



Mount Calvary Connected

October 28, 2021

Mount Calvary Connected is a weekly newsletter sent out at the end of each week. Our goal is to keep you connected to your church and your faith with messages from our pastors, information about upcoming activities at Mt. Calvary and more!

Pastor Scott Klimke Cell-Phone: 570-367-3421 Email: sklimke6@gmail.com	Pastor Jonathan Adams Cell-Phone: 412-817-6704 Email: revjonoadams@gmail.com
---	---

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 also stream these services live over the internet. Simply visit www.mt-calvarylutheran.org and click "Live Radio Broadcast" from the home page on Sunday mornings.

Weekly worship bulletins can be found at: www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/bulletins/

A Message from Pastor Jonathan

October is the first full month of Fall, and as we come to the end of the month, we reach a beloved holiday of children across the country: Halloween.

Occasionally, there are questions as to whether Christians should celebrate Halloween, and certainly there are some Christian churches that completely swear it off, but I don't think we need to be quite so drastic. There are conflicting stories about the origins of our modern celebrations of the holiday, but one that is almost certainly true is this:

Prior to the second or third century, the church celebrated the deaths of martyrs and saints specifically on the date of their death, but as the church accumulated more and more saints and martyrs to commemorate, the calendar quickly became crowded and various church leaders and bishops tried to fix a common day to celebrate ALL the saints. In the early 8th century, Pope Gregory III set "All Saints' Day" as November 1st, and finally it stuck. We continue to celebrate All Saints' Day on November 1st, and All Saints Sunday on the first Sunday in November.

But what does that have to do with Halloween? Well, first, remember that in the early church a day was understood to begin at sundown (which is why Christmas Eve is often the most popular celebration of that holiday, and why many churches begin their Easter celebrations on Saturday evening with an Easter Vigil). And so, if All Saints' Day is November 1st, the day officially begins at sundown on October 31st. "Halloween" is a simplified spelling of a night that was once called "Hallowe'en" which in itself is a shortening of "All Hallowed's Evening," the night which begins the celebration of all the hallowed ones (which the dictionary defines as "consecrated or made holy.")

It's literally the beginning of our remembrance of all the saints who have entered eternal life with Christ ahead of us.

While that doesn't necessarily explain all of the practices and traditions of Halloween, it hopefully justifies why it's not an anti-Christian celebration, and in fact ties in with our faith in a maybe unexpected way.

And while we're at it, let's talk about one of those seemingly strange traditions for just a moment: trick-or-treating. Frankly, I think it's a great way to live out our faith. When you turn your porch light on the night of trick-or-treating, you are signaling that your home is "open for business" and ready to welcome guests in a variety of costumes. When you share candy or treats with those visitors, you are sharing out of your abundance expecting nothing in return. And we don't stop every group of kids to ask "are you my neighbor?" Especially in our rural area where the few actual towns and neighborhoods tend to be hot spots for families who live further out into the country, we are reminded that "neighbor" applies to more than just the people living on our block.

All of that sounds pretty Christ-like to me... So, Happy Fall, and Happy Halloween!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jono

P.S. In the coming weeks, we will return to having a "feature" article at the top of each weekly newsletter, with Pastor Scott and I each taking a turn once a month, and filling the other weeks with articles from other interesting Christian writers.

Adult Sunday School

Adult Sunday School is ongoing! We were happy to see some new faces and hope that even more join us! We meet in the conference room/library each Sunday after worship.

Upcoming Meetings

Evangelism Committee will meet Thursday, November 4th at 6:30 p.m.

Social Ministry Committee will meet Thursday, November 11th at 6:30 p.m.

Stewardship and Administration Committee will meet Thursday, November 11th at 6:30 p.m.

WELCA will meet November 15th at 6:00 p.m.

Council is scheduled to meet November 16th at 6:30 p.m.

