

The Friendly News

Calvary Baptist Church



January-February 2024



The Pastor's Corner

God is walking ahead of you. He is right there with you. He will be with you. He won't let you down. He won't abandon you. So don't be afraid or scared - Deuteronomy 31:8.

Beloved,

Last year, we prayerfully embarked on an adventure of 365 days with God. We journeyed together into the unknown fully trusting that God will be with us. We have seen and experienced God's presence in our lives. As we give thanks to God for his leading, we see ourselves standing in the new year. I'm lost for words and simply stand in awe and wonder. At such a time as this, I remember and miss our friends who did not make it to this year but were summoned to the heavenly place of rest and peace. They did their part well and finished the race. Let us thank God for them, and humbly receive what's in store for us for this year that includes responsibilities and opportunities in our personal lives as well as our community. Let us begin this new year holding in our hearts God's mystery of salvation in the birth of the Son of God, as Martin Luther in his reflection on the incarnation said, "God came down as an infant to elicit love, to nurture tenderness." He came down to live and walk with us so that we will know his heart and our hearts will be joined with his.

So, the New Year 2024 begins, for us, with God, desiring after God's heart.

In the harshest of times as today where there is so much pain and suffering, fear and unrest in the world, our only strength and



peace is God because there is no other way which will keep our hope alive. At a time when the world is accelerating at high speed and we are short of breath trying to keep up with the world, we rest in God because nothing is going to relieve us from such weariness. We walk close with God because God's movement is the right time for us. After all, everything begins and ends with the steps that God takes.

As we think about our plans and goals for this new year, let us return to the basics.

Slowing down and being still.

In our slowing down and being still, we will hear God speaking the message of life to us, revealing things to us, and standing before us. We will feel God breathing life into us. We will understand that God is God, and perceive the depth of God's sheer grace bringing meaning to our existence. In this, we will have the time to cherish every bit of the moments of our lives. We will notice the good in all despite our imperfections, and love and accept one another. We will be able to greet each new morning with anticipation and joy and bless each night with gratitude. What are some ways you can slow down, be still, muse, and enjoy?

Acknowledging the sacredness of our lives and our sacred work.

Each of us is honored and loved by God, and all that we do out of love for God is sacred work. We are a people forgiven, free and loved, and each new day is a glorious day.

Holding on to the truth of our sacred birth, created in the image of God, may we be free from the grip of feeling unworthy and unwanted. May we treasure the truth that God enters our lives to reveal to us everything that is in our hearts, and align it with his own.



Let us put 2024 into God's hands.

Is there anything that needs to be released or repaired? Is there anything or anyone that needs to be honored and celebrated? What new things do you see happening? How are you imagining it to happen? How are you going to make it happen? How will you carry the love and compassion you have or long to have into the new year? Let us grow in confidence, and trust in God's power and ability so that all will be well. *Place your trust in the Eternal; rely on him completely; never depend upon your own ideas and inventions. Give him the credit for everything you accomplish, and he will smooth out and straighten the road that lies ahead* (Prov. 3:5-6). Let us remain open to what each day will bring us.

Here is a song for you as you embark on the newest adventure with God in 2024.

What We Need is Here - Paul Vasile, music by Amy McCreath
God is here today

*as certain as the air I breathe,
as certain as the morning sun that rises,
as certain when I sing you'll hear my song.*

English trans. by C. Michael Hawn

Dios está aquí

*Tan cierto como el aire que respiro,
Tan cierto como la mañana se levanta,
Tan cierto como que le canto y me puede oír.*

