



# Mount Calvary Connected

July 21, 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!*

<b>Pastor Scott Klimke</b> Cell-Phone: 570-367-3421 Email: <a href="mailto:sklimke6@gmail.com">sklimke6@gmail.com</a>	<b>Pastor Jonathan Adams</b> Cell-Phone: 412-817-6704 Email: <a href="mailto:revjonoadams@gmail.com">revjonoadams@gmail.com</a>
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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](http://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/](http://www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/bulletins/)

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### "The Good Samaritan"

By Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

I have been thinking a lot about the parable of the good Samaritan lately (Luke 10:25-37). Parts of it are so familiar—the unfortunate victim, the robbers, the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan—that I miss points of deeper meaning. We all know the compassion and generosity of the Samaritan has become the standard by which we measure our response to suffering. Hospitals are named Good Samaritan. All 50 states have a Good Samaritan law on the books. I always imagined (or hoped) that I would act like the good Samaritan were I ever in a similar situation.

There are two other characters connected to this story that I don't always think about: the lawyer and Jesus. Theirs was not a casual conversation. The lawyer was looking to test Jesus. "Teacher, he said, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answers with a question: "What is written in the law?"

Being a good lawyer the man answered from Deuteronomy and Leviticus: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Case closed. Conversation over.

But the lawyer couldn't let it go: "Wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"

We know the man wanted to test Jesus and justify himself so his question was not an earnest inquiry about the Torah. Are some people my neighbor and some people not? How far does hospitality have to extend? Can there be limits to compassion? What is reasonable: Family? People on my block? My congregation? Fellow citizens? And, conversely, whom can I exclude? People across town or around the world? Who is my neighbor?

It's in answer to this question that Jesus tells the parable—a parable designed to be as provocative as possible.

We call the Samaritan “good” but that word is not found in Scripture. No Jew would call a Samaritan “good” nor would any Samaritan call a Jew “good.” Samaritans and Jews regarded each other as ceremonially unclean, socially outcast and heretical. They would not have come up automatically in the neighbor category.

It's not clear that the beaten Jewish man would have been entirely thrilled that he had been helped and touched by the Samaritan. (Think of the All in the Family episode where Archie Bunker realizes he has received a blood transfusion from a Black doctor.)

Now it's Jesus' turn to ask a question: “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”

This becomes the question for us and for these times. When we ask, “Who is my neighbor?” we sort people into categories. Is the refugee my neighbor? Is the Muslim my neighbor? Is the Jew my neighbor? Is the Latina my neighbor? And on and on. This makes for increasingly smaller neighborhoods. And this question can be driven by fear and suspicion. Left to ourselves we turn in and away.

Thank God that God has not left us to ourselves. Our new life in Christ leads us to ask and answer a different question. Not, “Who is my neighbor?” but “How are we neighbor?”

The world is a dangerous place—just check any news source or social media. There are people who mean to do harm to our country. Fear and the threat of danger divide us and constrict us. But we live in the hope of the resurrection and in the certainty of the redemption of the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We no longer ask, “Who is my neighbor?” The question is now, “How are we neighbor?”

The lawyer answered Jesus' question about who was neighbor to the man beaten by robbers with: “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, and to us, “Go and do likewise.”

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### **Upcoming Meetings**

Property Committee: August 9th at 6:00 p.m.

WELCA: August 15th at 6:00 p.m.

Church Council: August 16th at 6:30 p.m.

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

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### **2022 Offering Envelopes**

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

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### **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!

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### **Get Well Cards for Pastor Jonathan**

Cards can be mailed to:

Pastor Jonathan Adams  
219 Ohio Street  
Boswell, PA 15531

If you'd like to send a meal to Pastor Jonathan & his family to help during his recovery, visit the Meal Train website: <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/n15v0q> Thank you!

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### **Backyard Ministries Summer Club Volunteer Opportunity**

For the past 5 years, members of Mt. Calvary have been volunteering their time one day a week, for one hour to spend with the children of Coopersdale during the summer months. We have a core of about 5 people, but when one or more can't show up on a certain week, it makes things more difficult.

If you want to make a difference in underprivileged children's lives and share the word of God with them, then please consider this opportunity! All you need to do is show up. We already have games and activities, as well as the Bible lesson to share each week. If you are interested, or would like more information on this rewarding experience, please contact Mike Kozak at 244-6880. Thank you!

