

FROM THE PASTOR



MUSTARD SEED
CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH
JANUARY 2015

Dear Friends in Christ,

I pray this letter finds all of you well and recovering from the holiday season!

As I sat down to write this article for the January 2015 edition of the newsletter, it struck me that my family and I have been here in Yuma for a full year already! This time last year, we pulled up with three vehicles (one of them my mother's), a trailer, 5 dogs, and 2 cats, we finally had arrived at our new home after more than 2000 miles of driving. Phew!!! A new home, new jobs, a new school and new teachers, new faces, new climate...out of the deep freeze and into the deep fryer some people said...wow, how everything has fallen into place. It is hard to believe 12 months just flew by. With Christmas soon to be behind us, the upcoming season of Lent will be quickly approaching.

Over the course of the year, I was privileged to make many hospital visits, preach sermons, conduct many worship services, officiate a funeral, officiate a wedding, lead numerous Bible classes, participate in various events, make many new friends, get to know many of you, attend a lot of meetings, deliver communion to shut-ins, welcome some new members to our Calvary family, say many prayers, have my faith challenged, grow in my faith, and amidst all of that...to fall in love with Calvary Lutheran Church! How truly blessed I am by God and by all of you. My transition from serving 2 congregations in North Dakota to serving Calvary was smooth and you helped make the transition as easy as it possibly could be. Words cannot express my sincere gratitude for everything you have done for my family and me. I love all of you tremendously and I look forward to this next year as we walk together in faith.

I know that adjusting to a new pastor is not always easy, especially when the pastor may do things differently from his predecessor. Over the years, Calvary has been blessed to have been served by great men of faith, and the instruction and shepherding they performed is obvious as I am privileged to see the faith they instilled in all of you. I only pray that our good and gracious God will work through me as He did through your previous shepherds. It has been honor to serve as your pastor and I look with great anticipation to the events we will share in 2015. Last year, I worked closely with the Board of Education as I felt my efforts and encouragement would be best utilized there. This year, at least initially, it is my plan to work closely with the Board of Missions and Board of Stewardship. There

are some ideas that have been brought to my attention that I think are really good and would serve Calvary and the community very well, and I would like to see those ideas come to fruition. Our congregation has a treasury of wonderful ideas. Implementing those ideas takes time, effort, and patience of which I am hopeful I can bring something to the table to assist in their planning efforts.

I desire above all things that Calvary remain a refuge and sanctuary for God's children...a place where the Gospel of Jesus Christ abounds, where people are nourished and strengthened by God's Means of Grace in Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and where faith is nurtured through worship and prayer. As we begin this new year, let us step out in faith, trusting God and knowing that "nothing is impossible with God!" Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving where we can taste and see that the Lord is God. And, as we look to Calvary's future, may we rest secure that God will be with us every step of the way. Happy New Year to all of you, my dear friends in Christ!

In Christian Love,
Pastor Kessler

Happy Birthday!

Terry Pray	01/03
Hank Green	01/10
Lily Green	01/11
Marilyn Damet	01/13
Donna Barton	01/14
Austin Kessler	01/14
Glen Wagner	01/19
Mary Ann Holloway	01/23
Leroy Pickett	01/27
Carolyn Macomber	01/31

Happy Anniversary

Ronald & Evelyn Foster	01/18
Rodney & Bonnie Fischer	01/20
John & Cathi Cochran	01/21
Mark & Teri Jo Ford	01/21



BAPTISM



Pam Green	01/01
Robert Stash	01/01
Betty Stewart	01/01
Lisa Stewart	01/01
Randy Williams	01/01
Johnnie Ehrlich	01/03
Brian Rochester	01/10
Roxana Williams	01/26

Sunday School Teachers & Helpers: If you have not yet completed the "Protect My Ministry: Child Safety Training for Abuse Prevention" please make every attempt to do so by the end of the month. Call the church office for more information.



KIC (Kids In Christ)

The youth group KIC will meet the 3rd Sunday of the Month at 4PM.

Calvary Lutheran Church Council Reports

Board Meetings 6:00P.M. & Council January 11, 2015

If you have a complaint or concern please attend the board meetings so the boards can address the issue.

2014 Contributions

11/16	3590.00
11/23	3727.00
11/30	2036.00
12/07	5864.00
12/14	4247.00
12/21	



Contribution amount needed per week is \$3,241.65 to meet current budget.

