



Mount Calvary Connected

March 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/

A Message from Pastor Jonathan

Lent is a time to consider the things in your life that may be keeping you from a certain closeness with God, and finding ways to deepen your relationship with God and your faith. Traditionally, the church has recommended that Christians might accomplish this by practicing one of four spiritual disciplines: prayer, study, acts of service, and fasting.

When most people think of Lent, fasting is the first thing that comes to mind. Even though fasting has never been something specifically required of Lutherans, the question of "what are you giving up for Lent?" is still a discussion that is not uncommon this time of year. But choosing a Lenten discipline can be more than just giving something up.

Take "study" for example... I have said it on more than one occasion that learning about our faith is not something that ends at confirmation, but a continuous process that should happen through our lives. Maybe this year is a time to read a book of the bible you've never paid much attention to, or to read some of the Lutheran confessions, or maybe some other religious book. It's important that we give ourselves the appropriate materials to study and allow our faith to grow and be nurtured.

"Prayer" is another spiritual discipline that doesn't take much thought. Maybe this year's Lenten season is a time to expand the ways you communicate with God? You don't need elaborate pre-written prayers, just find a quiet place to sit down (or go for a walk) and talk to God like you would tell a friend or family member about what's going on in your life. You could even combine prayer and study with some of the Lenten devotional books we have available.

“Acts of Service” can be undertaken in any number of ways. Maybe it’s time to clean out the closet of all those clothes you don’t wear and donate them to the thrift store? Maybe you can sign up to volunteer with that organization that you’ve been thinking about for a while? I can guarantee that all of our local fire companies can use extra help, even with non-firefighting things like fundraising or administration, and there are lots of other volunteer organizations that are in similar positions, every little bit helps.

Finally, we come to “fasting,” the age-old idea of giving something up for Lent. There can certainly be value in this, but the key is to make it more than just another set of “New Year’s Resolutions.” Make sure you’re giving something up that will help bring you closer to God in one way or another.

It can be especially fun to see if there are ways to tie all four disciplines together. It’s not uncommon for me to stop at Sheetz multiple times a week or at least a cup of coffee or fountain drink. Let’s say during the 40 days of Lent, I might stop at Sheetz 25 times. But let’s say, as part of my Lenten fast, I choose to give up those drinks. Over the course of Lent, I will have saved somewhere around two hours worth of time that I could devote to prayer and scripture, and somewhere around \$50 that I could donate to a charity rather than lining the pockets of the Sheetz corporation. It can be that easy to find a Lenten discipline that covers all four bases.

By the time you read this, Lent will have already begun, but it’s not too late to consider picking up a new spiritual discipline to help bring you closer to God during this Lenten season.

May God be with you all as we journey towards Easter Sunday,
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.

Bible Basics Course

Pastor Scott will be leading a Bible basics course for six weeks. Every Wednesday, we’ll gather at 6:30 p.m. and discuss how the most recent readings in worship can be connected to the larger themes of the Bible. Should there be an interest, we may continue this practice after Lent concludes. Bring a friend!

Upcoming Meetings

Stewardship and Administration Committee: Thursday, March 10th at 6:30 p.m.

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

Bible for Beginners: Wednesday, March 16th at 6:30 p.m.

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

Craft Club: Saturday, March 19th at 9:00 a.m. RSVP by March 10th

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

Bible for Beginners: Wednesday, March 23rd at 6:30 p.m.

Bible for Beginners: Wednesday, March 30th at 6:30 p.m.

Property Committee: April 12th at 6:00 p.m.

The Property Committee will meet on the second Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. in the old lounge.

Easter Flowers

The Easter flower order envelopes are now available on the table in the Narthex.

Three choices for flowers: 5-bloom lilies, 6-bloom tulips, or 3-bloom hyacinths.

The deadline to place an order is March 28th.

2022 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2022 are 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.

Volunteers who can be available on short notice are needed to help with set-up, serving, and tear-down after funeral luncheons.

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!

Annual Flea Market

May 7, 2022

Items can be donated after April 1st. Please no clothing or shoes at this time.

Yarn Collection

While everyone is cleaning out and getting ready for the flea market, if you find leftover yarn of any size, the Prayer Shawl group would appreciate it if you would bring it in and donate it to our cause. There will be a bin in the narthex where you can place it. Our supplies are getting low and we could use your help. Thank you so much!

