



Mount Calvary Connected

February 10, 2022

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/

"Cultivating Christ-Like Compassion"

By Rev. Peter W. Marty

I've thumbed through various leadership books for most of my adult life. Much of the literature strikes me as excessively jargony and less helpful than more practical methods for learning effective leadership. Nevertheless, certain leadership characteristics surface repeatedly—traits that capture the attention of followers.

What attracted people to Jesus, interestingly enough, were not traits that we customarily associate with effective leadership in our day, traits like self-awareness, innovation, emotional maturity, self-confidence, creativity, strategic thinking, and more. His personality may well have encompassed any of these. But when people followed Jesus, they were drawn by his compassion as much as anything else. He possessed what Frederick Buechner describes as the "fatal capacity for feeling what it's like to live inside someone else's skin."

At the very outset of his ministry, Jesus touched and cleansed a leper, moved as he was then (and at many other times) "with compassion." He cared for crowds from the deepest parts of his being—*splagchnizomai* in Greek, the bowels or entrails, or what we might speak of as "from his gut." His was a deep feeling for what others were experiencing, which he then acted upon kindly.

Because compassion was central to Jesus' self-understanding, we may speak of it as the primary ethical virtue of the Christian life. "If we want to be Christian," wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "we must share in Christ's large-heartedness . . . his liberating love for all who suffer." Developing this compassion takes practice and intentionality, so that our hearts actually open up and behave benevolently.

One way to nurture compassion is to be honest about the adversity in our own lives. Reckoning with our own hardship and suffering better prepares us to express empathy for others who know adversity. Empathic solidarity with others having a hard time in life can lead us to be more generous, kind, and supportive toward them.

David DeSteno, professor of psychology at Northeastern University, has studied this effect of personal adversity on compassion. Much of his recent research focuses on how we empathize with others in their distress, responding warmly with compassion because of our own experience with suffering. His thesis is compelling, to my mind at least, with one caveat. DeSteno is quick to suggest that we often use compassion for our own psychological well-being. It's a strategy, he argues, "for regaining [our] own footing . . . and making [us] more resilient."

I don't want to suggest that every motive for compassion is selfless and pure, or that DeSteno's data needs to be disproven. I simply want to make a case for a distinctively Christian understanding of compassion that DeSteno's work isn't intended to include.

Christians aren't the only people who cultivate compassion, but we do so for a distinctive reason: the imitation of Jesus Christ. When we come close to someone else's suffering, become unafraid of their pain, and connect their fragility and mortality with our own, a deep feeling in the gut inevitably results. Our vulnerability intensifies. We become a conduit for God's love to flow through us to the afflicted. This has little to do with selfish purpose contributing to resilience in our lives. It has everything to do with entering deeply into the world of someone who's hurting.

Compassion is hardly an automatic reflex, even for the most faithful. It's more like a disposition we have to keep fitting ourselves for. This may be why one New Testament writer directs us to dress in the clothing of compassion every day.

Peter Marty is the editor/publisher of "The Christian Century" and senior pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Davenport, Iowa.

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

Council: Tuesday, February 15th at 6:30 p.m.

Social Ministry Committee: Thursday, February 17th at 6:30 p.m.

WELCA: Monday, February 21st at 6:00 p.m.

Stewardship and Administration Committee: Thursday, February 24th at 6:30 p.m.

Property Committee: Tuesday, March 8th at 6:00 p.m.

2022 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2022 are now available in the narthex. Thank you in advance for your contribution!

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, February 12:

Greeters/Ushers: Brian & Lori Hiltz

Communion Assistants: Pat Bittner & Debbie Ferrin

Sunday, February 13:

Greeters/Ushers: Jim & Chris Koshute

Communion Assistants: Joan Hunter

Saturday, February 19:

Greeters/Ushers: Pat Bittner & Linda Barnhart

Communion Assistants: Volunteers needed!

Sunday, February 20:

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

Snow Camp 2022: Snow camp is BACK at Sequanota! Plans are in the works for the annual "snow camp" to return to Camp Sequanota on February 25th & 26th. This is an overnight event for youth in 6th through 12th grade. Registration opens January 15th, and we'd love to have a group. Contact Pastor Jonathan for details!

