard, what kind of gift can you give that will really say, “I love you”?

While that answer may vary humanly speaking, when it comes to God, the Apostle John has a great answer! In the verse above, he tells us that Jesus Christ, our heaven-sent Substitute is **THE BEST GIFT OF LOVE YOU CAN RECEIVE**. Pastor Ken Klaus writes,

“How can anyone remain unmoved by the love the Savior showed in the Garden of Gethsemane? There He received the weight of every sin humanity has ever committed. Even though He was greatly burdened, Jesus still rose up to meet His betrayer. Even though He knew what was ahead, Jesus went forward to be beaten, lied about and spit upon. What is the best gift of love we have ever been given? Just look at the cross. See the Savior who was laughed at; watch as His clothes were dispersed among His executioners; listen as He forgave His murderers, took care of His mother and promised salvation to a dying thief. Watch as He died the death we had deserved. What is the best gift of love we have ever been given? Stand at the empty tomb and know that because He lives we shall live also.”

My friends, Jesus really is the best gift of love we could ever give or receive! May you live in His love this month and always!

God’s Blessings,

Pastor Brett Hinrichs

Grow Together

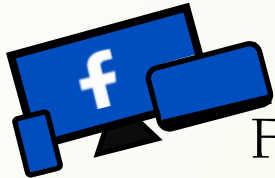
Worship Life at Mt. Calvary Sunday Opportunities

Worship Service at 9:00_{AM}

— A “relaxed” traditional service with hymns and standard orders of worship —

Christian Education Hour at 10:30_{AM}

— Adult Bible Study, Confirmation Class, Additional Classes —



Connect at Home

Facebook Live Worship: Sunday at 9:00_{AM}

Radio Worship: Sunday at 9:00_{AM} on 100.9FM WZUS

Weekday Bible Studies

Men’s Bible Study: Monday Evenings 6:30_{PM}

Location: Conference Room at Mt. Calvary (across from office)

The first Monday of each month join the men at Primrose Living Center.

Women’s Bible Study: Tuesday Mornings at 9:00_{AM}

Location: Conference Room at Mt. Calvary (across from office)

The 3rd Tuesday of each month join the ladies at Mt. Zion Rehab Center or Evergreen Living Center. See the Calendar for details.

Thursday Bible Study: 1st & 3rd Thursdays



****NEW TIME**** (Winter months only) AFTERNOONS @ 2:00pm

Location: Conference Room at Mt. Calvary (across from office)

All Bible Studies have call-in options. Please contact the group leader for more info

Serve Together



Valentines for Veterans



We will be collecting Valentines to take to Veterans at the Veterans Home in Danville. The basket is located in the Narthex. The cut-off date to drop Valentines in the basket is February 2nd, 2025.

Thanks to the Normans for delivering the Valentines.

Long-Term Planning Team Update

As many of you may know, last fall we put together a long-term planning team to begin gathering information about areas of ministry that affect our long-term sustainability. Among those topics was the possibility of partnering with other LCMS congregations in the Decatur area.

On Tuesday night, January 21st a group from Trinity Lutheran met with our planning team for the first time. We had a great discussion about the strengths and blessings of each congregation, as well as the struggles we are facing. It was very interesting to hear just how similar each congregation's challenges really are. By the end of the meeting, we not only felt like we knew each other better, but even began to brainstorm ways we could work together more closely. Our hope is to start doing a few joint events in the near future to explore how "compatible" our congregations are for future joint ministry. What these conversations and partnerships may lead to is still uncertain, but we firmly believe that as Christians we are better when we stand together.

Our teams will be getting together again next month to talk about two lists each congregation is preparing. One list will highlight the different ministries, programs, and Bible Studies we are offering right now. The second list will be a "wish list" of things that each congregation would like to do, but may not be able to accomplish on their own. Our hope is to use these lists to identify some of the joint ministries we may be able to do together.

If we were to use the analogy of a relationship, at this point we see our two congregations in the early stages of "dating." Each has a vested interest in the health and well-being of the other and is curious to see if we can come together as one "blended family" so we can be "better together."

Our team will be regularly sharing updates from these meeting and will be actively seeking feedback from the congregation because this is a whole family endeavor. We encourage your to share your thoughts with our team members (listed below) or to leave a note in the long-term planning team box in the narthex.

