



Mount Calvary Connected January 28, 2021

Mount Calvary Connected is a weekly newsletter that will be sent out each Wednesday while the church is pressing "pause" on in-person gatherings. Our goal is to keep you connected to your faith and your church with messages from our pastors, health information, and ways to share Christ's love during our current national crisis.

Pastor Scott Klimke

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Cell-Phone: 412-817-6704

Email: revjonoadams@gmail.com**A Message from Pastor Jonathan**

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you..." -Jeremiah 1:5a*

Earlier this week, my wife Bekah and I shared some good news that had been mostly a secret before now: our daughter Annabelle is going to be a big sister, as we are expecting a new addition to our family in June! We are very excited for what lies ahead, and happy to not have to keep it under our hats anymore.

But it didn't take long after we made our announcement on Facebook for one of my more candid friends to reach out with a question, "Aren't you worried about bringing a child into the mess that is the world right now?" It's a question that I've asked myself from time to time, and so my answer was pretty quick...

No, I'm not worried. Despite the pandemic, despite political divisions, despite uncertainty in the world and even in our community, I am not worried.

One of my favorite Martin Luther quotes reads, "If I knew that tomorrow was the end of the world, I would plant an apple tree today!" If you're familiar with that quote, you might think to yourself, "that's not exactly how I remember it being worded," and you'd probably be right. There are more than a few versions of this quote that might be attributed to translation differences from German to English, or perhaps from the fact that the first printed claim of this quote only dates back to 1944!

But even with its somewhat dubious attribution to Luther, I think it's an important cue yet again to remind us that as Christians, we are called upon to have hope, and to be a beacon of that same hope. We are called to be in the world, but not of the world; we simply cannot allow the powers of the world to dampen the hope we have in Christ.

If I can pull in a pop-culture reference, there's a song in the musical "Hamilton" called "Dear Theodosia." It's a duet between Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton in which they sing to their children; each man sings of his love for his child, and they sing of how they're working to build the new United States as a gift for them. And the line that gets me every time is this: "We'll bleed and fight for you, we'll make it right for you."

That's what I aspire toward as a parent, to be a sign of hope for my children and to make the world a better place for them. I know that God already has amazing things in store for my Annabelle and her soon-to-be brother or sister; but I know that part of my role as their father is to get them to that point.

The same can be said for each one of us, regardless of if we have children. We're in a fight to bring hope to the world. There is so much potential in each person who follows their faith, but the rest of us must live up to the task of lifting them up and nurturing that faith.

With faith for the journey,
Pastor Jonathan

Annual Reports are ready for pick up in the narthex or you may go to <https://rebrand.ly/MCLCAAnnualReport> to download a copy.

Message from Cindy Solarczyk

I wanted to thank the people of Mt. Calvary for giving me the opportunity to serve our church as the Council Treasurer for the last six years. I have always considered the people of Mt. Calvary as my “church family” and you have always treated me as a family member. While on council, not every decision was an easy one. Each decision was made as a unified Council with varied opinions but always together. Your church has been led by not only two of the most caring and ambitious pastors I have met, but also by a Council that has struggled to overcome adversity by putting the “church family” and their needs first. You can be proud of what has been accomplished with the ability of the various worship opportunities, the various outreach programs we are still able to offer to others, and the still growing family of new individuals we see each week. Every family has trials and tribulations. It's how you overcome them with faith and trust in God and continued love for your fellow man that allows us to continue to be the family of God.

Psalm 122:1

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

Cindy Solarczyk

A Message of Hope

We know the holidays are over, but the message still holds true. Mike Kozak's dad had this published in the Tribune's readers forum. We thought we would share it.

I was filled with a spiritual emotion when I heard the story about the owl found in the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center.

(The owl, which endured a 200-mile trip from upstate New York to Manhattan in the tree, was cared for and released back into the wild.)

To me, his survival was a glimmer of hope and the reassurance that God cares for each of us and will aid us in getting through these trying times.

Thanksgiving and Christmas will soon be here, and I know that many people will be spending the holidays without friends and family. However the blessings God has shown to us over the years have been numerous, and with today's technology, we can still communicate with those who will not be with us to share these holidays in person.

As we approach the celebration of the birth of the Christ child, I will remember that little owl and how his survival lifted my spirit the day he was found, recalling that Jesus was born to save us.

