



Mount Calvary Connected

February 3, 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/

A Message from Pastor Jonathan

2022 has started off with a bang for the Adams family...

The weekend of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, my wife and I were on high alert watching for symptoms of COVID-19 in our family. It started when our daughter Annabelle's preschool was shut down due to COVID cases, and then the teacher my wife eats lunch with tested positive, and then another family friend, and another. It seemed like after two years of successfully avoiding COVID, the numbers were beginning to be stacked against us.

We had a handful of the at-home rapid tests, and swabbed the whole family on Sunday night. The first round of tests were negative, as was a test that Bekah took on Monday night. But Tuesday afternoon and evening, something didn't feel quite right for me. I took another test, and sure enough it was positive. My wife ended up testing positive on Thursday. And our seven month old tested positive the following Tuesday. As it turns out, our three-year-old was the only one who somehow did not get it!

Being younger, fairly healthy, and with Bekah and I both having the benefit of being vaccinated, I believe our dance with COVID was relatively minor. But even so, it very noticeably felt different than any other cold I've ever had, my wife readily tells people it is the sickest she has ever been, and I think we both agree that nearly three weeks after testing positive, we're both still lacking the energy or stamina we had just a month ago.

But then, as we both tried to get back into the normal flow of things this week, we hit another hiccup. Driving to her job as a teacher in Somerset yesterday, Bekah's car died. After we got her safely to work,

I circled back to check the car. It was not good. There was something very obviously wrong with it, and after spending over an hour on the phone with our mechanic, and the warranty company, and the dealership we bought it from, it became obvious: something was very wrong, and it needed to be towed.

After the debacle of waiting hours upon end for a tow truck to arrive, we finally got it to the dealership. Within minutes, they had performed a simple diagnostic and came to tell us probably the last thing we wanted to hear: the engine had failed and would need to be replaced. We've had this car for less than two years; ironically, we bought it after the engine had died in her previous car and the manufacturer was not willing to stand behind their product despite an obvious widespread defect. All of this was the icing on the cake to a day (and month) that had already been filled with frustration and anxiety.

So why am I telling you this story of the chaos in our family these past few weeks?

It's not to try to sway your pity, but rather to point out something else...

While we were sick, we were SURROUNDED by God's love in the prayers, cards, and well-wishes we received from friends, near and far, but also in some very real and physical manifestations, too. We received homemade soup from no less than three separate kitchens, a friend dropped off some groceries, and one night a pizza delivery driver showed up with a dinner that had been anonymously paid for. We even had friends who had recently gotten over COVID take our daughters for a few hours so that Bekah and I could get just the slightest bit of uninterrupted rest.

Even while we felt so incredibly run down, even while we were worried about who WE might have passed COVID onto, we had so many people sharing their kindness, reflecting God's love to us.

And the car? Just seconds after our hearts sank from the news that the engine was dead, the service manager gave us the good news: The engine failure was caused by a known defect in this particular engine, that the manufacturer was accepting full responsibility, that even if we didn't have a warranty, the cost to replace it would be covered in full, and that they would provide a loaner vehicle for our family in the meantime. Very quickly, the sun seemingly came back out on a day that had previously been filled with a lot of tears and frankly, a good bit of foul language. A bright spot in the midst of darkness.

God does not cause bad things to happen to good people (or, to bad people, either). Sometimes bad things just happen. How we respond to them is entirely up to us. In the thick of things, it can be hard to see the light, but I firmly believe that when we bring our faith into those moments of darkness, we can see the blessings of light that God is giving us, even if only in hindsight.

I've never had so many people offering to bring me food, or groceries, or asking what I might need. I've had plenty of issues with car troubles including things that were obviously the manufacturer's fault, but I've never had a car company be so honest and quick to say, "this is on us, we'll make it right for you." Whenever I think back on these first few weeks of 2022, I'm sure I may remember the bad, but I'm hoping that the good remains more prominent in my recollection.

And I hope that whatever chaos might be infecting your life right now, that your faith might help YOU to see the light in the midst of darkness, and make it the lasting memory.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jonathan

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: Thursday, February 3rd at 6:30 p.m.

All Parish Committee: Tuesday, February 8th at 6:30 p.m.

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.

