

Building up the Body of Christ

CALVARY TODAY

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Fall 2026

“Faith for the Generations”

This year at Calvary, we are reflecting on what it means to pass the faith from one generation to the next. As we look at the generations that have come before us, we remember that God is the One who has been at work through it all.

His Word remains true from generation to generation. His purposes do not depend on one person, one class of students, or one season of ministry. He works through ordinary people and uses

their faithfulness in ways they may never see.

Nearly 95 years after Calvary began, we are still part of the same story: receiving what God has given, serving faithfully, and trusting Him with what comes next.

Our prayer for the students echoes the words of Paul to the Philippian church: “...He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6, NASB1995). ■

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Alumni Spotlight Craig and Shirley Preston

Taking Opportunities and Being Faithful

Craig Preston was born in Columbia, South Carolina, while his parents were students at Columbia Bible College. He came to Christ as Savior and Lord at age six while his parents were missionaries in New Guinea. He believes that, though he was so young and very ignorant of theological issues, this was when the Lord drew him to Himself. Craig graduated from a Christian high school in Kansas where his parents had roots.

Shirley Young was raised on a dairy farm in Wisconsin and was born again during a Vacation Bible School at the family's country church. Craig and Shirley met at Calvary Bible College. Craig says that Shirley is the greatest blessing God has given him and has been a great asset throughout their years of ministry.

At Calvary, Craig was influenced by professors like Carl Hock, Daniel Goldberg, and Carl Blackburn. Shirley appreciated Professor Blackburn and Dr. Gladdin. After graduating from Calvary in 1971, Craig attended Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana, and graduated in 1977.

Craig was involved in Bible college teaching ministries in New

Guinea, Java, and China. His last teaching ministry was in Merauke, New Guinea (2008-2015), near where his parents had served as missionaries. Shirley taught classes for women and children, which were appreciated. Craig and Shirley have four children and eleven grandchildren.

In retirement, Craig and Shirley live in Weatherford, Texas. The Prestons greatly appreciate the Bible training they received at Calvary as well as the many friends who had an impact on their lives.

Since retiring, Craig has been dealing with the Epstein-Barr virus. He says, "This has been very trying and I am learning to be content in God's orchestration in my life." Shirley has found great comfort in the book of Hebrews, knowing that our great High Priest understands our problems and is interceding on our behalf.

Craig recommends two older books, *The Crook in the Lot*, by Thomas Boston and *The Rare Jewell of Christian Contentment* by Jeremiah Burroughs. One biblical principle that Craig believes is important is to "be steadfast, faithful to the Lord even if your lot in life seems to indicate

that the Lord has forgotten you." 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." ■

Lee Smith
Class of 1970



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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To subscribe to *Calvary Today*, provide alumni updates, or offer feedback, please visit calvary.edu/alumni.

Craig Preston and Shirley Young met at Calvary Bible College and have spent their lives ministering together after their marriage.



Student Life *Move-In Day*

On August 14, 2026, Calvary University welcomed new students to campus. The Res Life team, faculty, staff, and volunteers from Fellowship Church greeted students and their families, provided a brief campus tour, and quickly helped them move into their rooms. Several parents expressed gratitude for the extra help, especially in getting settled and into the air conditioning quickly!



Students, families, and volunteers worked together to get boxes unloaded and new rooms ready for the year.

Joe provided lunch in the Student Life Center, giving students and parents an opportunity to connect with department heads and fellow students. In the afternoon, students attended orientation sessions before

cheering on an exciting volleyball match. Following the match, students gathered for worship and were challenged from Exodus 34 to consider whether they truly know who God is.



New students checked in with the Calvary team before moving into their dorms and a full day of orientation and activities.

The day concluded with a campus scavenger hunt designed to help students become familiar with their new surroundings. Overall, it was a hot but successful move-in day, and we are grateful for each of these students! ■

Jamie Franz
Dean of Students



Each week, Calvary students gather in chapel to worship, open God's Word, and be encouraged as they grow in their walk with Christ.

To Seek God First Chapel

What if chapel became a place where students could come to know Jesus more deeply and be reminded of the truth of His Word and the power of His love?

This was the question our leadership team began with as they met over the summer to discuss chapel's purpose. Our vision is to create opportunities for students to hear God's Word, worship together,

and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah 29:13 reminds us, "You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart." Ultimately, we want students to choose Him first before success, relationships, fear, or anything else because they know Jesus as the Savior worth seeking wholeheartedly.

As students gathered for the first chapel to hear Chris Williams speak, there was excitement and anticipation. The first challenge

came, that each one would see Jesus as King, to view life through a biblical lens, and follow Him beyond the classroom and chapel. ■

Tressa Barnes
Assistant Professor of Outdoor Adventure Leadership and Sports Management



Presidents' Corner

Many Calvary Today readers will remember the story of Corrie and Betsie ten Boom, sisters who hid Jews in their Haarlem home during the German occupation of the Netherlands from 1942 to 1944 until they were caught by the Gestapo.