2014 Contributions & Expenses NOVEMBER

GENERAL FUND	
Contributions	\$16,328.00
Expenses	<u>\$12,129.48</u>
Excess/Loss	\$4,779.52

YEAR TO DATE

Contributions	\$154,194.93
Expenses	<u>\$148,688.97</u>
Excess/Loss	\$ 5,505.96

It's Time to ... Elect District Convention Delegates

This will be a good time, since your congregation will be meeting to conduct other essential business in preparation for your circuit forum, to take care of other convention-related business, including the election of your congregation's voting delegates to the district convention (one pastor and one layperson for each congregation). This election has taken on added significance of late.

District Convention Delegates also are Presidential Election Voters

As stated by Synod Bylaw 3.12.2.4, voting delegates who attend their district conventions also cast their congregations' votes in the next national election of the president of the Synod. Four weeks prior to the national convention, the secretary of the Synod shall provide, via a secure and verifiable method, opportunity for two voting delegates from each congregation in attendance at the previous district convention ... to vote for one of the candidates for president.

District Convention Delegates Should be Elected Knowingly

When considering the election of district convention delegates, congregations should bear in mind: (1) congregations can only participate in the district convention and the election of the Synod president if they elect delegates; (2) delegates can only participate in the election of the president if they attend their district conventions; and (3) delegates will be able more easily to participate in the presidential election if they have some familiarity with and access to a computer and the Internet.



From the President

Once again, I would like to thank the congregation for coming through and exceeding expectations once again. For the first time that I can recall, our Sunday contributions exceeded our expenses for the year 2014. While we did not actually meet our proposed budget, our council was able to finish the year under budget, which allowed us to have a small surplus for 2014. We are in the black! I don't want anyone to be confused, I am only talking about our in the plate Sunday contributions. Special gifts and bequest are also in our general fund under the miscellaneous income portion of our budget, and we did have some generous contributions in those areas as well this year. All in all, it was a great year and the Church Council thanks you.

I also believe that we as a fellowship are beginning to regain our confidence in our ability to achieve our long term goals as Arizona's oldest Missouri Synod Church. Pastor Kessler and his family are now settled in, his sermons are outstanding, and our fellowship appears to be very comfortable with our new Shepherd. It appears to me that it is now time for us to start getting the word back out into the community that Calvary Lutheran Church is alive and well and moving into a new chapter in our continued service to God. Let's all try and bring a friend or two to church this year.

Unfortunately, we also have to start planning for the year 2015. Our proposed budget for 2015 is about 7% higher than our 2014 budget. It was handed out at our December 14th voter's meeting, and if you need a copy, we can get one to you. We also voted in the new officer's for 2015, and I look forward to having another successful year at Calvary. Please be at our January 11th meeting, where we as a congregation will discuss and vote on our new budget and recommit ourselves to meeting the needs of Calvary. As always, I have no doubt that our family in Christ will continue to just that.

Now, for the sad news. John and Cathi Cochran are leaving. Both have served this church selflessly in the past several years. Both never hesitated to step up when needed. Both offered all that they had. Both will be missed, most of all by me. Good luck and God Bless.

Elders Report

The Board of Elders and Pastor Kessler continue to study the book *Holding Up the Prophet's Hands* on how to support the pastor and one another in Christ's work on earth. We support and encourage each other in order to avoid burnout. Burnout can happen to any member of the Church as we struggle in this sin-filled world.

The final two sets of members will gather to meet and chat with Pastor Kessler during January. These

gatherings started during the summer and the return of winter visitors allows us to complete these times of sharing. Members under Mel Parker (formerly Smokey Morner's group) can expect invitations for Sunday, February 8. Winter visitors under Albert Claude can expect invitations for Saturday, January 31. Both groups will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 4 PM on their respective days. Singles, families, and children should bring a dessert and a willingness to share their interests and listen to the stories of others within their group, as well as those of Pastor Kessler.

In other matters, new acolytes will begin for more youth starting in February. We are also discussing ways to increase participation in ushering and to gather a list of those interested in starting a choir. As mentioned at the December Voter's Assembly, the elders will be gathering information and discussing the benefits of a parish nursing program at Calvary Lutheran Church. Look for a report on this program at the December 2015 Voter's Assembly.

Please contact one of the elders (Bruce Fenske, Director; Ron Hill; Mel Parker; Wil Stewart; or in the winter, Albert Claude.) God bless.

