



Mount Calvary Connected August 19, 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,

It's been a while since I've written one of these pieces. We've been busy, but all the effort has borne fruit rather than returning empty. One indication of the busy summer we've been having involves funerals and funeral dinners. After a period of inactivity due to the pandemic, our funeral dinner team has now served three families in less than six weeks. As for funerals and burials, there have been six in seven weeks. Along with the funerals, there have been five baptisms this summer, two couples preparing for marriage, five weeks of coverage for Pastor Jonathan at Benscreek Lutheran, drive-in worship on Wednesday evenings, two different radio broadcasts on Sundays, and production of videos for those who are still worshipping virtually. Put it all together and it's what you call busy, but I'm not complaining in the least. I love my job and the results continue to be gratifying, even as the long wait for a return to something like normalcy continues to weight on me and likely on you as well.

At the behest of our evangelism team, I compared this summer's worship attendance to worship attendance in 2019 and to worship attendance in 2016, our first year together. What I discovered is that this summer's worship attendance is slightly better than it was in 2016 and that as compared to 2019 this summer's worship attendance is only down by 1.4%. Does this mean everyone has returned to in-person worship? It does not. We still have folks listening on the radio or watching videos. Does it mean our current ministry has generated an approval rating of one hundred percent? It does not and it never will. Does it mean people are no longer dying, becoming homebound, or moving out of the area? It does not and this last collection of variables continues to assert the greatest downward pull when it comes to attendance. But even as the glass is not completely full, we are holding our own. We've been busy and working hard and the effort has not returned empty. Thanks be to God! Thanks be to all who have been working so hard to make it happen!

The current state of our finances also speak to how our hard work is producing dividends. Through the end of July, we remain in the black. With the move of a significant donor and the ongoing impact of other moves and deaths, as well as the pandemic itself, things are tighter than they once were, but we're again holding our own. Offerings and other revenues continue to come in pretty much just as we thought they would. Thank you!!! The same can be said for expenses, with only the property team over budget and its overage tracking down not up. Again, we're holding our own at a time that remains difficult for many and there are signs that this fall will continue the trends I've noted, with ministry growth a part of the picture too.

As she has been for some time now, Sue Cade, our executive secretary, has been a big part of all the busyness I have noted. She has been the very definition of dependable and flexible since the pandemic began. Her hours and her responsibilities have shifted again and again. Through it all, she's been steady and invested in our congregation's people and in our shared journey. But normal has been long in coming for Sue these past eighteen months and there's still no telling when anything like normal will return for her position at Mount Calvary. Understandably, this has led Sue to determine now is a good time for her to seek employment opportunities that more fully meet her needs and those of her family. With the congregational council accepting

her resignation on Tuesday night, Sue will work her normal hours through September 2nd, be off for the next two weeks, and then perhaps continue through the end of the month. Her exact end date is still to be determined. In the meantime, we will be working very diligently to cover Sue's responsibilities in the way that works best for Mount Calvary both in the short-term and in the long-term. When you have the opportunity, please thank Sue for her tenure at Mount Calvary. Additionally, should you have an interest in potentially taking on some of Sue's current responsibilities as our executive secretary, please be in communication with me or with Joan Hunter, a member of our council who worked in the field of human resources for decades. Joan's email address is Joan20457@gmail.com. My email address continues to be sklimke6@gmail.com.

Your Partner in Mission and Ministry,

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

Weekly Wednesday, Drive in Services

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

WE ARE BACK

Great news. Our WELCA group will be holding its "Picnic in The Parking Lot" Saturday, August 28th, following the 5:30 service.

WELCA will supply the hot dogs and condiments, and drinks. We ask if you are planning on attending to please bring your favorite covered dish.

There will be a sign-up sheet beginning this weekend. Put your name, # attending and what your delicious dish will be; perhaps a casserole, or a great salad, a tasty dessert or whatever it may be. We look forward to seeing you all for fun, fellowship and great food.

Personal Care Kits

The following items are needed for the personal care kits. Please have them at the church by Sunday September 5.

-Towel: lightweight bath size (between 20x40" and 27x52"), dark colored recommended

-Toothbrush: adult size in original packaging. Multipacks may be used be sealing individual toothbrush in a business size envelope; no plastic bags or wraps.

