



# Mount Calvary Connected February 4, 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.*

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## A Message from Pastor Scott

At its February meeting, the congregational council will elect new officers for one-year terms. Please make sure to thank Sean Horn, our current president, Mark Rychak, our current vice-president, Ray Leverknight, our current secretary, and Cindy Solarczyk, our current treasurer, for their service this past year. Also, please be sure to thank whoever is eventually elected to serve as our council officers until next year's annual meeting when time and opportunity allow.

The change to a one-year term for officers is consistent with adaptations made to our constitution and bylaws in the early winter of 2019. The feeling was that asking potential council officers to serve for three-year terms would unduly limit the number of candidates who would make themselves available. It was also felt that having to change treasurers every year, or even every three years, would not be good for the congregation and its ministry. As a result of this feeling, the constitution and bylaws were also changed so that the congregational council could appoint a treasurer for an unlimited period of service; provided annual audits spoke to the quality and the honesty of their work. I am pleased to announce we have found someone who was qualified to be appointed in this way. Her name is Bev Coughenour and she was appointed as our next treasurer at a recent council meeting.

Bev is originally from Somerset County where she attended Friedens Lutheran Church and served as that congregation's treasurer for about ten years. The now retired, but long-time pastoral team at Friedens Lutheran, Ed and Pernelle DeVore, recommended Bev for similar service at Mount Calvary. Bev graduated from California University of Pennsylvania with a bachelor's degree in business administration that featured a concentration in accounting. Working for a CPA named Craig Miller and then Riggs Industries, and doing seasonal tax work for Bulow, Hottle, and Company along the way, Bev has been doing books and involved with various kinds of accounting for over forty years. Still doing some part-time work in the field, she's now retired and looking forward to travel and enjoying the grandchildren she already has and those she hopes are still to come.

After relocating to our area, Bev attended services for a while and then ultimately joined our congregation by way of membership transfer in early 2019. Bev did some research on Mount Calvary before coming for the very first time; impressed by the sermons and other materials she found on our website. Since coming to Mount Calvary, Bev has continued to be fed spiritually and has felt adequately and sensitively welcomed. Should you wish to meet Bev or ask her about a financial issue, Bev will be at church on Wednesdays from 10-12. You can call her at 814-266-4859 or schedule an appointment. An active participant in our drive-in services throughout the summer and fall Bev is now worshipping remotely through the resources we have made available; hoping like the rest of us that COVID-19 will soon dissipate to the degree that a return to something like normalcy will be both safe and possible.

Like four of the five council members who will be appointed at Sunday's annual meeting, Bev is indicative of a positive and healthy trend that continues at Mount Calvary. Healthy congregations invite, welcome, feed, and include. As Jesus told the first disciples on the day of his resurrection, our mission is to go

and make disciples of every people and nation, baptizing them, and teaching them to obey everything our Lord has commanded, which of course, includes service in his Church (Matthew 28:16-20). With Bev and several of our new council members being examples, we've been doing this at Mount Calvary a lot in recent years. Even in 2020, a year when a global pandemic changed everything, we've been blessed to welcome nearly sixty new visitors, with two-thirds of them returning three or more times. Including this new batch of returnees, this has happened three hundred times since our partnership began just about five years ago and this doesn't count the over thirty inactive members who have become active again over the same period. Quite clearly, we've been inviting, welcoming, and feeding. Now we just need to keep including, with some indication we're at least heading in the right direction.

Pastor Scott

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

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### **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.

Psalms 122:1

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

Cindy Solarczyk

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### **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

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### **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](http://www.rebrand.ly/MtCalvaryWorship)

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### **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.

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### **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!

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### **Year Round Giving Tree**

For the month of February, the money collected will continue to Pro Papa Missions to help the country of Honduras. It was decided that we will keep the same organization for two months instead of one. Thank you to everyone who has bought a mask or made a donation up to this point!

The Social Ministry team would also like to thank the following individuals for making this tree a success. It would not have been possible without them:

Anita Brodt - tote bags  
Barb Meltenberger - masks and tote bags  
Marelyn McClland - masks  
Jane Layton - student bags  
Charlie Nemeth - Giving Tree

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### **About Our Members:**

**James Balogh** passed away on January 30, 2021.

**Gerald Barrick** is home from the hospital.

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

Thank you for the Beautiful flower I received after Christmas. I am still enjoying it today. I have received my first Covid 19 vaccine shot and hope to soon rejoin my friends at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church.

Jayne Dunbar

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.