Also, just a note:



Support education and direct your tax dollars

Are you aware that you can support education by effectively directing your income ta dollars?

You can make a donation to either the School Tuition Association of Yuma, Inc. (STAY), or the Yuma's Education Scholarship for kids, Inc. (YES). You may receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit up to \$2106 for couples and \$1053 for individuals on your state income taxes, as well as a charitable deduction on your federal income taxes. STAY primarily supports students at Yuma Lutheran School and YES primarily for students at Southwestern Christian School. Visit www.azstay.com and www.yesfundforkids.com for more information on these organizations. For further information, see Bruce Fenske.

People making donation may nominate families or individual students for tuition support. Several families from Calvary Lutheran Church (e.g. Kesslers, Rutledges, or Stuebs) have or had students enrolled at these schools; thus, you may recommend financial support for these students with your donation. Donations are deductible within the tax year made for federal income tax purposes and creditable to a tax year until you file your tax form for that year for state income tax purposes. For complete information for your situation, see your tax preparer.

Public School Tax Credits

Here's your chance to help our schools without it costing you a thing!

Arizona allows state income taxpayers to receive a tax credit of up to \$400 for contributions made to public schools to support extracurricular activities. This tax credit is available to all taxpayers whether or not they have children in the public schools.

The kinds of programs you can help fund range from sports and band fees to lab sciences and art projects. Yuma area schools are committed to maintaining these activities for the enjoyment and enrichment of our students. Unfortunately, our funding is not sufficient to offset all of the associated costs. As a result, these programs must depend on fees from students. And that's where you can help.

To claim your Arizona State Tax Credit, just make a donation in an amount you feel comfortable contributing. Whatever amount you give will be offset by a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for the applicable tax year.

Mission Board news

Thank you for all who helped with the Thanksgiving Day meal. It was great to be with Church family. We were able to use Thrivent Funds and provide 8 Baking Boxes for Salvation Army's Christmas Assistance Program and donate canned goods for Yuma Community Food Bank. Thank you to all who helped with these worthwhile projects. *"He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor."* Proverbs 22:9

Thank you for your donations this year that enabled our Church to help with funding the Seminary Food Banks at Fort Wayne and St. Louis, supported our Missionaries- the Horns and the Meekers, provided for our military, Lutheran Bible Translators, Lutheran World Relief, and the many other programs provided by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. It is a testament of your faithfulness and trust that we can provide for those in need.

January will start a new year with our mission program of monthly giving. January's money will go to Life Ministries, a program of the LCMS. Life Ministry is devoted to upholding the sanctity of human life, both in our church body and the culture at large.

These programs support women and children through crisis pregnancy centers, reaching out to youth, and working closely with allies carrying the banner that life is sacred. Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is January 18, 2015. If you would like to donate, please designate on your offering envelope, Life Ministries-LCMS.



Sincerely, Paula Backs, Mission Chairman

LWML news for Mustard Seed

Thanks to many, we had a successful cookie sale. THANK YOU to those who furnished cookies, to those who worked, those who shopped and the special donation made; we will be receiving the full \$700 match from Thrivent. As I have said, each month we make a mission gift of \$100 to the choice of our program or speaker. Our October and November program people designated theirs to the Food Bank. At our December meeting we designated December's to Precious Treasurers after enjoying a wonderful program of Christmas carols and music by 21 of the children. We also voted to make \$100 gifts to Crossroads, Salvation Army and the Food Bank. Thanks to the cookie sale we are able to make those gifts and also our other monthly pledges.

Our Program Chairman is working on two programs for the January and March meetings. As soon as she is able to confirm, it will be announced in the church bulletin. Since New Year's Day falls on the first Thursday of January, our meeting will be on January 8th. And remember: the annual mug exchange will be in February at our regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday February 5.

You can start bringing your items for the rummage sale to the church for donation. See an LWML member for date and time to bring your items. The rummage sale is set for the first part of February.



MERRY CHRISTMAS to each one of you and BEST WISHES for a BLESSED NEW YEAR.

CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH (LCMS)
December 14, 2014 Voters Meeting & Election of Officers

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Ehrlich at 11:48 a.m. with an opening prayer by Pastor Kessler.

It was moved by Cathi Cochran and seconded by Janet Ehrlich to accept Deborah Lamaestra as a new member. Motion carried. There was no Associate or Returning Voting Members to accept.