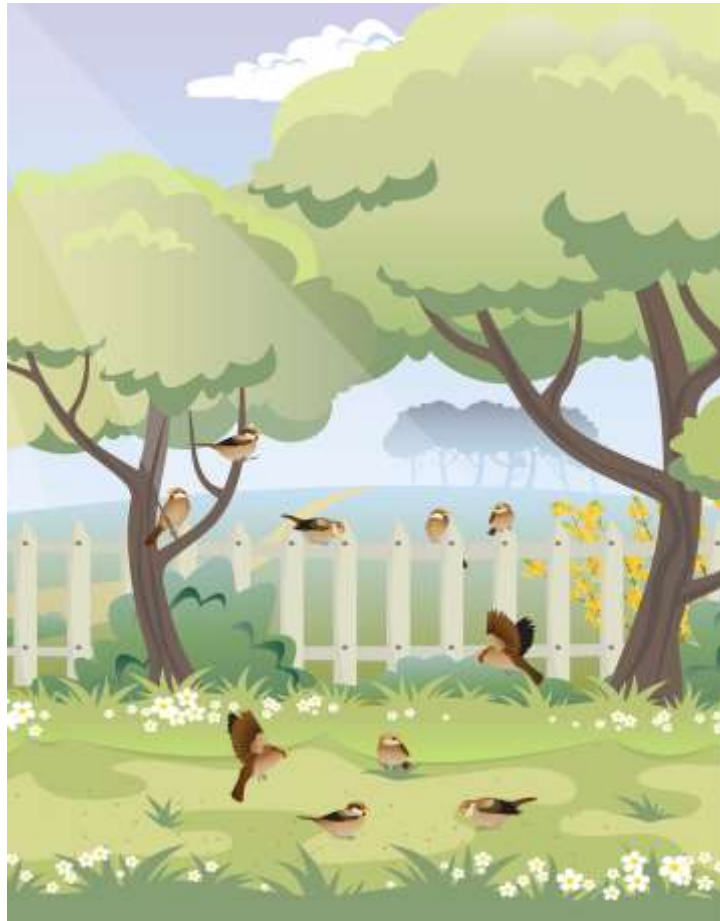
-Javier Gacias Mateo

Can we say that what we need is here? Can we say that we are satisfied with what is here?

May God bless the dreams of your heart and see your plans through to the end.



Blessings,
Atula



God will take care of you



Beannacht: A Blessing for the New Year

John O'Donahue

On the day when
The weight deadens
On your shoulders
And you stumble,
May the clay dance
To balance you.

And when your eyes
Freeze behind
The gray window
And the ghost of loss
Gets into you,
May a flock of colors,
Indigo, red, green
And azure blue,
Come to awaken in you
A meadow of delight.



When the canvas frays
In the curragh of thought
And a stain of ocean
Blackens beneath you,
May there come across the waters
A path of yellow moonlight
To bring you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
May the clarity of light be yours,
May the fluency of the ocean be yours,
May the protection of the ancestors be yours.

And so may a slow
Wind work these words
Of love around you,
An invisible cloak
To mind your life.



Note: Beannacht is “blessing” in Gaelic.





From the Deacons

Greetings,

Here we are approaching, once again, another New Year, having just participated in one of the most beautiful celebrations of the Season of Advent. Those of you who were able to be in attendance on the Sundays during December can attest to the special time that it was. From the Sanctuary being “dressed for the holiday,” to the lighting of the Advent candles, to the inspirational music, and the reading of the attendant Scripture passages by various members of our church family, to the touchingly beautiful and enlightening messages from Pastor Atula, the anticipation of our Savior’s birth was palpable. Though there was trouble in the world throughout that time, by the Grace of God we experienced relative peace and joy in our little corner of it.

Also, throughout that time period, preparations began for the upcoming 2024 Annual Meeting, which is slated to take place on Sunday, the 4th of February, directly following the worship service. Once again, I would like to thank you for your pledges for the 2024 calendar year and to extend my utmost appreciation to all of you who have volunteered to assume roles in the enhancement of the weekly worship services as well as in the overall operations of our House of Worship. The filling of each and every role is vital to the continued success of our endeavor as a church family.