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### **Giving Tree**

For the months of July and August, the Giving Tree will be used to collect \$5 donations for the Jared Box Project. This is a charity that helps brighten the spirits of children in our local hospitals. The money collected will be used to purchase a small bag of activities for each child. The bags will be packed and delivered on God's Work, Our Hands Saturday, September 10th. Thank you for your continued support!

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### **Computer & Internet Connection Now Available**

Members may use the computer in the library during office hours: Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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### **Scheduled Worship Help**

#### **Saturday, July 23:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Mark & Debbie Rychak

**Communion Assistants:** Volunteers needed!

**Sunday, July 24:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Volunteers needed!  
**Communion Assistants:** Volunteers needed!

**Saturday, July 30:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Volunteers needed!  
**Communion Assistants:** Cindy Solarczyk

**Sunday, July 31:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Volunteers needed!  
**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.

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## Youth News

**Mt. Calvary's Adventures of "Flat Jesus":** This summer, Pastor Jono Adams invites you to adopt "Flat Jesus" and take him on your summer adventures! Please see the additional information below or visit Mt. Calvary's website.

**Pastor Jono's Sunday school class, and the nursery/childcare** has concluded for the summer. We look forward to seeing you all later this year!

**Synod Day @ DelGrosso's Amusement Park:** Monday, August 1st

**Lutheran Day @ the Curve:** Sunday, August 21st @ the Curve Baseball Field in Altoona

**IGNITE - Elementary Youth Retreat (Grades 2 - 6):** September 24-25 @ Camp Sequanota

**PLUNGE - Jr. High Retreat (Grades 6 -9):** October 1-2 @ Camp Sequanota

**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](mailto:RevJonoAdams@gmail.com)), cellphone (412-817-6704), or Facebook.

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### **Mt. Calvary's Adventures of "Flat Jesus"**

This summer, Pastor Jono Adams invites you to adopt "Flat Jesus" and take him on your summer adventures!

"Flat Jesus" was inspired by a children's book by Jeff Brown called, "Flat Stanley." In the book, a boy named Stanley becomes flattened and is able to be mailed to different places, having all kinds of exciting adventures.

"Flat Jesus" is a way to keep our church family connected as we enter into the summer traveling season. Bring home a "Flat Jesus" and take him with you as you travel...or to whatever you do this summer. Take a picture of him doing lots of different things: going out to dinner, having fun at the beach or the mountains, hanging out with friends or cousins, or whatever you are doing! It will be an amazing adventure! It is a great way to remember that Jesus is always with us, wherever we go. And it just might start up a conversation with someone about what you are doing...and why!

**AND THEN... SHARE HOW JESUS IS ON THE MOVE!**

When you have taken photos of "Flat Jesus," you can share your "Flat Jesus" pictures:

1. By emailing photos to RevJonoAdams@gmail.com or texting them to 412-817-6704.
2. By uploading your picture directly to Facebook. Tag Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church of Johnstown, PA. Add the hashtag #flatJesus and/or #jesusisonthemove

It will be so exciting to see where Jesus is on the move this summer as you share your adventures! And remember, Jesus is with you ALWAYS!

We'd LOVE to see at least one "Flat Jesus" photo from every family in church. And if we get enough, we'll combine them into a video at the end of the summer!

If you won't make it to church to pick up a printed "Flat Jesus," but still want to participate, you can download and print your own by visiting Mt. Calvary's website: <https://www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/mt-calvarys-adventures-of-flat-jesus/>

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### **Youth/Family Ministry Ice Cream Event**

We'll hear screams for ice cream on August 20th after the 5:30 p.m. service. Our youth and their families are invited to enjoy an ice cream sundae in our side yard under the pavilion. Bring a chair or sit in the grass, meet new friends, eat ice cream, and enjoy summer before school starts! More details to come!

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### **1st Annual Cruise-In**

Sunday, July 24th from 1-4 p.m.

Mt. Calvary parking lot

Open to all cars, trucks, and bikes. A gift bag will be given to the first 25 vehicles. There will be food, dessert, and a DJ. Any questions, please contact the church office at 814-266-4859.