Help Wanted

The Property Committee is looking to recruit a number of small job volunteers. Tasks might include replacing light bulbs, changing hardware on a commode, getting a lawnmower or snowblower ready for use, etc. The Committee believes we have a lot of talent in the congregation and wants to make greater use of it. Every small job handled by a member equals one less call that needs to be made to a vendor who may have a minimum visit charge or an hourly rate of \$50 or more.

Interested parties should contact Mark Rychak or one of the pastors. A message could also be left with the church office at 814-266-4859. Thank you!

Scheduled Worship Help

Saturday, October 30:

Greeters/Ushers: Todd Moss & Deb Rychak - **Communion Assistants:** Dolores Schneider & Claudia Plows

Sunday, October 31:

Greeters/Ushers: Keith & Wendy Mayket - **Communion Assistants:** Ray Leverknight

Saturday, November 6:

Greeters/Ushers: Joan Bunnell & Janis Daily - **Communion Assistants:** Noelle Berkey & Cindy Solarczyk

Sunday, November 7:

Greeters/Ushers: Jerry & Ruth Pozun - **Communion Assistants:** Volunteers needed!

There are sign up sheets in the Narthex for Greeters/Ushers and Communion Assistants. 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](tel:814-421-4921) or Chris Oleksa at [814-244-9851](tel:814-244-9851).



Youth News

Sunday School has begun for Pre-K through 8th grade. "Mount Calvary Kid's Crew" is our program for Pre-K and up that gathers at 8:30am in Sander Hall with Pastor Jonathan. Students focus on a bible story and have an activity or craft before rejoining their parents during the worship service.

Childcare is now available during Sunday morning worship. Hannah Salamon is a Richland Learning Center staff member who will be joining us each Sunday along with Pastor Jonathan and other volunteers to provide childcare for infants through age 5. For the time being, drop-off for this service will take place in Sander Hall. Speak with Pastor Jonathan for more information.

In November, there will be a service project to help the less fortunate in our communities.

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).

Pastor Jonathan LOVES to get out and see our Mount Calvary youth in action doing the things they enjoy! Be sure to share your schedules for sports, concerts, recitals, etc. You never know where he might show up!

Pastor Jonathan's office hours at Mount Calvary are Mondays & Wednesdays, 10am-3pm. He is available outside of those hours via email (RevJonoAdams@gmail.com), cellphone (412-817-6704), or Facebook.

All Saints' Day
Saturday, November 6th and Sunday, November 7th

Those who have buried a loved one in the past year or had a loved one baptized in the last year should send the names of those they want acknowledged and the date of their death or baptism to Terrie at tcrisi@mt-calvarylutheran.org and Erin at epowell@mt-calvarylutheran.org by **Monday, November 1st**. We will then read the submitted names and light a candle for each person in worship when All Saints' is celebrated.

Giving Tree

The collection will be donated to the Nardecchia Spay and Neuter Fund and will run through November. Thank you for your continued support!

Advent Devotionals

A book of Advent devotionals written by members of the church will be put together this year. Each short devotional and accompanying prayer will respond to familiar hymn verses traditionally used in December or January. Interested parties should speak to one of the pastors or leave a message with one of the pastors soon.

Kadiya Lingenfelter, a freshmen at an area college now, will be pulling the various devotions together into a finished and potentially edited product.

Annual Remembrance Service

Mt. Calvary has been asked to be this year's host for the Annual Remembrance Service, following our commitment of "Inviting all generations" and community involvements. The service will be held **Wednesday, November 10, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.** in our sanctuary and will be followed by a meal in Sander Hall. Hope to see you there!

ELCA Good Gifts

ELCA Good Gifts is a great opportunity to provide critical support to the ministries and programs of the ELCA in nearly 80 countries around the world.

How it works:

- Choose a gift (food, medical care costs, school supplies, etc.)
- Receive a card to share the news of your gift
- Make a difference in someone's life!

Visit goodgifts.elca.org for more information on how to donate!

ELCA "Stories of Faith in Action"

Check out the latest issue of "Stories of Faith in Action," which includes: a message from ELCA Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, nine inspiring stories from around the country & world, the 2020 financial report on Mission Support, and a story-based devotional for use in Bible studies or committee meetings.

