



Mount Calvary Connected April 29, 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

Not including Easter, this past week worship attendance exceeded 200 people for the first since February of 2020. This was once our norm, but it hasn't been for some time. Perhaps it's a sign that in spite of spiking COVID-19 cases in our area health and healing are drawing closer to us. I hope so. Like you I long for the return of communion at the rail, as well as the resumption of congregational singing.

When they met last week, members of the All-Parish Ministries Committee began to discuss how we'll use music once in-person congregational singing is able to return. It was a good discussion; a model for how all discussion should be carried out at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church. Those present expressed their thoughts openly. There were a variety of opinions expressed. No one overplayed their hand, and everyone left feeling heard. This is the Church at its best. To echo Colossians 3:12-14, we "bear with one another" and "clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience," as well as "love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." When the Church lives up to this calling through the Holy Spirit, it's a beautiful thing. I felt privileged to be the pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church last Tuesday night.

As I think about what was said last Tuesday night, it's clear that more discussion about how to use music on the other side of the pandemic will need to take place. In this millennium, our congregation's use of music has been a back-and-forth affair. There have been the usual debates about how much Christmas music to use during Advent and how often to sing the golden-oldies. But there's also been resistance to the introduction of our denomination's latest hymnal—*Evangelical Lutheran Worship* published back in 2006. With a new hymnal supplement in the vein of 1995's *With One Voice* now available, this is surely something to remember.

More recently, there have also been debates about how hymnal-centered our use of music should be. Now, as in the past, our pews are peopled by traditionalists, those who are drawn to more contemporary instrumentation and lyrics, and those who like a little bit of everything. Prior to the pandemic, those who commented on our use of music were largely traditionalists who wanted to sing more than just the golden oldies, but there were also those who felt touched and moved by more modern compositions. Now there are also those who have made known their appreciation for the use of secular music with lyrics applicable to issues of faith. As your pastor, I no longer really know how to handicap the congregation's musical tastes. People really and truly are all over the map in a way they have not been before. Whether it's through the use of more modern Christian music, more secular music with faith-friendly lyrics, or some combination of the two, it seems likely that our post-pandemic use of music will not simply reinstate what was customary before the pandemic. How will we arrive at the right mix of music or the right combination of services traveling in this or that lane?

The answer is through more conversation and sharing like that which took place at last week's meeting of the All-Parish Ministries Committee. Presently, no one knows enough to say how we should structure our use of music on the other side of the pandemic. Only two things are clear. The congregation has evolved over the past year and people find music to be an essential part of our worship life, even as their tastes for music vary. There certainly has to be a way to fit all of the pieces together, but it's going to require widespread sharing and conversation before it's discovered. For better or for worse, I am not a leader who will lead on the basis of supposition or conjecture. My years in the business world have left me absolutely wed to proceeding based on measurable information when and where it's available. It's why I hope you'll share your musical tastes and sensibilities with me. If there's enough conversation, I and others will be left more able to measure where things presently lie with respect to music. By way of disclosure, I am traditionalist who could easily return to being a traditionalist, as I also am a traditionalist who has become more open to the use of less traditional musical forms in worship. Like the congregation as a whole, I have strong reason to believe, I am all over the map. Where are you when it comes to music in worship? Like the other members of the All-Parish Ministries Committee, I'm hoping you'll tell me so we can navigate the future based upon measurable information when and where it's available.

Pastor Scott

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

Bake Sale



Our WELCA ladies will be joining the fun of the Flea Market on **Saturday, May 8th**, by selling baked goods. If you would like to make your favorite goodies and donate them to the sale, please bring them to the church **Friday, May 7th by 12 noon**. We ask that items be packaged and/or wrapped ready to sell. There is a sign-up list in the narthex to let us know what you will be making. All proceeds from the sale will go to property committee to help purchase the automatic locking doors. Any questions check with Carol Sauter or Kathy Ling.

Flea Market Reminder

The Flea Market is scheduled for **May 8, 2021 from 8:00 to 12:00**. If you have any donations, you may bring them in any time between 9-3 pm, Monday – Thursday and place them in the hallway by the old lounge next to Sander Hall. PLEASE NO TV'S OR CLOTHES. If you have any questions, please contact either Janis Daily or Joan Bunnell.

Weed and Feed

The Property Committee will have a weed and feed night on **Thursday, May 13, at 5:00 PM**. Please bring your shovels, rakes, etc. There will be plenty of mulch to spread. Many hands will make light work. Food will be provided.