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### **Walk Thru Basket Party**

We are having a Walk Thru Basket Party on September 24th and September 25th. We are asking for your support of the event with the following: purchase tickets, filled baskets, gift certificates, or cash. Tickets will be on sale at the Cruise-In on July 24th. Tickets will also be on sale before and after church services on July 30th and 31st.

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### **Touch a Truck!**

Saturday, September 10th from 10-2 p.m.

There will be all types of vehicles to explore, including fire, police, rescue, and commercial trucks. Snacks and drinks will be provided. There will be a special appearance by Po Poore!

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### **Clothing Sale**

The Social Ministry Team will be having their annual clothing sale on Saturday October 8th. We now have a storage area downstairs at the church that allows us to start collecting items earlier. If you have any clothes you would like to donate, please bag them by size and gender. This makes it easier during the sorting process. You can drop the clothes off at any time. If the church is locked, and no one is available in the office, please leave them by the blue bin outside. It will be checked daily. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Kozak at 244-6880. Thank you!

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### **Boscov "Friends Helping Friends" Shopping Passes**

WELCA is selling Boscov "Friends Helping Friends" discount shopping passes again this year. Your \$5.00 donation entitles you to a shopping pass to Boscov's on October 19th, giving you a 25% discount on most purchases. Proceeds benefit WELCA's many activities throughout the year. Let any WELCA member know you'd like to purchase a pass or watch for someone selling them in the Narthex after services.

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**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
 God's work. Our hands.

March 24, 2022

*Thank You*

Mount Calvary Lutheran Church  
 1000 Scalp Ave  
 Johnstown, PA 15904-3035

Dear Mount Calvary Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your gift(s) given to your synod, received by ELCA World Hunger in January 2022.

*Bring us, O Christ, to share the fullness of your joy;  
 baptize us in the risen life that death cannot destroy*  
 (ELW 328).

This is a season of reflection and sacrifice, but also a season of hope. As we walk the 40-day journey of Lent, we know that we are walking toward Easter and the promise of renewal. Your gifts to the ministries of the ELCA are bringing that promise and hope to your neighbors around the world.

Your generosity is getting at the root causes of hunger and poverty in over 60 countries, including the United States. It is providing access to clean water, health care, agriculture, livestock, education, and peace and justice. Through your gifts, you are joining with the whole church as we work toward a just world where all are fed.

You are creating new beginnings. Thank you for sharing the hope of new life and the fullness of Christ's joy.

In Christ,

The Rev. Robin Brown  
 Director, Congregational Generosity

*P.S. Please see the reverse side of this letter for gift detail.*

8765 West Higgins Road • Chicago, Illinois 60631-4101 • 773-380-2700 or 800-638-3522 • ELCA.org • LivingLutheran.com

Gifts are designated for:

Date	Program	Amount
12/30/2021	ELCA World Hunger	\$50.00
1/31 /2022	ELCA World Hunger	\$2,497.00

## 14-Day Biblical Pilgrimage Adventure to Israel

Jerusalem Seminary in Conjunction with Redstone Presbytery and Friends

October 15 to 28, 2022

Please see email sent May 31st for trip information, including the itinerary, or visit:  
<http://redstonepresbytery.org/>

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### Give now for Eastern Europe Crisis Response

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).*

Friends, I write to you again about our neighbors in Eastern Europe. First, I thank you for your outpouring of prayers and generosity — you are making a difference in the lives of people impacted by the war in Ukraine.

Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response during this crisis are already at work. Because of your generosity, \$1 million will support the Lutheran World Federation and these member churches:

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Romania

They are distributing hygiene supplies, food, medicine, bedding and psychosocial and pastoral care to refugees and internally displaced people, most of whom are women and children.

**Your support has made this possible, but more work remains. Your gifts to “Eastern Europe Crisis Response” will be used to in full (100%) to address the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and neighboring countries.**

Additional responses through partners in these countries and others in the region are expected in the coming weeks and months, and Lutheran Disaster Response is committed to accompanying those partners as the situation evolves. We pray for the Roma communities and foreign nationals who are facing racial and ethnic discrimination at the borders as they flee Ukraine. Our companions are ensuring that people in these marginalized groups will be treated with respect and dignity as they seek safety.

We know there are many organizations that you can choose to support, but it is only by giving to Lutheran Disaster Response that guarantees your gift will fund ELCA-supported work through faith partners in the region.

