



# Mount Calvary Connected August 26, 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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## 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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## Weekly Wednesday, Drive in Services

Wednesday evening drive-in services are 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!

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## 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.

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## Haiti Earthquake Relief

A devastating 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck southwest Haiti on Saturday morning. Over 1,400 people were killed, probably more. Over 6,900 people were injured, and roads are closed to hospitals that need supplies delivered. There is also now flooding from Tropical Storm Grace.

If you would like to donate to help the survivors, please make check payable to Mount Calvary and mark in the memo line "Haiti Earthquake".

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## Flowers

In honor of Mary Ann Mapes's birthday by Family.

### Wildfire Relief

A prolonged drought and extreme heat waves are causing wildfires to spread rapidly, which makes them difficult to contain. California is currently the hardest-hit state. There are more than 100 wildfires now burning throughout 15 states.

If you would like to donate to help the survivors, please make check payable to Mount Calvary and mark in the memo line "Wildfire Relief".

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### 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 by 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
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### 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!

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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>

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### 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!

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### 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.

### 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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#### 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

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#### 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!

**September 2 will be the next collection date.**

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#### 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.

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#### 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.

## Installation of Allegheny Synod Bishop Paula Schmitt

**Sunday, September 19, 2021**

Because of the uncertainty of the spread of Covid-19 and its variants, in-person capacity at the church is limited to invited guests only. The event will be livestreamed on the Allegheny Synod Facebook page (Allegheny Synod 8C) beginning at 2:40pm.

You are warmly invited to attend one of the smaller receptions with the new bishop listed below.

**--Monday, September 20th 6:00 pm--**

Grace Lutheran Church, State College, Narthex and Upper Commons

**--Tuesday, September 21st, 6:00 pm--**

Evangelical Lutheran Church, Duncansville. Social Hall

**--Wednesday, September 22nd 6:00 pm--**

Friedens Lutheran Church, Friedens. Friendship Hall.

**--Thursday, September 23rd 6:00 pm--**

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Lanse. Narthex.

### **Birthdays and Anniversaries for the Week: August 29 – September 4, 2021.**

**Aug 29** – Jonathan Brandau, Bryar Burkett, Brady Kostick, Evan Kostick, Frank, Robison

**Aug 30** – Gladys Haupt, Mary Ann Mapes, LUke Shertzer

**Aug 31** – James Colvin, Hayden Lingenfelter, Alan Sterner

**Sept. 1** – Cody Berkebile, Jan Layton, Jack Lumley

**Sept. 4** - Paul Bergman, Rachel White

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

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, Harold, Rick, Midge, Shirley, Jennifer, Debbie Finnegan, Jill McEntee, David, Karen, Lauren, Billy, Barb, Jamie, Sara Solarczyk, Whitney Sheehan, and Jackie Janak.

### **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 22, 2021.**

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

P: Holy God, your word feeds your people with life that is eternal. Direct our choices and preserve us in your truth, that, renouncing what is false and evil, we may live in you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**A: Amen.**

**FIRST READING: 1 KINGS 8: [1, 6, 10-11] 22-30, 41-43**

*Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem and put the ark of the covenant there. This passage includes part of the prayer Solomon prays at the dedication of the temple. He prays for the fulfillment of God's promises to David and for God to hear the prayers of all the faithful.*

<sup>1</sup>Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the ancestral houses of the Israelites, before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. <sup>6</sup>Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. <sup>10</sup>And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD, <sup>11</sup>so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

<sup>22</sup>Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands to heaven. <sup>23</sup>He said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and steadfast love for your servants who walk before you with all their heart, <sup>24</sup>the covenant that you kept for your servant my father David as you declared to him; you promised with your mouth and have this day fulfilled with your hand. <sup>25</sup>Therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant my father David that which you promised him, saying, 'There shall never fail you a successor before me to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your children look to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.'  
<sup>26</sup>Therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you promised to your servant my father David.

<sup>27</sup>"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! <sup>28</sup>Regard your servant's prayer and his plea, O LORD my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today; <sup>29</sup>that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may heed the prayer that your servant prays toward this place. <sup>30</sup>Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling place; heed and forgive.

<sup>41</sup>"Likewise when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a distant land because of your name <sup>42</sup>—for they shall hear of your great name, your mighty hand, and your outstretched arm—when a foreigner comes and prays toward this house, <sup>43</sup>then hear in heaven your dwelling place, and do according to all that the foreigner calls to you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and so that they may know that your name has been invoked on this house that I have built."