Visit elca.org to download your copy!

2021 Operation Christmas Child Project

Belmont United Methodist Church will operate as a Collection Center for the 2021 Operation Christmas Child project. Drop off completed boxes at Belmont United Methodist located at 107 Coldren Street in Johnstown. The drop-off schedule is as follows:

Monday, November 15th 10a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tuesday, November 16th 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Wednesday, November 17th 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. & 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Thursday, November 18th 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Friday, November 19th 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Saturday, November 20th 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sunday, November 21st 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Monday, November 22nd 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

If you have any questions, please contact Mel Hofecker at 814-266-1660 or by email at Mevnbel@aol.com. You may also call the Belmont United Methodist Church at 814-266-3964.

Updates on Our Members & the Community We Serve

Mt. Calvary Church Family,

Thank you all for the cards and other expressions of sympathy for the loss of our father/grandfather. We appreciate them all.

Noelle Berkey & Erin Powell

Birthdays and Anniversary for the Week: October 31 – November 6, 2021

Oct. 31 – Alvin Just, Kevin Kunkle, John Lumley, Jr., Hunter Miller, Richard Sholtis, and Scott Yarnick

Nov. 3 – John Sann

Nov. 1 – Frank & Kristen Witsberger

Remember those that prayer has been requested for:

Joe Miller & Family, Jennifer & Ryan, Linda & Dick, Dolly & Chiz Palm, Claudia Plows, Maddie Pierce, Gladys Haupt, Joe & Judith Lopez, Maria, Dave, 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, Corinne, Joan, Amy, Dan, Natalie Zerby, Pastor Scott Custead, Stephanie Kriss, Luella Koontz, Family of Patricia Conklin, Family of Robert Lawrence, Al Lindner and Family, Bob, Dawn, Stacy & Josh, Florence Barker, Bob Trotter, and Cassy Sojak.

Financial Update

Through the end of September, Mount Calvary remains in the black for the year. Income is within 2% of what was expected at the beginning of the year. An indication of the continuing impact of the pandemic, the entire shortfall can be attributed to lower-than-expected proceeds from building use. Thanks to the membership of Mount Calvary for keeping up with prior levels of generosity and/or increasing generosity when possible.

On the expense side, we are running under budget by about 4% at this time. Many thanks are due to the Stewardship and Administration Committee for pulling together such an accurate budget and to all the congregational leaders who strived to be both faithful and frugal!

Condensed Worship for Sunday, October 24, 2021

Prayer of the Day

Eternal light, shine in our hearts. Eternal wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance. Eternal compassion, have mercy on us. Turn us to seek your face, and enable us to reflect your goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Semicontinuous First Reading: Job 42:1-6, 10-17

¹Job answered the Lord:

²"I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

³'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?'
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

⁴'Hear, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you declare to me.'

⁵I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;

⁶therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes."

¹⁰And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. ¹¹Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring. ¹²The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. ¹³He also had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴He named the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. ¹⁵In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. ¹⁶After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. ¹⁷And Job died, old and full of days.

Semicontinuous Psalm: 34:1-8 [19-22]

- ¹I will bless the Lord at all times;
the praise of God shall ever be in my mouth.
- ²I will glory in the Lord;
let the lowly hear and rejoice.
- ³Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord;
let us exalt God's name together.
- ⁴I sought the Lord, who answered me
and delivered me from all my terrors.
- ⁵Look upon the Lord and be radiant,
and let not your faces be ashamed.
- ⁶I called in my affliction, and the Lord heard me
and saved me from all my troubles.
- ⁷The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear the Lord
and delivers them.
- ⁸Taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are they who take refuge in God!
- ¹⁹Many are the troubles of the righteous,
but the Lord delivers them from every one.
- ²⁰God will keep safe all their bones;
not one of them shall be broken.
- ²¹Evil will bring death to the wicked
and those who hate the righteous will be punished.
- ²²O Lord, you redeem the life of your servants,
and those who put their trust in you will not be punished.

