



Mount Calvary Connected

November 4, 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!

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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 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/

An Article by Anglican priest, Tish Harrison Warren:

"We Remember Saints Because They're a Lot Like Us"

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Most major Christian holidays focus on an event in the life of Jesus, but All Saints' Day, which falls on Nov. 1, is fixed on stories of his people.

Though the day is understood and celebrated differently in different traditions, most people in my denomination, Anglicanism, understand the term "saint" to include both canonized heroes and average Christians.

For a religious holiday, All Saints' Day is surprisingly earthy. It reminds me that for all of us — so-called religious or nonreligious people alike — faith and spirituality are shaped in profoundly relational ways. No one is a "freethinker." None of us come to what we believe on our own.

For good or for ill, we believe what we believe because of our particular encounters with people and human communities. All systems of belief and practice are handed down in ordinary ways by people with particular names, faces, languages, traditions, limitations and longings.

In popular imagination, a saint is someone who is perfect and selfless, who dwells in holy ecstasy and impeccable goodness. "Don't call me a saint," Dorothy Day said. "I don't want to be dismissed that easily."

But saints are imperfect people. And this is what draws me to this day. Christians don't remember these men and women because they were perfect. We remember them because, like us, they were broken, selfish and fearful, yet God wrought beauty and light through their lives.

At the first Anglican church I attended, over a decade ago, we didn't have a sermon on All Saints' Sunday. Instead, congregants were invited to tell stories about people who had changed their life and faith. Some told stories of well-known saints — Teresa of Ávila or Francis of Assisi. But they also told of friends bringing casseroles after the death of a spouse, of people showing up when life was falling apart, of professors, parents and neighbors. It was like a less polished version of "The Moth Radio Hour," but in church. I loved it.

The story of how I came to know God is one about chance encounters and long friendships, honest conversations and books I've read, people who have left the Christian faith and those who haven't, communities who've loved me and dismayed me.

Though I grew up going to church, for most of my childhood, church history was a hazy and irrelevant idea. My imagination started with Jesus and his followers, then skipped across two millenniums and landed at my own congregation in a small town in central Texas. As an adult, I began learning about church history and it felt like an almost miraculous discovery. This broader global and ancient family expanded my vision of what Christianity is beyond the small confines of my culture, race and moment in time.

I learned about how Christians created orphanages and hospitals. I encountered Ephrem the Syrian, a poet and musician, who began women's choirs and composed some of the earliest hymns for female voices, spreading literacy among women in the fourth century. He died tending the sick in a plague.

I read about Felicity, an enslaved woman who was martyred in the third century while offering forgiveness to her executioners. I learned about Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Catholic priest who hid thousands of refugees during the Nazi regime. Kolbe died in Auschwitz after volunteering to take the place of another prisoner who was to be executed.

But learning church history was also deeply disillusioning as I discovered how parts of the church have been complicit in white supremacy, colonialism, abuse, misogyny and astonishing evil. All faith stories are shaped by human communities, and these human communities often disappoint us.

In a cultural moment when we want to divide all people and institutions neatly into "good guys" and "bad guys," those on the right side of history and those who aren't, the righteous and the damned, this day reminds us of the checkered and complicated truth of each human heart. Martin Luther gave us the helpful phrase "simul justus et peccator" — simultaneously saint and sinner. It names how we are holy and wayward at once. It proclaims a paradox that we are redeemed yet in need of redemption.

All Saints' Day reminds me that God meets us, saints and sinners, despite our contradictions, and makes good out of haphazard lives. It tells me that all of us, even the best of us, are in need of unimaginable mercy and forgiveness. The church is "first and foremost, a community of forgiven sinners," writes the theologian Gilbert Meilaender. It is not "a community that embodies the practices of perfection" but instead "a body of believers who still live 'in the flesh,' who are still part of the

world, suffering the transformations effected by God's grace on its pilgrim way." Recalling the stories of saints is, in the end, a celebration not of perfection but of grace.

Tish Harrison Warren is a priest in the Anglican Church in North America and the author of "Prayer in the Night: For Those Who Work or Watch or Weep."

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

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, November 6:

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

Sunday, November 7:

Greeters/Ushers: Jerry & Ruth Pozun - **Communion Assistants:** Chris Koshute

Saturday, November 13:

Greeters/Ushers: Pat Bittner & Linda Barnhart - **Communion Assistants:** Joan Bunnell & Pam Bittner

Sunday, November 14:

Greeters/Ushers: Volunteers needed! - **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.

