



Mount Calvary Connected September 2, 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

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!

Flowers

In honor of Erin Powell's birthday by Noelle Berkey.

Hurricane Ida Relief

The impact of Ida is yet to be fully assessed, but with a hurricane of this scale, rebuilding will be costly and take years. With extensive experience in accompanying communities throughout the relief and long-term recovery phases, Lutheran Disaster Response is working with local ELCA synods and Lutheran social service organizations to coordinate a response to Hurricane Ida. Immediate needs will include food, basic necessities and temporary housing. Long after the headlines change, Lutheran Disaster Response will continue to accompany communities on the journey of rebuilding their homes and lives.

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

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".

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 are 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".

Sunday Morning Childcare

Mount Calvary is getting ready to provide a staffed nursery during Sunday morning worship services! This will be available for children through age five. Drop them off at the beginning of the service, or during if they start to get restless. **This offering will begin September 12, 2021.** See Pastor Jonathan for more information!

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!

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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Don't forget that youth Sunday School begins next Sunday, September 12, 2021. We'll also include a Backpack Blessing during the Sunday morning service for students and teachers, so make sure you bring your school bags so that we can pray for you at the beginning of this school year!

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.

Memorials

Dot McQuaide – Janet Newmar

Patti Sliko – Old and Regular Volleyball Players

Pat Conklin – Linda McMullen, Carlene Motter, Darlene Rassiga & Family, Steven Pearlman & Terri Coltin

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 16 will be the next collection date.

Fall Youth Activities

We've got an exciting slate of youth and family activities planned for this Fall! It'll all kickoff Sunday, September 26 at 6pm with a cookout at the church for all ages and their families. In October, we'll have a Halloween themed outing to one of the local Fall attractions, November will be a service project to help the less fortunate in our communities, and in December, we'll have a "Parents' Night Out" with a Christmas movie, snacks, games, and activities for all ages, (a great opportunity for moms and dads to get some Christmas shopping done). Watch your email for more information or talk to Pastor Jonathan!

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 _____

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.

About Our Members:

Pastor Nathan Pile is home recovering after a short stay in the hospital.

Gladys Haupt is doing well with her rehab at Golding Living Center.

Jackie Janak is home from the hospital.

Debbie Finnegan is home from surgery in Pittsburgh.

Kathy Pochine's father-in-law passed away.

Birthdays and Anniversaries for the Week: September 5 – September 11, 2021.

Sept. 5 – Dawn Berkebile, Sage Brehm, Chad Wolfhope

Sept. 6 – Justin Hill, Reese Hutzal, Nancy Strihan

Sept. 7 – John Bunnell, Jr., Chelsea Hiltz

Sept. 8 – Brandt Hutzal, Philip Reitnauer

Sept. 9 – Hunter Bergman, Kelly Bowser, Alijah Magliocca, Kaitlyn Mijenovich

Sept. 10 – Brooke Bachota, Maggie Borodach, Kathy Carr

Sept. 11 – Colby Alexander, Michael Kasuba, Phyllis Nider

Sept. 9 – Frances & Catherine Prisk, Jr. (54 years)

Sept. 10 – Frances & Wendy Truscello (10 years)

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, Lauf Family, Jackie Janak, Jack, and Joan.

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 29, 2021.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: O God our strength, without you we are weak and wayward creatures. Protect us from all dangers that attack us from the outside, and cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be preserved through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

A: Amen.

FIRST READING: SONG OF SOLOMON 2:8-13

Though using language and images of a love story, the Song of Solomon has long been interpreted allegorically. Jewish lore sees it as a description of the love between God and Israel. Christians have often interpreted the Song as a description of the love between Christ and his church.

⁸The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. ⁹My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice. ¹⁰My beloved speaks and says to me: “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; ¹¹for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. ¹²The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. ¹³The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

PSALM 45:1-2, 6-9

P: My heart is stirring with a noble song; let me recite what I have fashioned for the king; my tongue shall be the pen of a skillful writer.

A: You are the noblest among the people; grace flows from your lips, because God has blessed you forever.

P: Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever, a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom.

A: You love righteousness and hate iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions.

P: All your garments are fragrant with myrrh, aloes, and cassia, and the music of strings from ivory palaces makes you glad.

A: Kings' daughters stand among the ladies of the court; on your right hand is the queen, adorned with the gold of Ophir.

SECOND READING: JAMES 1:17-27

The letter of James was intended to provide first-century Christians with instruction in godly behavior. Here Christians are encouraged to listen carefully and to act on what they hear, especially by caring for those least able to care for themselves.

¹⁷Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

¹⁹You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. ²¹Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

²²But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

²⁶If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

GOSPEL: MARK 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Mark's gospel depicts Jesus as challenging traditional ways in which religious people determine what is pure or impure. For Jesus, the observance of religious practices cannot become a substitute for godly words or deeds that spring from a faithful heart.

