

Calvary Episcopal Church

a place to call home

at the intersection of Main Street and the River

in

Bastrop, Texas



Love unites us.
Tradition grounds us.
Service animates us.
Creativity beckons us.
Worship points us toward our true home.

Who We Are

We are an energetic, growing, joyous parish housed in a very old, very beautiful, historic sanctuary on the Colorado River. 88% of us are smack dab in the center of the “transformational quadrant” on the Holy Cow survey.

Common refrains we hear from newcomers are: “I was raised in (fill in the blank) tradition. I just knew I needed to come to church here.” “The Holy Spirit spoke to me.” “I knew I was home.” Another refrain is how welcome and included they feel right away. The third verse is how great the music is!

We remain the only Episcopal church in Bastrop County, the booming county just east of Austin. The western part of the county is home to a panoply of new businesses. We represent a broad intersection of viewpoints. Our Calvary t-shirt says it all...

Being at the intersection means cultivating a willingness to balance those opposites; a willingness to live within those tensions. We work on our vulnerability. We practice seeing Christ in all people. We don't have to work on being welcoming or curious. We just are. We continually demonstrate our willingness to experiment with the new while treasuring our past.

We are on the cusp of a building campaign. We own almost 3 city blocks in Bastrop's historic downtown. Our immediate challenge is to preserve our historic sanctuary while bringing our facilities up to date to house our many ministries.

Calvary Episcopal School has recently moved into their new, \$8M building, vacating several older buildings on our campus, freeing us up to dream big for the ways we can serve as the hands and feet of Jesus in our community. Calvary is chomping at the bit; thrilled to be able to build space to better serve both our own parish as well as the community at large. Like our exquisite stained-glass windows, we aim to be the church where the Light shines through.



ASHES TO GO



219

Average Sunday Attendance
145 in person, 74 on-line



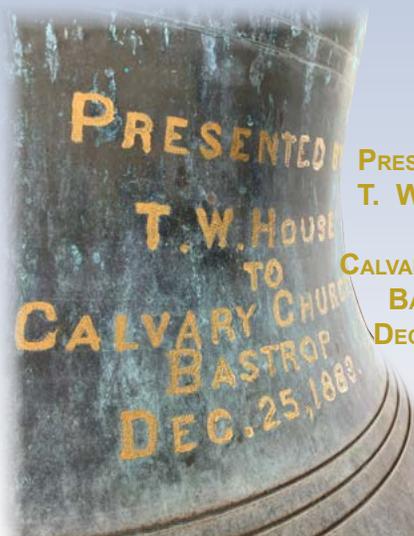
\$583,467

Budget for 2025

New members in 2025

25

PRESENTED BY
T. W. HOUSE
TO
CALVARY CHURCH
BASTROP
DEC. 25, 1883



54

Ministries



History

Calvary Episcopal Church in Bastrop is one of the oldest active parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. For 157 years Calvary has provided sacred bread and wine, spiritual teaching and solace to countless parishioners navigating the sacred thresholds of ordinary life...births, baptisms, marriages, deaths. Calvary was founded four years after the American Civil War. We stood together through two world wars. Recently, we have been a place of comfort and healing for those displaced by a cataclysmic forest fire and pivoted to accommodate worship during a global pandemic.

Our historic building, a fine example of Scottish Gothic architecture, is among the earliest in Texas. The hand-carved arches of the nave reference both the structure of a ship (a symbol of the church across time and space) as well as the Biblical “bones of the belly of the whale.” The acorns hanging from the arches symbolize the mighty oak that grows from tiny origins. Organized in 1869 by Bishop Alexander Gregg, the first services in the historic section of the current sanctuary were held in 1883. A fascinating, detailed history of Calvary is chronicled in the book, *Calvary Episcopal Church*, written by Rev. Ken Kesselus, the 26th rector of Calvary.

cecbastrop.org

As a living tradition since 1869, we honor our roots in reason and Scripture while maintaining our historic presence in Bastrop County. We join the communion of saints gathered across time to hear God’s story and pray our common prayers.

What grounds us is tradition.



Worship

Sunday services begin at 8 am with Rite I. At 10, Rite II features music led by Dr. Justin West. He successfully blends the traditional Calvary Choir with our Contemporary Ensemble.

Our devoted Altar Guild prepares the Lord's Table with chalices and linens creating a sacred atmosphere for both services. Youth serve as Acolytes at the combined service along with dedicated teams of Ushers, Greeters, Lay Readers and Lay Eucharistic Ministers. Our combined service blends worship styles as well, offering kneeling as well as standing communion. We use traditional Rite II while including interactive prayer stations to deepen our awareness of worship themes.

Special services such as Lessons and Carols, Christmas Eve, The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Feast of the Epiphany, the Liturgy of the Palms, Lessons on Thursdays during Lent, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, the Great Vigil of Easter, Ascension Day, Trinity Sunday, the Blessing of the Animals, and All Saints Day have nurtured our spirits throughout the last 157 years.