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.

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.

Giving Tree

A total of \$601 was collected from the Giving Tree for September-November and was donated to Nardecchia Spay and Neuter. Donations will now be given to The Helping Hands Mission in Portage through February. Thank you for your continued support!

Backyard Ministries Snack Collection

The Social Ministry Team wanted to share the following Facebook post from Backyard Ministries. It shows how much of an impact our snack collection has on the children of Johnstown.

"Why do we go? Yesterday we gave out cookies to kids getting off a bus in a Johnstown neighborhood. The kids were laughing, smiling, and repeatedly saying thank you. Just 48 hours earlier, the same bus was delayed at school for hours by a hostage situation in the neighborhood. Why do we go? Because the kids have nowhere else to go. Because Jesus goes!"

Again, thank you for your continued support!

Updates from Our Members & Community

Wyatt George and his family, along with myself and our family cannot express our appreciation and gratitude enough to our church family. This has been a long road we have traveled and continue to travel. What has helped so much was, and continues to be, the outpouring from our friends, family and fellow worshipers! The cards you sent lifted Wyatt's spirits more than you can imagine! Your prayers, your concern, gifts, cards and well wishes were very meaningful to all of us. You have touched not only our families but also our hearts. Thank you for caring!

Love, Cindy Solarczyk and Family

Wyatt George and Family

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!

**Birthdays and Anniversaries for the
Week: February 13 – February 19, 2022**

Feb. 13 - Barbara Kane

Feb. 14 - Mark Blough, Kathy Gelser, & Richard Wagner

Feb. 15 - Riley Alexander, Sarah Costlow, Edward Pawlowski, & Kiley Zubay

Feb. 16 - Carrie Foor, Molly Leverknight, Kollin Long, Kelsie McQuaide, Julie Rohrbaugh, & Gary Schofield

Feb. 17 - Julian Beglin, Erica Floyd, Megan Floyd, Nathaniel Mayket, Luke Raho, & Megan Ross

Feb. 19 - Lisa Gembinski, Jerry Heinze, John Plunkard, Natalie Popp, & Penelope Reininger

Remember those that prayer has been requested for:

Jennifer & Ryan, Linda & Dick, Dolly & Chiz Palm Family, Claudia Plows, Maddie Pierce, Gladys Haupt, Bill & Linda, Jose & Family, Dave, Tom, Lt. Hunter Bergman, and Lt. Dylan Merchant, Harold, Rick, Midge, Shirley, Debbie, David, Lauren, Billy, Barb, Sara Solarczyk, Jackie Janak, Jack, Corinne, Joan, Dan, Natalie Zerby, Pastor Scott Custead, Luella Koontz, Al Lindner and Family, Bob, Dawn, Stacy & Josh, Florence Barker, Bob Trotter, Jean Pellon, Bill Layton, Deb Zilch, Bennett, Cassy Sojak, Paul Miller, Keith Mayket, Ruth, Pete, the Teplitz Family, Ethel Warshel, Melanie, Ken, John Nerone, Dane Wisner, Jeff, Don, Dorothy, Irene, Karen, Erin, Susan Dyers, Bob McMullen, Dwayne Dietrich, Wyatt George, Larry Hockensmith, Jean Pellon, Mike, Corey, John Rychak, Pastor Jonathan & Family, Roxanee Horner, Lynn Palm and son, Alex, and Alex's wife, Becky Lilja, Kathy P., Al Johnson, Donna & Danny, Cheryl, Jennifer & Family, Jaime, Dorothy, Matt & Ashley, and Landon.

Condensed Worship for Sunday, February 6, 2022

Prayer of the Day

Most holy God, the earth is filled with your glory, and before you angels and saints stand in awe. Enlarge our vision to see your power at work in the world, and by your grace make us heralds of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Isaiah 6:1-13

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." Then I heard

the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!” And he said, “Go and say to this people: ‘Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.’ Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.” Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” And he said: “Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is utterly desolate; until the Lord sends everyone far away, and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land. Even if a tenth part remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled.” The holy seed is its stump.