R: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**

**PSALM 84**

P: How dear to me is your dwelling, O LORD of hosts!

**A: My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.**

P: Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young, by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts, my king and my God.

**A: Happy are they who dwell in your house! They will always be praising you.**

P: Happy are the people whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

**A: Those who go through the balsam valley will find it a place of springs, for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.**

P: They will climb from height to height, and the God of gods will be seen in Zion.

**A: LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob.**

P: Behold our defender, O God; and look upon the face of your anointed.

**A: For one day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.**

P: For the LORD God is both sun and shield, bestowing grace and glory; no good thing will the LORD withhold from those who walk with integrity.

**A: O LORD of hosts, happy are they who put their trust in you!**

### **SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 6:10-20**

*Like a general giving a rousing speech to troops before battle, this letter closes by calling on Christians to be equipped for spiritual warfare against evil. The full armor of God includes truth, righteousness, peace, faith, the gift of salvation, and the word of God inspired by the Spirit.*

<sup>10</sup>Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup>Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. <sup>15</sup>As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup>Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

<sup>18</sup>Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. <sup>19</sup>Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

R: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**

### **GOSPEL: JOHN 6:56-69**

*The "hard saying" that offends Jesus' disciples is his claim that his followers must eat his flesh and drink his blood. The followers who return to their old lives know something about how odd this sounds. Simon Peter, on the other hand, knows something about the scarcity of living, gracious words. He asks the most important question: "To whom shall we go?"*

[Jesus said,] <sup>56</sup>"Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup>Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup>This 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.”<sup>59</sup> He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

<sup>60</sup>When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?”<sup>61</sup> But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you?”<sup>62</sup> Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?<sup>63</sup> It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.<sup>64</sup> But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him.<sup>65</sup> And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

<sup>66</sup>Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him.<sup>67</sup> So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?”<sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life.<sup>69</sup> We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

## **SERMON BY PASTOR SCOTT**

*Alleluia! Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!*

For Lutherans, these words have a particular resonance. Ever since the green hymnal otherwise known as Lutheran Book of Worship came out in 1978, they’ve been used to greet the gospel with song. When the blue hymnal otherwise known as With One Voice came out in 1995, this could have changed, but it did not. Generally speaking, it was the hymns, not the liturgies of the blue hymnal which took hold in the life of your average congregation. And then again in 2006 along came our current cranberry-colored hymnal otherwise known as Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Again, the words Lutherans had been singing pretty much every weekend since 1978 could have gone extinct, but they did not. Some congregations, like the one Pastor Jonathan serves out in Benscreek, never got our current hymnal; sticking with the green hymnal of 1978. Others continued to take advantage of how the new, cranberry-colored hymnal includes the liturgies Lutherans have been singing for over forty years now. Given this history, it’s just a fact that if you’ve been Lutheran for a while, the words “Alleluia! Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!” should resound with you.

If this resonance exists, it’s a good thing. Our reading from John reminds us the words Lutherans have been singing to greet the gospel for over forty years now go back to the Bible itself. This is the case with all the songs in the traditional, Lutheran liturgy. They all repeat or paraphrase the Bible and this is no accident. In accord with what’s said in the New Testament letters of St. Paul, Lutherans believe faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit often produced through hearing the word of God. And so, in Lutheran circles, church comes with a lot of scripture. Sometimes it’s read. Sometimes it’s confessed. Sometimes it’s prayed. Sometimes it’s preached. Sometimes it’s sung or chanted. And all of this helps to explain why we need church. We need, our neighbors need, the world needs, something that calls away from doubt and disbelief and towards faith instead. Church does this by gathering us around the word of God in all of its rich variety so the Holy Spirit might use the word of God to awaken and sustain faith in our lives.

If we put this in the language of our reading from Ephesians, what church does is help us quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. After all, our reading from Ephesians says this is done through faith, and again, it’s at church where through exposure to the word of God the Holy Spirit creates and/or sustains such faith. With this in mind, we might say we need church to help us through the trials and temptations of life. I, for one, know church has done this for me.

During this weekend in 1994, I was sitting in a church pew in Brookfield, Wisconsin; a suburb of Milwaukee. I can remember it as if it were yesterday. As the weekend had approached, I had been slandered and defamed; with somebody making me out to be someone I was not and never had been. Ever been there? I once heard a Lutheran bishop from Africa make light of the slander and defamation we can experience by

saying a dog will only bark at a moving car, whereas the same dog will soil the tires of a parked car. I definitely think there's a point to his folksy analogy, but it still hurts and stings to be slandered and defamed.

