



Mount Calvary Connected

October 27, 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

Semper reformanda! Always reforming!

This weekend we will celebrate the Reformation in both of our worship services, with an especially important celebration during the Sunday service as three young people affirm their baptism completing the confirmation process.

Each of the young people being confirmed has had a "unique" confirmation process that was undoubtedly affected in one way or another at some point in time by COVID. And while they've learned what has been expected of them and are ready to make the commitment of faith in confirmation, I can imagine that this time in the life of the church will forever be part of their faith story. The church is different than it was when they began, it will never be the same; the church is always reforming, always changing.

And as the church continues to change, our hope is that these two young women and one young man who are about to become full, active members of the congregation, will be part of carrying it into the future, adapting with the church and the changing world, giving thanks for their blessings from God by finding ways to be blessings to others.

Their names are Savannah Foor, Ian Selepack, and Lilianna Swartz. If you're in worship on Sunday and haven't met them before, I highly encourage you to introduce yourself and congratulate them. Maybe get their home addresses from the church office and send a card. They need our support, they need the encouragement and the reminder that they are part of something so much bigger than themselves, that they are a part of the family of God that we call the church. And even though the church they are inheriting is different from what we've experienced in the past, we know that God will be with them

every step of the way; so let's join them on that journey, too, because confirmation is not the end, it's just another new beginning as people of faith.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jonathan

Upcoming Meetings/Events

Stewardship and Administration: October 27th at 6:30 p.m.

Evangelism/All Parish Meeting: November 3rd at 6:30 p.m.

Property Committee: November 7th at 6:00 p.m.

Psalms Bible Study: November 9th at 6:30 p.m.

Church Council Meeting: November 15th at 6:30 p.m.

WELCA: November 21st at 6:00 p.m.

Deadline for WELCA Spirit Sale Orders: November 30th

Christmas Pageant

Christmas pageant rehearsal will begin during Sunday School on November 27th.

The Christmas pageant will be on December 18th.

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!

All Saints' Day

Sign Up Sheets for All Saints' Day for DEATHS and BAPTISMS since November 1, 2021 are on the table in the Narthex. Or you can call Terrie in the office at 814-266-4859 and give this info to her.

Clothing Sale - Thank you!

Thank you for all of the clothing donations! The sale brought in \$485 and will be split evenly between Helping Hands Ministry, Precious Life, and Hozanna House. The remaining clothes were donated to the following locations:

Men's - Franklin St. United Methodist Men's Store
Women's - St. Vincent DePaul of Johnstown and St. Francis Sharing and Caring of Davidsville
Children's - Johnstown Elementary School

The Social Ministry Team would like to thank everyone who donated, helped setup/sort clothes, and who worked the day of the sale. It would not be possible to do this every year without the generous members of this congregation!

Help Us Fill in the Blanks!

Our birthdate, wedding anniversary, and church membership records are incomplete. We have been working on moving records from paper to electronic and it's a huge undertaking. Please help Terri or one of our volunteers if they contact you for missing information. You can be a bigger help by calling the church office to verify birth and anniversary dates with Terri. Thanks for your cooperation!

Giving Tree

The Giving Tree collected \$337 for the months of July and August. WELCA generously donated \$115 of that amount. This allowed us to pack 75 bags for God's Work, Our Hands Sunday. The bags were donated to children at Conemaugh Hospital.

The donations for September and October will be going toward the Hozanna House Project. This is a mission who works on local projects, such as cleaning up areas of town, painting or repairing houses, etc. Monetary donations, as well as volunteer opportunities will be available. Thank you for your continued support!

Backyard Ministries Hat/Glove Collection

Once again, Mt. Calvary will be collecting hats and gloves for the children of Coopersdale. Please take a labeled bag, fill it, and return it to the bin in the narthex. This year, there will also be the opportunity to provide a monetary donation, instead of purchasing the items. A basket will be in the narthex for this option as well. Thank you for your continued support!

Choir Reorganization

Several people have been asking about starting up a new choir!

Between time lost over COVID and losing a couple of longtime choir members, we will be needing to start fresh!

Over the years at Mount Calvary, we have sometimes worked with small numbers and sometimes included large groups of over twenty singers.

Some have been strong musicians and others of modest ability. We have sung in unison and in parts. We have occasionally included ambitious music such as that of Mozart and Handel, and even sung significant portions of the Messiah!

The one constant is that we have worked with people who are available and are willing to give freely of their time. This is an opportunity where anyone can participate.

By singing in the choir, you yourself become a stronger musician. Singing is a form of prayer. Singing touches our souls. Singing in a group connects us in a spiritual way.

For this September, it might be nice to tiptoe gently into a new season. I am thinking of beginning with some rounds and two-part singing. If this takes off, we certainly can be more ambitious!

