

Building up the Body of Christ

CALVARY TODAY

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“...For such a time as this...”

The moment must have felt impossibly dark. A decree had been issued. The future looked certain, and not in a particularly hopeful way. Fear weighed heavily on God's people, and at the center of it all stood a young woman, Esther, in a position she never would have chosen for herself.

The simple and profound message of hope sent to her was a message that still echoes through history: she had been placed in her

circumstances for such a time as this.

In her bleak place, Esther chose courage; she chose faith. She chose to believe that the God who put her in that palace had a purpose and a plan.

Today, at Calvary University, some would say our moment resembles Esther's. The realities before us are serious while resources seem limited. Questions about the future weigh on every heart here, and it

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would be easy to feel overwhelmed by what stands in front of us.

However, Esther's story reminds us that God's placement is never

accidental. There is always a purpose in His plan.

None of us are here by chance. Our students are not here by coincidence. Our faculty and staff have not labored faithfully without purpose. Our alumni were not shaped within these classrooms and dorm rooms without intention. Just as Esther was placed in her position at a critical hour, God has placed each of us within this institution at this exact moment.

In Esther's day, the stakes were high, and the path forward required unity, prayer, and bold action. She stepped forward in spite of her own

uncertainties and with faith in an ever faithful God. And He moved in ways no one could have predicted.

The same ever faithful God is holding Calvary University in His hand. We do not believe this season will mark the end of our story. It is an invitation to step forward in action! To lean in, to pray earnestly, to give generously, to lead faithfully, and to believe confidently that God has put us here for such a time as this. ■

Alumnus Spotlight

Larry & Diane Mehlhaff

During his senior year in high school in South Dakota, Larry Mehlhaff's history teacher invited a few students to ride with him to attend preview days at Calvary Bible College. It was there that the Lord moved in his heart to change his plans and attend CBC where he majored in Choral Music. Larry was also privileged to travel with choral and vocal music groups over his four years at Calvary. Larry says, "There were three professors who played a major role in preparing me for ministry. Gilbert Haglin, an excellent mentor, who prepared me for all my experiences in choral directing of church, school, and community choirs. Dr. Wayne Knife was a constant encourager and deeply appreciated. Coach Richard Spencer played a very vital role in the practical development of a Biblical philosophy of life where the centrality of Jesus Christ and His word in all of life was lived out in his coaching." These

men laid the foundation of a strong Biblical worldview that helped Larry in his teaching and administrative ministries. Larry continued his preparation by attending several universities for various classes in graduate studies, but the emphasis and major in Bible at CBC kept the compass of life pointing in the right direction, following Jesus Christ in obedience.

God blessed Larry with the gift of a wonderful wife, Diane, daughter
(continued on the next page)



Larry and Diane joined over fifty alumni that gathered at Calvary's current campus for a 55+ Reunion in September.



Our mission is to prepare Christians to live and serve in the church and the world according to the biblical worldview.

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of Gilbert Haglin, whom he dated during his senior year of college. Larry and Diane were married a couple years later at Southwest Bible Church with Pastors George Darby and William Bishop officiating. Larry says, "It is an amazing experience that Diane and I could team up and share in the understanding of a Biblical worldview, which was key in raising our children and supporting us in the ministries that we served, including being an Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) representative for South Dakota and North Dakota Christian schools." Recently, the Mehlhaffs

also have been involved in helping start a Christian school for parents desiring a God-centered education for their children.

God richly blessed Larry and Diane with five children, sixteen grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. They are grateful that their children and grandchildren have taken the "baton" of Christian living and service and have done so beautifully, being involved in church ministry and Christian education for their children. This has been a tremendous blessing to Larry and Diane.

Larry says, "A special verse for

me in my life has been Psalm 28:7 'The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.'" Larry and Diane acknowledge that God has been faithful. Larry and Diane have centered their lives on the Bible. They believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word, God's absolute. The Bible should be the foundation for all we think and do and can be fully trusted for all the answers we need to live a successful Christian life for His Glory. ■

Lee Smith
Class of 1970

Supporting the Students

I'm Jamie Franz, and I became the Dean of Students on January 1, 2026. This is my sixth year at Calvary. I started in 2020 as Dean of Women and the Accommodations Support Coordinator. After a year or two, I also started teaching classes, and I teach in the Education and English departments.