P: The word of the Lord,

A: Thanks be to God!

Psalm 138

P: I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing your praise.

A: I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name, because of your steadfast love and faithfulness; for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.

P: When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me.

A: All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O Lord, when they have heard the words of your mouth.

P: They will sing of the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord.

A: The Lord is high, yet cares for the lowly, perceiving the haughty from afar.

P: Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me.

A: You will make good your purpose for me; O Lord, your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

P: The word of the Lord,

A: Thanks be to God!

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

A: Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon by Pastor Scott Klimke

Today's readings find God forgoing direct action for indirect action through people like you and me instead. Rather than the extraordinary showing up and standing out from the crowd like a sore thumb, God instead shows up in the ordinary, the average, the everyday; still managing to pull off important stuff, but with a lot less flash and grandeur than we might expect. For example, in our first reading, God doesn't flip some sort of heavenly repentance switch to overcome Israel's disbelief. God instead sends Isaiah in an effort to get Israel to have a change of heart and mind before it's too late. Here is our first example today of God forgoing direct action for indirect action through people like us. Why? Why does God show up through the fan in the stands rather than through the star athlete celebrating a touchdown in the end zone?

Well, let's start with this: Maybe it's dangerous to bring the holy and unholy together. Maybe the holy and unholy are like oil and water in that they don't mix. This certainly explains Isaiah's fear in our first reading. A man of unclean lips from a people of unclean lips has come into direct, unbuffered contact with the holy and the divine. Isaiah worries that he's on the way out; that he's about to go snap, crackle, pop, with God's holiness being the milk to his unholy Rice Krispies. And in actual fact, Isaiah must be cleansed so that God's holiness does not repel his unholy self in a way that very well may prove to be fatal. It's a perspective on what it takes for the holy and unholy to coexist that is quite prevalent in the Bible. God chooses to act indirectly, to stand on the other side of some sort of buffer or go-between, so that we aren't immediately fried up and out of existence by the white hot, unsparing, unrelenting fire of God's holiness. It's definitely a biblical teaching that demonstrates the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; that God is not a play toy, a puppy, or a platitude, but the

holy judge of all creation. But even so, there are additional or alternative ways to explain why today's scriptures so often find God forgoing direct action for indirect action through people like you and me.

If we turn now to our reading from 1st Corinthians, here too, God forgoes the showy and the flashy for the average, the ordinary, and the everyday. When Jesus was raised from the dead, God could have emblazoned the skies the whole world over with the Good News regarding his Son. With any and all possibilities available to God, God could have communicated the Good News of Jesus' Easter victory to the entire world quicker than any technology available today. But it didn't happen. As our reading from 1st Corinthians tells us, God instead decided to communicate through clay pots and earthen vessels like St. Paul and all the other original Easter witnesses. And of course, Jesus' commissioning of Peter in our reading from Luke today prefigures all of this. Why such a lack of flash? And speaking of a lack of flash, why does baptism make use of average, ordinary water rather than something a good bit showier and more spectacular? And why does holy communion convey the real, here and now presence of the resurrected Christ through simple grain and grape rather than through steak and lobster or champagne and caviar?

If you'll allow me to be cynical for a moment, it may be because our scriptures and our sacred traditions want to scam us into thinking that we matter; that the Church matters; that the priesthood matters; that the sacraments matter. If all these things matter, the Church is never going to be short on people and money, right? Right! But as I put this highly cynical thought out there, let me label it as improbable from the start. The fact of that matter is that today's scriptures and their shared emphasis upon God's use of the ordinary come from two different testaments separated by centuries. If a scam was on, people who never met one another and spoke entirely different languages and called God by different names would somehow have to be in on it. I find this to be improbable. But we do have to concede the Church has not always been above board.

As one example of this, it could be argued the only reason you have a Lutheran movement is because the Church once sold a get-out-of-purgatory-free card known as an indulgence to acquire the money to build St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Five hundred years ago, Johann Tetzel and his crew were all over Europe saying, "When a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs." This was a scam all the way. Purgatory, a kind of waiting room for heaven, doesn't exist and salvation is won solely on the basis of what God has done through Christ and the Holy Spirit's gift of faith. But even as the Church has sometimes been a den of thieves, it's much harder to say this when it comes to how our scriptures and our sacred traditions so often draw attention to God's use of the ordinary, the average, and the everyday.