Motion was made by Cathi Cochran and seconded by Paula Backs to approve the minutes from the January 26, 2014 Voters Meeting. Motion carried.

Ed Hahn asked to speak and thanked those who served the church and those elected and requested that they follow the church constitution. Treasurer's Report for month ending November 30, 2014 was passed out. Mike Ehrlich reported that 2014 is the first time since he has been serving that contributions have exceeded expenses and further reported that contributions did not meet projected budget but that we did not spend all of the projected budget. Cathi Cochran reported that the back of the first page of the report shows a monthly breakdown of contributions for the past 3 years and further reported on some changes made to this year's report. Discussion was held. It was moved by Wil Stewart and seconded by Nancy Heredia to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Motion carried.

Report of Officers:

President – Mike Ehrlich thanked the congregation for addressing Calvary's budget needs and also thanked Cathi and John Cochran for their service and further thanked Johnnie Alstatt for running for treasurer.

Vice President – no report;

Secretary – no report;

Treasurer – previously reported

Report of Boards:

Elders – Bruce Fenske reported that the elders are: 1) working with Pastor on how things have operated in the past and discussing new ideas for the future; 2) working on Every Member Visits; and 3) looking at a Parish Nursing Program.

Missions– Paula Backs reported on behalf of the Mission Board that 1) the mission budget went to Lutheran Bible Translators, our missionary families the Horns and Meekers, district/synod supported missions, and the food banks at the seminaries at Ft. Wayne & St. Louis; 2) they sponsored the Thanksgiving Dinner which was attended by 30 people; 3) they advertised through the Yuma Sun thanks to the Stashes, and also advertised through the Yuma Visitors Bureau; 4) next year they will again be supporting our missionaries and the seminary food banks and also plan on having a synodical-sponsored mission per month to support. She thanked the congregation for their mission support.

Stewardship - Connie Wubbena reported the stewardship board: 1) completed the offering envelopes; 2) had the Outback fundraiser; 3) will have 3 new board members; 4) welcomes ideas on any new fundraisers; 5) and needs counters.

Education – Donna Fairchild with Mike Ehrlich reported on the "Protect My Ministry" Program, which involves a background check and completion of an educational program required by our insurance company for all individuals who work with our youth. Donna further reported: 1) we need Sunday School teachers; 2) KIC "Kids In Christ" program started in September; 3) Jennifer Kessler is our new Sunday School superintendent; 4) Children's Christmas Program is at 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

Trustees – Janet Ehrlich reported the Trustees: 1) tiled the floor in the education building so now groups can meet there for meetings that involve food and drink; 2) performed many small repairs in preparation for the 75th anniversary celebration; 3) are looking to repair the parking lot at a projected cost of \$5,000 - \$7,000 and want to start raising money for this project.

75th Anniversary Committee – Janet Ehrlich reported the committee spent \$1,302 for the anniversary celebration, which funds came from Thrivent Choice Dollars.

LWML – Connie Wubbena reported: 1) LWML funds are low this year as they contributed \$1500 to Calvary; 2) on monthly gifts to the food bank and Lutheran Bible Translators; 3) 1st meeting held in October; 4) reminded everyone that all ladies are members of LWML; 5) just held the Cookie Walk; 6) rummage sale upcoming; 7) mug exchange will be held in February meeting; 8) will be hosting the spring rally/celebration; 8) in addition to regular delegates to the District Convention this year we also had a Teen Representative – Hannah Kessler.

Assistance Fund – Elaine Green reported that Pastor administrates this discretionary fund and further reported that they gave a \$400 gift card for use and also received \$75 and \$461 from the quilt raffle which amounts helped with diabetic shoes and travel.

Unfinished Business - no unfinished business

New Business

2015 Ballot of Officers and Boards:

President – Mike Ehrlich is on the ballot. No further nominations from the floor.

Vice President – Pat Lamaestra is on the ballot. No further nominations from the floor.

Secretary – Lisa Elam is on the ballot. No further nominations from the floor.

Treasurer – Johnnie Altstatt is on the ballot. No further nominations from the floor.

It was moved by Bob Stash and seconded by Elaine Green to close the nominations for officers and that we accept the slate of nominations for officers by acclamation. Motion carried.

New Business continued

Board of Elders – Bruce Fenske, Ron Hill, Wilbert Stewart, Mel Parker & Albert Claude are on the ballot. No further nominations from the floor. Discussion was held that Bruce, Ron, and Albert are for a 3 year term and that Wil and Mel are for a 2 year term to complete the terms of Smokey Morner and John Cochran. It was moved by Bob Stash and seconded by Art Elias to close the nominations for Elders. Motion carried.