Less widely known is that Willem ten Boom, Corrie and Betsie's grandfather, began a prayer group to pray for the Jewish people, the peace of Jerusalem, and the protection of the Jewish people (Psalm 122:6) in 1844, a tradition that continued within the ten Boom family for exactly 100 years. Willem taught his children the discipline of prayer and the practice of compassion.

Willem's son, Casper ten Boom, taught his children, including Corrie and Betsy about the power of prayer and about the unique place of the Jewish people as the "apple of God's eye" (Zechariah 2:8). Three generations later, that inherited faith bore fruit in a hidden room behind a false wall, where the ten Booms sheltered desperate refugees from Nazi persecution. The ten Boom family exemplifies the idea of a faith for the generations literally at work. In doing so, God used them to answer, in part, Willem's century-old prayer.

Calvary University's theme this year is "Faith for the Generations." When Calvary's founders published a prospectus about opening the new institution, they wrote that the purpose of the institution was for "training men and women in the study of the Scriptures, and in ways and means of winning hearts for God

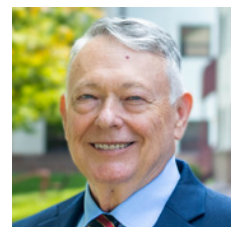


The faculty welcomed incoming students during Convocation Chapel on August 24.

through the Gospel." Subsequent generations of Calvary staff and faculty have steadfastly held to that purpose, likewise, preparing generations of students to serve God in the church and in the world.

As I write, Calvary is beginning its 95th year of service. It is our intent, with purpose and resolve, to press forward so that as long as the Lord tarries, we will endeavor to prepare the next generation for service just as one grandfather did for his family nearly two centuries ago. ■

Dr. Teddy Bitner
Co-President



"It is our intent, with purpose and resolve, to press forward so that as long as the Lord tarries, we will endeavor to prepare the next generation..."

Faith for the Generations

There has never been a more important time for distinctly Christian higher education.

For generations, Calvary University has stood strong for Christ in metropolitan Kansas City with an unwavering conviction: God's Word is true, Jesus Christ is Lord, and every generation must be equipped to carry the Gospel into the next. That mission continues. We are a disciple-making institution who uses education as our platform for fulfilling the mission to make disciples.

Calvary is Kansas City's Christian university, a place where students can earn an excellent degree without surrendering their biblical convictions. Here, education is about more than preparing for a career. It is about preparing for a life of faithfulness. Students come to Calvary to study business, education, counseling, ministry, music, the

sciences, and more. But along the way, something greater happens. They forge a faith that can withstand the pressures of the world. They discover God's calling on their lives. They build lifelong friendships. Many even meet the person with whom they will build a family and serve Christ for decades to come. That is the Calvary difference.

We are not interested simply in producing graduates. We are preparing Christians to flourish in Christ for a lifetime. As alumni, you are living proof of that mission. And now it is our turn to ensure that another generation has the same opportunity. We are calling this vision Faith for the Generations, strengthening Calvary today so that our children, grandchildren, and generations yet unborn will have a university where Scripture remains the foundation, Christ remains supreme, and students are prepared to serve the Church and the world according to a biblical worldview.

The world does not need Calvary to become less distinct.

It needs Calvary to be more Calvary. Together, we can ensure that happens, for His glory and for generations to come. ■

Pastor Chris Williams
Co-President



"We are not interested simply in producing graduates. We are preparing Christians to flourish in Christ..."

Giving Update Development Department

God's provision never ceases to amaze me, the longer I live. Calvary University experienced some of these unique provisions this summer.

We received two grants, one of \$10,000 for upgrades in technology and another grant of \$25,000 to assist students whose parents serve in the military. We also received a new coating on the parking lot in front of Madison Hall provided by

a donor, and volunteers painted some of the trim on several of our buildings. The biggest blessing to Calvary University was the replacing of lights in our athletic center, Student Life Center, and library, all provided by one donor.

We have many such opportunities for you and your church to get involved. If you are interested, I would be glad to speak with you. ■

Randy Grimm
Chief Development Officer
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How I Spent My Summer Vacation

For a lot of us, summer break is a time of rest, relaxation, and maybe a vacation or two. While all of that is wonderful, for Ministry and Intercultural Studies students at Calvary, summer break is also a time of ministry, service, and maybe a little bit of adventure. Several students spent their summer serving the Lord in a variety of capacities.

Silas Stucky, who is working towards a dual degree in both Pastoral and Intercultural Studies, did not one, but two internships. For the first, he spent almost six



Over the summer, Silas Stucky completed an internship in Mozambique with Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission.

weeks serving with Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission in Mozambique. Then, returning to the States, he participated in a second internship at a local church in South Dakota.