Parent's Night Out – December 17th: Need to finish your Christmas shopping? Or maybe you're ahead of the game and just need a bit of time to wrap gifts! OR, maybe you just need a night away from the kids. Friday, December 17th, Mount Calvary will be holding a "parent's night out." Drop your preschool, elementary, and middle-school-aged kids off at the church beginning at 5:30 p.m., adult chaperones and senior high youth will take care of the rest! We'll treat them to pizza, a movie, and snacks while you take care of whatever needs done. Contact Pastor Jonathan to sign up!

Christmas Pageant – December 19th: Mount Calvary's Youth Christmas Pageant will take place Sunday, December 19th during the regular 8:45 a.m. worship service. Preschool and elementary-aged youth will learn their parts the preceding two weeks (December 5th & 12th) during the Mount Calvary Kid's Crew Sunday School time. If you would like your child to participate, please make sure to bring them to Sander Hall by 8:30 a.m. on the 5th, 12th, & 19th!

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.

WELCA Hymn Sing & Pie Social

WELCA will be hosting a hymn sing and pie social on Wednesday, November 24th at 6:30 p.m.

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!

Annual Remembrance Service – Reminder & Correction

Mt. Calvary has been asked to be this year's host for the Annual Remembrance Service. The service will be held **Wednesday, November 10, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.** in our sanctuary. However, upon the advice of their medical staff, the post-service meal has been canceled.

Please plan to join us for this meaningful service.

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.

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!

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.

Clothing Sale

Our annual clothing sale collected \$450 which will be donated to the family who lost two children in a house fire in Moxham last month. The remaining clothes were donated to the following places: Johnstown Elementary School, St. Vincent De Paul, Free Store 15901, and The St. Francis Sharing and Caring Thrift Shop. Thank you for all of your generosity to make this event a success each year!

**Birthdays and Anniversary for the
Week: November 7 – November 13, 2021**

Nov. 9 – Isabella Kamler

Nov. 10 – Laura Bower

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, Jean Pellon, Bill Layton, Deb Zilch, Bennett, 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 31, 2021

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Psalm: 46

- ¹God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
- ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,
and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;
- ³though its waters rage and foam,
and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
- ⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- ⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;
God shall help it at the break of day.
- ⁶The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;
God speaks, and the earth melts away.
- ⁷The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
- ⁸Come now, regard the works of the Lord,
what desolations God has brought upon the earth;
- ⁹behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world;
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.
- ¹⁰“Be still, then, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”
- ¹¹The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Second Reading: Romans 3:19-28

¹⁹Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰For “no human being will be justified in his sight” by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

Gospel: John 8:31-36

³¹Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” ³³They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free?’”

³⁴Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. ³⁶So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

Sermon by Pastor Scott Klimke

Today’s appointed psalm, Psalm 46, was the biblical inspiration for Martin Luther’s most famous hymn. It’s a poem that begins and ends with a celebration of God’s presence in our lives. “God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble” are its first words. “The Lord of hosts is with us: God is our refuge” are its last words. Quite clearly, our psalmist felt called to celebrate God’s earthly presence. You might feel the same call. Martin Luther certainly did.

At one point in his most famous hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is our God,” he happily identifies Christ as a champion who has come to fight and to hold the field victorious. Later in the same hymn, Luther God fights by our side with the weapons of the Spirit. Quite clearly, like our psalmist, and maybe you too Martin Luther also felt called to celebrate God’s earthly presence. But why? How is having God present in our lives better than not having God present? What beneficial response is God’s earthly presence to elicit from us?

Psalm 46 would seem to suggest that God’s earthly presence is capable of quieting all of our fears. In verse two, after we hear of how God’s earthly presence, the psalmist writes, “Therefore, we shall not fear; though the earth be moved, and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea.” This is what you call the absence of fear and maybe even faith. Life as we know it can fall apart and we will not fear because God is a very present help in trouble. It’s a sensibility Luther shares through “A Mighty Fortress is our God.” Luther boasts, “Though hordes of devils fill the land all threatening to devour us, we tremble not, unmoved we stand.” Later, he boasts even more, exclaiming, “Were they to take our house, goods, honor, child, or spouse, though life be wrenched away, they cannot win the day. The kingdom’s ours forever.” This too sounds like the absence of fear and maybe even faith. When you put together Psalm 46 and Luther’s most famous hymn together, it does sound like the desired effect of God’s presence is to quiet our fears so that faith might assert itself. But, what exactly is the relationship between fear and faith? Is faith really and truly the absence of fear in our lives?

It’s certainly a timely question. How are people of faith to respond to a worldwide pandemic which continues to assert itself almost two years later? How are people of faith to respond to the decline of the Church in America and its collapse in Europe? Shall the appropriate response be some fear, no fear, or all kinds of fear?

