

May 26, 2022

Dear Friend:

Are you on the edge of your seat? I am! I am eagerly looking forward to seeing what God is going to do in and through our church family this summer! I believe as we pray, worship, give, and serve Him together, there will be great things that happen. We will look back at the summer of 2022 and say, "**ONLY GOD could do that!**" So please join me in praying God does a mighty work in and through us as a church in the season ahead!

Maybe summer 2022 will be more "normal" than the last two summers! Yes, political tensions swirl, economic concerns remain, and possible new virus outbreaks haunt us. Still, there is a determined sense that people want to move forward, get out, go places, reconnect with others, and find ways to thrive despite the headwinds we face.

Each week, more people show up for our weekend services. After services, people hang around talking with each other in our lobbies, patios, and parking lots. Community grows among us and shows up organically as people connect with familiar and new faces.

I have to share one story with you. Chuck, a man in his mid-thirties, started attending Calvary's weekend services. He began as a skeptic, but after months of attending Calvary and meeting with a few pastors, he admits something is changing.

Susan, an elderly woman who came to Christ in the last ten years at Calvary, met Chuck in the parking lot after one of our services. Susan struck up a conversation with Chuck about the color of his shirt as they walked into our building together. They hit it off. Susan invited Chuck to join her and her husband, Bill, for coffee at Starbucks. Susan and Bill shared their own stories of faith and attempted to answer Chuck's faith-related questions.

God never ceases to amaze me. As several of our pastors were looking for ways to shepherd Chuck through his spiritual quest, God placed Susan and her husband in Chuck's path – at just the right time. Pray with us for Chuck to come to faith soon. He is so close to embracing Jesus!

Why tell that story? Because **ONLY GOD** could do that! **ONLY GOD** could orchestrate a continuing Gospel conversation between strangers because of a passing comment about a shirt color. **ONLY GOD!**

Stories like this keep me on the edge of my seat, eager to see what God will orchestrate this summer throughout our Calvary family. In June, we launch a summer series titled "It's OK to Not Be OK." God loves us as we are but loves us too much to leave us in our weariness, fears, depression, anxiety, and doubt. God wants to bring healing and hope where we are and lead us forward from there. **ONLY GOD** gives that kind of hope!

This summer, our children's ministries will again host eight weeks of Calvary's day camp, Adventure Weeks, for elementary-age kids. Calvary's Vacation Bible School (VBS) for children three years of age through fifth grade will occur June 20-24. Over 600 kids will attend this week-long event packed with creativity, fun, worship, and Bible teaching at the kids' level! **ONLY GOD** can impact so many lives over a few weeks in the summer!

Calvary's High School and Middle School Ministries will each take students to week-long summer camps. Nearly 300 students will attend camp with Calvary. Over 800 different students will attend at least one of the Summer Nights events each week. These nights will allow students to engage with each other, have fun, worship, and hear a challenge from God's Word! Each summer, dozens of middle and high school students come to Jesus and get baptized because of these summer ministries. How does that happen? **ONLY GOD!**

Our Special Abilities Ministries will host their annual Beach Day on Saturday, August 13th. Entire families affected by physical and cognitive challenges will spend the day at the beach with other families. For some, due to the complexity of their situation, this is the only beach time they get each year. While great leaders and volunteers serve these families, **ONLY GOD** brings ultimate joy, help, and hope!

Calvary will send out our first short-term missions trips since the pandemic began. These teams of high school students and young adults will work with Calvary mission partners on the ground in Uganda, the Dominican Republic, and the Middle East. **ONLY GOD** can transform lives through such profound cross-cultural experiences!

Outreach ministries such as our Fresh Market, Food Pantry, and Angel Threads will faithfully invest in the hurting and marginalized this summer. In addition, our Care, Seasoned Adults, and Small Groups Ministries will offer God's truth and grace to people easily overlooked or not connected in today's world.

While the news about the war in Ukraine often slips from front-page headlines, we remain passionate about helping Ukrainians devastated by the war. **ONLY GOD** could provide through His people over a quarter of a million dollars for us to help suffering Ukrainians through local churches!

Many of our ministries come with significant emotional heaviness. Yet, **ONLY GOD** gives the strength and grace required to serve others in need!

Throughout the summer, our entire leadership and staff teams will be preparing for the casting of our Calvary 2030 vision this fall. Our elders and pastors have been praying over, dreaming about, and believing God will use Calvary in specific ways throughout the rest of this decade. We will be working on a sermon series and small group materials to help communicate the fresh vision God has given our leadership!

I can't wait to share more this fall! We saw that **ONLY GOD** could bring the Calvary 2020 Vision to life over the last decade, and we know that **ONLY GOD** can bring the vision ahead to life as we follow and trust Him!

Thank you for the investments you make of your time, energy, skills, and financial resources to make sure the Calvary family lives and loves like Jesus in a weary and broken world. Let's pray together that God will do what **ONLY GOD** can do in changing lives this summer! Let's ask Him to use us as a church family to serve others around us every day in Jesus' name. As we approach this summer, I am on the edge of my seat – waiting to see God do what **ONLY GOD** can do! Are YOU?

May God bless you as you seek to live and love like Jesus!



Shawn Thornton  
Senior Pastor