- Metal nail clippers: attached file optional, remove packaging

-Soap: 2 bath size bars (4 to 5 oz.), any brand, in original packaging

-Comb: sturdy, remove packaging

Affirmation of Baptism

On August 15, we welcomed Samantha Jean Wilson into Christ's Church through Affirmation of Baptism.

Flowers

In honor of Bob & Kim McMullen's 35th wedding anniversary by Dick & Lois Sholtis.

God's Work, Our Hands Sunday

On **Sunday, September 12**, after the service, we will be putting together the personal care kits to be sent out while enjoying a meal and fellowship. If you would like to join us, please contact Mike Kozak at 244-6880 before September 1. This will give us an idea on how much food we need to prepare. Thank you!

Throughout the summer, some of littlest Lutherans have been learning how to be secret agents, GOD's Secret Agents. It's our mini vacation bible school for preschool and elementary aged students focused on how WE can change the world with secret powers like generosity, compassion, forgiveness and more!



Each night, our aspiring secret agents hear a story about one of the secret skills that God gives us all to help make the world a better place through a story, a craft, and games. And afterwards, we get to share a meal with our friends and parents!

There's one more night left this summer on **Saturday, August 21st!** Join us at 4pm for VBS, 5pm for dinner, and stick around for Saturday evening worship at 5:30pm.

RSVPs helpful, but not necessary. For more information, contact Pastor Jonathan at
RevJonoAdams@gmail.com.

MOUNT CALVARY
LUTHERAN CHURCH
**FALL 2021 YOUTH
SUNDAY SCHOOL**

BEGINS SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 12, 2021

We're gearing up for our fall Sunday School, and we'd love to have your children participate! On Sunday, September 12th, we will kick off our fall program of Christian education for the youth of the congregation. We'll be in touch with more information via email, mail, and phone for families with children, but in order to best prepare for your children, and ensure that we have the best contact information for your family, we ask that you fill out a simple registration form as soon as possible, accessible online using the

URL: <https://rebrand.ly/MtCalvaryKids2021>

Clothing Sale

After a year off, the Social Ministry Team is happy to announce that we will once again be having our annual clothing sale! The sale will take place on **Saturday, October 2 from 10-2**. Clothes can begin being dropped off in the old lounge in September. This year we are asking that you please separate and label your clothes by size/gender when you are packing them. This will make the setting up and sorting process much easier for the volunteers working the event. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Kozak at 244-6880. Thank you!

Worship Help Needed

There are signup sheets, in the Narthex, for Greeters/Ushers, and Communion Assistants, for the months of July and August. Please sign up for the dates that would suit you best. We appreciate you volunteering. If you have questions about these roles, please contact Christine Koshute at 814-421-4921 or Chris Oleksa at 814-244-9851.

Baptism

On August 15, 2021, we welcomed Roman Michael Shaffer into Christ's Church through Holy Baptism. Roman was born on October 27, 2019. Roman is the son of Jacob Michael Shaffer and Samantha Jean Wilson. Her sponsors are Jessica Thomas and Erin Shaffer Pozun. Betty Shaffer is his grandmother.

Mt. Calvary Press Release

You now have an opportunity to sponsor the Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church notice in the Saturday issue of the Johnstown Tribune-Democrat newspaper! We are asking if any of our members are interested in sponsoring this ad for 1 week. The cost is \$11.00. We are also giving you the opportunity to place this as an Honorarium or Memorial if you wish.

Sponsored by _____

In Honor/Memory of _____ How Many Weeks _____

Memorials

Chuck Schemkmeyer - Carol Ribblett

Zakary Lonsinger - William & Cara Lonsinger

Joseph Adamy - Tim & Kim Spangler

DJ Shaffer - Tim & Kim Spangler

Jim Balogh - Tim & Kim Spangler

Catherine Kinzey - Tim & Kim Spangler

Bill McMullen - Tim & Kim Spangler

Patti Sliko - Robert & Cindy Solarczyk, Linda McMullen, Jayne Dunbar, Shirley Glova, Carmen Schellhammer, Diane Thoburn, Gerald & Ruth Pozun,

Dot McQuaide - Shirley Glova, Cindy Solarczyk, Carmen Schellhammer, Jayne Dunbar, Sean Lewis, Mangus Family, Gerald & Ruth Pozun, Richard & Deborah Harr, 1st Summit Bank, Kathleen Harriger, Christopher & Dana Begley, John & Carol Letizia, Lonsinger Family, Linda McMullen, Stan & Deborah McQuaide

Bertha Ford - WJ & Sandy Plunkard, Jayne Dunbar

Pat Conklin - Wilma Hiltz, Brian & Lori Hiltz, Joyce Motter

Gaynell Knowlton - Kathleen Harriger

Backyard Cookie Collection

Due to the current surge in the COVID-19 Delta Variant, Backyard Ministries has made some changes to their cookie collection. Moving forward, only pre-packaged items will be accepted. These can be any type of snack, not just cookies (fruit snacks, bags of chips, etc.). Please no longer donate any homemade cookies, or large packs of cookies that must be divided into individual bags.