¹Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], ²they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) ⁵So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; ⁷in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’ ⁸You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

¹⁴Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

²¹For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²²adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

SERMON BY PASTOR JONATHAN

August 29, 2021 - Lectionary 22, Year B - Song of Solomon 2:8-13, Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from Christ Jesus our Lord who journeys with us in love. Amen.

Have you ever seen one of those soldier reunion videos on TV or the internet? You know the ones where a military person has been away from home for a long time, and they get to surprise their family: their spouse, their children, maybe even their pets?

I love those videos.

The pure, unguarded, vulnerable joy that you see when someone gets to see a loved one for the first time in however many months, or even years. It's beautiful. And it's a whole body experience as people run across airport lobbies, or break down in tears on the front steps of their home, or dogs just can't stop wriggling with excitement. Sometimes, when I'm in a bad mood, I watch a few of those sorts of videos just for the pick-me-up.

But the thing is, with those videos, you rarely get to see what happens next. You get to see the joyful moment of reunion, but the cameras are rarely rolling for the ride home, for those next few hours that I'm certain are just as joyful. And maybe even the rest of their lives, as their love for their missed loved one grows ever stronger.

Sometimes I think I'd want to see that even more.

Today, we hear from the Song of Solomon as our first reading from the Old Testament as part of the semi-continuous series. Over the summer we've heard stories about the great early kings of Israel: Saul, David, and Solomon, and now we shift gears just a bit. The Song of Solomon is not a story, at least not in the same sense of the stories we've been hearing.

Song of Solomon is a *love* story. A *love poem*. No one's quite sure who first wrote it, but obviously, they were madly and passionately in love. Some say it might have been written by one of Solomon's first wives, or by Solomon himself. But its presence in the canon of scripture is a result of the way it's been interpreted throughout history.

The Israelites read it as a confession of love between God and the people of Israel. And later, the early Christians saw it in much the same way, but rather representing the relationship between Christ and the church.

When you hear the opening lines of today's reading, "Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills." Don't you almost want to imagine the sort of joyful reunion between a soldier returning home after a deployment to their spouse? Or their children? Or dog? Or maybe, it conjures up memories of the end of the story of the prodigal son, where the father runs across the field to greet the son he thought he had lost.

Pure, unguarded, vulnerable joy. The kind that can only come along with pure, unconditional love.

But just like those reunion videos, my curiosity leads me to question, what happens next? What happens after the camera crew goes home. And the Song of Solomon gives us that answer, too...

"My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;"

"Come away." Those two words can be found in so many love songs. Because love is not just about that one moment of joy, but the journey that you share together. How you live out your love each and every day of your life.

And believe it or not, the story we hear of Jesus in today's Gospel says just as much...

We're coming back into the Gospel of Mark on the heels of the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus walking on water. He has ruffled feathers and the Pharisees are already up in arms when they see his disciples eating with unclean hands. HOW DARE THEY!?! They're not following Jewish law, they are defiling their entire bodies!

And Jesus turns around and calls the Pharisees hypocrites.

Because he knows that they don't love God as much as they love rules. They don't love God as much as they love being in power, being in control.

The reason I would want to see the "after" of those reunion videos is because I know that those couples, those families, are just as loving behind the scenes and in the journey after as they are in their moment in the spotlight.

The same cannot be said for the Pharisees. Their love for the Lord is only skin-deep. When no one is watching, they're just as wicked as the rest of us.

But that's the thing. All of us are in need of God's redemptive love. And God doesn't give us rules to chain us down. God shows God's love in hopes that we might be inspired by it and pass it on to others.

God comes to us like a beloved family member, and says "come away with me." It doesn't matter what happened the minute before, or the month before, God welcomes us home. And it's not that single solitary moment that's important. It's not the joy of being welcome home. But rather, the endless love for which the reunion is just the beginning. 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: We pray for the church, that it is a safe haven for all who seek your presence. Fill it with pastors, deacons, and leaders who echo your expansive and generous welcome. Lord, in your mercy,

A: hear our prayer.

P: We pray for the whole of creation, that plants and animals have the habitat and resources to thrive and flourish. Inspire us to protect threatened habitats and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come. Lord, in your mercy,
A: hear our prayer.

P: We pray for individuals in positions of authority (*national and local leaders may be named*). Raise up wise and discerning leaders in federal, state, and local governments and guide them to seek the benefit of every person. Lord, in your mercy,
A: hear our prayer.

P: We pray for all who are in need. Support and encourage those who are unemployed, underemployed, or experiencing poverty. Bring food, shelter, clothes, and stability for daily life. Lord, in your mercy,
A: hear our prayer.

P: We pray for this congregation, especially those beginning a new school year (*students, teachers, or others may be named here*). Empower teachers and school administrators. Guide students in their learning and development. Accompany parents, foster parents, and caregivers who provide encouragement and love. Lord, in your mercy,
A: hear our prayer.

P: We give thanks for the faithful departed who showed us how to honor God with our heart. Inspire us by their example and renew our faith, trusting that we will be united with them in glory. 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.