In January, when I took over the Student Affairs department, I challenged the students with Psalm 37:3: "Trust in the Lord and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness." I've been thinking a lot about how the Lord asks us to trust Him where we are. It is easy sometimes to wish we were someplace else (still on break, summer, Hawaii, etc.), but the Lord asks us to be faithful where he has us planted. I challenged students to find ways to trust, dwell, and cultivate this semester.

Our team is working hard, planning several events to wrap up



During Calvary's preview day, visiting high school students gathered with current Calvary students for a time of worship and reflection on Scripture, led by members of the Res Life team.

the school year. Then we will turn our attention to planning and preparing for next year. I'm thankful for the resiliency of the 2025-2026 Res Life team, and I'm excited for the 2026-2027 team. We are working hard to support our student body. My prayer is that the Student Affairs office and residence life team can encourage and support our Calvary students as they do life here on campus. We are excited to see how the Lord

continues to use our department, because He has been faithful and will continue to be! ■

Jamie Franz
Dean of Students



President's Corner

On July 2, 1863, Bowdoin College professor Joshua Chamberlain found himself in an unusual situation for an academic. Having quietly volunteered for service in the Civil War after requesting a two-year leave of absence to study in Europe, he now stood atop a hill south of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, as the newly promoted colonel of the 20th Maine Infantry Regiment. Placed on the extreme left of the Union line and ordered to hold the position at all costs, he faced an imminent Confederate attack on a rocky hill known as Little Round Top.

Chamberlain's opponent was Colonel William Oates, leading the 15th Alabama Infantry Regiment in repeated assaults against the 20th Maine's position on the hillside. From about 6:00 to 6:45 p.m., Oates's men attacked relentlessly as the 20th Maine's ammunition ran alarmingly low. Chamberlain knew his men could not sustain another attack, yet retreating would expose the Union flank and risk the collapse of the entire line. In that critical moment, he made a decision that helped change the course of the Battle of Gettysburg: at approximately 6:45 p.m., he ordered a downhill charge with fixed bayonets, swinging like

a gate from left to right, driving the Confederates back and stabilizing the Union position so that Northern forces were poised to defeat the Confederates the following day.

Joshua Chamberlain was the right person, in the right place, at the right time—ready to make a decision that helped transform a Union army marked by earlier setbacks into an army that defeated Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia at Gettysburg. His experience was a “such a time as this” moment.

God prepares us for moments when the choices we make can have a lasting effect on the lives of our families, friends, congregations, and, yes, even Christian colleges. Often those choices are difficult and may, as in the case of Esther (Esther 4:14), require us to pay a personal price for doing the right thing. When the Jews were in great peril from the king of Persia, Mordecai sent word to his cousin Esther, the queen, urging her to approach the king and “beg for mercy and plead with him for her people” (Esther 4:8, ESV). When Esther responded that she could not approach the king unless summoned—and that doing so without an invitation could cost her life—Mordecai replied, “And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14, ESV).

In reflecting on Little Round Top later in life, Chamberlain said, “We can hold our spirits and our bodies so pure and high... that we can determine and know what manner of men we will be whenever and wherever the hour strikes, that calls to noble action” (Chamberlain, 1889). Whether we face circumstances with clearly grave consequences, or situations that seem far less momentous, we can be confident that God placed us there because He prepared us to rely on Him to carry us through (Romans 8:28).

Calvary, like other Christian colleges across the United States, faces significant headwinds for various reasons. But because God is faithful, I am convinced that the leadership of this institution is here today because it is our turn to follow the steadfast, scripture-based examples of those who have gone before, including the many heroes of Scripture and the founders and past leaders of Calvary University. We earnestly seek your prayers as we, under God's guidance, prepare Christians to live and serve in the church and the world according to the biblical worldview. ■

Dr. Teddy Bitner
President



“God prepares us for moments when the choices we make can have a lasting effect...”