Mt. Calvary Long-Term Planning Team: Joel Fletcher (Co-chair), Beth Landgon (Co-chair), Heather Boleyn, Sharon Butler, Loretta Hoehne, Sherman Kramer, Alan Little, Janice Weathers, and Pastor Brett Hinrichs (ex-officio)



Serve Together

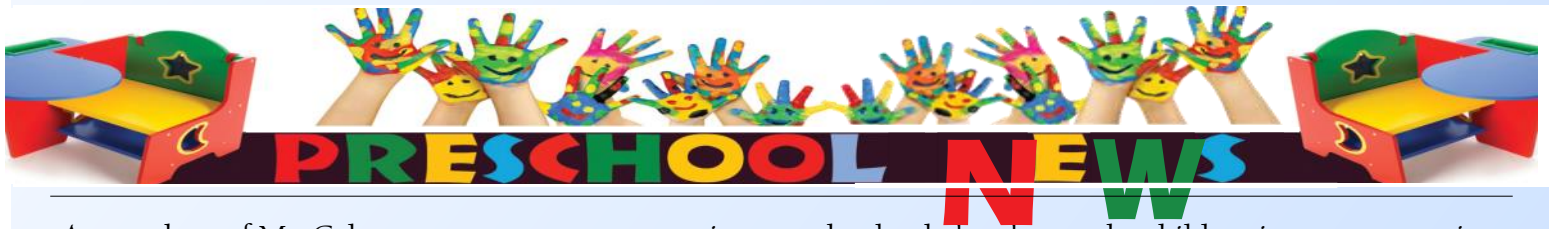
Stitches of Love

Stitches of Love had a very productive year in 2024! We made 886 hats, 38 baby hats, 28 blankets, 64 scarves, 71 dish cloths, and 1 shawl! For 2025 we have 37 hats already!

Hats and scarves were given to Mt. Calvary Preschool and Dennis School. Hats were given to Ashley Robinson's grade level students, Shannen Ray's class, and the first graders at South Shores Elementary in their Christmas gift bags. Hats, scarves and blankets were donated to Danville Veterans. God's Shelter of Love received hats, scarves and dish cloths. HSHS Cancel Care received hats and blankets. We are honored and blessed to be able to provide these items to people whom God loves to show His love and our care.

We recently applied for a Thrivent grant to buy yarn to help defray the costs for our members and have been notified that we have been awarded the grant, so that is another blessing!

If you would like meet with us, we meet from 1-3pm the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. We welcome new crafters as we join together to be the hands and feet of Jesus.



As members of Mt. Calvary, you support our amazing preschool to help educate the children in our community. While you can see things like the projects hanging on the walls, you may not always get to see the ministry that is being offered to our preschool families. So going forward, in each month's Parish Pulse I am going to share a "Jesus Story" about something God has been doing for these families and will occasionally offer a devotional thought too!

Things Jesus is Doing in the Ministry of the Preschool!

Recently, I received a message from a parent who expressed her love and gratitude for our preschool. In the note, she noted how the child's grandfather has been ill and is struggling with pain. Our student told her grandmother that she wanted to pray for her grandfather to "quit hurting." This family is an example of not only the child hearing about Jesus, but the child being comfortable to pray with her family! This child has faith that God can help her Grandfather, and bring him comfort in a difficult time.

Looking Up: A New Year's Revelation

My New Year's resolution came to me as I was looking at a picture taken in Arizona. My oldest son graduated from Arizona State University in December 2024. While in Arizona, we took a hike in the mountains in Phoenix. Later, while looking at this picture, I noticed the sky was a beautiful blue that I had not paid attention to while actually hiking. I had been looking at the ground, the surrounding communities below, and of course my family. As I thought about what I missed in that moment, I decided my New Years resolution would be to "Look Up." Look to the things God is doing that are "up" not "down." Isaiah 40:26 says, "Lift your eyes and look to the heavens; who created these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls them each by name. Because of His great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing."

Thank you for supporting this ministry! It is YOUR MINISTRY shared with these families!





COUNCIL

CORNER

Mortgage Reduction Opportunity (MRO) Update

Great news on the MRO program; Our mortgage will be paid off *this year (2025)!*

Just to recap the effort; the church building mortgage balance owed on January 2, 2023 was \$437,366 and on track to be paid off in 8 years/5 months. Our normal monthly payment is \$5,211.50.

The MRO program began 2/6/2023. Since it began, over \$283,848 extra dollars have been contributed to reduce the principal owed. The net effect of this is to reduce the total interest paid on the loan, increase the amount of principal being applied to the loan monthly, and to advance the payoff date.

As of our last statement on 12/31/24, our loan balance is now \$60,122. That means that we have less than 12 months to pay on this loan, and it will be paid off in 2025!