Backyard Cookie Collection will be Thursday, May 13, 2021.

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!

Calling Graduates & Families

The Youth Ministry team would like to honor all those graduating as part of the class of 2021 (high school, trade school, college, etc.) To ensure we don't miss anyone, please forward information about graduates to Pastor Jonathan, including their name, where/what they're graduating from, and a recent photo if you have one.

Memorials

Linda McQuaide - Dana Begley

Tim McQuaide - Dana Begley

Jim Balogh - Eric & Janet Lynam, Shirley Glova, Cindy Solarczyk, Brian & Lori Hiltz, Linda McMullen, Laura Kern Nehrebecki

Peg Felix - Linda McMullen

Edith Miller - Linda McMullen, Claudia Plows, Nikki Stein, Chelsea Lichey, Debbie Morgart

Catherine Kinzey - Stanley & Maryan Yoder, Brian & Lori Hiltz, Cindy Solarczyk, Linda McMullen

Bill McMullen - Brian & Lori Hiltz, Cindy Solarczyk

Stimulus Challenge

A member of our congregation has challenged others to put their economic stimulus money to good use!

One morning in March, a member of the congregation presented Pastor Scott with a check for \$140. She shared that she had received her "economic impact payment" (stimulus check) and since she had not been adversely impacted by the pandemic, she was giving a portion of it as a tithe, and wanted to challenge others to do the same.

Since sharing this news, other families in the congregation have come forward and over a thousand dollars has been collected. Soon, we'll poll those who contributed to this challenge and mutually decide on a worthy cause in the community to direct the money toward. But, in the meantime, there is still opportunity to make YOUR tithe!

If you'd like to make a gift, simply write a check to Mount Calvary, with "Stimulus Challenge" in the memo line. Checks can be included in the offering plate during worship, dropped off at the church office during business hours, or mailed to the church at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, 1000 Scalp Ave, Johnstown, PA 15904.

Weekly Wednesday, Drive in Services

Wednesday evening drive-in services have resumed at 6:30 pm. Download a bulletin from: <https://www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/bulletins/>, bring your own bread for communion, and tune your radio to 88.3FM and you are set!

See you there!

Church Directory

We would like to update the church directory. Many people are going to only cell phones instead of landlines. Please call the church office to update your number and any other information that has changed, address, email etc.

Birthdays and Anniversary for the Week May 2 - May 8, 2021.

May 2 - Sue Carnevali, Colin Cunningham

May 3 - Kathleen Harriger, Michael Hill, Max Lawn

May 4 - Keith Colvin, Laura Gusmenotti, William Kidd

May 5 - Marcie Kist

May 6 - Dustin Pringle, Brian Selepack, Randall Sterner

May 7 - Eli Swartz, Charles Verostick

May 8 - Alyssa Gusmenotti, Shane Katrancha, Thomas Lushko

About Our Members:

Pastor Scott & members of Mt. Calvary Luther Church,

We thank you for your prayers and my hospital visit.

The procedure went well and I'm (Brent too) on the way to getting back to all the activities we enjoy, not the least of which is church.

See you there,

Brent & Ida Mary Williams

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

Remember those that prayer has been requested:

Linda & Dick, Irene, Vic, Midge, Kevin, Anita, Claudia, Bill, Liam, Dolly & Chis Palm, David, Karen, Lauren, Billy, Patti Sliko, Pat, McMullen Family, Maxine Hale, Pastor Greg Harbaugh & Family, Pastor Toby Holland & Family, Linda Sell, Patti Finnegan, Richard Isaac Pentz, Michelle Roberts, Jill McEntee, and Cissy.

NEW Financial Update through April

Though still in the red for the year, Mt. Calvary's financial position improved as February gave way to March. Positively, things have gotten even better in the month of April. This was anticipated, but it was still reassuring to see all the pieces come together. For this year's plan to work, we all just need to do our part by maintaining what we gave the prior year or going back to the levels of giving in place before the pandemic disrupted so much. As to committee expenditures, all but the Property Team are currently under budget. Once winter-related expenses give way to spring and summer, much of the current overage related to property expenditures should work itself out.

CONDENSED WORSHIP FOR THE WEEKEND OF SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 2021.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord Christ, good shepherd of the sheep, you seek the lost and guide us into your fold. Feed us, and we shall be satisfied; heal us, and we shall be whole. Make us one with you, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: ACTS 4:5-12

Peter and John had been arrested the previous day because they were proclaiming the news of the resurrection to the people. In today's reading, Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit so that he can proclaim salvation in Jesus' name to the religious authorities.