Scheduled Worship Help

Saturday, March 12:

Greeters/Ushers: Dick & Anita Brodt

Communion Assistants: Debbie Ferrin & Pam Bittner

Sunday, March 13:

Greeters/Ushers: Volunteers needed!

Communion Assistants: Volunteers needed!

Saturday, March 19:

Greeters/Ushers: Tom & Kathy Rohrabaugh
Communion Assistants: Cindy Buday & Pat Bittner

Sunday, March 20:

Greeters/Ushers: Dick & Lois Sholtis
Communion Assistants: Ray Leverknight

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 or Chris Oleksa at 814-244-9851.



Easter Pageant - Palm Sunday: Our Easter pageant for young people will be held on Palm Sunday, April 10th. Children, and parents who can help, are invited to participate in this meaningful event!

Holy Communion: Is your child ready to learn about Holy Communion and receive the sacrament for the first time? Information was sent out this week about a series of First Communion “retreats” with the hope of helping children to join us at the table during Holy Week and the Easter season. If you’re interested in having your child participate but haven’t already been in touch with Pastor Jonathan, let him know!

Youth Committee: Volunteers are needed to help plan and coordinate events for children of all ages, especially this summer as Pastor Jonathan will be unavailable for a period due to major surgery. If you’re willing to help out (even just for one event) please let Pastor Jonathan, Pastor Scott, or any member of church council know!

Summer Camp at Sequanota: We are blessed to have a GREAT Lutheran church camp practically in our backyard just twenty-five minutes away at Camp Sequanota near Jennerstown. Registration is now open, with programs for all school-aged kids. Talk with Pastor Jonathan to brochure, or visit www.sequanota.com for more information.

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.

Craft Club – Spring has sprung!

Saturday, March 19th @ 9:00 a.m.

More info about what you'll need for the craft is available on the table in the narthex. Please RSVP by March 10th to jslayton@atlanticbb.net.

ELCA Good Gifts Collection

During Lent this year, Mt. Calvary will be donating to the ELCA Good Gifts Program. Each week we will focus on a different area of need that can be used throughout the global community. The Giving Tree will also coincide with the weekly themes. The following is a schedule of the themes and what the donations could possibly be used for:

March 5-11: Healthcare: (Hygiene kit \$25, personal protective equipment \$25, food for orphans \$25/1 month, mosquito net \$10, clinic visit for a child \$10, vaccination for a child \$30, stock a health clinic for a week \$75)

March 12-18: Education: (Send a girl to school \$40, computer for a community center \$800, one month of internet connectivity \$100, school supplies \$10/child, \$300/classroom)

March 19-25: Water: (Water well \$2500, water filter \$30, irrigation project \$100, latrine \$150)

March 26-April 1: Agriculture: (Community vegetable garden \$200, fruit tree seedling \$10, fruit tree farm \$150, seeds and gardening tools \$50)

April 2-April 8: Biblical: (Bible \$12, motorbike for a pastor \$375, Sunday School start-up kit \$65)

Any questions, please contact Mike Kozak at 244-6880. Thank you for your continued support!

Giving Tree

The Giving Tree collected a total of \$1,060 for the months of December-February. It will be donated to Helping Hand Rescue Mission in Portage. Thank you for your continued support!

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

March 16 - Autumn Goehres

March 17 - Drew Berkebile

March 18 - Andrea Burkett, Makenzie Kunkle, & Melissa Pringle

March 17 - Michael & Christie Philibin (21 years)

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, 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, Chris, Donna & Danny, Cheryl, Jennifer & Family, Jaime, Dorothy, Matt & Ashley, Landon, the Family of Attorney Gary Costlow, Max Lawn, Linda Haberkorn, Lorraine, Joe, Donna, Danny & Family, Becky Jo, Bill, Linda & Family, Mary, Cheryl, Mary Jane, Janice, Dennis, Rick, Don, and the Chavis Family.

Financial Update

Through the end of February, income is slightly over budget and expenses are slightly under budget.

We have had a good start to 2022. Thank you! Now we all just need to continue to do our part; maintaining prior patterns of giving from year to year as a baseline and increasing our giving whenever possible, as we also invite and welcome new people into the life of the congregation.

In our area, doing ministry requires being ever mindful of how an aging community where relocation to another area is common reduces our active membership by 8-10% per year. To just hold even, much less grow, the time, talent, and treasure of all these siblings in the Lord will need to be replaced from year to year. It's something we have managed to do for six years in a row now, but if it is to continue it will require us to be both resolute and intentional when it comes to our evangelism and stewardship practices.