In God's wisdom I believe that he will allow us to successfully find a cure for the coronavirus in the upcoming new year and on that special day, we will all celebrate with thanks and a new found joy.

You just have to have faith and believe.

Gary G. Kozak

LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP SERVICE INFORMATION

Mt. Calvary hosts live broadcasts of the liturgy at 8:45 AM Sunday mornings. The broadcast can be heard by tuning your radio to 88.3 FM if you are near the church. We can also stream the service live over the internet.

By clicking the following link, you can gain access to the live stream audio. <https://streams.radiomast.io/96172026-6cba-407b-9090-e150b471ae0e>

Weekly worship bulletins can be found at: www.rebrand.ly/MtCalvaryWorship

Annual Congregation Meeting

Annual meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 7**, approximately 10:00 AM. If you plan to attend, please be at the church by 9:45 AM.

Backyard Ministries Cookie Collection

Each week, Backyard Ministries usually has a small pack of cookies to give to each family they visit at the Coopersdale Homes. These cookies were made by other churches in the area. However, due to social distancing they have not been gathering to bake. They are asking Mt. Calvary to donate 200 packs of cookies (store bought is ok, if they are not individually wrapped packs, they can be 5 in a zip lock bag) a month for them to deliver. The first pickup being on **February 4** and then continuing on the **first and third Thursday of each month**. Cookies can be placed in the bin outside the church, or the labeled one inside. If you have any questions please contact Mike Kozak at 244-6880. Thank you for your continued support!

Year Round Giving Tree

For January, all proceeds will go to Pro Papa Missions to help the country of Honduras which has been hit hard by hurricanes and COVID-19. On the tree you will find an envelopes, and handmade face masks. On the table are bags made out of grocery bags. The suggested price on the envelope is \$3, however, any amount will be accepted. Envelopes can be returned to the collection plate or dropped off at the church office. Thank you.

About Our Members:

Gerald Barrick is in the hospital.

Pat Conklin is out of the hospital.

Reminder to please pray for our members and their families that are affected by COVID 19.

Hello Mt Calvary,

I want to thank you for the lovely flowers I received on Saturday afternoon. It was so kind of you to remember a shut in here at Laurel View Village. We are still in the red zone. No visitors or activities. Our trays for meals are sent to our room. I'm fine I read a lot.

Thanks again.

Natalie Zerby

Birthdays for the Week Jan. 31 - Feb. 6.

Jan. 31 - Brenda Christy, Lori Hiltz, Janelle Mowery, Hadley Pozun

Feb. 1 - Emily Andrascik, Dennis Apple, Mark McQuaide, Mindy Stohon

Feb. 2 - Gertrude Allison, Eric Eschrich, Gary Gusmenotti, Sidney Nash, Kathleen Rohrbaugh, Kevin Ross

Feb. 3 - Catherine Costlow, Brooke Witsberger

Feb. 4 - Camryn Beglin, Kyle Vivis

Feb. 5 - Louis Horn, Nathan Smith

Feb. 6 - Jacob Brandau, Thomas Donaldson, D. Pellon, Sara Whetzel

Remember those that prayer has been requested:

Patti Sliko, Bruce and Carol, Julie, Joel, Andy, Adam, Linda & Dick, Jamie, Don, Joanne, Shirley, Chris, Tracy, Flanagan Family, Roy, Joyce, Dolly & Chis Palm, David, Karen, Lauren, Billy, Rick, Joe, Pat Conklin, and Gerald Barrick.

Support of Mount Calvary

Through the end of November, Mount Calvary's monthly expenses have been averaging about \$17,685. This is in the neighborhood of \$4,225 a month less than budgeted. Thanks to your generosity and the faithfulness of your leadership team, Mount Calvary has not yet had to dip into reserves in spite of all the disruption introduced by the pandemic. We're a team and the entire team deserves a thank you! Now all that's left to do this year is to top things off with another strong and robust December as we have done for many years running.

CONDENSED WORSHIP FOR THE WEEKEND OF SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 2021.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **A: Amen.**

FIRST READING: JONAH 3:1-5, 10

The book of Jonah is a comedy starring a reluctant prophet who is given a one-sentence message: Nineveh will be destroyed in forty days. Much to Jonah's dismay, the people of Nineveh repent. The point of the story is to get the reader to wrestle with the question "On whom should God have mercy?"