We have been blessed as a congregation by the support of our members for this initiative. The additional dollars have come from member giving, gifts, estates and local programs (Kroger, Monical's Pizza, The Giving Plate, Rural King, House of Meats). This will free up dollars in future years in support of the future budget needs. Thank you to all who have made this possible!

Respectfully submitted,
Rodger and Debbie Koester

2025 Budget Update (January 1-19, 2025)

<i>Budgeted General Funds</i>	<i>Received YTD</i>	<i>Projected End of Year</i>
Weekly Offerings	24,250.00	260,000.00
Pre-School Tuition**	3,390.16	32,600.00
Thrivent Funds		2,500.00
Special Services Offerings	1,500.00	5,000.00
Other Offerings		500.00
Altar Flowers	80.00	2,000.00
Interest Income		1,200.00
Building Fund Offerings	310.00	30,000.00
Mortgage Interest Refund		2,500.00
Other Income	40.00	2,700.00
	30,030.16	339,000.00

<i>Designated General Funds</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Gift-In-Kind	
Memorial	
MRO	1,660.00
Sunday School	
Venezuela	1,200.00
Pre-School Scholarship	
<i>Separate Account</i>	
Elders' Fund	10.00

Surplus or (Deficit)
(-308,969.84)

***Registration fees for 25-26 school year are included.*



Share Together



CHILI TO GO



Sunday, February 9th (Superbowl Sunday) we will have quart to-go containers of Chili available for you to take home after Worship and Bible Study. The cost is \$12 per quart.

Please sign-up on the sheet in the Fellowship Hall so we know how much to prepare. If you are not at the church and would like to sign up you can call the office 217-428-0641 (M-Thurs 8-noon) or contact Bethe Little directly at 217-855-2802.

Join the Ladies for Lunch!

Our Tuesday morning Ladies' group will be eating out for lunch after the first bible study of each month. This list is not set in stone, so please keep up with Bethe Little to ensure you are up-to-date with any future changes.



February 4th - Benny's



Would you like to adopt a House Plant?

The House Plants in the Narthex are available to anyone in the congregation. They are becoming so large and heavy that they need to be repotted—and that is a job larger than our members who care for them want to take on. There are Peace Lilies (3), Fiddle Leaf Fig, Rubber Tree, Schefflera, Ficus and Philodendron plants. If you are interested in any of the plants please let Marsha Warnick or Debbie Goveia know. You will need to be able to move the plant yourself.

1 Peter 5:8-11

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

¹⁰ And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. ¹¹ To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.





MTC KIDS CORNER

★ Children's Church

Classes Available During Christian Education Hour

Although we are no longer offering a time of Bible instruction for kids during worship, we still have Sunday School classes for kids of all ages during our Christian Education Hour! We encourage all kids to attend!

★ Confirmation Connections

Our weekly confirmation classes will continue in the month of February. As the year goes on, please be sure your kids are doing their sermon reports and earning their service hours.

★ General Reminders

"MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO" — MODELING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

As a teenager or young adult, you likely said to yourself, "When I get older, I am not going to insert behavior your parents did that bugged you." And yet, despite our best efforts, we often find ourselves repeating those very same behaviors that we swore we'd never do. It's a classic case of "Monkey see, Monkey do!"

As Christian parents & mentors, it's important to make sure that we're modeling the values, attitudes, and behaviors that we want our kids to have in their adult years. Because whether we like it or not, they will imitate what they see in us. Let's be intentional about living out our own spiritual values and practices, so that as kids grow they'll begin adopting these values as their own. After all, the old saying is true, "Monkey see, Monkey do."

★ Events and Activities

NYG Updates

- Kids & parents have a Gathering Update Meeting at St. Paul's @ noon on January 26th. Meetings will also be held on 2/23, 3/30, & 4/27 (kids only). A final child/parent meeting will be on 6/15 at St. Paul's @ noon.
- Please watch your texts for info about upcoming fundraising efforts.
- Pray for God to prepare the kids' hearts to receive the growth He has planned for them at the Gathering.

Jr. High Youth

- Our next joint youth meeting will be on Feb. 1st at noon @ MTC.

SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE IN FEBRUARY

ELDERS

Feb 2	Dan Reynolds
Feb 9	Sherman Kramer
Feb 16	John Graff
Feb 23	Russ Jozwiak

ORGANISTS

Feb 2	Steve Ford
Feb 9	Steve Ford
Feb 16	Peter Miller
Feb 23	Lisa Peterman

A/V TECHNICIANS

Feb 2	Joel & Stacey Fletcher
Feb 9	Joel & Stacey Fletcher
Feb 16	Joel & Stacey Fletcher
Feb 23	Joel & Stacey Fletcher

READERS

Feb 2	Youth Reader
Feb 9	Tom Little
Feb 16	Russ Jozwiak
Feb 23	Frank Dunmire

OTHER SERVANTS

ALTAR FLOWERS	Sandy Haseley & Marsha Warnick
BANNERS	Sharon & Rod Butler
BUILDING/GROUNDS	Roger Harting
CHANCEL CANDLES	Dale & Barb Jones Debbie Koester
COFFEE/TEA	Bethe Little
NURSERY	Sharon Goers
PLANTS	Debbie Goveia
RECYCLING	Lyn Stevens
SOUND & VIDEO	Jim & Lyn Stevens Joel & Stacey Fletcher
SUNDAY SCHOOL	Gale Krueger Dan Reynolds
TABULATOR(S)	Carol Campbell & Marsha Warnick
HEAD USHER	Andrew Napier

MEALS ON WHEELS

Feb 4	Sharon & Rod Butler
Feb 11	Lyn & Jim Stevens
Feb 18	Karen & Larry Lange
Feb 25	Barb & Roger Harting

Thank You to our volunteers & workers for all you do!

Check out the Sign-Up Station in the Fellowship Hall for opportunities to serve.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Feb 1	Cheryl Sappington
Feb 2	Austin Atchason
Feb 6	Daniel Gambrill
Feb 7	Allison Dull
Feb 7	Matthew Glosser
Feb 12	Lisa Peterman
Feb 12	Hunter Urbanowicz
Feb 13	Shawne Gambrill
Feb 14	Suzanne Aukamp
Feb 14	Phillip Goode
Feb 14	Spencer Maxwell
Feb 16	Robert Creamer
Feb 16	Will Aubert
Feb 16	Steve Haseley
Feb 16	Jackson Stock
Feb 17	Bob Norman
Feb 20	Leslie Bennick
Feb 21	Sarah Koester
Feb 21	Joel Robb
Feb 23	Mary Little
Feb 24	Tom Fiesler
Feb 27	Sherman Kramer
Feb 28	Janice Weathers
Feb 29	Janet Searl

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Feb 1	Lyn & Jim Stevens
Feb 7	Marsha & Larry Warnick
Feb 15	Karen & Roger Dworak
Feb 25	Bridgett & Joel Robb

A few scriptures from a small but powerful book: 2 Peter

“And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.” 2 Peter 1:19

³ His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

**⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
2 Peter 1:3-8**

⁸ But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. “ 2 Peter 3:8-9

Partner Ministry Updates



UNITY CHRISTIAN LIONS

PREPARING LEADERS FOR LIFE

— A Ministry of the Lutheran School Association —

SAVE THE DATE—the Unity Christian School Dinner Auction will be May 2, 2025 at 5pm. “Country Boots and Christian Roots” is the theme for this year’s dinner/auction. Grab your cowboy boots and hat and join the fun. Watch for ticket information soon!

The LSA ReSale Shop

Volunteers are always needed. The resale shop needs clean used clothing, especially children’s. The shop takes donations of any and all holiday items no matter the season.

Donations should be clean and in good condition; something that you would buy if you were one of our customers. Please put your donations in bags or boxes of a manageable size with clothing separate from household items. Volunteers are always needed. You can come when it’s best for you. You can work an hour, a few hours, once a week, twice a week or whatever works for you. Contact the shop at 217-423-0122 for details. The LSA ReSale Shop is located at 421 E. Cerro Gordo in Decatur.



Coming up at Camp CILCA



February 28-March 1—Woodcutter’s Retreat. We will be cutting trees, splitting wood, and enjoying fellowship and good food. Strong backs and eager hands are needed—no special skill sets required! To register go to www.cilca.org and find “act like men” under the Events/Retreats tab.

March 28-29—Women’s Retreat. The theme is Lean & Learn. Daytime retreat only is \$75. Retreat and over-night is \$100.

ALL CAMP REGISTRATIONS ARE \$75 if you register BEFORE APRIL 1!

Email director@cilca.org to register



**CENTRAL ILLINOIS
DISTRICT**

of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



LLL Convention

March 1st at the new dining hall at Camp CILCA. Registration begins at 9:00AM. Lunch will be served. The guest speaker is Dr. Dale Meyer, retired Concordia Seminary President and past Lutheran Hour Speaker.