Morning Prayer is offered by volunteers on Fridays at Argent Court Retirement Community. Calvary's Lay Pastoral Assistants visit the sick and offer communion to homebound parishioners.

We encounter God as we celebrate Jesus and offer ourselves and all we are to God. We discover how God is speaking today, pray for the world and know Jesus, in the breaking of the bread.

Worship points us towards our true home.

52%

Of guests who identified themselves to us in 2025 are now part of Calvary

2,437

Worshippers at Argent Court 2025

cecbastrop.org





Music

Please allow us to introduce Calvary's accomplished music director, Dr. Justin West. Dr. West serves as both organist and pianist while directing both the Choir and Ensemble. He is part of the University of Texas' tenured faculty, teaching UT students what he practices at Calvary; blending a range of singers (beginning up through highly trained singers) in our choirs, seemingly effortlessly... All while bringing exceptional music week after week. Dr. West also has managed to pull off the blending of musical styles in our church services. Our Ensemble group has a more contemporary focus. Our Choir is oriented towards more traditional church music. Sometimes we have separate services for each choir. Often the Choir and Ensemble sing at the same service. Members of both groups speak fondly about how much fun choir practice is with Dr. West. Others emphasize how well-planned choir practices are. The choirs are moving into a larger practice space on our campus having outgrown the original space.

Special music programs are featured throughout the church year. High Holy Days are not to be missed. In 2026, both choirs will combine to present Requiem by Heather Sorenson on Good Friday. This will be a first for Calvary. Needless to say, Dr. West enjoys enormous support amongst the parish at large.

Every act of creativity reflects the presence of God within and expresses our unique and God-given purpose. We are committed to fostering our creative gifts -and those of our community- through diverse types of music, teaching children and youth, engaging the arts, compelling communication, and experimenting with new ways of being church.

What beckons us is the creative spirit.



Formation

Jesus does not call us to simply attend church. Jesus calls us to be formed and transformed by his Spirit, the Word of God, as well as life in community.

Formation is offered most Sundays. Fellowship and food provide a welcoming atmosphere.

Weekly, Women's Bible Study is led by clergy or lay leaders on a variety of subjects, always based on scripture.

The Brotherhood of Saint Andrews meets bi-weekly Sunday morning in the Parish Hall Library for book discussions over coffee and pastries.

Lessons on Thursdays during Lent offer a deeper knowledge of principles for life application.



Parish Life

Parish Life is rich and varied at Calvary. Folks team up to encourage and challenge each other to walk closer with our God and better serve each other. Joy is palpable at our parish gatherings.

- Foyer groups meet to foster friendship over potluck dinners
- Daughters of the King have an active chapter at Calvary, serving for baptisms, funerals and various service projects
- Women of Calvary host a weekly Bible study as well as speakers and social outings
- Prayer Shawl Ministry hand-knits or crochets shawls to be shared with those in crisis
- Hungry Elders provides lunch once a month for seniors to enjoy
- Coffee Hosts provide coffee every Sunday
- Brotherhood of St Andrew is an active men's book study and service organization
- Vacation Bible Camp provides Bible-themed activities and projects for 45-60 children



1,640 and counting
Bell Tower Logo Cookies
Baked, blessed and handed out



Outreach

Calvary as a parish is passionate about serving those in need. A sampling of our ministries is listed below...

- Free Lunches (who says there's no such thing!) are offered to any and all comers every Thursday
- Thanksgiving Dinner is cooked and served to the community-at-large. Some 700 meals were enjoyed in 2025
- Alternative Giving Fair gives parishioners an opportunity to dedicate gifts to non-profits that serve our community
- A rotating schedule of parishioners volunteer at our local soup kitchen and food pantry
- Cold Weather Shelter has provided a place to sleep and a warm breakfast when outside temperatures plummet

Seeking to address the needs of our parish family as well as our larger community, we strive to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Compassionate service blesses the giver and the receiver in an unending cycle of grace.

What animates us is service.



Free sack lunches handed out every Thursday

1,750 in 2025

Over **700**

Thanksgiving hot meals served, 2025



Bastrop Soup Kitchen
Monday breakfasts served

1,575 in 2025

Monday lunches served

3,375 in 2025



Community Engagement

Calvary's outreach and community engagement are closely intertwined. As a parish we believe wholeheartedly in participating in our local community. Projects such as:

- Art Fest raises funds for the church while providing a market to artists from across the community.
- Calvary operates the 'Merc on Main' – a mercantile for community artists and others to rent affordable space to incubate their businesses. The Merc also provides Calvary with an opportunity to maintain a daily presence in downtown economy.
- Support for civic events such as Bastrop Pride, Juneteenth, Bastrop Homecoming, Halloween Boo Bash, Bastrop Lighted Christmas Parade, MLK March, Mardi Gras parade is strong in the parish.

Several local churches have begun to follow our lead.



2025 Art Fest
Net Funds Raised
\$3,663



18
Events engaging
the larger community

900 Expected visitors each for
Boo Bash • Cocoa and Carols • King Cake



At Calvary we recognize we are all God's children, made in and for love. We practice seeing God in all people, welcoming each other and embracing our differences.