I invite you to watch this [video](#) from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton about the situation in Eastern Europe and the ELCA’s response.

Together we pray for our siblings in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. May God be with them in their time of need.

In Christ’s service,

Daniel Rift

The Rev. Daniel Rift  
Director, ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response Fund  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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**Birthdays and Anniversaries for the  
Week: July 24 – July 30, 2022**

**July 24** - Andrew Pozun

**July 25** - Richard Gallus & Graham Kylor

**July 26** - Meleiah Dusack, Ken McCutcheon, & Shari McQuaide

**July 27** - Kadiya Lingenfelter, Patricia Molnar, Kevin Oleksa, & Mark Williams

**July 28** - Kadence George

**July 29** - Jon Dusack

**July 30** - Abigail Miller & Mary Pullin

**July 24** - Scott & Julie Rickley

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**Remember those that prayer has been requested for:**

Linda & Dick, Claudia Plows, Maddie Pierce, Gladys Haupt, Bill & Linda, Jose & Family, Dave, Tom, Lt. Hunter Bergman, and Lt. Dylan Merchant, Harold, Rick, Shirley, Debbie, David, Lauren, Billy, Barb, Sara Solarczyk, Jackie Janak, Jack, Corinne, Joan, Dan, Natalie Zerby, Pastor Scott Custead, Luella Koontz, Al Lindner & Family, Bob, Dawn, Stacy & Josh, Bob Trotter, Bill Layton, Deb Zilch, Bennett, Cassy Sojak, Paul Miller, Keith Mayket, Ruth, Pete, Teplitza Family, Ken, John Nerone, Dane Wisner, Jeff, Dorothy, Irene, Karen, Erin, Susan Dyers, Bob McMullen, Wyatt George, Larry Hockensmith, Jean Pellon, Mike, Corey, Pastor Jonathan & Family, Roxanne Horner, Miriam Horner, Becky Lilja, Kathy P., Al Johnson, Chris, Donna & Danny, Cheryl, Jennifer & Family, Jaime, Matt & Ashley, Landon, Max Lawn, Linda Haberkorn, Lorraine, Joe, Donna, Danny & Family, Becky Jo, Bill, Linda & Family, Mary, Mary Jane, Janice, Dennis, Rick, Don, Mabel Ann, Betty, Cathy, Cindy, Jill, Theresa & Family, Dean, Madi & Family, Patty & Family, Sydney & Family, Paulette, Ron, Andrea, Mary Ann, Midge, Rayford, Lois A., Nicole, Trent, Kim, Kyle, Anna, Beverly, Sondra, E. Warshel, Audrey Rubis, Carol, Katey, Janice, Trina & Family, Jake Wissinger, Candi Walker, Dave Brehm, Chrissy-Baby Emma, Wyatt, & Gerald Barrick.

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**Financial Update**

When the council reviewed financial reports through the end of June on Tuesday, things were largely as they've been for some time. There's stability at Mount Calvary. Even with the volatility affecting the savings and investments of so many, our overall holdings are up a tad from a year ago. Income is over budget and expenses are under budget.

The biggest danger before us is not to fall into a false sense of security. The pandemic threw not just Mount Calvary, but much of the Church into neutral for what has been over two years now. Every minute in neutral is a minute lost and as the minutes add up so do the losses. It's why inviting and welcoming without interruption and maintaining or increasing giving when possible are important.

They stave off the losses that are inevitable even when it's full steam ahead and are now more important than ever since things haven't been full steam ahead for some time.

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## Condensed Worship for Sunday, July 17, 2022

### Prayer of the Day

P: Eternal God, you draw near to us in Christ, and you make yourself our guest. Amid the cares of our lives, make us attentive to your presence, that we may treasure your word above all else, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

### First Reading: Genesis 18:1-10a

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son."

P: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**

### Psalm 15

P: Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? Who may abide upon your holy hill?

**A: Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right, who speak the truth from their heart;**

P: they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends; they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

**A: In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear the Lord. They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.**

P: They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent. Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

### Second Reading: Colossians 1:15-28

[Christ Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him—provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

P: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**

### **Gospel: Luke 10:38-42**

Now as [Jesus and his disciples] went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

P: The gospel of the Lord.

