



# Mount Calvary Connected

January 12, 2023

*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](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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## Readings & Sermon from the Past Sunday

Listen to the readings and the sermon from this past Sunday on our website: <https://www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/sermons/>

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## A Message from Pastor Scott

Along with its contributors, this newsletter is being produced by Lacey Fetcko. Lacey has been hired as Erin Powell's replacement. Erin did a stupendous job, but she has now found a different full-time job which is more demanding and leaves her with less time for extras like our communications at Mount Calvary. Still an active member at Mount Calvary, we're happy that Erin has taken a desired step in her career path. May it bring many blessings!

Getting back to Lacey, she will be working remotely as Erin and others did before her. Eventually, she'll handle all print, PowerPoint, and web-based communications. Now a mother engaged with raising her children, Lacey has a background in non-profit work which should tie nicely with our needs at Mount Calvary. She interviewed with Pastor Jonathan and Joan Hunter and they both couldn't have been any more enthusiastic in their appraisals of Lacey's character and credentials. Realizing it will be a few weeks before Lacey is fully up to speed, for now you should send desired announcements and prayer list additions to both Lacey and Erin. Lacey's email address is [lacey@mt-calvarylutheran.org](mailto:lacey@mt-calvarylutheran.org). Erin's email address continues to be [epowell@mt-calvarylutheran.org](mailto:epowell@mt-calvarylutheran.org). Once Lacey has assumed all of her responsibilities, we will let you know and from that point on all desired announcements and prayer list additions should be sent to Lacey alone.

Fitting in with a larger trend, Lacey is our latest attempt to strengthen our support staff at Mount Calvary. Thinking back to when I began at Mount Calvary, we were probably expecting too much from our front office staff. In a church environment, there's always going to be more to do than can actually be done at any given time. Being successful in a church environment requires flexibility, an adaptive spirit, and an intuitive sense for what item on the never ending to do list should come next. Finding people with this combination of traits is not easy.

Compounding the difficulty is the wide variety of tasks which must be attended to administratively. Bills must be paid and financial reports generated. Databases must be kept up to date and accurate, with their reporting capabilities also maximized. Memorial contributions and the correspondence they necessitate must be managed. Bulletins, newsletters, and web-based posts must be created and made available. Contributions must be entered and tracked with the highest degree of accuracy and confidence possible. Facility usage must be scheduled and monitored. The pastoral care needs of those in medical settings must be assessed and passed on to the right pastor. Emails must be answered and phone calls fielded. Visitors to the office must be received positively and professionally. Office equipment must be kept in good working order and the office stocked, clean, and organized. And then there's all I haven't mentioned and that which will show up as new challenges present themselves. Thankfully, all of these tasks very rarely converge upon our support staff at the same time, but there's a lot to do and its variety makes finding just one or two people to do it quite difficult, if not out and out impossible. It's why we have been breaking up our administrative needs into different parcels and then doing our best to find the person best-suited to manage one or more of the parcels we've created.

In some cases, the above approach to the management of our administrative needs is undoubtedly working. Since taking over our bill and bookkeeping operations, Bev Coughenour has hit the ball out of the park. Along with being quite accurate, Bev is the very definition of what it means to be flexible, adaptive, and intuitive. Erin is the same way and we anticipate Lacey will be much the same. Terrie treats people with compassion and respect, holds things in confidence well, and has growing familiarity with the parts of our database which deal with contributors and contributions. Put it all together and it's clear that progress has been made and that's good. But there are still parcels of our administrative pasture which are waiting for just the right steward. Maybe you're that steward. If you think you might be, let me know and we'll see if there's an administrative task with your name written all over it.

Your Partner in Mission and Ministry,

Pastor Scott

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### **Annual Report**

We reduced the number of printed copies of the annual report produced. If you're a voting member and you picked up your packet last year, one will be available for you in the narthex. If you're a voting member and did not pick up your packet last year, you will need to request one from the church office. Also, if you are not a voting member but made a contribution to or through the church and desire a year-end giving statement, that can also be received by contacting the church office.

A digital version of the Annual Report can be found [here](#).

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### **Upcoming Meetings/Events**

- Annual Meeting: January 15th at 10:00 a.m.
  - Volunteer at Family Kitchen: January 15th from 10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.
  - WELCA: January 16th at 6:00 p.m.
  - Church Council Meeting: January 17th at 6:30 p.m.
  - Social Ministry Meeting: January 19th at 6:30 p.m.
  - Snow Camp at Camp Sequanota: January 27-29
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### **It's time!**

Our annual congregational meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, January 15th. The purpose of the meeting will be to approve last year's minutes, adopt a budget for 2023, and appoint and/or elect council members.