Condensed Worship for Sunday, March 6, 2022

Prayer of the Day

P: O Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide us now, so that, following your Son, we may walk safely through the wilderness of this world toward the life you alone can give, 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: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us." When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, you shall make this response before the Lord your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land

flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me.” You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.

P: The word of the Lord,

A: Thanks be to God!

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

P: You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty—

A: you will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my stronghold, my God in whom I put my trust.”

P: Because you have made the Lord your refuge, and the Most High your habitation,

A: no evil will befall you, nor shall affliction come near your dwelling.

P: For God will give the angels charge over you, to guard you in all your ways.

A: Upon their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

P: You will tread upon the lion cub and viper; you will trample down the lion and the serpent.

A: I will deliver those who cling to me; I will uphold them, because they know my name.

P: They will call me, and I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue and honor them.

A: With long life will I satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

Second Reading: Romans 10:8b-13

“The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

P: The word of the Lord,

A: Thanks be to God!

Gospel: Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’” Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, “To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself

down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

A: Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon by Pastor Scott Klimke

In the Christian tradition, there's a longstanding principle that holds prayer precedes creed or belief. This idea that prayer is the foundation of creed can be seen to be at work in a couple of our readings. In our reading from Deuteronomy, for instance, we find ancient Israel's creed; the ancient version of our Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed. This creed holds that Israel was landless, stuck in oppressive Egypt, and then rescued and given its own land by God. But if you follow what's said in our reading from Deuteronomy, where does Israel's creed find its starting point? In prayer, just as Christian tradition would suggest. Israel cries to the Lord, Israel prays to the Lord, and then everything it comes to believe follows.

It's also not hard to see how prayer precedes creed in Luke. As Jesus does battle with the devil, he quotes three scriptures we might as well call "creeds." But how does Jesus come to believe that the word of God can feed and sustain as much as bread? Not by reading a book, but out in the wilderness where prayer and the word of God feed and sustain for forty long days and nights. And how did Jesus come to know it is in the service and worship of the Lord that servants of the Lord shall prosper more than any other? It wasn't in a library, but up on a cross where he prayed and prayed and was then raised from the dead forever and ever after three days. And how was it that Jesus learned it's best not to put the Lord God to the test. Not in a lab, but in a garden where he prayed so intensely that Luke says he was sweating blood; only to hear back from God, "Don't put me to the test. Do as you're told! Drink the cup before you and go the cross." This too is creed following after prayer; after lived, real life conversation with God and experience. It's how knowing becomes believing. To know is only to be aware of someone else's creed, whereas to believe is to have your creed born of prayer and personal experience.

And so, if you find yourself landless, aimless, unmoored, pray and live until you find out where you belong, who you are, and what you believe. If you find yourself oppressed and abused, don't fold or capitulate. Instead, pray and fight until you fight and pray your way through to self-respect and self-understanding; two things you'll need to have before you can ever be free. If there's a cross for you to bear, walk and pray your stations of the cross. If there's a daunting day, week, month, or year before you, pray and kneel atop your rock, your own personal Gethsemane, until your stone is rolled away. And if there's someone or something from which you should fast, discover the delectable delights of prayer and the new and healthier life and diet they bring along with them. One way or another you'll emerge from it all knowing what you're made of and in possession of the creed that gives meaning and shape to your life. This, to use its original Latin, is the principle of "lex orandi, lex credendi." It's prayer, lived experience, ongoing conversation and communion with God and world, as the foundation of creed and belief. And as is the case with everything Christian, this happens not in isolation, but in conversation and communion with the Church. This is important to remember.

By way of illustration, I once had someone say to me, "It's only the Church. The Church isn't everything." Their contention was that prayer can lead us away from the Church rather than into deeper relationship with the Church. They wanted to argue that prayer and scripture and creed can justify a churchless existence where everything's about God and me first and also alone if it has to be. We're likely to hear more and more of this as we're able to bring so much of what used to take place outside of the home into our home through the use of smartphones, tablets, and the like. But as much as we might hear it, you can't squeeze the Church out of Christianity, any more than you can isolate the principle that creed follows prayer from the Church. The idea that we're not free agents, but instead members of a community is actually and quite obviously embedded in our prayers and our creeds.

