



# Calvary Herald

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## For All that Has Been, “Thanks!” For All that Shall Be, “Yes!”

As the pastor here at Calvary, it’s easy to look back at all the ways God has been at work in our church family in 2023 and to be overcome by a sense of gratitude. Our worship has been enthusiastic and welcoming and has allowed us to take a journey through the Big Story of the Bible. Our fellowship has been warm and caring and has been expressed in lots of prayer for and ministered to each other. Our efforts to grow in Christ been bearing fruit, not only in terms of a dynamic Sunday School, but also in the small groups that are meeting outside of Sunday morning to study scripture together. And in what gives me an extra dose of thanksgiving, we’ve been a blessing beyond our church family. I won’t try to list everything that we’ve accomplished. But from providing weekend food to students at Franklin Elementary to encouraging local businesses with a gift of Valentine cookies - and from collecting supplies for multiple local ministries to holding a “Servant Sunday” that completed more than 20 projects involving more than 150 volunteers - we have consistently shared the love of Jesus in practical ways. And for all this, I give thanks to all of you - and praise to the Lord who called and empowered us.



Naturally, as we look ahead, some might wonder how I’d like to see God at work in our church family in 2024. And I feel like my personal hopes for our congregation have less to do with “what we do” and more to do with “who we become.” Don’t get me wrong: I’m confident that we’ll DO a lot! But more important than our list of accomplishments are the ways that each of us as individuals and all of us as a church are coming to reflect more completely the image of Jesus. Are we creating a culture in which people are encouraged and equipped to love God, to love each other, and to share Christ with others in both word and deed?

Of course, the more active each of us is in building such a culture, the more likely it is that all of us will experience it! And so I hope that you personally will say “Yes!” to growing in Christ in the year ahead. Make worship a priority for yourself and your family. Study the Bible in a Sunday School class or by taking advantage of one of the other discipleship opportunities described in this newsletter. Participate in our mission efforts and, even more important, help us identify new ways that we can make a difference in the lives of others!

As we do these things--both individually and collectively--I’m convinced that God will provide wisdom, resources, and passion we need to join Him in the work that He’s doing. After all, “The One who called us is faithful, and He will do it!” (1 Thess. 5:24) So, let’s look forward attentively and expectantly, trusting God go before us.

*Pray Big and Love Well...Pastor Alex*



## Let's Save Some Soles!

Our first mission project for 2024 will be a "Saving Soles" sock drive. During the month of January, we'd like to collect at least 500 pairs of new socks for adults (men or women). We'll be sharing these socks with some of our local ministry partners (Shepherd's House, Salvation Army, Surry Medical Ministries, and so on), so they can be distributed to our community's most vulnerable citizens. Collection boxes will be available in the church office, the church lobby, and near the elevator entrance. Thanks in advance for helping be a blessing to our neighbors in need! And if you'd like to start thinking about next month's mission project, we'll be having a "Souper Bowl" canned soup drive to benefit the local food bank.



## Mid-Week Ministries Return

Seeking ways that you and your family can get "rooted" more deeply in your relationship with Christ? Why not get "planted" more deeply in our Mid-Week Ministry offerings! By investing yourself in these ready-made opportunities for growth and fellowship, you'll nurture the "spiritual fruit" that makes you a more productive follower of Jesus.

Our new season of Mid-Week ministry kicks off on Wednesday, January 10. We'll begin the evening with a brief word of prayer in the fellowship hall. And after that, we'll break out into groups for children, youth, and adults. For our first session, adults will have two study options.

- Pastor Alex will be continuing his study of the Book of Revelation. We'll be starting the new year at Chapter 17. But new participants are welcome!
- Becky Critz will be leading a study called "Unoffendable," which offers practical insights for reducing stress and increasing your capacity to care by giving up your "right" to be offended. There is book that accompanies this study; so if you plan to participate, please notify Becky Critz (bcritz1129@gmail.com) so she can get you a copy.



## Fuel Your Growth in 2024

Are you making any "discipleship resolutions" for 2024? Don't forget that you've got access to lots of great resources through RightNow Media! As a participant in the life of Calvary Baptist, you can set up a free account that allows you to access thousands of Bible studies, training tools, devotionals, and values-driven entertainment options for your kids. Here's a small sample of what's trending right now:

### "Faith Foundations" by David Platt.

What are we made for? What does it look like to know God deeply? Why are we called to reflect his light to those around us—and how do we do that? Join author and pastor David Platt in his ten-session series as he examines foundational truths for becoming mature disciples of Christ. *(Ten videos with free study guide)*



### "Lyrics for Life" by Lisa Harper.

Join Bible teacher Lisa Harper as she teaches from the book of Psalms looking at the variety of circumstances faced by followers of God. Learn how to find comfort in any situation based on this songbook of the people of God. *(Eight videos with free study guide)*



### KidVue Series.

Follow the adventures of Avery and her furry friend, Elvis, as they make new friends and explore God's Word. There is always something new to discover on KidVue! *(Multiple seasons with 10 videos each)*



If you aren't yet taking advantage of RightNow Media and want to know more about setting up your free account - or if you've got questions about how to use the service - please contact Pastor Alex.