Annual Meeting

Mt. Calvary's Annual Meeting will occur on Saturday, February 5th following the 5:30 p.m. worship service. Please plan to attend.

Annual reports for current voting members of the congregation are now available at church in the narthex. If you are a current voting member, please pick up your copy before or after worship, from 9-11 p.m. on Monday through Thursday, or by making special arrangements with the church secretary. According to the congregation's constitution, current voting members are confirmed members who have communed with the congregation and made a contribution of record to the congregation in the current or prior year.

Year-end giving statements are included in the annual report packets.

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 5:

Greeters/Ushers: Dick & Anita Brodt

Communion Assistants: Cindy Solarczyk & Chris Koshute

Sunday, February 6:

Greeters/Ushers: Volunteers needed!

Communion Assistants: Volunteers needed!

Saturday, February 5:

Greeters/Ushers: Volunteers needed!

Communion Assistants: Volunteers needed!

Sunday, February 6:

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!

Committee News

The Nominating Committee appointed by council in August has completed its nominating ballot for council. The committee's nominees are Kevin Oleksa (1st three-year term), Mark Rychak, (2nd three-year term), Judi Stinebiser (1st three-year term after completing remainder of somebody else's term), and Jack Weisbrodt, (1st three-year term after completing remainder of somebody else's term).

Below is some biographical info for each nominee:

Kevin Oleksa – Serving in various position, I have been with OTS, Inc, a computer and network company. for over 30 years. I have been owner of OTS since 2003. I am originally from the East Conemaugh section of Johnstown but have lived now with my wife Chris in Richland since 2006. Both Chris and I have attended Mt. Calvary for approximately 4 years with 2+ years of that being full time members. I bring to the table not only 15+ years business ownership experience but also service on several Boards of Directors for nonprofit organizations in the area like the Greater Johnstown YMCA and Allegheny Unlimited Care Providers (AUCP) for over 20 years. My knowledge of organizational strategy from a board level would be a help to Mt. Calvary.

Mark Rychak – I have been asked, and am happy to serve a second term on council. Deb and I were married by Pastor Brandau in what is now Sander Hall 38 years ago and have been members ever since. As the Holy Spirit grew in us, so did our commitment to our church through our time and talents. We have been blessed throughout the years in many ways. I have worked in the construction field for most of my adult life and I enjoy the many challenges that maintaining a building like Mt. Calvary can pose. I am honored that my company was chosen to build our new sanctuary in 1992. All businesses and organizations have been "through the ringer" in the last couple of years with the pandemic and I have enjoyed working with the entire council to work through these difficult times.

Judy Stinebiser – Hi my name is Judy Stinebiser. I have been a member of Mt. Calvary Church for 50 years. I have served on council for one year, without missing any meetings. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve on council, and a great experience. The members of council have accomplished a lot this past year to improve the church, and make it a safer place to worship God. I would be glad and happy to be able to serve on council for three years.

Jack Weisbrodt – I'm proud to say I'm a lifelong member of Mt Calvary, dating back to the 50's with Pastor Sander. My parents, who have been deceased for over 30 years, were also members and they too were very active, serving on different committees. My father had also served on council and was a member of the choir, and often performed solos. Unfortunately, he didn't pass down the singing gene! This is my second time on council. I served under Pastor Reed too. It was an exciting time, as I participated in the groundbreaking for the new sanctuary. And it's an exciting time now with Pastor Scott. He has worked tirelessly to make our church "better". It's great to see all the new members and even greater to see them get involved and serve in different ways. We've got a good thing going, and I'm proud to be part of it!

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 6 – February 12, 2022

Feb. 6 - Jacob Brandau, Thomas Donaldson, Jean Pellon, & Sara Whetzel

Feb. 7 - Brady Bachota, Robert Colvin, & Michael Zerby

Feb. 8 - Yvonne Newman

Feb. 9 - Helen LaTulippe & Bonnie Logar

Feb. 10 - Maddox Intihar, William Nihoff, & Steven Winfield

Feb. 11 - Jacqueline Cassidy, Jonathan Elliott, & Debra Sarlouis

Feb. 12 - John Lund, Jr., Susan Osborn, Karen Trabold, Leah Warmkessel, & Megan Wiley

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 Teplitza 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, January 30, 2022

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and love; and that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord." Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

P: The word of the Lord,

A: Thanks be to God!