Thank you for your continued support!

August 19 will be the next collection date.

Farewell Liturgy for Bishop Rhyne

We will have a service of Farewell and Godspeed at

Evangelical Lutheran in Duncansville starting at 2 PM on August 28th.

Clergy are invited to vest and process. August 28 is the Commemoration of St. Augustine of Hippo so the color of the day is white. The people of Duncansville have graciously offered to host a reception after the service.

Installation of Allegheny Synod Bishop Paula Schmitt

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will join us to install our new Bishop on
Sunday, September 19 at 3 PM.

The service is being held at First Lutheran Church in Altoona. The color for the day is red. We will be livestreaming the service and there will be a reception following hosted by our partners at Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries.

Birthdays and Anniversaries for the Week: August 22 - August 28, 2021.

Aug 22 – Kaitlyn McKool

Aug 23 – Ryan Friedman, Benjamin Hiltz, Amelia Lally, Karen Zimmerman

Aug 24 – Russell Hill, James Ivory, Stan McQuaide, Donald Osborn,
Pamela Verostick

Aug 25 – Cynthia Colvin, Zachary Drennen, Jennifer Hershberger, John Kist, Dylan Ritko, Albert Roth,
Deborah Rychak, Michele Wingard

Aug 27 - Wayne Alexander, Robert Carbaugh

Aug 28 - Shawn Saloney

Aug 22 - Brian & Deborah Wechtenhiser (40 years)

Aug 23 - Bob & Kim McMullen (35 years)

Aug 26 - Bill & Cara Lonsinger (26 years)

About Our Members:

Linda Haberkorn and Bonnie Kishlock's mother, Jennie Haney-Moore passed away on August 11, 2021.

Debbie Finnegan is home from the hospital and recovery is coming along well.

Mark and Deb Rychak are grandparents of a baby girl. 8lbs., 11 oz., 22 1/2 inches long.

Kevin and Chris Oleksa are grandparents of a baby boy, Peter Isaac Williams.

Remember those that prayer has been requested:

Bob, Alex, Jose & Family, Harold, Rick, Midge, Shirley, Jennifer, Debbie Finnegan, Jill McEntee, David, Karen, Lauren, Billy, Barb, Jamie, Joe Miller & Family, Jennifer & Ryan, Linda & Dick, Dolly & Chis Palm, Claudia Plows, Maddie Pierce, Gladys Haupt, Joe & Judith Lopez, Maria, Tom, Lt. Hunter Bergman, and Lt. Dylan Merchant.

AUGUST FINANCIAL UPDATE

Through the end of July, we remain in the black. We are tighter than they once were, but we're again holding our own. Offerings and other revenues continue to come in pretty much just as we thought they would. Thank you!!! The same can be said for expenses, with only the property team over budget and its overage tracking down not up. Again, we're holding our own at a time that remains difficult for many and there are signs that this fall will continue the trends

CONDENSED WORSHIP FOR THE WEEKEND OF SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 2021.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Ever-loving God, your Son gives himself as living bread for the life of the world. Fill us with such a knowledge of his presence that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life to serve you continually, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

A: Amen.

FIRST READING: 1 KINGS 2:10-12; 3:3-14

Solomon, son of David and Bathsheba, becomes king over Israel when his father dies. He asks God for wisdom in order to govern the people. God grants his request, and Solomon becomes known far and wide for his great wisdom.

¹⁰David slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David. ¹¹The time that David reigned over Israel was forty years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. ¹²So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.

^{3:3} Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David; only, he sacrificed and offered incense at the high places. ⁴The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the principal high place; Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. ¹³I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you. ¹⁴If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life."

PSALM 111

P: Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

A: Great are your works, O LORD, pondered by all who delight in them.

P: Majesty and splendor mark your deeds, and your righteousness endures forever.

A: You cause your wonders to be remembered; you are gracious and full of compassion.