## Red Cross Blood Drive

Calvary will host its next Red Cross Blood Drive on Sunday, January 7, from 11 am to 3:30 pm. And in support of Brent Hull, whose treatment has required regular infusions, the drive will be held in his honor. Walk-ins are welcome, but if you'd like to schedule a donation, visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) and use the sponsor code "Calvary." If you can assist by preparing snacks, serving in the snack area, or registering donors, you're asked to contact Mary Jane Shelton ([grayandmary@gmail.com](mailto:grayandmary@gmail.com)).





## Women's Ministry @ CBC

Attention ladies of ALL ages! As we enter this new year, the WMU and BYW cordially extend an open invitation to every woman at Calvary Baptist Church. The WMU (Women on Mission) meets the first Tuesday of every month at 10:30 am in Room 111. The BYW (Baptist Young Women) meets at 6:30 pm the second Tuesday of every month in the fellowship hall. Each group offers opportunities to enjoy fellowship and to serve others within our church family and beyond. In 2024, the BYW focus will be on mental health. We look forward to seeing you at one or both of these monthly meetings.



## Gratitude for Gifts Given

The Calvary Baptist Church family would like to express our deep appreciation to all those who have given gifts in memory and in honor of those they love. In the past month, contributions have been made...

- In Memory of Bill Belton by Lillian Holder
- In Memory of James Belton by Claudia Bryant, Lillian Holder
- In Memory of Arthur and Vera Forrest by Tom Forrest
- In Memory of Vera Forrest by Chuck and JoLynn Johnson
- In Memory of Nancy Haynes by Claudia Bryant, Vernell Goins, Dot Marion, Mary Jo White
- In Memory of Kenny Hicks by Mary Jo White
- In Memory of Lonnie Jackson by Claudia Bryant, Lillian Holder, Ken and Barbara Nowlin, Mary Jo Roberts, Vernell Goins, Mary Jo White
- In Memory of Mildred Jarrell by Margaret Smith
- In Memory of James Poore by Lillian Holder
- In Memory of Pam Jackson Saunders by Mary Jo Roberts
- In Memory of Myrtle Wagoner by Youvana and Coy Bowman
- In Memory of Kenneth White by Mary Jo White
- In Honor of Juanita Clifton by Greg and Kim Cheek

## Dear Calvary...

Thank you is not enough. The prayers, concerns, food, money, gas cards, and phone calls meant more than you will ever know. We are pleased to remember that our church friends are always supporting one another. Tony is home and is getting stronger. Please continue to keep us in your prayers. *Love, Tony and Deena Martin*

Thank you so much for my Christmas gift! I will put it to good use. It is an absolute joy to be a part of the music ministry at Calvary! *Love, Beth Church*



## Through the Bible in 2024?

If anyone out there is interested in a great Bible reading plan, the YouVersion Bible App has one called "The Bible Recap" by TaraLeigh Cobble. The plan organizes readings from the Bible chronologically, which has helped me so much in understanding the flow of God's story. TaraLeigh also has a companion Podcast called "The Bible Recap" where she offers background and information on each day's reading. This duo has helped me to understand more of the bible and to build my biblical knowledge.

I've heard several people around church say that they'd like to read the entire Bible; or that they started in January, got behind, and stopped. I have fallen into the second category several times! But with the Bible app I can listen to the Bible while I do chores or work out; or I can read it visually in my own time. This makes it so much easier for me to keep up with the most current reading.

The reading plan can be done solo; or you can use the app to read along with others. I've been reading the Bible with two friends from home, which allows us to see who's completed each day's reading. It has been fun to encourage each other along the way if one of us has fallen behind. And here's another great feature: You can start your reading plan on any day of the year! So people don't have to feel pressured to start on January 1st.

If you'd like to know more about the YouVersion Bible App, just visit their website (<https://www.youversion.com/the-bible-app/>). And if you'd like to know more about reading through the Bible with "The Bible Recap," feel free to touch base with me.

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