Psalm 71:1-6

P: In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame.

A: In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free; incline your ear to me and save me.

P: Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe; you are my crag and my stronghold.

A: Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the clutches of the evildoer and the oppressor.

P: For you are my hope, O Lord God, my confidence since I was young.

A: I have been sustained by you ever since I was born; from my mother's womb you have been my strength; my praise shall be always of you.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

P: The word of the Lord,

A: Thanks be to God!

Gospel: Luke 4:21-30

Then [Jesus] began to say to [all in the synagogue in Nazareth,] “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” 22All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” 23He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” 24And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. 25But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; 26yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. 27There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” 28When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. 29They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. 30But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

A: Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon by Pastor Scott Klimke

Week in and week out, our mission and task is to love like Christ; to practice the Christ-like love that the Holy Spirit’s gift of faith enables and encourages. I’ve said it before. I say it again today. Individually and collectively, we are to live out the more excellent way that St. Paul details in today’s reading from 1st Corinthians—the more excellent way called “Christ-like love.” And so, how did it go since we were last together. Did I, did you, did we love like Christ?

If it happened, hopefully last week’s sermon about Christ fulfilling all of God’s expectations and requirements for us found us loving gratefully rather than fearfully or acquisitively. If we ever did, we

don't have to win God's love anymore. God's love has been won for us by Jesus once and for all. And already today, at this early juncture in Luke's gospel, we get a glimpse of how Christ wasn't going to be moved off the way of love. Rejected and nearly lynched by those who knew him best, Christ didn't give up love for hate or grace for vengeance. He'd do the same later when scoffers tried to talk him down from the cross, saying, "Forget about love! Forget about the other! Save and love yourself!" But once again, Christ didn't budge. He walked the long and difficult line of love from start to finish, never straying to the right or to the left. And because he did, our love, when it happens, is now a thankful response rather than a fearful and acquisitive attempt to win God's love on our own. But even so, love, Christ-like love, faith active in love is still our mission and our task week in and week out. How did we do this past week? Did I, did you, did we love like Christ?

It's possible we never got out of the gate and into the game. Maybe we were like Jeremiah in our first reading. The call of God comes and Jeremiah resists. He's not qualified. He's too young and inexperienced. But God's response is to say, "Jeremiah, trust the game plan. I shall provide the words you need and the schedule for their speaking. I shall be right there with you as you get out of the gate and into the game. Just trust the game plan, Jeremiah!"

This can be hard to do—to trust God's game plan—to submit to God's coaching. It will prove to be difficult for Jeremiah all the way through the long book bearing his name. Jeremiah resists God's plan so much that we've been bequeathed the word "jeremiad." It refers to a temper tantrum; a giant woe is me session; a pity party. It's what Jeremiah does all throughout his prophetic career. Called by God in a way he can't deny, he whines. He complains. He tries to poke holes in God's game plan. Modeling the love that never ends, the love that believes all things, bears all things, hopes all things, and endures all things, God listens, but never relents. After listening to the latest jeremiad, God's response is always, "Okay, kid. You had your water break. Get back in the game and to the love that both plants and uproots. I've prepared you and shall continue to coach you all the way though. Now just trust the game plan."

To do this, to trust the game plan, we've got to remember that God's the potter and we're the clay. Growing up, my mother often sang a hymn featuring these words themselves taken from the book of Jeremiah. The hymn's not quite as familiar to me. We Lutherans don't make much use of the songs used at the tent meetings and revivals my mother and her family often attended when she was a child. But the basic point of the hymn stands, as does the Scripture from which it's drawn. God's the potter and we're the clay. God's the Creator and we're the critters. God is Lord and King and we're subject and citizen. Our role in life is not to recreate the wheel, but to trust the potter who turns the wheel. We're to get out of the gate and into the game and trust the game plan. And as more than one person here today can attest, good things do happen when we trust God's game plan for each of us individually and for the Church as a whole.