Angela Beck joined her parents on a trip to Israel which we look forward to hearing about, now that school has resumed. Brooke Behlen participated in an internship at her local church in Nebraska, as did Melody Hall as well. Both students helped in children's ministry roles and other beneficial ministries to their local congregations.

Two of our current pastoral students, Max Moore and Clay Swanson, not only spent their summer but are already serving in pastoral roles in their local churches. I am leaving many out, as there are many other students who over the summer served the Lord at camps, on missions trips, or in their local



Angelina Larsen served with GC2 Ministries and Iglesia Cristiana Gracia in Tárcoles, Costa Rica.

congregations. Calvary's mission, "to prepare students to live and serve..." is alive and well. As we welcome our students back for the 2026-2027 school year, we look forward to how the Lord will direct us to serve alongside them! ■

Dr. Joshua Paxton

Director of the Burnham Center for Global Engagement



Athletic Department *Fall 2026 Update*

Welcome to another exciting year of Calvary University athletics! I am blessed to return to Calvary as the new Head Women's Basketball coach and Assistant Athletic Director.

There are many new and exciting things surrounding the athletic department this year. We are proud to announce the construction of our on-campus baseball field here at Calvary. While the field is still under construction, it is coming along nicely and should be ready to begin hosting games on campus this season.

We are also excited as the volleyball season, led by Coach Steve Ward, is under way. In an exhibition match to kick off the season, the

team came away with a victory against a talented MidAmerica Nazarene group. Our Lady Warriors will host Spurgeon College on Tuesday, September 29 at 6:00 p.m.

Men's Basketball has also begun strength and conditioning as they prepare for this upcoming season. Come out and support your Warrior student athletes and coaches as

we prepare for an exciting time in Calvary athletics. ■

Brandon Jordan

Assistant Athletic Director



Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

29 **Volleyball Home Game**
vs. Spurgeon College

OCTOBER

1 **Presidents' Dinner**
1-2 **Alumni Reunion '76-'86**
12-16 Fall Break
12 **Volleyball Home Game**
vs. Union Adventist University
13 **Volleyball Home Game**
vs. Ozark Christian College
19 Start of Fall Session 2
24 **Volleyball Home Game**
vs. Manhattan Christian College
26 **Calvary Campus Preview**
29 **Basketball Home Game**
vs. Missouri Valley College

NOVEMBER

7 **Basketball Home Game**
vs. Union Adventist University
10 **Basketball Home Game**
vs. Central Methodist University
14 **Holocaust Memorial Event**
14 **Basketball Home Game**
vs. Dallas Christian College
25-27 Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

5 **Christmas Concert**
5 **Sports Card Show**
5 **Basketball Home Game**
vs. Central Bible University
9 **Basketball Home Game**
vs. Kansas Christian College
14 Christmas Break Begins

For more details, visit
calvary.edu/calendar

Staff Updates



Dr. Ian Bacon has stepped into a new role as Calvary University's **Dean of Men**, in addition to his continued service as Associate Professor of Bible & Theology. Having served at Calvary since 2018, Dr. Bacon brings years of experience teaching, pastoring, and investing in the next generation.



Brandon Jordan has recently joined the Calvary team as **Head Women's Basketball Coach** and **Assistant Athletic Director**. A former Calvary basketball player, Jordan brings years of coaching and player-development experience, along with a passion for using basketball to connect with others and share the gospel.



Heather Wilson brings her experience in both vocal and instrumental music and a passion for music education to the leadership of Calvary University's Music Department as she steps into a new role as the **Music Department Chair**, providing guidance and training for students as they use their gifts in service to Christ.

Alumni Updates

BIRTHS

■ Ethan Souza (September 13, 2026) to Victor and **JOANNA (THOMPSON CA11) SOUZA**

MARRIAGES

■ **NATHAN KNIGHT (CU25*)** and Kelly Baker on June 27, 2026
■ Josiah Metcalf and **JULIE VANDERWOUDE (CU24)** on September 5, 2026

DEATHS

■ **DELORES "DEE" RAIFORD (FORMER STAFF)**, August 4, 2026 (age 89)
■ **PAULA SPENCER (CA79)**, December 18, 2024 (age 68)

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 ELAINE GRUBBS (KUDRIKOFF CA73)

Richard Grubbs (CA69)

IN MEMORY OF CARLENE DRIVER

Melanie Driver (CA80)

IN MEMORY OF PETER FREISEN (FORMER FACULTY)

James Irby (CA77)

*Non-degree-holding

Dr. Teddy Bitner and Pastor Chris Williams invite you to attend Calvary University's Presidents' Dinner.

Faith for the Generations.

Proceeds from offering will support student scholarships.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2026



To register, scan the QR code or visit calvary.edu/presidents-dinner

PHILIPPI | THESSALONICA | BEREA | ATHENS | CORINTH

You are invited to follow in the footsteps of the apostles.



Burnham Center
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& Friends
Greece Trip
May 15-24, 2027

For more information,
visit calvary.edu/greece