¹The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, ²"Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." ³So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. ⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" ⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

¹⁰When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 7:29-31

Paul does not disapprove of marriage or other human social institutions. He does, however, want Christians to live in the present in fervent anticipation of God's future, which even now has dawned through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

²⁹Brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, ³⁰and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, ³¹and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

GOSPEL: MARK 1:14-20

Before Jesus calls his first disciples, he proclaims a message that becomes known as "the gospel" or good news from God. God is ready to rule our lives. Those who realize this will respond with repentance and faith.

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

¹⁶As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people."

¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

SERMON BY PASTOR JONATHAN

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from Christ Jesus our Lord who calls us to follow. Amen.

By the time I was in high school, I had begun to really enjoy volunteer work. My hometown had multiple small festivals and events where I would get the opportunity to help out by parking cars, loading and unloading shuttle busses, running different lighting and sound equipment, picking up trash or a dozen other small tasks. And often, I'd go with my parents to other larger events, things like the county fair or the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix, and we'd do much the same sort of work. I loved it. I loved being part of the behind the scenes of special events.

But as much as I loved that volunteer work, I craved a more regular gig. While I helped out at most of the same events every year, they were different things sponsored by different groups. In high school, I was already thinking about what made good resume material. And I wanted to be able to claim more than half a dozen small events.

I wanted to join our local volunteer fire department, but my parents vetoed that idea pretty quickly. But after some research and more false starts, I landed on the idea of wilderness search and rescue. It was the perfect combination of my love of the outdoors and my desire to get involved in emergency services, AND my parents were on board with it.

The summer before my senior year of high school, I officially became a member of the White Oak EMS Search and Rescue team. With at least one meeting or training every month, and the possibility of getting called out for a search, it was the perfect answer to my desire to have a volunteer organization to belong to. And even though I only went on two real searches during that first year, I was hooked.

The next year, before I even started college at WVU, I had done my research and knew that there was a search and rescue team based in Morgantown. And so, on the first week of classes, I rode my bike to the fire station where they were holding their month meeting, with a completed application in hand. I was ready.

And over the next four years, I got a lot more experience training and going on searches. I learned how to be ready, keeping most of my essential gear in a backpack that was always in my Jeep. Having a few other sets of equipment in duffle bags or milk crates, ready to be tossed in as needed.

Back then, the team was just starting to be able to send out dispatch information via cellphone. You'd get a text message with a few sentences of information. "62yo hunter missing in Preston County, call so and so if available." And in those minutes, you had to make a judgment call, "Am I available to go on this?" "If I go now, how long am I able to stay?" "If I don't go now, when might I be free to go?"

In general, you would call one of the team leaders with your answers to those questions. Either that you were available and on your way, or that you'd be free after a certain time, or maybe you didn't think you could go, but you would be willing to work the phones for others who would be. With time and experience, it became easy to absorb the little bit of information we would receive and determine whether this would be a simple search that wrapped up in an hour or two, or whether it might be something that would drag on. And with that knowledge, you could pack extra stuff as needed, or make arrangements to cancel plans or call off from work.

I loved my time doing search and rescue, and it only got me more interested in emergency services. And so when I moved again, this time to Gettysburg to start seminary, yet again, I had done my research, and I showed up with a completed application, this time, not for a search and rescue team, but for the local volunteer fire department.

And when I joined the fire department, my understanding of being ready for calls changed completely from what it had been with search and rescue. Most fire calls, are much more urgent than your average search callout...

You don't have to worry about packing the right camping gear into duffle bags or your trunk. Most everything you need gets carried on the fire trucks themselves, you just have to get to the station, or maybe go straight to the scene with a little bit of safety equipment in your personal vehicle. You don't have fifteen or twenty minutes to decide whether you can go and what you'll need to bring, which makes sense because you're rarely committing yourself to any more than a few hours at a go.

But even so, when your pager goes off, or the whistle blows, you take a moment to take stock and think about whether you can go. Again, with experience, it's easy to know how long a typical wreck takes to clean up, how long you might be expected on scene for a house fire, or cutting up trees after a windstorm. And in a split second you weigh that knowledge against your awareness of the rest of your day.