Peoples' schedules are busy. In recent years, we have done Wednesday evening rehearsals for those who can make it. Sometimes I meet people individually. Sometimes people join in last minute at the choir warmup before the service.

I often record parts and, these days, can send an audio text to help people be better prepared.

Since I do not know everyone in the congregation and may not have invited you to sing, let me know if you would like to give it a try! Thanks so much!

Talk to Dan Gresh after any church service or text or call at 814-659-5109

Visits to Shut-Ins, Hospital or Nursing Home Patients

Never hesitate to contact the church office if you, or a loved one, desires a visit from one of our pastors, or a lay visitor. If you, or someone you know is homebound, hospitalized, or in a nursing/care home, and wants or needs a visit or more frequent visits, we are happy to do so. We never want anyone to be missed. We try to get information on those hospitalized or placed in nursing homes, but please don't assume that info is given to us automatically. Call us!

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.

Usher Teams

We are looking to recruit teams of ushers staffed with at least four people. Each group will be assigned to Saturdays or Sundays and a month which works for them. Once the day and month have been arranged, it will be up to the people on the team to determine who will be taking the various weeks in the assigned month. Please be in contact with Pastor Scott should you wish to become a part of a team or have already recruited a time of four.

Scheduled Worship Help

Usher Team for Saturdays (October):

Jerry Pozun, Ruth Pozun, David Saloka, and Stacey Saloka

Usher Team for Sundays (October):

Family of Keith & Wendy Mayket and Family of Chris & Tiffany Swartz

Readers/Communion Assistants (October):

Saturday, October 29: Anita Brodt and Missy Brodt

Sunday, October 30: Joan Hunter

There are sign up sheets in the Narthex for Greeters/Ushers and Readers/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.



Children's Sunday School for youth in preschool, elementary, and middle school started September 11th. See 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. And he is available outside of those hours via email (RevJonoAdams@gmail.com), cellphone (412-817-6704), or Facebook.

WELCA Spirit T-shirt and Sweatshirt Sale

It's not too early to Christmas shop, or treat yourself to new, colorful Mt. Calvary T-Shirts, Sweatshirts, Hoodies, etc. WELCA's Spirit Sale is being held online. Visit <https://mtcalvarylutheranchurch.itemorder.com> to see the selection of items, colors, sizes and prices. Place your order, pay and get a receipt all on-line with F/X Screen Printing.

All purchases will be delivered to the church and a WELCA member will contact you to arrange pick-up at the church. Any questions, contact any WELCA member, or F/X at the number on the website. Prices were rounded up slightly, and proceeds will benefit WELCA's many activities.

Deadline to order is November 30th.

Lutheran Disaster Response: Hurricane Ian Relief

Hurricane Ian made landfall in Florida on Sept. 28 with near Category 5-strength winds, dumping record amounts of rain and causing catastrophic, life-threatening flooding. The western coast of Florida was hit particularly hard. Wind gusts of over 130 mph have downed power lines, leaving millions of residents without power.

In response to Hurricane Ian, Lutheran Disaster Response is partnering with the Florida-Bahamas, Southeastern, North Carolina and South Carolina synods, as well as Lutheran Services Carolinas, to provide both immediate and long-term support. We anticipate relief will include water, food supplies, tarps, cleaning materials and other needs for those who have lost or damaged homes.

Your gifts will support survivors of Hurricane Ian. Gifts to "Hurricane Response" will be used in full (100%) to assist those affected by hurricanes until the response is complete.

Give Now for Eastern Europe Crisis Response

On February 24th, Russian forces invaded Ukraine, launching land, sea, and air attacks. Airports are now shut, and few railway lines are operational. Civilians fleeing the violence are heading toward Ukraine's western districts and such neighboring countries as Poland, Moldova, Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary. Millions of people are seeking refuge in neighboring countries. There are major humanitarian concerns for both internally displaced people and refugees. Many of these Ukrainians fleeing their homes need shelter, basic necessities, and pastoral care.

Lutheran Disaster Response is accompanying our companions in Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, and Moldova, as well as such ecumenical partners as Lutheran World Federation and Church World Service, in their humanitarian responses to the crisis. These partners provide refugees with immediate support and supplies such as food, blankets, water, and hygiene kits.

Your gifts designated for "Eastern Europe Crisis Response" will be used entirely (100%) to provide support for people impacted by conflict in the region.