What unites us is love.

145
Students, pre-k to 8th

Student return rate

87%



Calvary Episcopal School

Calvary Episcopal School nurtures the whole child (spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically) helping to set students up for success in every facet of life. It's diverse faculty is known for excellence, diligence and compassion, helping children feel confident in school by supporting their independence, teaching self-control and tolerance and assuring them that they are a significant part of a loving community. The school is accredited with the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools and is a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools.



In January, 2026, Calvary Episcopal School moved off the Calvary campus and into its brand new \$8 million facility. Support for the school is strong within the parish. Calvary's rector leads chapel once/week and serves as ex officio chair of the school board.



*Motto:
Terras
Irradiant:
Let them
give
light to
the world.*



calvaryschool.net

Family & Youth Ministries

Youth serve as acolytes and lay readers. They are welcome in the Choir and Ensemble and can participate in the Jr. Altar Guild. A twelve year-old serves on the leadership team of our Downtown Ministry Committee! High School graduates are celebrated each May with a special service where they are the lay readers and preachers.

To keep our community safe, all adults who work with children and youth complete Safeguarding God's Children training, undergo background checks and renew their certification every 3 years.

As a parish we see the need for more extensive programming for our children and youth. Within the last year we were unable to replace Children's Formation teachers who needed to step away from teaching for a while. Our Holy Cow results identify this as a priority for growth and development. The rector we envision will plant, water and grow our family and youth ministries.

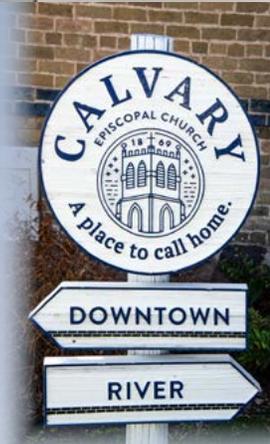


Bastrop, TX

Bastrop, Texas, offers a compelling blend of historic charm and modern opportunity that makes it an inviting community. Nestled about 30 minutes southeast of Austin, Bastrop combines the warmth and character of a small town with convenient access to the cultural and economic amenities of a major city. Its picturesque downtown, lined with beautifully preserved 19th and early 20th-century architecture, has earned national recognition for its charm and walk-ability, fostering a vibrant local atmosphere that residents and visitors alike enjoy. The community's strong identity is rooted in its long history—dating back to 1832—and is reflected in more than 130 registered historic sites and a lively cultural scene.

Quality of life in Bastrop is enhanced by its welcoming community spirit and abundant recreational opportunities. The area's proximity to natural attractions—including Lake Bastrop and nearby state parks with extensive hiking, camping, and outdoor recreation—invites residents to embrace an active, nature-oriented lifestyle. Local events, farmers markets, and festivals foster connections among neighbors and create a sense of belonging.

The region is experiencing dynamic growth, with a steadily rising population and expanding economic opportunities. Bastrop's proximity to Austin provides opportunities for cultural enrichment, educational opportunities, not to mention sporting events and fabulous restaurants! Population trends show significant increases in both residents and household incomes, and long-range planning efforts emphasize sustainable growth while preserving the community's unique character.



The Rector We Seek

Spirituality

The rector we seek is a deeply spiritual leader, grounded in prayer and Biblical teaching and preaching. We expect a deep commitment to pastoral care.

Compassion for the Needy

The rector we seek cares deeply about the needs of our surrounding community and joins wholeheartedly in our commitment to being “the hands and feet of Jesus.”

Community Engagement

A community-oriented rector would reside locally and actively engage with the Bastrop community. This person resonates with our strong parish participation in the civic life of our city, loving without an agenda.

Rebuilding Youth and Family Ministries

To rebuild youth and family ministry, our rector will construct an engaging children’s formation and foster a supportive atmosphere for families.

Vision for Property

Our next rector will help us discern best uses for the extensive property we are blessed with while holding a vision for the church that we will be in the not-too-distant future.

Celebrates Diversity

Calvary’s next rector will embrace our congregation’s diverse views, promoting inclusivity while encouraging all to leave divisive opinions at the door of the church.

Support for Calvary Episcopal School

Supporting Calvary Episcopal School is crucial, especially in attracting young families. Our rector will demonstrate commitment by engaging with the school, nurturing the development of children and teens.

Conflict Resolution

The Rector we seek possesses strong conflict resolution and reconciliation skills, leading us by example into humility, vulnerability and wholehearted faith. By fostering open dialogue and respecting diverse viewpoints, they can maintain unity and harmony within the congregation.

Administrative Skills

The Rector we seek will bring strong administrative skills to the table, working collaboratively with lay people and staff.

Resilience

The Rector we seek will be resilient, possessing a sense of humor. Stamina for presiding over multiple services is a must.

Do you feel guided by the Holy Spirit to be the 30th Rector of Calvary Episcopal Church?

If so, please contact
The Rev. Kellaura Johnson,
Canon for Transition Ministry
kjohnson@epicenter.org
713.353.2118.