### **Birthdays for the Week Feb. 7 - Feb. 13.**

Natalie Zerby

**Feb. 7** - Brady Bachota, Robert Colvin, Michael Zerby

**Feb. 8** - Yvonne Newman

**Feb. 9** - Helen LaTulippe, Bonnie Logar

**Feb. 10** - Maddox Intihar, William Nihoff

**Feb. 11** - Jacqueline Cassidy, Jonathan Elliott, Debra Sarlouis

**Feb. 12** - John Lund Jr., Susan Osborn, Karen Trabold, Leah Warmkessel, Megan Wiley

**Feb. 13** - Barbara Kane

Linda & Dick, Jamie, Don, Joanne, Shirley, Chris, Tracy, Flanagan Family, Roy, Joyce, Dolly & Chis Palm, David, Karen, Lauren, Billy, Rick, Joe, Pat Conklin, Gerald Barrick, Patti Sliko, Brooke, Balogh Family, El Warshel, and Grosholz Family.

### **Remember those that prayer has been requested:**

#### **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 31, 2021.**

#### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Make whole all that is broken and replace our confusion with truth, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **A: Amen.**

#### **FIRST READING: DEUTERONOMY 18:15-20**

*Today's reading is part of a longer discourse in Deuteronomy, an updating of the law for the Israelite community as the people wait to enter the promised land. Here Moses assures the people that God will continue to guide them through prophets who will proclaim the divine word.*

Moses said: <sup>15</sup>The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. <sup>16</sup>This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." <sup>17</sup>Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. <sup>18</sup>I will raise up for them a

prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. <sup>19</sup>Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. <sup>20</sup>But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die.”

### **SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13**

*Paul is concerned about the way some Corinthian Christians use their freedom in Christ as license to engage in non-Christian behavior that sets a damaging example to other, impressionable believers. Christians have a responsibility to each other that their behavior does not cause another to sin.*

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. <sup>2</sup>Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; <sup>3</sup>but anyone who loves God is known by him.

<sup>4</sup>Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” <sup>5</sup>Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—<sup>6</sup>yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

<sup>7</sup>It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. <sup>8</sup>“Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. <sup>9</sup>But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup>For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? <sup>11</sup>So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. <sup>12</sup>But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

### **GOSPEL: MARK 1:21-28**

*Forces that would bring death and disease have taken hold of a man, yet they recognize Jesus and know what his power means for them. Jesus commands these forces to leave and people are amazed at his authority.*

<sup>21</sup>Jesus and his disciples went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup>They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup>Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, <sup>24</sup>and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” <sup>25</sup>But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” <sup>26</sup>And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. <sup>27</sup>They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” <sup>28</sup>At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

### **SERMON BY PASTOR SCOTT**

Jesus is here! Raised from the dead, never to die again, seated at the right hand of the Father with all of heaven’s resources forever at his disposal, Jesus is here each and every time we gather in his name and around God’s word and sacraments. And today’s reading from Mark gives us a good idea about what Jesus is up to when he joins us through these gatherings and others like them. When Jesus shows up, our reading from Mark suggests, change for each of us individually and change for our congregation is on the agenda.

I mean how else are we to interpret what happens in our reading from Mark. Jesus shows up in a church just like this one and does a couple of notable things. First, he teaches with authority; departing from the conventional teaching of his time and calling for change in the process. And then, through an exorcism, Jesus actually enacts change in an individual and his church. It's a common thread that weaves its way through the gospels. Worship in Christ's presence changes doubting Thomas into a believer. Worship in Christ's presence creates the same change in those who celebrate holy communion with Jesus at Emmaus. Put it all together and it becomes evident that Jesus isn't just here today. He's here to change us and our congregation today. And by the way, it would seem that our ability to change will have much to say about the truth and the sincerity of our religion.

Just think about how our reading from Mark concludes. Jesus teaches, then he exorcizes, and then those present are refreshed and amazed by what he has done. Jesus has authority in our reading from Mark, Jesus and his teaching are new, as in new and improved, in our reading from Mark, because Jesus manages to pull off what eludes so much of what has been passed off as religion over the years. When a church falls under the management of Jesus Christ, our reading from Mark informs us, it changes; changes in the direction of Jesus' perfect example. The same happens to individuals who are led to regard Jesus as their Lord. But before we go much further, let's be clear about this. Though it can happen, change doesn't always haul us off into uncharted territory. Sometimes the change that true and genuine religion brings about carries us back into the well-charted territory of the past.

Martin Luther is a case in point. As is well known, Luther felt the Church of his present had lost its way. But he was equally convinced the Church had once been right, or at least closer to right than it had become. What was needed wasn't a new playbook. It was the rediscovery of how things had been before the Church had gone south. It was time to learn how to read the Bible in its original languages rather than relying on the Church to tell you what it said. It was time to see how the teaching and the preaching of the present stacked up against the preaching and teaching of an earlier and closer to the original past; as in the findings of prior Church councils and the writings of Church fathers like Saint Augustine. This is how Luther called for change. He said it was time to become more traditional rather than less traditional. As I've said, sometimes change in Jesus' perfect direction requires reclaiming the past more than it requires discovering what's still uncharted. But even then, change is still scary. It's one thing to say that change in the direction of Jesus' perfect example is the measure of true and genuine religion. It's quite another to pull such change off, whether it be individually or congregationally.