**A: Praise to you, O Christ!**

### **Sermon by Pastor Scott Klimke**

In this year of Luke, we're hearing from an evangelist who knows how to hold people's attention. Where do you get shepherds, swaddling clothes, the heavenly host, and our traditional story of Christmas? Luke. Where do we get an industrious, judgmental older brother, a spoiled, irresponsible younger brother, and a father tasked with holding it all together? Luke. And where do we hear of the first, good Samaritan? In Luke by way of last week's Parable of the Good Samaritan. And as the good storyteller he is Luke knows how to deliver the zingers that surprise us, shock us, and hold our attention.

Take last week's Parable of the Good Samaritan as a starting point. The zinger is that it's not two priests, two holy men of Israel, who save an injured neighbor. It's a Samaritan; a religious heretic in the estimation of your average, first century Jew. This is a zinger. We get another one today. We might miss it if we don't connect our story about Martha and Mary with last week's parable. The two come back to back in Luke's gospel and probably best interpreted in tandem.

To develop the connection that exists so today's zinger might emerge in full view, we need to realize that last week's priests were being pious in their own way when they passed by an injured, wounded,

bleeding neighbor. To us twenty-first century Americans, the piety in practice is probably invisible. A lot's changed in twenty-one hundred years. Nonetheless, it will be useful for us to remember or learn that Israel had a real thing about contact with blood; a blood-phobia encouraged by Scripture itself. If you came into contact with blood, even if it involved something as beautiful as childbirth, you became ritually unclean. This was an undesirable place to find yourself. The ritually unclean couldn't interact with the community-at-large until they became clean again. To become ritually unclean was in many ways to become persona non grata. You weren't welcome. It's why you had leper colonies like those represented in the movie Ben Hur where the unclean lived apart and at some distance from everybody else.

If you were unclean, you were also barred from Jerusalem's Temple and unable to make the sacrifices necessary for the forgiveness of your sins. And here's where we get into the part of last week's parable we may miss. It was the priests, the Levites who presided over the sacrifices that forgave the sins of those who came to Jerusalem's Temple. Had the priests in the Parable of the Good Samaritan touched the wounded, bleeding man they encountered they would have been out of work for a while. The same would have been true if the man was already dead. It may be that the priests who look so indifferent and unmerciful to us figured one man's life was going to be less important than maintaining their ability to preside over the sin-forgiving sacrifices that many more would want to offer in Jerusalem's Temple. They may have combined their blood-phobic piety with the view that the right is to be found in what benefits the most people. But whatever the particulars were, Jesus and a lawyer made it clear last week that the priests who passed by an injured, bleeding man were guilty of false piety. I think it may even be fair to say that they were guilty of dangerous piety. Because it ends up in this place, the Parable of the Good Samaritan can be heard, and in some ways probably should be heard, as a call to be done with piety; a call to be done with rules, regulations, and hoops; a call to be done with anything and everything that gets in the way of mercy. When Jesus ends the Parable of the Good Samaritan by telling a lawyer and us to go and do mercy, the message seems to be simple and straightforward. Don't be like all those holy rollers. Don't let piety come before the practice of mercy and hospitality in every day life. But then, in the next verse of Luke's gospel, we get today's zinger. Today, a woman named Martha welcomes Jesus into her home and works hard to make his stay as pleasant as possible. Just as the end of the Parable of the Good Samaritan commands, she's gone out and done mercy and hospitality. But Jesus doesn't praise Martha. Or at least he doesn't praise her as much as he praises the other sister Mary who hasn't helped out in the kitchen, but has sat at Jesus' feet piously, receiving his teaching like those who are thirsty receive water. What's the deal here? Just verses after extolling activism and the doing of mercy and hospitality Jesus now praises piety more. Is his memory that short? Is there no consistency to him and his teaching? Or might there be something else going on here?

In actual fact, I'd suggest there are probably multiple things going on. Let's start with how St. Luke likes to hold opposites in tension. You've got the uber-responsible, judgmental older brother and the spoiled, unappreciative, irresponsible brother in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. They're opposites who the father loves equally. Earlier on, you've got the shepherds and Mary, the mother of our Lord. On the night of Jesus' birth, they both know the same things about him. He's a Savior who is Christ the Lord. But their reactions to this information couldn't be any different. The shepherds tell as many as they can about Jesus. But Mary is quiet and still; pondering everything she has come to know about Jesus in her heart. It's almost as if the shepherds are today's busy Martha and the mother of our Lord is today's different, but still quiet and pious Mary. The point may very well be that it takes all kinds to be

the Church. You need the activists who push the envelope. You need the contemplatives who slow things down. It takes all kinds to be the Church and we are at our best when we remember this.