Second Reading: Hebrews 7:23-28

²³The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; ²⁴but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Gospel: Mark 10:46-52

⁴⁶As [Jesus] and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.” ⁵²Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Sermon by Pastor Scott Klimke

As I was just about ready to put pen to paper this week, something jumped out at me which I had not previously highlighted. At one point, our first reading says, “The Lord restored the fortunes of Job.” This sounds an awful lot like the beginning of Psalm 126, which says, “The Lord restored the fortunes of Zion.” It’s a nearly word for word correspondence which suggests that through people like Job the writers of Scripture were trying to tell us about themselves—the residents of Zion, the people of Israel.

If you think about it, there are an awful lot of Job-like narratives in the holy book the Spirit wrote through the residents of Zion—the people of Israel. These are all rags to riches, cross to crown narratives. The biggest of these narratives is the one about Jesus. Jesus is born in a born, crucified by the leading citizens of his day, and buried as what would seem to be a totally discredited person. But before too long, Jesus is also raised from the dead and given the name above all names. This is rags to riches; cross to crown. It’s the stuff of Scripture. Jesus is one example. There are many others; with a good number found in the Old Testament.

To get back to Job, he loses everything and suffers a great deal in the process. But the Lord eventually restores his fortunes. This is rags to riches; cross to crown. Think now of the rags to riches cycles found in the book of Genesis. Noah has his former life flooded away. For a time, he floats around aimlessly on an ark, but he eventually steps back on dry land and what was lost due to the flood begins to be found again. Jacob has to flee his father’s house to escape his brother’s wrath and is then away from home in a foreign land his Uncle Laban tries to swindle him more than once. But Jacob overcomes it all and becomes the namesake of Israel itself. For his part, Joseph is left to die, sold into slavery, and thrown into an Egyptian prison on a false charge, but he eventually becomes Pharaoh’s righthand man and delivers his family and many others from a worldwide famine. These are all rags to riches, cross to crown, narratives—Jesus, Job, Noah, Jacob, Joseph—every one of them. And guess what! I could keep going. The Bible as a whole, and the Old Testament in particular, are filled with rags to riches, cross to crown, narratives. I suppose we could ignore this or excuse it away as a coincidence or an accident. But it seems more likely that the recurring journey from rags to riches, from cross to crown, is meant to illustrate the experience of Zion, of Israel, of the Church, as a whole.

First for Zion or Israel, now for us, there will be times when the chips are down. First for Zion or Israel, and now for us, there will be times when the temptation will be to say, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” But where there are rags there shall eventually be riches too and where there are crosses there shall instead one day be crowns as well. It’s the experience of Job and of Zion and of Jesus. It shall be our experience too. And what is this expectation of a positive turnaround to produce in us? It’s to produce what I’ll call holy boasting.

If you're looking for a concrete example of what I mean by holy boasting, I'd refer your attention back to our reading from Job. Before the Lord ever restores the fortunes of Job, the one who has lost everything and suffered much in the process says of the Lord, "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted." How does Job know this? What is the basis for his confidence? He's just been through hell, still finds himself there, has yet to trade in rags for riches or crosses for crowns, but out of his mouth comes, "Lord, you got this. I know it. No worries. All things work together for good with you at the helm." This is holy boasting. When you're at rock bottom and there's no rope in sight, you're boasting. You're embellishing. You're talking away reality. But if you're boasting in the Lord, it's okay. It's holy boasting.

Think too of what's said in our appointed psalm. At one point, the psalmist writes, "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear the Lord and delivers them." A couple of verses later the same psalmist writes, "Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them from every one." When we remember these words were written and first spoken by a nation that always stood in the shadow of bigger and more powerful nations, a nation that was enslaved by one superpower and carried off into forced captivity by another, they become outlandish; the boasts of those who have no sense of reality. We're in the territory of Jesus promising himself a kingdom and a repentant criminal paradise as they both hung from a cross. When we're blowing in the wind, claiming more than life has given, we're boasting. But if we're boasting in the Lord, it's okay. This is holy boasting, not the kind of our parents rightly opposed. I wonder how common such boasting is in today's Church?