Chamberlain, J. L. (1889, October 3). Chamberlain's address for the 20th Main Monument at Gettysburg [Dedication speech]. American Battlefield Trust.
<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/chamberlains-address-20th-maine-monument-gettysburg>

God's Plan and Provision

Athletic Department

"For such a time as this." These words from Esther 4:14 have never felt more personal to me than they do right now.

At forty-three years old, I, Tressa Barnes, found myself stepping into something I never expected: a return to the athletic world, not as a coach or administrator, but as a player. After stepping away from coaching five years ago after twelve years as the head women's basketball coach at Calvary, I believed that chapter of my life had closed. However, God had directed my path toward graduate studies in Biblical Counseling. I've come to learn that God's plans often stretch beyond what we can imagine.

When Coach Cameron Coleman stepped in to take over the women's basketball program, time was not on his side for recruiting. The idea that I could fill that need as a player felt a little crazy. But then something even more meaningful happened: my former player, Taylor Hunter, also had eligibility left and joined the team midyear. Suddenly, this wasn't just an unusual opportunity, it was



Tressa Barnes looks to pass during a January 17 win over Emmaus Bible College.

something unique and special.

For years, I had led from the sidelines. Now, I was in it and feeling the pressure, the excitement, the exhaustion, the pain, and the joy right alongside the team. It reminded me how much athletes carry, not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually.

What made this journey even more meaningful was walking alongside a new coach and a newly formed team as we built something together. There were challenges—building trust, and finding our identity—but there was also incredible growth. That growth led to winning the conference regular season and then the championship game. And then, we experienced something historic: earning a third seed in the NCCAA National Basketball Tournament, something that had never been done in our program's history. Additionally, Coach Coleman was named "Coach of the Year" by the NCCAA in recognition of his success this year.

I also had the opportunity to observe athletes from other teams in our athletic department and how they were handling adversity and success while honoring God. What began as a simple but bold idea when Coach Mick Simpson stepped into the office and said, "I have an idea to start a baseball program here" has

now become a reality with twenty-eight players. For everyone involved, this is truly a "for such a time as this" moment, laying a foundation that will impact student-athletes for years to come.



The dugout erupts after a three-run homer in the Warriors' first win of the season.

In addition, Calvary University is excited to welcome Steve Ward as our new Women's Volleyball Coach. With over thirteen years of experience at the club level, including eleven years with Club North Volleyball in the Kansas City area, Coach Ward brings a strong track record of developing athletes and building competitive programs.

The Men's basketball team demonstrated great teamwork throughout their season with a brand-new coach and Athletic
(continued on next page)



The Warriors women's basketball team celebrates their MCCC conference victory.



Zae Montgomery controls the dribble while reading the defense.

Director Matt Brown. Finishing with an 8–16 record, the team refused to let early challenges define them. Their victory over Central Christian College of the Bible in the regional tournament propelled them into the semi-finals. It was a powerful reminder that sport reveals so much about the heart.

Looking back, I can't help but see God's hand in every step of this journey. This year has reminded me that no matter our age or stage of life, God continues to place us exactly where we need to be.

For such a time as this. ■

Tressa Barnes

*Assistant Professor of Outdoor
Adventure Leadership and Sports
Management*



Fun and Games!

The theme of the 2026 Feast & Fund Auction was "Fun & Games," and it was truly a fun evening! The Student Life Center was decorated with "Calvaryopoly" and colorful centerpieces made from board games. More than 175 guests joined in the festivities, and several students served in various capacities throughout the event. It was a pleasure to welcome many new friends who are just getting to know Calvary for the first time.

Guests bid on a wide variety of silent and live auction items and participated in raffles and drawings



for prizes. Delicious prime beef was served for dinner, and Les Norman was the special guest speaker. Les is a former Kansas City Royal, and he currently serves as an assistant coach for Calvary's baseball team. He is also a parent of a current student.

During the Fund-a-Need portion of the program, \$27,400 was raised for the dorm thermostat project. Overall, the auction raised more than \$100,000 to help Calvary continue in its mission to prepare students to serve in the church and in the world according to the Biblical worldview. Praise the Lord for His provision! ■

Sara Klaassen

Donations Processing Clerk

Financial Outlook Development Department

When we hear the phrase "for such a time as this," what comes to mind? These words from the book of Esther 4:14 carried profound significance for the Jewish people in the Old Testament, and they continue to resonate with meaningful relevance today at Calvary University.