The answer depends upon your point of reference. When it comes to what’s going to happen at the end of the line, faith is the absence of fear. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, we fearlessly and steadfastly hold that God’s going to win in the end, with the purposes of God achieving realization. It’s why Psalm 46 says God can melt the world with God’s mouth and also promises that God shall one day make war to cease in all the earth. God’s going to win. The purposes of God shall achieve realization. Martin Luther couldn’t agree more. In “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” he says, “The Kingdom is ours forever.” No one, not even the devil, shall thwart the purposes of God as Luther tells it; explaining his boast that God can subdue the devil with just one little word. But as we people of faith hold to God’s eventual and eternal victory, we also know we haven’t reached the end of the line just yet. As of now, there are

things which concern us and rightly so. With God's Kingdom still on the way, there are ongoing reasons for caution in our lives, and again, rightly so.

This is why even though Luther predicts the defeat of the devil in "Our Mighty Fortress is Our God," he also makes it clear that the devil is an ongoing menace and threat. First, Luther warns that "the old satanic foe has sworn to work us woe." Then he warns that it's "with craft and dreadful might that the devil arms himself to fight." According to Luther's most famous hymn, "On earth the devil has no equal" and "no strength of our ours can match his might." It sure sounds as if Luther wants us to be wary of the devil; to approach the devil with caution and concern. And as for Psalm 46, it promises an end to war because it knows war and bloodshed and human brutality in general are of great concern to us now; an ongoing reason for caution in our here and now lives. And whatever else they may involve caution and concern do have something to do with fear. This clearly tells me that as we await the eventual and eternal victory of God there's going to be room for some fear in our lives. Where we people of faith are to land, it seems to me, is somewhere between no fear and all kinds of fear.

As I understand it, Psalm 46 tries to help us achieve this kind of balance between fear and faith by exhorting us to be still and to know that God is God. When we overreact, when we're overcome by too much fear, the truth is we're not still. We fly off at the mouth. We scheme and sow division. We run around like a bull in a china shop. We distrust established authority so much that we become self-appointed authorities ourselves. This is what happens when we're not still; when we overreact; when we afford fear too wide a berth in our lives. It sounds to me like we should place a premium on being more still in our lives. But we also don't want to be bumps on a log; people who underreact; people who have no fear.

I'd assert this is why Psalm 46 follows up the call to be still with the call to know God is God. Knowing is not a passive activity. We humans are not computers which can be uploaded with all the information life requires in a matter of minutes or hours. To know, we have to engage the world around us. To know, we have to put ourselves out there; not with no fear, not with too much fear, but with just the right amount of fear. This happens when we vote, but don't raid the capitol if we don't get our way. This happens when we demand justice and life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all, but refrain from vandalism and the burning of buildings when these efforts are disappointed. This happens when we use our minds and our hearts and our hands not to be breakdown, but to buildup. Oh, what a much better world it would be if we people of faith could get a better handle on our fear by avoiding both underreaction and overreaction. How might this happen more frequently?

Psalm 46 says it's most likely to happen when we drink often from the river of God that flows through the city of God. This river of God is the presence of God that Psalm 46 and Luther's hymn both celebrate. As we await the end of the line, it's in worship where we most often experience the presence of God that quiets fear and gives faith a healthier place in our lives. Encounters with the word of God can be like a cup of cold water on a hot summer day. The remembrance or celebration of baptism can be like a lukewarm shower after a hot and sweaty workout. The Lord's Supper can for a time quench our thirst completely. And the people of God with whom we gather for worship can shower us with spiritual gifts that call us back like flowers and trees in spring. And so, people of God, as we go from week to week, let's also go from drink to drink here in worship. If we engage the process, leaving any and all resistance to the Spirit to the side, we'll find ourselves more able to walk the fine

line between faith and fear in our present and just as able to hold fearlessly that God's going to win in the end, with all of God's purposes achieving eventual and eternal victory.

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.

We pray for all who long for a word of truth and for the radical grace that flows from the cross. Inspire congregations to freely and boldly proclaim your love for all people with persistence and hope. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for your creation, for mountains, rivers, streams, cities, homesteads, and neighborhoods. Write in our hearts a new love and care for creation. Give us the will to curb wasteful habits and to hold accountable those who neglect the vulnerable. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for all who aspire to public office and for all who will vote on Tuesday at local polling places (especially). Pour wisdom and understanding upon all who govern so that communities of justice and peace may thrive. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for all who long for healing in mind, body, or spirit (especially). Strengthen hospitals, clinics, counseling centers, nursing homes, and recovery centers to be holy spaces of renewal that all might live the abundant life you intend. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for all who seek to grow in faith and love of you. Guide teaching and learning in confirmation, small groups, Sunday school, youth groups, schools, seminaries, and universities. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for all the saints and reformers who have gone before us who dwell in your holy habitation (especially). Give us courage through their example to challenge unjust systems and work toward life-giving reformation. 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.