When we asked Jesus to teach us how to pray, he didn't teach us to pray, "My Father who art in heaven." No, he taught us to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven," as he also taught us to pray for our bread, our forgiveness, and our deliverance from Evil. And if prayer in the Christian tradition assumes the existence of a community so does creed. "We believe," not "I believe," is the language of both the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed. And as for the Apostles' Creed, the only reason it uses "I believe" rather than "we believe" is because it's long been the creed of baptism and confirmation; moments when individuals step to the fore and say, "I believe what the rest of you believe and what the Church has believed for hundreds of years." And if you want to bring Scripture itself into the conversation, the only reason we have the Bible we do is because a community of our ancestors in the faith said these books and these words are in and these books and these words are out. I'm afraid the idea that my prayers and my creeds can stand on their own two feet apart from the prayers and the creeds of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church is a non-starter.

As the sinners we are and will remain until Jesus comes again, we need each other and the Church's scriptures, creeds, and traditions to check the conclusions we draw from prayer on our own. Otherwise, our unchecked conclusions may leave the fold of Christian faith and practice and never come back. It's why our reading from Deuteronomy finds every Israelite bringing their creed out into the light of day for inspection by a priest representing the community as whole. It's a perfect illustration of how that which starts in our own small corner of the universe only reaches the finish line when our prayers and corresponding conclusions are brought into continuity with the prayers and corresponding conclusions of the Church of ages past and present. Which is just another way of saying that we need each other and our siblings in Christ of every age and place desperately. Unlike Jesus, who never became a sinner, we are sinners and we won't make it out in the wilderness without each other. Our individual prayers, wiles, and creeds will only get us so far. There's a reason why Christ's new commandment was the commandment that we love one another as he first loved us. We need each other. Ours is a deeply and profoundly mutual and communal religion. And this brings me to how the principle I've been highlighting grew over time.

Somewhere along the line, this principle became not just "lex orandi, lex credendi," but "lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi." Think of "lex vivendi" as these boots, these prayers, these creeds were made for walking; for use out in the real world. And this is just how it works in our reading from Deuteronomy. Israel's prayers give rise to the gift of a land of its own, this gift born of prayer leads Israel to believe its life as whole is a gift from God, and this creed leads Israel to share the gift of its life with Jerusalem's priesthood and with needy and vulnerable neighbors. It's prayer, then creed, then corresponding life. This is "lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi." And here's one way the same principle can play itself out

in our life together. If we pray as us, if we believe as us, shouldn't we also live as us? The answer is yes and only yes. This is prayer, then creed, then corresponding practice. It's "lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi" hundreds of years after those words were first used. And so, I do hope and pray that Mount Calvary Lutheran Church might become even more of a "we thing" than it already is. There are simple ways for all of us to help with worship. There are simple ways for all of us to use our spiritual gifts and more involved ways to do the same if we feel the Spirit's tug in that direction. Whether it's done simply or more complexly, the bottom line is that integrity calls us to make common cause with one another. It's how our creeds and the prayers responsible for them shall be verified and certified authentic. Again, live as you pray and believe, which is never just me, but also we for Christians like us. Amen!

Prayers of Intercession

P: Drawn close to the heart of God, we offer these prayers for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

P: We pray for the church. Sharpen its proclamation of the word so that your people learn to reject voices of deception and distraction. Strengthen all who are tempted to believe lies about themselves or others. Merciful God,

A: receive our prayer.

P: We pray for the earth and all its creatures. Protect wilderness places and all plant and animal species that call them home. Sustain farmers and all laborers who work the land and harvest the fruits of its abundance. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

P: We pray for the nations of the world. Awaken elected leaders and government officials to the needs of those who are oppressed and grant them compassion to deal mercifully with immigrants and refugees who reside among us. Merciful God,

A: receive our prayer.

P: We pray for those in need. Rescue those experiencing mental illness or contending with addiction. Ease the anxiety of those who live with dementia. Command your angels concerning all who are sick (*especially*). Merciful God,

A: receive our prayer.

P: We pray for this assembly. Bless those who bake bread and prepare the table for our communion celebration. Accompany those who share the bounty of this meal with those who are homebound or hospitalized. Merciful God,

A: receive our prayer.

P: We give thanks for those who have died (*especially*). Gather them with all the saints into your heavenly dwelling place. Encourage us with the promise that all who call upon your name are saved. Merciful God,

A: receive our prayer.

P: Accept the prayers we bring, O God, on behalf of a world in need, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Blessing

P: Now is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation. Holy God, speaking, spoken, and inspiring,
✠ bless you, unbind you, and send you in love and in peace. **Amen.**