P: You give food to those who fear you, remembering forever your covenant.

A: You have shown your people the power of your works in giving them the lands of the nations.

P: The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice; all of your precepts are sure.

A: They stand fast forever and ever, because they are done in truth and equity.

P: You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever; holy and awesome is your name.

A: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever.

SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 5:15-20

True wisdom integrates our new reality in Christ with our Christian fellowship and daily conduct. Because we are filled with the Spirit, Christians regularly rejoice together, give thanks to God for one another, and care for one another. In this way we revere our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁵Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, ²⁰giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL: JOHN 6:51-58

In John's gospel, the feeding of the five thousand leads to extended teaching in which Jesus identifies himself as the true "bread of life." Finally, in these verses, he makes a connection that would not be understood until after his death, in light of the church's celebration of holy communion.

Jesus said, ⁵¹"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

⁵²The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ⁵³So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; ⁵⁵for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."

SERMON BY PASTOR SCOTT

Jesus is good at his job. Today we hear that Jesus is so good at his job that no matter how long it might be before the last day arrives, Jesus will not lose track of us in the meantime. On the last day, our reading from John says, Jesus will be there to raise us up unto eternal life no matter the time elapsed. But is this ultimately Jesus' job; to care for us through all the twists and turns of God's plan so that he might be there to raise us up at the last?

This certainly wouldn't be a bad job description for Jesus, but it also might be a little too limiting. Throughout his gospel, John applies many, many metaphors and descriptions to Jesus. Today, Jesus is the Bread of Life that sustains us eternally. Previously, he's been the very Word of God, the giver of grace upon grace, the Son who reveals the Father's heart, the best wine ever, the new Temple, the replacement for Moses' bronze serpent on a pole, living water, the One whose food is doing the will of God, and the end time Judge appointed by God the Father. And this is all with fifteen chapters still to go. All the metaphors, all the descriptions, can get a little overwhelming in no time at all and this may be the point to some degree. It's possible that John keeps piling on the metaphors and the descriptions because he wants Jesus to come off as

one of a kind; someone we would never dream of making our peer or our equal. But like any good evangelist, John doesn't just want to worship Jesus in all of his majesty and magnificence. He also wants to communicate and to connect with his audience. He wants his audience to know what Jesus' job is and that Jesus is good at it. To this end, I'm happy to report that John lays down enough of a trail that we can follow it and make sense of all the places he takes us.

One good place to look for this trail is in what's come to be known as the prologue to John's gospel. Taking up the first eighteen verses of his work, the prologue to John's gospel is itself soaring and poetic. Right out of the gate, John writes, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Such talk probably helps to explain why John's gospel has long been called the most spiritual gospel. John soars and flies with his language. But as much as the prologue to John's gospel is no exception to this rule, the prologue doesn't just tell us we should buckle up for what's going to be quite a roller coaster ride. It also lays down much of the trail we'll need to follow if all the forthcoming dots are to be connected.

Key for our purposes today is John's assertion in his prologue that all things came into being through Jesus. According to John, Jesus is a Creator of the capital C variety. If it had to be, I suppose this could be Jesus' job—to create. But thankfully, John also goes a little farther than this in his prologue. While hailing Jesus' identity as a Creator of the capital C variety, he also says Jesus specializes in the creation of a life that has been and continues to be the light of all people. When you get down to it, this is Jesus' job. This is the job at which Jesus excels. He's very, very good at being or creating the light that gets us through our present darkness and on into the Kingdom of God where the book of Revelation tells us there shall be endless light. This is Jesus' job. Jesus' job is to be or to create the light that gets us out of the darkness; both the darkness of our present and the darkness of our future apart from the grace of God.

Start with the darkness of our present. Describing our present as dark can be hard for us to stomach and rightfully so to some degree. I think of two, twin sisters, I once baptized as one was preparing to be married. As we were preparing for their baptism, the two sisters had some trouble with how dark the Church's description of human beings and life in general can be. They reckoned, if everything's so dark, if everything's so hopeless, if we're in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves, then why bother! Even before they became mothers, something which eventually happened in one case I know, here were two young women who already had a sense of how beautiful life can be; of how euphoric life can be; of how wonderful falling in love, giving birth, and creating positive change can be. And you know, in spite of all of his talk about darkness, John knows this too. In one of the Bible's most well-known verses, John says God so loved the world, so loved the world, that he gave his only Son Jesus to die for it. This passionate, self-sacrificing love for all of creation certainly adds nuance to all of John's talk about darkness. I think we might say that all of John's talk about darkness is meant to say that God loves the sinner and loathes the sin; knowing sin to be a destructive force in our present and lethal whereas eternity is concerned. But be this as it may, this doesn't change the fact that our present is dark sometimes.