⁵The next day [the] rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, ⁶with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, ¹⁰let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.

¹¹This Jesus is ‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.’

¹²There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

PSALM: PSALM 23

P: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

A: The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.

P: You restore my soul, O LORD, and guide me along right pathways for your name’s sake.

A: Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

P: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

A: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

SECOND READING: 1 JOHN 3:16-24

Jesus’ death on our behalf is the clearest demonstration of divine love. This is the very love we share with others, not just through our words but especially through our deeds. In sharing such love we fulfill God’s commandments.

¹⁶We know love by this, that [Jesus Christ] laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. ¹⁷How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

¹⁸Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. ¹⁹And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; ²²and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

²³And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

GOSPEL: JOHN 10:11-18

In language that recalls the twenty-third psalm, Jesus describes himself as the shepherd who cares for his sheep. He is willing to die for them, and he is able to overcome death for them.

[Jesus said:] ¹¹“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

SERMON BY PASTOR SCOTT

In some ways, the song we just got done hearing (40 Hour Week by Alabama) is hopelessly out of date. Released just thirty-six years ago in 1985, it gives thanks for all kinds of blue-collar jobs which no longer employ as many as they once did. Today, Detroit is no longer synonymous with automaking. Pittsburgh is no longer filled with steel workers. Today there are fewer coal miners in West Virginia than there once were. Today the family farm can no longer compete with the corporate farm or the multinational farm. Today the advancing tide of driverless vehicles does not bode well for those in the transportation industry. Fact is we're no longer the industrial economy we once were. For the educated and the uneducated jobs are tougher and tougher to find and to hold; particularly jobs which will support a middle-class lifestyle. And all of this was already starting to happen when Alabama released its song in 1985. The notes of protest in the song aren't hard to hear. Industrial America, blue-collar America, had a spirit you can't replace with no machine the song says at one point. There's something lost, this song says, when the common good doesn't include each of us and when we don't each support the common good with our love and our labor. But what is it that's lost? With so much now different than it once was, what is it we are now seeking to recapture?

In the simplest language possible, I'd call it the Christian ethic or the Christian spirit. Christians are big, very big, on the value and the dignity of each human life. We insist that everyone has gifts which can enhance our common life together and that our common life together shall suffer when the gifts we all have aren't cultivated and utilized in affirming and respectful ways. It's a take on things that goes all the way back to the first chapter of the Bible where we're told that every human being has been created in the image of God. And this conviction that we're all valuable, all capable of helping the sum become greater than its parts, also shows up in today's appointed readings from Scripture.

To start with our gospel, why is Jesus the Good Shepherd? Because he sacrifices himself for the sheep; laying down his life to keep the flock alive and in circulation. Jesus, through the cross, recognizes that the shepherd is not more important than the sheep; that the common good suffers when we don't stand in the way of wolves that threaten to gobble up some or all of the flock. The Good Shepherd is the Good Shepherd because he lays down his life out of the recognition that the sum can only be greater than its parts when all of the parts are around to support it. It's a very Christian take on things that also informs our reading from 1st John.

To echo what's said in verse seventeen, is it good or bad if someone with the world's goods, someone with earthly means, ignores those in need? According to our reading from 1st John, it's bad; one hundred and one percent bad; a complete departure from the Christian way bad. When we're true to our identity as Christians, we love as Christ loved. And how did Christ love? He laid down his life for the sheep. He sacrificed himself for the greater good. He died for you and for me because we're important; because the common good suffers when we're not around to support it in a way that also supports us. Do you hear how St. John was writing the lyrics to "40 Hour Week" long before Alabama first sang them in the mid-eighties. We Christians are big, very big, on the value and the dignity of every life and gift. Systems that exclude, systems with super-

sized winners and super-sized losers, are not good systems as far as we're concerned. We've all got gifts which can support the common good and which the common good itself should support. And this brings us to our reading from Acts.