Birthdays and Anniversaries for the Week: October 30 – November 5, 2022

- Oct. 30** - Chelsey Wingard & Patty Wingard
- Oct. 31** - Alvin Just, John Lumley, Jr., & Dick Sholtis
- Nov. 3** - Wendy Mayket & Claudia Plows
- Nov. 4** - Doris Barber
- Nov. 5** - Austin Dye & Levi Hockensmith

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, Teplitz Family, Ken, John Nerone, Dane Wisner, Jeff, 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, Linda Haberkorn, Lorraine, Joe, Donna, Danny & Family, Becky Jo, Bill, Linda & Family, Mary, Mary Jane, Janice, 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, Kyle, Anna, Beverly, Sondra, El Warshel, Audrey Rubis, Carol, Katey, Janice, Trina & Family, Jake Wissinger, Candi Walker, Dave Brehm, Chrissy-Baby Emma, Wyatt, Gerald Barrick, the Shreffler Family, Louise, Kim, Devin, Laura & family, Dorothy, Jo Ann, John Alt, Jan Mertz, Denny, Jill Lisson, Jaci, Dominic Megia, Jackie Hauger, Sharon, Barbara, Louise & Family, Dennis, Mary M., Joel Penrod, & Tim Miller.

Financial Update

When the council gathered to review financial reports this week, net income through the end of September was still positive. As compared to last year, member gifts and other income are now essentially equal to where the same measures stood a year ago. Positively, overall expenses are lower than they were a year ago, even as continuing issues with our electrical supply wreak havoc on more and more equipment. We give thanks to Mark Rychak and the rest of the property team for the ways in which they are working with our insurance company to help defray the overall cost of replacing so much equipment this past year due to issues with our electrical supply.

As has been the case for some time now, maintaining the financial stability we have now enjoyed for a good number of years will involve continuing to invite and welcome newcomers into our church and maintaining or increasing our personal giving as we can. Thanks in advance for your help with doing both of these things.

Condensed Worship for Sunday, October 23, 2022

Prayer of the Day

P: Holy God, our righteous judge, daily your mercy surprises us with everlasting forgiveness. Strengthen our hope in you, and grant that all the peoples of the earth may find their glory in you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Jeremiah 14:7-10, 19-22

Although our iniquities testify against us, act, O Lord, for your name's sake; our apostasies indeed are many, and we have sinned against you. O hope of Israel, its savior in time of trouble, why should you be like a stranger in the land, like a traveler turning aside for the night? Why should you be like someone confused, like a mighty warrior who cannot give help? Yet you, O Lord, are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name; do not forsake us! Thus says the Lord concerning this people: Truly they have loved to wander, they have not restrained their feet; therefore the Lord does not accept them, now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins.

Have you completely rejected Judah? Does your heart loathe Zion? Why have you struck us down so that there is no healing for us? We look for peace, but find no good; for a time of healing, but there is terror instead. We acknowledge our wickedness, O Lord, the iniquity of our ancestors, for we have sinned against you. Do not spurn us, for your name's sake; do not dishonor your glorious throne; remember and do not break your covenant with us. Can any idols of the nations bring rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Is it not you, O Lord our God? We set our hope on you, for it is you who do all this.

P: The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God!**

Psalm 84:1-7

P: How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts!

A: My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

P: Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young, by the side of your altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God.

A: Happy are they who dwell in your house! They will always be praising you.

P: Happy are the people whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

A: Those who go through the balsam valley will find it a place of springs, for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.

P: They will climb from height to height, and the God of gods will be seen in Zion.

Second Reading: 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

P: The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God!**

Gospel: Luke 18:9-14

[Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

P: The gospel of the Lord. **A: Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon by Pastor Jonathan Adams

One of my hobby projects at the fire station the last few weeks has been helping to convert one of our recently retired ambulances into what we're calling a "squad truck." Basically, we've taken out the stretcher and medical equipment, but left in the seats and cabinets, turning it into sort of a soccer mom minivan on steroids.

In its new configuration, it has seats and seatbelts for seven people, and plenty of storage for all sorts of equipment. It will be used to haul people and equipment for times where a big gas-guzzling fire

engine isn't really necessary. And among the equipment it will carry is something like fifty traffic cones, a dozen road signs, and possibly just as many orange and white barricades.

As someone who enjoys directing traffic more than your average volunteer firefighter, this has me pretty excited.

But it would've made the high school version of myself that much more impressed. Because in high school I didn't buy traffic cones or barricades by the dozen using a fire department credit card.

In high school, I stole them.

It started out innocently enough, a traffic cone here, a construction sign there. Over a few years, I amassed quite a collection, so much so that other students were even stealing them for me, unprompted, because they thought I was obsessed, and, more likely because it gave them an excuse to explore their own criminal mischief.

But the thing is, I never really saw myself as a thief. It's not like I was shoplifting or stealing people's yard decorations. I was taking cones from organizations like PennDOT that no doubt owned hundreds of thousands of them. I was delivering them to places like our marching band's practice field, or my church's parking lot the week before a big event.