Within the Development Department at Calvary University, we are keenly aware of the call to redeem the time and the urgency reflected in both of these expressions. In a rapidly changing world, we continually ask: How can we more effectively share the message of the importance of a strong, biblically grounded education and encourage support for students

preparing for ministry and service?

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of several ways you can support the students and ministry of Calvary University:

- Non-cash assets (such as vehicles, land, or other property)
- Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)
- Cash gifts
- Stocks or bonds
- Wills and estate gifts
- Unique assets (such as art, gold, or silver)

In light of the events unfolding in our world today, many sense that the time of Christ's return may be drawing nearer. With that perspective in mind, our mission is to redeem the time and faithfully serve for such a

time as this. The opportunity is now. Training is happening now. And your partnership is needed now.

As we approach our upcoming fiscal year-end giving campaign, I invite you to prayerfully consider whether there may be unique or creative ways you could contribute to this important work. I would be honored to assist you and answer any questions you may have. ■

Randy Grimm

Chief Development Officer



Calendar of Events

APRIL

10 Spring Concert

Men's Baseball Home Game

vs. Champion Christian College

11 **Men's Baseball Home Game**

vs. Champion Christian College

17 Midwest Christian School

Academic Meet

Men's Baseball Home Game

vs. Dallas Christian College

18 **Men's Baseball Home Game**

vs. Dallas Christian College

21 **Men's Baseball Home Game**

vs. Hannibal-LaGrange Trojans

MAY

8 Baccalaureate

Awards and Alumni Induction Ceremony

9 **Commencement**

11 Summer Classes Start

JUNE

5 **Calvary Classic Golf Tournament**

29 Summer Break Begins
(Offices Closed)

JULY

6 Summer Classes Resume
25 **Creation Camp**

AUGUST

17 Fall Semester Begins

SEPTEMBER

24 **President's Dinner**

For more details, visit
calvary.edu/calendar



On February 2, the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum provided the entire baseball team with the opportunity to visit free of charge.



Students presented a collection of scenes from "All in the Timing" by David Ives on March 19-22.

Staff Updates



Steve Ward has recently joined the Calvary team as **Women's Volleyball Coach**. Coach Ward spent his first 11 years with Club North Volleyball in the Kansas City, Missouri area, where he played a key role in building strong foundational programs.

Over the past two years, he coached with Optimum Volleyball Club at the national level, helping teams compete among the top programs in the country. Across his 13- year coaching career, Coach Ward has led teams to qualify for Nationals in the 8 seasons, reflecting his commitment to excellence and consistent performance.

Steve's Path into coaching began through his family. Alongside his wife Jen, and as a father of five daughters, he became involved in volleyball when his two oldest girls developed a passion for the sport. That journey has shaped his coaching approach, emphasizing character development, teamwork, and Christ- led mentorship both on and off the court.

In addition to his coaching background, Coach Ward is the CEO and founder of Caregen Group Inc., bringing strong leadership, organizational expertise, and values to the Calvary volleyball program.

Calvary University is thrilled to welcome Coach Ward and his family to our community. We are confident his experience, leadership, and passion for developing young women will have a meaningful impact on our volleyball program. We look forward to the future under his guidance. ■

Do you have updates to share? Please visit calvary.edu/alumni and use the contact form to let us know what God has been doing in your life!

Memorial Gifts

IN MEMORY OF DOUG LANGMADE (MB51)

Kate Langmade

IN MEMORY OF JAMES HODINA (CA84)

Anonymous

25th ANNUAL *Calvary Classic* GOLF TOURNAMENT



FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2026
Eagles' Landing Golf Course
Belton, MO

Registration
opens soon!

Save the date!

President's Dinner 2026

Thursday, September 24 at 6:30pm

Student Life Center
512 Bong Avenue
Belton, Missouri 64012

Speaker
Dr. Teddy Bitner
President of Calvary University