As a pastor, I've ended up finding myself in all sorts of situations for which I had no formal training. Time and again, it's been: Get out the gate and into the game; trusting the game plan that God shall reveal. Recently, I was led to remember one of the first funerals I ever did. One of the deceased's four children introduced themselves by telling me that his mother was a BEEP, as in a word not appropriate for polite company. He also told me I had better not make his mother out to be a saint from the pulpit. As this was all going down, I thought to myself, "They don't prepare you for this in seminary." But God challenged my deer in the headlights disposition. As I prepared for the funeral with great fear and

trepidation, God said to me, “You got to name it before you claim it. You’ve been taught that there’s no good news without bad news. Trust the game plan. Name it before you claim it.” And so, after sharing what I thought I had heard from God with another pastor, I trusted the game plan. I named it before I claimed it.

In essence, I said, today we remember someone who wasn’t perfect; someone we wish might have been different. Let’s try to do better ourselves. But as we do, let’s remember we’ve got our own imperfections and that the deceased was good enough for God so she should be good enough for us too. I don’t think I can give words to how risky and unnatural that feels the first time you do it. But I’ve now done it multiple times and it works; works what might be rightfully called wonders. It’s just one small example of how God doesn’t leave us up a creek without a paddle. Like a good coach, God prepares and accompanies us; sometimes long before we realize it. We’ve just got get out of the gate, into the field of play, and trust God’s game plan.

And what about those times we do love like Christ and it doesn’t seem to work? Sometimes, it’s because the game is still in progress; with us mistaking an out for an inning or an inning for a game. In today’s reading from Luke Jesus’ love isn’t returned or reciprocated. With the cross ahead of him things are only going to get worse. But things do eventually get better. When Peter preaches in Jerusalem fifty days after Easter, three thousand people repent and vow to love like Christ going forward. This is how it can go for us as well. Sometimes what we think is a failure is just one play in a much longer game. The key is to keep trusting the game plan. The key is not to give in to the temptation to give up on the more excellent way of love.

It’s here where the importance of Christian community begins to emerge. When we gather together for communion with one another and the Holy Spirit, the scriptures tell us we’re not alone in our struggles. Jeremiah resisted getting into the game and whined and waffled when he was in the game. Hearing this helps. If Jeremiah could eventually trust the game plan, even if it was just for short increments, so can we. And along with the encouragement of Scripture there’s also the encouragement we receive from one another.

The truth is that you preach to me as often as I preach to you. The truth is you preach to each other more sermons that I could ever preach to all of you. With this in mind, I’ll confess that I didn’t have a very good week at love. More than once pride and anger and resentment threatened to throw me over the edge just as some of the citizens of ancient Nazareth once threatened to throw Jesus over the edge of a cliff. But as this was going on, at least three members of this community talked me back from the edge; enabling me to pass through my anger and my pride and my resentment as Jesus once passed through the malice of friends and former neighbors. Along with members of this faith community, God was also talking to me in a quiet moment or two and then there was my wife Julia who has redirected more than one of my jeremiads over the years; saying to me, “Get back at it and trust the game plan.”

And so, here I am, maybe with no great and grand successes to report, but with my integrity still intact, which is itself a victory not to discount. And guess what! Now it’s time to start all over again. In, by, and through the Holy Spirit, let’s trust the game plan God has prepared for each of us and for the Church as a whole. And in moments of danger and despair let’s listen to the scriptures and the siblings in the Lord who tell us to keep trusting the game plan called Christ-like love.

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: Guide your church in the ways of faith, hope, and love. Cultivate ministries and communities of compassion that bear witness to your enduring presence among us. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

P: Teach us to live in humility on the earth. Curb arrogance that leads to destruction of natural resources and disregard for future generations. Inspire the work of scientists who urge us to live in harmony with your creation. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

P: You are the refuge of all who seek hope and freedom. Accompany immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who cross borders to find safety and opportunity. Embolden leaders to draft compassionate policies on behalf of migrants and those who assist them. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

P: Love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things. Comfort with your love all who are lonely, fearful, or brokenhearted. Sustain the hope of all those who suffer in body or spirit (especially). God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

P: Your grace falls upon young and old alike. Bless the gifts of children in this congregation and in this community. Give us humble hearts to follow their leadership. Inspire us with their laughter, their insight, and their curiosity. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

P: We praise you for those who have gone before us and now see you face to face (especially). Abide with us in this mortal life until we rest in the arms of your never-ending love. 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: The blessing of the living God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, surround and sustain you, keep you from harm, and fill you with courage. **Amen.**