Today's reading from Acts is a continuation of last week's reading from the same book. Last week Peter explained to a dumbstruck crowd that the healing of a cripple had put the wonder of Easter on full display; proving the tomb was empty and that Jesus was the King of kings and Lord of lords. In between that sermon and another one like it today, Peter and John are arrested by the priestly establishment; setting up today's additional opportunity to bear witness. There are definitely some points of continuity between this week's reading and last week's reading from Acts, but here's the thing we don't want to miss. Jesus is healing outside of the priestly establishment. Jesus is healing through blue-collar fishermen from remote and rural Galilee. To put a more contemporary spin on it, Jesus is healing through the Detroit autoworker; through the Pittsburgh steelworker; through the West Virginia coalminer; through the Kansas wheat farmer; through the truck driver employed by Young American Furniture or W.C. McQuaide or Hard Hat Trucking here in Johnstown. Maybe it's because the priestly establishment has gotten too big for its britches; making its contributions more important than those of everybody else. Maybe it's just to affirm that we all contribute to the Kingdom of God in ways as important as they are various and numerous. But one way or another we arrive back at the Christian ethic or Christian spirit our society is perhaps in danger of losing today. With Jesus healing through fishermen, we're told we're all important; that none of us are throwaway stuff. For all of today's readings, we win when we all win and keep making the sacrifices, keep carrying the crosses, that enable this to happen. All for one and one for all are we supposed to be. And this too is reflected in Scripture and in Alabama's song from 1985.

Up to now, I've talked primarily about the value and the dignity of each person; of how God creates all of us to make a profound and incredible difference. But this also can be overdone. In Alabama's song, the Detroit autoworker, the Pittsburgh steelworker, the West Virginia coalminer, the Kansas wheat farmer, the Johnstown truck driver are not ends in themselves, but spokes in a larger wheel. They all work to send it on down the line so the next person might make their own vital and individual contribution to the common good. While the value of every person is affirmed and never surrendered, supporting the wheel, keeping we and me in balance, is always part of the equation too. It can be a tricky balance to maintain. I'm not less important than anyone else, but I'm also not more important than anyone else. The point is not for me to win alone, but for us to win together; becoming more than the sum of our parts by looking after the health and the wellbeing of our shared community. But as tricky as maintaining this balance can be, it is the work which the Lord Jesus Christ has made our life's work. "Love your neighbor as yourself," he has said; promising that if you keep the community to which you and your neighbor belong healthy you both will prosper and the common good too. And if there's any question about why we should consistently seek this kind of me and we balance in our lives, our reading from 1st John certainly steps up to the plate with more than one answer.

For starters, there's the familiar refrain that Jesus did it for us so we should do it for others. There's also the reminder that as the clear winner on Easter morning, the One we now rightly hail as Lord of lords and King of kings, Jesus is quite worthy and deserving of our obedient commitment to the community-centered work he has sanctioned. But there's also what has become this decidedly Lutheran accent. As Christians, we go to work for each other not for extra credit, not to pay off the gift of salvation, but to grow in the confidence that we are in fact members of Christ's flock. When we love our neighbor as if they were our very self, our reading from 1st John says we know that we are from the truth otherwise known as Jesus Christ. And as the same reading goes on to say, over time, this confidence that we are indeed members of Christ's flock becomes contagious; leading to greater and greater boldness and additional confirmation that Christ is our Good Shepherd and that we are sheep who hear and respond to his voice. And so, let's get busy; going to work for each other and the rest of our community. Not only because it shall be to everyone's benefit, but also because it will lead us to be more confident and competent Christians. Amen!

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

P: Loving Shepherd, you know your own and your own know you. Your voice calls us to your loving embrace. Strengthen your church throughout the world that we bear witness to your expansive love. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: Gracious Shepherd, you are generous with the gifts of goodness and mercy. Restore your creation to wholeness so that cities and towns, countryside and wilderness, may abound with life. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: Hope-giving Shepherd, the nations and peoples are your heritage. Place into the hearts of all leaders and rulers the passion to serve. Crucify any desire to overpower others and give leaders joy in lifting up the lowly. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: Abiding Shepherd, your love flows as we reach out to those around us. Move us with your Spirit, so that we lay down our lives for those in need (*especially*). Help us love one another in truth and action. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: Saving Shepherd, you restore us to wholeness. Help our community in our life together and give us vigor as a people of faith. In the midst of challenges and opportunities (*specific concerns may be named*), fill us anew with you Holy Spirit. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: Eternal Shepherd, you hold us securely in your loving hands. In the assurance of resurrection hope, we remember our loved ones who have died in you (*especially the evangelist Mark*). Bring us, with them, to dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: Lord Jesus you are always with us. As we prepare for the call of our next Bishop, remind us of your presence. Show us the way the Holy Spirit is moving in our midst. Lead us in this time of discernment and show us where we should go. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.