Just a few hours ago, my fire department was dispatched for a wreck. Within just a few seconds I thought about the fact that the wreck would probably pull me out of the house for at least an hour, maybe two. I thought about how I didn't have any obligations during that time span, but that my wife Bekah was getting ready to go visit a friend this evening and that leaving her alone with our daughter Annabelle would create some extra unnecessary stress for her as she tried to get ready for her visit, and eventually probably cause some stress for me, too, as *I* tried to get ready for worship this evening.

So, I decided not to go. And as I listened on the scanner, it sounded like they did fine without me.

But that background, my experience of being on call in one way or another for the better part of 14 years, is what bears on my mind when I hear today's Gospel story about the call of the first disciples.

Jesus doesn't give them any background about what he's calling them toward...

Or at least that's what Mark's Gospel might lead us to believe.

I'm sure many of us would be uncomfortable with this sort of situation. Where Jesus simply says, "follow me."

WE want to know the details: What do you need us to do? How long will we be away from home? What skills do we need? What do we need to bring with us? What will be provided? Should I bring my heavy winter parka? Or just a light raincoat?

But Jesus gives none of that, he looks at these fishermen along the sea of galilee: he looks at Simon, Andrew, James and John, and he just says, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people."

And believe it or not, they all just go. They drop what they're doing, and they follow. Apparently, whatever they felt like they needed to be ready to follow a Galilean carpenter into the unknown was fulfilled.

They were ready. And they answered the call.

Frankly, I can say that I probably would not have been so ready. Even as a relatively young pastor, even as someone who went straight from high school to college to seminary to my first parish, you'd think that I knew that I was going to go into ministry my whole life, but I didn't.

I don't think I was ready the first time that Jesus started calling me to follow. I needed to get some of those unknowns sorted out first. But just like Jonah in our first reading, eventually I had heard the message enough to become a believer, to turn toward that call rather than run away, rather than hide. I just needed a nudge or two along the way.

God and Jesus don't call everyone to be pastors, but I know that God calls each one of us just the same.

Maybe one of the reasons that the first disciples were so ready and willing to follow Jesus was because he framed the work he was calling them to do in terms of what they were already familiar with. He didn't look at a group of fishermen and say "Hey, I'd like you to come be healers." He looked at a group of fishermen and said "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people."

And through that, I have to believe that sometimes Jesus' call to ministry comes in the form of something familiar. I'll never forget hearing the story of the middle-aged man who began a monthly free dinner at my internship congregation, he told me "I like to eat. I like to cook. I wondered if God might be able to use that, because I was so thankful for everything that God had given me."

And even though I followed the call to be a pastor, my experience answering calls for search and rescue and fire and EMS has continued to be a blessing and an asset for me in ministry.

And whether you're a pastor or a parent or a teacher or a garbage man, you have a way to answer God's call. You may not feel like you've heard it just yet, but it's there.

We just have to be ready to follow when Jesus calls. And I know that's the basis for Paul's confusing warning about time being short in the letter to Corinthians. It's simply yet another encouragement to put away the things that might prevent us from answering the call, so that when we have that experience where God is saying "Come and follow me," we can rise up, ready to do the Lord's work. Thanks be to God. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

P: For the church throughout the world, for pastors and teachers, for deacons and deaconesses, and for musicians and servers, that all proclaim the good news of God's reconciling love, let us pray.

A: Have mercy, O God.

P: For skies and seas, for birds and fish, for favorable weather and clean water, and for the well-being of creation, that God raise up advocates and scientists to guide our care for all the earth, let us pray.

A: Have mercy, O God.

P: For those who provide leadership in our cities and around the world, for nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations, for planning commissions and homeless advocates, that God inspire all people in the just use of wealth, let us pray.

A: Have mercy, O God.

P: For those who are sick, distressed, or grieving; for the outcast and all who await relief (*especially*), that in the midst of suffering, God's peace and mercy surround them, let us pray.

A: Have mercy, O God.

P: For our congregation and community, for families big and small, and for the organizations that meet here during the week, that God's steadfast love serve as a model for all relationships, let us pray.

A: Have mercy, O God.

P: In thanksgiving for our ancestors in the faith whose lives serve as an example of gospel living, that they point us to salvation through Christ, let us pray.

A: Have mercy, O God.

P: Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

A: Amen.