Missy Brodt, Todd Moss, Jeff Penrod, and David Raho have all been nominated for three-year council terms, with Cindy Solarczyk being appointed to complete a one-year term vacated by a previous council member.

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### **Family Kitchen Opportunity**

Mt. Calvary will be helping out at the Family Kitchen on Sunday, January 15 from 10-1. They are still doing take out on weekends so our responsibilities will include packing/taking out meals, washing dishes, and cleaning the kitchen. If you would like to volunteer, or donate cookies, please contact Mike Kozak at 244-6880. This is a great event to start the new year by helping those in need!

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### **Snow Camp!**

The snow camp is for Grades 6-12 and is at Camp Sequanota. Registration is online at the camp's webpage or see Pastor Jonathan for more info!

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### **Got Questions? Try Alpha!**

Alpha is an 11 week course that's been developed to help you build a closer relationship with our savior. Each session focuses on a different question centered around faith. There's no studying and no homework, it's even okay if you miss a week, it's as simple as dinner and a movie!

Registration is open and classes begin on Tuesday, February 21st at 6:00pm. Register today!

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### **Was your New Year's Resolution to try something new?**

Join Lori from La Bella Embrace as she guides us through creating our own charcuterie board. This is a wonderful opportunity to make your "covered dish" for the Super Bowl the next day. Click here to learn more and invite your friends!

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## **Scheduled Worship Help**

### *Ushers:*

Saturday, January 14th: Hiltz Family  
Sunday, January 15th: Mayket Family

Saturday, January 21st: Jackie Carpenter & Jack Weisbrodt  
Sunday, January 22nd: Mayket Family

Saturday, January 28th: Jackie Carpenter & Jack Weisbrodt  
Sunday, January 29th: Mayket Family

### *Readers/Communion Assistants:*

Saturday, January 14th: Jack Weisbrodt & Ida Mary Williams  
Sunday, January 15th: Carter & Laura Bower

Saturday, January 21st: Mark & Paige Williams  
Sunday, January 22nd: Laura Bower & Marybeth Heinze

Saturday, January 28th: Kevin Oleksa & Cindy Solarczyk  
Sunday, January 29th: Ray Leverknight

Those interested in volunteering may contact Pastor Scott to sign up.

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## **Children's Sunday School**

Children's Sunday School for youth in preschool, elementary, and middle school is ongoing! See Pastor Jonathan for more information.

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## **Help Wanted!**

The Property Committee is recruiting volunteers to assist with occasional maintenance issues at the church. Volunteers who can be available on short notice are also 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 may also be left with the church office at 814-266-4859.

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## **Altar Guild**

We are reorganizing for 2023. We can never have too many helpers for this important service, so if we haven't approached you yet, please tell anyone you see cleaning up after services that you'd like to help. Join us any time. We'll show you what to do!

The Altar Guild schedule can be picked up in the office when you have an opportunity. If you would like it mailed, please contact Terrie in the office, and she will forward a copy to you. Thank you once again for serving!!

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### **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.

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### **Communion Bread Sign-ups**

Communion bread sign-ups for 2023 are low. Though a number of families have signed up for a month at a time lately, this is not necessary. Please sign up to donate bread for even a week so we might be reminded of how there is one bread for the one Body of Christ.

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### **2023 Offering Envelopes Available in the Narthex**

The envelope numbers changed from the prior year. Those who donate apart from an envelope should make note of their new number. Those who presently don't have envelopes, but desire them, should contact the church office.

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### **Why aren't people coming back?**

A letter to pastors and churchgoers who wonder what happened to the pre-pandemic church they knew.  
by Peter W. Marty

Dear friend,

I am going to assume you're a positive person who enjoys people, radiates goodness, and thrives on hope. I'm also going to assume you're familiar with discouragement. So, tell me if I have this much right: sometime in the last year you looked out over the sanctuary and congregation you love, and you wondered, What happened to the people? Why did so many kiss congregational life good-bye?

Well, keep the doors of your church and heart wide open. Don't write off anyone's place in your community unless they insist on it. Restarting a lapsed habit of any kind, remember, can be more difficult than creating and cultivating a brand-new one.

I wouldn't overanalyze why all sorts of people aren't showing up. Your church may be as good as any. Let's not forget the growing secularization of culture and rising religious indifference staring us all in the face. Much of the public perceives faith as having limited social value. "We now live in a time," says Andrew Root, "where the very idea that God is real and present in our lives is no longer accepted. Indeed, it's widely contested." Skepticism about the benefits of religious community has caused many people to quit looking to the church for personal meaning or identity.

Because you are a person of faith who leans into Christian community, however, there are some things to keep in mind when you're discouraged.

First, remember that God has given the church a bigger and better hope than what the world lives by. How you communicate this beautiful idea that we follow a light brighter than the flicker of our own little bulb is up to you.