Back in 1994, I was first learning what the book of James will tell us in a couple of weeks. I was learning the tongue can be a beast that defies domestication like no other creature known to humankind. I was learning the tongue can be a terrorist that does its best to light fires all around. But our reading from Ephesians is right. Church and the faith it encourages and enables can repel the fiery arrows of the evil one; can stand up to the wiles of the devil; can withstand all that's availed against us on the most evil of days. Back in 1994, when I heard our reading from Ephesians talk about putting on the whole armor of God, I was transfixed. I sat straight up in my seat. The Holy Spirit was talking to me quite directly; saying, "You got this. Don't let some slander and defamation bring you down or throw you off your game. Shake it off and move on. It's better to barked at than it is to have your tires soiled." Still able to remember it as if it were yesterday all these years later, church helped me on the day and weekend I've described. It's helped many more times since and I hope it has for you as well. It's one of the reasons why we and our neighbors and our world need church. Church calls us to faith so we might overcome the trials and temptations of life; so we might quench all the fiery arrows of the evil one.

But, but, but, as church calls us and our neighbors and our world to faith, we also need church for another reason and that's to call us beyond ourselves and our old, tired, and grave-bound ways. Just go back to the words: Alleluia! Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia! In addition to being the stuff the Holy Spirit uses to awaken and sustain faith. these are words which make it clear that Jesus has competition. There are ways we can go in life other than Jesus' way. But as St. Peter first acknowledged long ago in our reading from John, all these other ways, all these ways that take us away from Jesus, travel towards death and the ephemeral rather than towards life and eternity. To get back in the direction of life and eternity, to get back in the direction of Jesus, we need church to call us beyond ourselves and our old, tired, and death-bound ways. Yes, we need church so that we might live out the meaning of the alleluias which precede and follow our singing about Jesus having the words of eternal life. For brothers and sisters, "alleluia" means not "praise ye the competition," but "praise ye the Lord." After the gift of faith, this is the other reason we need church. We need church to call us beyond ourselves and all of our old, tired, and death-bound ways so that we might actually get around to praising the Lord Jesus Christ. I suppose this is why I spent this past Friday morning with a group of cancer patients.

That I would do this could be construed as quite surprising. Number one, in the midst of what's been a very busy summer here at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, going to the hospital on Friday morning was something extra; one more thing I didn't have to do, as I did have to do many others. Number two, and perhaps more importantly, back on my birthday in 2011 I spent hours sitting in Boston's Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. My heart was torn apart by the sight of very sick person after very sick person and then, to top the day off, I got to hear a compassionate and capable doctor tell my kid sister Amy that she had a non-curative form of cancer. It rates as one of the worst days of my life, if not the worst. And this isn't to mention all the bad memories I have of accompanying too many beloved congregants as they've fought their own battles with cancer, sometimes successfully; more often unsuccessfully. Given this history, why in the world would I volunteer to go and spend more time, time I didn't have to give, with cancer and those it terrorizes? With all I had already been through, why in the world did I agree when a social worker I've known for a long time called and asked me to spend some time with a dozen or so of her current cancer patients?

It's because through church, we're called beyond ourselves and our fears and our hurt feelings and all of our other old, tired, death bound ways to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's because through church, faith grows into faithfulness; in the process turning back the devil's efforts to thwart God's effort to turn us into those who like Jesus before us use our wounds and our scars for the good of others. Again, we need church so that faith might be awakened and we in the process might be called beyond ourselves and our sinful inclinations to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ. How's this happened for you? Blessing you with faith in the

process, how has church called you beyond yourself and toward that which trends in the direction of life rather than death? Amen!

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

P: God of courage, bless all leaders of your church. Make them ready to proclaim the gospel of peace and strengthen them to preach your loving word. Lord, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

P: God of creation, bless fields and orchards. Protect the land from drought and bring life-giving rain to support growth. Instruct your people in wise treatment of the world you have provided for all your creatures. Lord, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

P: God of community, bless all who seek justice between nations and peoples. Give guidance to bridge-builders, heal divisions, and inspire cooperation in times of crisis, disaster, and war. Lord, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

P: God of compassion, bless all who are in any need. Accompany all who are lonely and feeling abandoned and remind them of your abiding presence. Accompany all who are persecuted and exploited and open us to their cries. Lord, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