I saw myself as sort of the Robin Hood of traffic cones.

But, even so, I was committing what the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania considers, "theft by unlawful taking." Not that I was ever charged with it. Not that I ever even had any interaction with law enforcement about it. Just a stern conversation with my dad every once and a while when he noticed something new in the back of my Jeep, or the dark corner of our garage.

If I had to guess, I'd bet that the idea of trying to justify ourselves when we know we're doing something wrong is probably a pretty natural human reaction. We try to make excuses for why what we're doing isn't wrong. We try to put ourselves ahead of others, "well, at least I'm not as bad as....."

We try to justify ourselves like the Pharisee in Jesus' parable. We thank God not for our forgiveness, but rather that we're not as bad as someone else.

But right is right, and wrong is wrong.

Even my four year old knows the difference between right and wrong. Most of the time at least. She does something bad and immediately starts apologizing until it's acknowledged, "Sorry daddy, sorry daddy, I'm sorry daddy..." "Sorry baby sister..." "Sorry mommy..."

Even our sixteen month old has started to get a pretty strong sense of right and wrong and what the word "no" means.

As adults, or even on the way to adulthood, we should know what's right and wrong, good and evil. But sometimes we forget. Sometimes we try to claim that we're better than we really are.

Over the past ten years or so, I've been very interested on and off in the teachings of Alcoholics Anonymous because their teachings are relevant to just about any addiction or self-destructive behavior. A lot of it is pretty strongly and widely relevant for life in general.

Take for example, the first three of the famous “12 steps...”

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

If you’ve never read or heard the twelve steps, hearing those first three might be kind of shocking. Especially when you recognize that alcohol is only mentioned once, halfway through the first sentence, the first step.

The rest of it has a lot more to do with our relationship with God and ourselves.

In fact, if we swap out the world alcohol for something like, I don’t know, “sin,” it sounds a lot like the way we begin most worship services at Benscreek, with the “Brief Order for Confession & Forgiveness found on page 56 in your green Lutheran Book of Worship...” “we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves.”

The sooner that each one of us can come to that realization, the better. The sooner we can truly live that out in our daily lives, the better. That we are powerless over sin, that God himself is the only one who can possibly justify us, that we have to turn everything over to God.

We can’t be like the dorky high school kid who steals hundreds of dollars worth of stuff “for a good cause.” We can’t be like the pharisee, beating our chest claiming that we’re better than “all those other sinners.”

We need to recognize that apart from God, we are nothing.

But together, with God, we are something. We are everything.

If you’ve never read and reflected on the 12 steps of Alcoholic Anonymous, I highly encourage you do so. Go home and Google it, or let me know and I can print you out a copy. There really is a lot of value to be found in them for people of faith, even if communion wine is the only drop of alcohol that has ever touched your lips, even if it hasn’t.

And the twelfth and final step, goes like this...

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

Take a moment once again and reflect on what those words might mean for us as Christians when we swap alcoholics with “sinners,” or with “Children of God.”

It makes it pretty clear, to me at least, that the last step is really only the beginning of a new journey. That once we’ve truly turned it over to God, once we’ve stopped trying to justify ourselves, that we’re only at the beginning of a new adventure, one that involves teaching and sharing with others.

Maybe that’s what I’m doing as a reformed traffic cone thief who now sets out traffic cones to protect my fellow first responders.

But either way, it’s an encouragement that there is so much more on the other side. That there is fellowship, there is joy, there is peace, there is no fear whatsoever, once we let go of ourselves and lean on God as our justifier. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

P: In gratitude and humility, let us join together in prayer on behalf of all of God's creation.

P: God of mercy, you are in the midst of us and we are called by your name. Inspire your church to serve and love all people with the unceasing grace you extend to us. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: God of all creation, you formed a world where even the sparrow finds a home. Preserve the beauty and diversity of all creatures with whom we share the earth. Lead us to protect all living things. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: God of peace, you are an ever-present help in time of trouble. Rescue families and nations torn apart by violence and warfare (especially Ukraine and Myanmar). Unite all people toward common goals of reconciliation and peace for every person. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: God of hope, you stand with the suffering and give strength. Comfort your people filled with fear or anger, anxiety or shame. Bring healing to all who are sick in body, mind, or spirit (especially). Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: God of restoration, you call us to trust in you and not ourselves alone. Make this congregation a community of humility and repentance, ready to encounter you in love and follow in your ways. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: God of eternal life, to you be the glory forever. We give you thanks for (James of Jerusalem and) all who have fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith, and now live with you. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: With grateful hearts, we commend our spoken and silent prayers to you, O God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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.**