It's also likely that today's zinger is meant to relay something important about the well from which our activism is to spring. If we're not careful, we can spring into action because we think or hope that if we love, if we practice mercy, if we're hospitable, God will love and praise us back. In today's reading from Luke, Martha borders on falling into this trap, if she doesn't fall into altogether. She assumes what she is doing is correct and that what Mary is doing is incorrect. In so obviously contrasting herself with Mary, Martha can be heard to say, "Jesus, God in the flesh, look at me! Look at me! Look at me! I'm busy with mercy and hospitality and my sister isn't it. Praise me. Love me." This is the trap of "if, then." If I do this or that, then God will love and praise me. But this isn't why we do love, mercy, hospitality, or anything else as people of faith. Our motivation isn't "if, then." Our motivation is "because, therefore." Because Jesus has loved me, I love others. Because Jesus has been merciful to me, I am merciful to others. It's because Jesus has been so hospitable, making room for me in his Father's house that I practice hospitality and make room for others myself. And the bottom line is that you'll lose track of the because responsible for everything you do, the because responsible for every therefore you live, if you don't spend regular time at the feet of Jesus like Mary does in today's reading from Luke. And this brings me to the final thing I'd lift up for you today.

When we integrate the Parable of the Good Samaritan and the story of Mary and Martha as St. Luke's back to back telling encourages, what we get isn't a rejection of piety. What we get is a reorientation of piety. As Jesus' praise for Mary makes clear, there's a place for piety in the life of the Christian. But the piety that's appropriate isn't Temple piety any more than it's legalistic piety. The piety that's appropriate for us is Jesus piety. To quote today's reading from Colossians, it's in Jesus that all things hold together. And so, as we carry on with existing spiritual practices and traditions and consider adding others to the mix, we always want to be asking ourselves, "What would Jesus do—WWJD—what would Jesus do?" If Jesus would do it, it's okay for us too. If Jesus wouldn't do it, it's time to move on. And we know what Jesus would have us to do more than anything else through the Holy Spirit's gift of faith is love God by loving one another and the rest of our neighbors as an extension of self. If piety works against the health of neighbor, it's got to go. But if piety works for the neighbor, we practice it often. Amen!

### **Prayers of Intercession**

P: United in Christ and guided by the Spirit, we pray for the church, the creation, and all in need.

P: Ever-present God, in Christ you fill all things. As your church gathers to hear your word, share your meal, and receive your blessing, teach us to welcome strangers as we have been welcomed by you.  
God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Through Christ you created all things, visible and invisible. Teach humankind to honor and protect all creation, including living things that remain hidden from our eyes such as air, atmosphere, molecules, and microscopic creatures. God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Through Christ you reconcile all things. Motivate those in power to end enslavement, dehumanization, or brutality of any kind (in the spirit of Bartolomé de Las Casas, whom we commemorate today) and to protect and improve the lives of Indigenous peoples. God of grace,  
**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Through Christ you bring peace. Assure all who are worried and distracted by many things of your constant presence. Soothe those suffering in mind, body, or spirit. Sustain all who are afflicted and those who serve as caregivers (especially). God of grace,  
**A: hear our prayer.**

P: In Christ you make your word fully known. Inspire this worshiping community (congregation may be named) to abide fully in your word as we sit at the feet of Jesus. Bless the ministry of teachers and Bible study leaders. God of grace,  
**A: hear our prayer.**

P: In Christ you brought forth the firstborn from the dead. We give thanks for the saints you have gathered at your table. Gather us with them in your eternal glory. God of grace,  
**A: hear our prayer.**

P: God of every time and place, in Jesus' name and filled with your Holy Spirit, we entrust these spoken prayers and those in our hearts into your holy keeping.  
**A: Amen.**

### **Blessing**

P: May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad! The blessing of God, Sovereign, ✝ Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always. **Amen.**