As an example of this, think of those churches which teach the King James Version is the only trustworthy Bible. We know this to be patently false. The King James Version is at least three layers removed from the earliest Bibles. First, a guy named Jerome translated the Bible into Latin. Known as the Latin Vulgate, this was for centuries the Bible of the Church. Then, having some, but not the best early Bibles, a guy named Erasmus came out with a somewhat corrected version of Jerome's version. And then, those responsible for the King James Version translated Erasmus' new and improved Latin version into English; having no access to the best and earliest manuscripts of Scripture now at our disposal. This is what happened. It's beyond dispute. And no matter how you slice it being at least three layers removed from the original is never going to be as good as going back to the best and oldest version you can find and translating it into the language of your choice. This is the Bible we use in worship versus the King James Version. Ours is just one layer removed from the original. The King James Version is at least three layers removed from the original. But can you imagine the stir that would transpire if we told those who insist on the King James Version that they needed to become more traditional. Even though the facts would clearly be on our side, fear and suspicion would likely drown out everything we said. Whether it involves becoming more traditional or less traditional, change is always scary and disconcerting and truth and nothing but truth sometimes isn't enough to inspire change. But then again, change in the direction of Jesus' perfect example is the measure of true and genuine religion according to our reading from Mark. How do we effectively reconcile this tension?

To use the language of 1<sup>st</sup> John chapter 4, we do it by testing the spirits before we dash off in the direction of change. On the one hand, this involves testing the spirits calling for change against the words of the Holy Spirit who has gone on record through the scriptures. But testing the spirits also involves practicing interpersonal awareness. As both our readings from Deuteronomy and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians acknowledge today, sometimes the truth and nothing but the truth is too much for too many to handle at a particular moment in time. When this is the case, it's better to wait for comfort levels to rise, better to wait for the right message and messenger to emerge, than it is to insist upon change now. We are, after all, in this thing called church together. The truth and nothing but the truth won't be worth much if we're the only ones around to enjoy it and in chasing so many of our siblings in the Lord away our reading from 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians says we will have sinned against Christ himself. And so, as we never forget that change in the direction of Jesus' perfect example is the measure of true and genuine religion, let's also test the spirits--practice interpersonal awareness--so we become more aware of the right time to implement change. When that time has come or is still a way off, I have found that through those around us Jesus shall and shall not say, "Get ready! Here I come!"

As a closing example of this, our communion rail is in the process of being refinished. Because they've told me so when other forms of communion have been practiced, I know rail communion means an awful lot to many here at Mount Calvary. Thanks to COVID-19, having to commune in their pews or in their cars, or having to forgo communion altogether, has been a real challenge for those who feel this way. Thankfully this challenge has more often than not been handled with grace and supported by the love for neighbor that would not want to put others at risk unnecessarily. But believe you me, I know pew communion and car seat communion will cease once current health conditions change. It's not that communion away from the rail isn't communion. When blessed with Christ's words of institution by an approved agent of Christ's church for the purpose of communal worship, Christ is fully and completely present in both elements of the holy meal no matter how they are distributed and no matter who distributes them. But even though this is the truth and nothing but the truth I've more than once been clearly told that living this truth out, apart from the necessities born of a global pandemic, would be too much for too many to bear here at Mount Calvary. And so, even though it's not and never will be strictly necessary, it will be back to rail communion when circumstances allow. But even as this happens someday, I hope you'll join me in listening for other instances in which the potential for change is blessed by hearing Christ say through others, "Get ready! Here I come!" For it's in testing the spirits, in picking our spots, in practicing interpersonal awareness, that we marry the necessity of change in the direction of Christ's perfect example with the equally important task of not getting out ahead of the One who has a time and a season for everything under heaven. 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 all who share the gospel and proclaim freedom in Christ throughout the world: prophets, teachers, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders; for the church and its ministries, let us pray. **A: Have mercy, O God.**

P: For all God's works in creation: plants and animals, water and soil, forests and farms; and for those tasked with protecting our natural resources and all that exists, let us pray. **A: Have mercy, O God.**

P: For government and leaders: cities and nations, rescue professionals and legal aid attorneys, elected officials and grassroots organizers; for all responsible for the well-being of civil society, let us pray. **A: Have mercy, O God.**

P: For those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit: those who are sick and hospitalized, those living with HIV/AIDS, those struggling with mental illness, those who are hungry or homeless, and all in any need (especially); for caregivers, hospice workers, and home health aides, let us pray. **A: Have mercy, O God.**

P: For the concerns of this congregation: those who travel, those absent from worship, those celebrating birthdays or anniversaries; for the people of God in this place and for other needs in our community (especially), let us pray.

**A: Have mercy, O God.**

P: For the covenant God made with us in the waters of baptism, in thanksgiving for the baptized who have died in the Lord, 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.**