One of the first times life on this side of the hereafter got dark for me was when a kid named Tim Denny knocked me out cold in the fifth grade. One second I could see trees of green and skies of blue and the colors of the rainbow like Louis Armstrong. The next second, with a fist pummeling into my jaw, everything went dark and I fell to the ground in a heap. It's what can happen in our present. Life can knock us out. Life can blind and bewilder us. Life can leave us weaving and wobbling like a punch-drunk boxer. But Jesus, who's so good at his job, administers the smelling salts we need. He brings light and focus back to our eyes. Being and creating the light we need he turns on the light switch so we might stop bumping into the walls at night and tripping over ourselves and our present. Our reading from Ephesians calls this Jesus helping us make the most of the time we have until the last day. Our reading from 1st Kings calls this Jesus giving us the wisdom to be who God would have us be in real time and space. Our reading from John calls this Jesus giving us the food and the drink we need to recover our strength and to see straight and clear again. Whatever we may call it, this is a big part of Jesus' job. Through the Holy Spirit we receive at baptism, through prayer, through the word

of God in all of its forms, through holy communion, and through fellowship with other Christians, Jesus is the light or creates the light we need to get us through our present when it gets dark. But before we get to the endless light to be experienced in the Kingdom of God, there's another darkness Jesus has to handle for us. It's the darkness of death.

Jesus himself experienced this thick, seemingly endless darkness on Good Friday. First, there was the suffering that all too often precedes death. Then there was the darkness of death itself. But after the darkness of death, there also came the light of Easter Sunday. Long before Jim Morrison and the Doors sang of it, Jesus broke on through to the other side. On Easter Sunday, he made it all the way through what we once thought was the thick and endless darkness of death so he might prepare a place for us in the Kingdom of God where the light of God shall shine so bright and strong that it will render the sun obsolete according to the book of Revelation. To date, Jesus is the only one who has ever done this. And in fact, other than God the Father and God the Son, he's the only one who ever can do it. This is why Jesus says today that we have no life in us apart from him. Without Jesus, the darkness of death will win, but it also doesn't have to be this way. Jesus is very, very good at his job. Jesus is the light or creates the light that gets us in and out of our present darkness, where and when it exists, and then well beyond the darkness of death forever. Jesus first becomes this light for us on the day of our baptism and remains the same light for us unto eternity as long as we have the Holy Spirit's gift of faith. It's why these weekly gatherings are so important. Without them, baptism's light still shines, but the Holy Spirit's gift of faith fades and may even be quenched; which is something we definitely don't want to happen. And so, let's keep at it with one another, continuing to gather as we are today, until through the ongoing ministrations of the Holy Spirit Jesus gets us in and out of what can be our present darkness and then well beyond the darkness of death forever and ever and ever. Amen!

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

P: God of wisdom, enlighten your church. Guide theologians, biblical scholars, authors, and seminary professors as they seek greater knowledge and invite others into deeper understanding. Teach us to ask faithful questions and open our minds to new ideas. God, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

P: God of creation, mend the earth. Cool warming oceans and preserve melting ice caps. Increase our awareness of changing climate patterns and reveal new approaches to the ecological challenges we face. Shield those in the path of hurricanes or tropical storms (*especially*). God, in your mercy,

A: hear our prayer.

P: God of all nations, direct our leaders. Grant them courage to lay aside political grudges and renew their determination to address difficult conflicts. Guide them in the work of reconciliation. God, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

P: God of compassion, tend to the wounded. Rescue those tormented by mental illness or mired in addiction. Ease the anxiety of those struggling with dementia. Come quickly to help all who are grieving and all those who suffer (*especially*). God, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

P: God of beauty, inspire artists. Bless those whose visual and musical gifts enliven this assembly (*especially*). Bless the creative work of poets, hymnwriters, composers, painters, sculptors, and others that enrich our worship and daily life. God, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

P: God of resurrection, bring us to new life. Give us the living bread from heaven through which we abide in your love, and on the last day raise us with (*Mary, mother of Jesus, name/s, and*) all the saints to eternal life. God, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

P: We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.