Board of Missions – Diana Schauer and Rebecca Kessler are on the ballot. No further nominations from the floor. It was moved and seconded to close the nominations for the Board of Missions. Motion carried.

Board of Education – Jennifer Kessler and Maggie Fenske are on the ballot. No further nominations from the floor. It was moved and seconded to close the nominations for the Board of Education. Motion carried.

Board of Stewardship – Jan Stash, Betty Stewart and Bonnie Reinertson are on the ballot. No further nominations from the floor. It was moved and seconded by to close the nominations for the Board of Stewardship. Motion carried.

Board of Trustees – There is no one on the ballot. No further nominations from the floor. It was moved and seconded to close the nominations for the Board of Trustees. Motion carried.

It was moved by Bob Stash and seconded by Cathi Cochran that we accept the slate of nominations for Boards by acclamation. Motion carried.

Appointment of 2015 Officers to begin on December 16, 2014: It was moved by Cathi Cochran and seconded by Paula Backs that the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary begin their terms at the close of this meeting. Discussion was held and it was decided that this motion would be in violation of our bylaws. Cathi withdrew her motion and Paula withdrew her second of the motion.

Election of Circuit Forum Representative: It was moved by Cathi Cochran and seconded by Nancy Heredia that Bruce Fenske be our Circuit Forum Representative. Motion carried.

Election of District Convention Delegate: Connie Wubbena nominated Bob Stash. Bob declines. Pastor led us in prayer. It was moved by Nancy Heredia and seconded by Paula Backs to table this matter to our next voters meeting on January 11, 2015. Motion carried.

Nomination of Candidate for Circuit 25 Visitor: It was moved by Paula Backs and seconded by Elaine Green that we nominate Rev. Mark Johnson. Motion carried.

Parking Lot Repair Funding: It was moved by Bruce Fenske and seconded by Nancy Heredia that we establish a fund designated for parking lot repair. Motion carried.

Presentation of 2015 Budget: Cathi Cochran presented the 2015 Proposed Budget Worksheet to the congregation for review. Mike Ehrlich mentioned that some increases are unavoidable such as employee insurance increase because of the Affordable Care Act and further mentioned that council is recommending an increase in Pastor's salary. The budget will be voted on at the January 11, 2015 Voters Meeting.

It was moved by Bruce Fenske and seconded by Cathi Cochran that we pay bills from January 1, 2015, until we approve the 2014 budget at the January 11, 2015 voters meeting. Motion carried.

Good of the Order: No items.

Closing Prayer: Closing Prayer was held by Pastor Kessler and the Doxology was sung by all.

Adjournment: It was moved by Cathi Cochran and seconded by Nancy Heredia that we adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting Adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jane Pray, Secretary

January 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 09:30 AM-Bible Study/ Emerald Spring	2	3 07:00 AM-Bible Study/ Goldsborro
4 09:00 AM-Communion Service 10:30 AM-Sunday school classes	5	6 06:00 PM-Board Meetings 07:00 PM-Council	7 11:00 AM-Bible Study 04:00 PM-Confirmation	8 09:30 AM-Bible Study/ Emerald Spring 07:00 PM-LWML meeting	9	10 07:00 AM-Bible Study/ Goldsborro
11 09:00 AM-Communion Service 10:30 AM-Sunday school classes 11:30 AM-Voter's Assembly	12	13	14 11:00 AM-Bible Study 04:00 PM-Confirmation	15 09:30 AM-Bible Study/ Emerald Spring	16	17 07:00 AM-Bible Study/ Goldsborro
18 09:00 AM-Worship Service 10:30 AM-Sunday school classes 04:00 PM-KIC	19	20	21 11:00 AM-Bible Study 04:00 PM-Confirmation	22 09:30 AM-Bible Study/ Emerald Spring	23	24 07:00 AM-Bible Study/ Goldsborro
25 09:00 AM-Communion Service 10:30 AM-Sunday school classes	26	27	28 11:00 AM-Bible Study 04:00 PM-Confirmation	29 09:30 AM-Bible Study/ Emerald Spring	30	31 07:00 AM-Bible Study/ Goldsborro 04:00 PM-Pastor Meet/ Greet