When it comes to the simple water of baptism, St. Paul is already writing about the sacrament in his letter to the Galatians just twenty or so years after the resurrection; calling it a means of grace that clothes us with Christ forever. As for the simple, earthly elements of communion, St. Paul labels them means of grace, bearers of Christ's body and blood, multiple times in his first letter to the Corinthians before we get to today's selection from the same letter. Here, too, we're dealing with a letter that's quite old; maybe written just five or ten years after the letter to the Galatians. If a fix was on, it was on very early; long before the Church built big buildings, established a priesthood, or became anything other than a very minor player in the realm of religion. And if truth be told, today's reading from 1st Corinthians is itself an argument against the Church being some kind of scam. As St. Paul goes out of his way to emphasize, a scam would have required collusion on the part of more than five hundred

original Easter witnesses. I think there being so many original Easter witnesses is a strength of ours. Ours is an apostolic faith; a faith that goes back not just to one person but to hundreds of people whose writings openly tell us they didn't always get along, but still essentially taught the same thing. All of which is to say the Church is not above reproach but at its core does seem to lie the conviction that God regularly uses the everyday, the average, the ordinary for great good.

But if it's not a scam and more than protection from the white hot, unsparing, unrelenting fire of God's holiness, what is it? Why does God so often take the long way; involving us and other members of the creation rather than just taking care of things himself? It's here where our identity as liturgical Christians may help us. Liturgy means something like work of the team. It's a word meant to convey that worship is to be a team sport, not an activity for spectators. God does God's part, the priest his or her part, and the people their part. It's all to be a back-and-forth affair that brings God, priest, and people into closer relationship with one another. And it's here where I'd suggest we find the biggest reason God takes the long way around rather doing everything himself. Put simply, God is committed to relationship with us. God wants to do things together, not apart. Though God could do it, God shall not work around us, over us, or under us. So committed to relationship with us is God that it's going to be with us and through us or not at all for God. There simply shall be no undercutting of the relationship between Creator and creation on God's part. God's going to live out a mutual journey with us, never calling a taxi or an Uber, but instead waiting for us to join him on the way to salvation with works of faith, hope, and above all love. If we wait too long to join God on what is to be our mutual journey, time may run out on us eventually, but not before God and at least some of us have reached the finish line; not at different times, but together. And so, more often than not may Scripture, sacrament, liturgy, and Holy Spirit lead us to recognize that God's always going to have work for us to do and a place for us to be; with the work being Christ-like love and the place being wherever someone is in need of one of God's go-betweens so that Christ-like love might be more fully experienced here on earth. Amen!

Prayers of Intercession

P: The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

P: Equip your church to proclaim the good news that we have first received: the forgiveness and grace shown to us through Jesus Christ. Send us out as apostles, sharing the hope of your salvation with a waiting world. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

P: Holy are you, O God of hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Reveal your splendor in fiery sunsets and in deep blue twilights. Teach us to recognize you in the beauty of our natural world. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

P: Soften the hearts of rulers and governments that they perceive and tend to the needs of their people. Remove corruption and the impulse toward violence. Protect first responders and military personnel who risk their lives in service of others. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

P: Your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon those who look to you for hope and healing. Bless doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists, and all caregivers. Draw near to those who are scared, sick, or in pain (especially). God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

P: The disciples received help from partners as they brought in an abundant catch of fish. So strengthen this congregation's partnerships with community organizations and ministries (especially). Multiply our shared efforts and bring joy to our relationships. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

P: We give thanks for our ancestors in faith who boldly answered your call. By their example give us courage to live in faith and to proclaim your mercy until the day that you gather us into your glory. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

P: Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

A: Amen.

Blessing

P: God the creator who delights in you, Jesus the Savior who is born for you, and the lifegiving Spirit who shines on you, ✠ bless you and keep you in hope and peace. **Amen.**