I'd assert, "Not common enough." Recently, I heard somebody say, "In Western Pennsylvania, we're just too humble to say anything about ourselves." This might have something to do with all the immigrant that once peopled this area's coal mines and steel mills. By way of illustration, during the pandemic, I got a copy of my great-grandfather's naturalization papers. They're dated January 30th of 1913. Interestingly, my great-grandfather Albert Herman Klimke was in this country for thirty-two years and had seven children with my great-grandmother Matilda before he ever became a citizen. These were very different times. But even back in 1913, fear and suspicion of the foreigner were very much present.

Before my great-grandfather could become an American citizen, he had to renounce any and all allegiance to the German Emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II, three times. And this was after producing seven American children and causing no problems for thirty-two years. Might the feat and suspicion experienced by my great-grandfather and so many other immigrants have something to do with our quietism; our problems in the realm of evangelism; our habit and history of maintaining a low profile. I think so. When you're an immigrant already under suspicion, you don't do anything that will draw further attention to yourself. You stay quiet, tell your kids to do the same, and on and on it goes from generation to generation. But as much as flying under the radar may be our cultural inheritance, we've got to get over it. Holy boasting is repeatedly encouraged by the Bible and for good reason. Faith, remember, comes by hearing and the hearing that leads to faith requires the use of our mouths. Without some holy boasting on our part, the Church and this congregation are bound for earthly extinction and the missing piece to this or that congregational puzzle is less likely to appear. Without some holy boasting on our part, we'll remain what I've often said we are and that's the best kept secret in town. And so, given how much Scripture encourages holy boasting and how beneficial it shall be, let me end by reminding all of us why boasting in the Lord is okay and is not like the boasting our parents rightly opposed.

In the Lord Jesus Christ, I'm here to tell you, I'm here to boast, both our present and our future are secure. Start with our present. Our reading from Hebrews says Jesus always lives to make intercession for us. Whatever we need, Jesus is going to intercede and get it for us. He lives to do this. Might this generate some confidence, some holy boasting, on our part? If it's not happening, it should. And as for our future, our reading from Hebrews also says Jesus has offered once and for all himself, all that we need, to be forever disentangled from our sins and their consequences. Might this also generate some confidence, some holy boasting, on our part? Again, if it's not happening, it should. Jesus has got big plans for us now and later. Jesus is doing big things through us now and that's not going to stop until nothing separates us from the Paradise Jesus promised from the cross. And so, let's talk, let's boast, about that which Jesus has enabled us to boast about. It's what you call holy boasting and it's okay because it's what gives birth to faith in others through the Holy Spirit.

Amen!

Prayers of Intercession

Set free from sin and death and nourished by the word of truth, we join in prayer for all of God's creation.

Risen One, we give you thanks for congregations and ministries throughout the world that serve as centers of prayer and action. Empower missionaries, teachers, healers, evangelists, and all who are sent to share your song of joy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Holy One, we give you thanks for generous land that produces abundant harvests. Strengthen and protect all soils, from rooftop gardens to prairie farmlands, to patio planters to fertile valleys, and bless all who lovingly tend them. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Ruling One, we give you thanks for leaders of nations who work to build up the common good. Strengthen efforts of reconciliation among all nations (especially), that peace extends in every direction. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Healing One, we give you thanks for all who labor for the health of others. Comfort and strengthen all who struggle with chronic pain. Send healing and relief to all who are sick (especially). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Providing One, we give you thanks for all who provide for others. Inspire generosity in your people, so that we carry out the work of making disciples of all nations. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Living One, we give you thanks for the saints who have increased our faith. Give us courage to follow in hope until you gather us all around your table of abundance. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Confident that you hear us, O God, we boldly place our prayers into your hands; through Jesus Christ, our truth and life.

Amen.

Blessing

People of God,
you are Christ's body,
bringing new life to a suffering world.

The holy Trinity, † one God,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.