As we enter into a new year, we are blessed to do so with faith, hope, and love: gifts granted us by the Grace of a loving God. May our faith be continually renewed and may we be emboldened to continue the journey in the fulfillment of our part in God’s great plan; may our sense of hope not wane



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along the trek. Perhaps most of all, may we experience the love of God in our hearts as we are filled with the Spirit, and may we, in turn, graciously share that love with all those we encounter each and every day in the year ahead.

On behalf of all the members of the Board of Deacons, I wish you a very Happy New Year! I am confident that by the Grace of God we, as a church family, will experience success as we continue to do our part in the furtherance of God's plan for Calvary Baptist Church and its partner churches. Wishing you much of God's promised Peace and Joy!

In faith, with hope, and with much love,

Cynthia M. Sandholm
Moderator



From the Kitchen

CHICKEN CORDON BLEU

4 Skinless, boneless chicken breast

4 Slices Swiss Cheese

4 thin slices deli ham

1/4 cup flour

1 egg; beaten

1 cup Italian seasoned bread crumbs

1 pk. chicken gravy

Pound chicken breast to 1/4 inch thickness. Sprinkle each piece on both sides with salt and pepper. Place 1 cheese slice and 1 ham slice on each breast. Roll up using toothpicks to secure if necessary. Dredge in flour, then in egg and then bread crumbs. Place seam side down in baking dish that has been sprayed with Pam. Bake at 350@ for 35 minutes or until juices run clear. DO NOT OVERBAKE. Serve with chicken gravy.





Happenings at Calvary

1. Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 4, 2024 (snow date 2/18/24) immediately following the worship service at church.
2. Please sign up for Scripture Reading and Coffee Hour.
3. Please notify the office one week ahead for any items to be put into the bulletin.
4. TeensAlive meeting in-person 1st and 3rd Saturdays from 2-4pm.
5. Prayer Requests: If you need prayer support, please write your request on the easel that is in the back of the sanctuary.
6. If anyone has any personal news such as an Anniversary, birth in the family or any other news, please send an email to the church or leave a note in the office.
7. If you would like to donate toward altar flowers in honor or memory of loved one(s) please talk to Cynthia



Thoughts and Prayers

Ruth Webber—Life Care Center, 80 Boston Rd., Billerica MA

Helen Rogers—6 Regis Drive, Pelham NH 03076

*Alice Hughes—Woodlands Memory Care of Madison, 110 East
Madison Rd., Madison ME 04950*

*Phyllis Kirsch—Bayberry, 2000 Emerald Cr., Tewksbury MA
01876*

*Evelyn Dixon—The Residence at Freeman Lake, 4 Technology
Dr., No. Chelmsford MA 01863*

Janet Tremblay-186 Frost Rd., Tyngsboro MA 01879

Praying for One Another

We continue to pray for one another in different circumstances. If you would like a prayer, please call the church office or the Pastor so that we can pray for you.



January Birthdays

Cheyenne Tygre Lacey 1/2
Patricia Hiort 1/4
Anthony Hiort 1/10
Timothy Sovanna So 1/11
Gail Donahue 1/25
Wally Harmon 1/29

February Birthdays

Peter Gibson 2/1
Chris Marvin 2/5
Lynda (Yen) Sar 2/5
Eric Harmon 2/11
Peter Tellier 2/11
Janet Paton 2/13
Marcia Long 2/21
Cynthia Sandholm 2/24
Lensanok Imsong 2/24

*Wishing you a day full
of happiness and a year
full of joy from all of us
at Calvary!*

*Please contact the
church office if we have
missed anyone.*





Christmas Memorial Flowers



Advent Candle Lighting



*First Sunday of
Advent*



Second Sunday of Advent



Third Sunday of Advent





Fourth Sunday of Advent



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Sunday School Children getting ready for Christmas



Congratulations to Edith & Armand on their wedding



Calvary Baptist Church
60 Hastings St, Lowell, MA 01851



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A CARING CHURCH,
REACHING PEOPLE,
CHANGING LIVES

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