P: God of change, bless our transitions. Guide all who are embarking on new stages in life such as a new job, new school, or new community (*especially*). Sustain enduring friendships and kindle new relationships and interests. Lord, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

P: God of comfort, bless all who mourn the deaths of their beloved ones. We give you thanks for the saints who have gone before us (*especially*). Renew our confidence in your promise of resurrection and life in the world to come. Lord, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

P: Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **A: Amen.**

RE: Security System

On September 13<sup>th</sup> we will be activating our new security system that was recently installed at the Church. This has been discussed for many years and we were able to install a system that will keep the Church safer than it has been. The Property Committee talked to several law enforcement officials for guidance on how to make our property safer, and the system that we installed follows their recommendations and can be expanded if necessary.

The highlights from our system are as follows:

- Keys will no longer be used to unlock exterior doors and several interior offices.
- All exterior doors on the Church will remain locked at all times except during Church services special functions, group meetings etc.
- For our Church services, the doors will be programmed to automatically unlock one half hour before services start and automatically lock 15 minutes after the services start.
  - The ushers will have a monitor and a control button for the main entrance door and the lower rear entrance; late comers can be buzzed in by the ushers.
- Anyone who needs to stop into the office during office hours will be let into the church remotely by the office staff.
  - Upon entering the building, you will be asked to enter the vestibule at the office to interact with the office staff.
- The day care has its own security entry system.
  - This system has been on-line for a few weeks and is working the way it was designed.
- All council members, Church staff, ministry leaders and committee chairpersons will receive keys fobs to enter the building after hours if necessary.

I know this system is different than the way the Church has operated in the past. The property committee worked many hours discussing the systems that would work best for us. After recent church shootings and the violence occurring nationwide, along with the discussions that we had with local law enforcement officials, we felt that the time has come to do everything in our power to make a safe environment for our worshipers, church staff and visitors to our facility.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mark Rychak  
Property Committee Chairman



# Allegheny Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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A Pastoral Message of Farewell  
Bishop Michael Rhyne  
August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021

*God be with you till we meet again; by good counsels guide, uphold you, with a shepherd's care enfold you; God be with you till we meet again. Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus feet; God be with you till we meet again.*

*'God Be With You Till We Meet Again'* Jeremiah Rankin and William Tomer

Dearest Friends in the Allegheny Synod,

It has been my greatest honor to serve as your Bishop these last seven years. We have seen times of great joy and times of challenge. But our Lord Jesus continues to walk with us no matter what comes our way. I thank God for you. I will always treasure the time we have had together. I am deeply grateful for the many ways you have blessed me and my family.

I would ask you to remember who and whose you are. You are baptized children of God. In our baptism we were eternally united to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. That gift of life in Jesus changes everything. We do not have to be like the rest of the world. We don't have to put ourselves first, we don't have to look out for number one, and we don't have to fight to see who can accumulate the biggest pile of stuff before we die. Since we belong to Jesus, our lives are a blessing that can be given away and shared for the sake of others. You are agents of the love of God moving in this world. You are vessels through which the Holy Spirit blesses this creation. You are called by Jesus to follow his self-sacrificial life.

I have seen that in you. Repeatedly the Holy Spirit has surprised me in the way you are able to care for God's people. Because of how the Holy Spirit is at work through you; the hungry are fed, the cold have clothes and blankets, children are taught the faith, seminarians are trained to serve God's church, and so very much more. The Spirit does not sit still. Rather the Spirit grabs a hold of us and uses us to care for, love, and help this broken world.

My hope is you will continue to seek out ways you may more fully live into your calling as the body of Christ. God has given the Allegheny Synod everything you need to carry out God's mission. It doesn't mean it is going to necessarily be easy. Following Jesus never promised to be easy. We may even fall into the trap of thinking we don't have enough. However, we remember that we follow the Lord Jesus who took five loaves and two fish and fed five thousand people. We serve a God who brings life from death, who brings healing and hope when we may feel there is no hope left, and who is in the business of surpassing our expectations. Most importantly Jesus promises to be with us always, even until the end of the age.

I pray you continue to see the ways that Christ is active and alive around you. I pray you know the love of Jesus. I pray that you will be continually transformed and reformed by Jesus and used by him to make this world a better place.

Again, I thank God for all of you. The Allegheny Synod will forever be in my prayers. You have marked and blessed my life. May God be with you until we meet again.

Your brother in Christ,

+Bishop Michael Rhyne