Second, don't forget to love your Christian community as you find it, not merely as you wish it were. That's Dietrich Bonhoeffer's idea, not mine. He also reminds us that there's no way to know Christ apart from Christian community. Christus als Gemeinde existierend—Christ exists as community. Anybody can talk up their love for Jesus. But the church is the one place where we actually meet the living and present Christ.

Third, remind yourself that your church needs to welcome and accept people for who they are—if it is to be any kind of magnet in your community—and then love them into who they get to become in Christ.

Fourth, keep looking for ways to grow and share the bubbling energy that ought to be evident in your church when people come together around a shared purpose. Émile Durkheim coined the term collective effervescence to describe what happens when communal gatherings foster a deep religious experience.

Finally, delight in every sign of your congregation's faithfulness. Fixating on who's not in the pews is a worthless and suffocating exercise. There is no convincing anybody of their need for Christian community. They have to want it. And their best chance for discovering that desire may come from observing the joy that's in you.

Your companion on the journey,  
Peter

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

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## **Birthdays and Anniversaries during the week of January 15 – January 21, 2023**

### *Birthdays*

Jan. 16 - James Huerth & Sandy Shuma

Jan. 17 - Christina Cononie, Julie Rickley, & Kaitlyn Wertz

Jan. 19 - Dorothy Bell, Judith Frombach, & Gloria Reed

Jan. 20 - Nathan Berkebile, David Hunter, & Jack Weisbrodt

Jan. 21 - Rodger Thomas

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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, 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, Cathy T., Paul Brodt, Kim Stayrook, April & Schuyler, Alan, Pastor David Louder, Frank Robison, & Sandy.

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## **Condensed Worship for Saturday, January 7, 2023 & Sunday, January 8, 2023**

### **Prayer of the Day**

P: O God our Father, at the baptism of Jesus, you proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized into Christ faithful to their calling to be your daughters and sons, and empower us all with your Spirit, 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: Isaiah 42:1-9**

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a

bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

P: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**

### **Psalm 29**

P: Ascribe to the Lord, you gods, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

**A: Ascribe to the Lord the glory due God's name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.**

P: The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is upon the mighty waters.

**A: The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice; the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendor.**

P: The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

**A: the Lord makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

P: The voice of the Lord bursts forth in lightning flashes.

**A: The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

P: The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare. And in the temple of the Lord all are crying, "Glory!"

**A: The Lord sits enthroned above the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forevermore.**

P: O Lord, give strength to your people; give them, O Lord, the blessings of peace.

### **Second Reading: Acts 10:34-43**

Peter began to speak to [Cornelius and his household]: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

P: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**

## **Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17**

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

P: The gospel of the Lord.

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

## **Sermon**

Baptism of Our Lord A – Matthew 3 – January 7, 2023

Pastor Jonathan Adams

Grace, mercy and peace to you from Jesus the Christ whose baptism we share as believers. Amen.

If you're like the Adamses, and have yet to put away your Christmas decorations, you are officially LATE.

On Friday, the church throughout the world celebrated Epiphany, marking the arrival of the three wise men, the three kings, the three magi, who came to visit Jesus bringing their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Christmas season is officially over.

Now, it's Epiphany, a season in which we focus almost specifically on the ways that Jesus was the light of the world. In which our Gospel lessons will tend to tell us stories about the ways that Jesus was more than human.

Today, our Gospel lesson does just that. Exposes Jesus as divine. But also keeps us focused on Jesus the human. And it all begins when he makes the trek from Galilee to the Jordan river to be baptized by John.

That in and of itself is impressive, since it would have been about a 50-60 mile walk. More than most of us have ever traveled by foot, and certainly a bit more effort than most of us would have had to exert in order to be baptized.

Jesus must really have wanted to be baptized.

And when he arrives at the Jordan River with his cousin John the Baptist, John is incredulous. John knows who Jesus is, he's spent his entire life preparing the way for him. Why would he make such a journey in order to be baptized. Why would he travel so far to be baptized by John the Baptist?

But Jesus insists. This is the most important thing in the world to him in this moment. He says it's the important and proper thing in order to fulfill all righteousness. So John does it.

He takes Jesus down to the river, he asks him to repent his sins, he dunks him into the water, and then...

“just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

This was one of my father’s favorite verses of scripture. He loved to quote it in reference to my brother and I. I never had any doubt that my dad was proud of me, that the things I was doing with my life made him pleased.

And that’s where my train of thought often goes when I hear this story of Jesus’ baptism. It’s a story of God claiming Jesus, a story that shows his true divinity. But there’s so much more than that. Like I said, it’s also a story that shows his true humanity.

You see, I’ve seen pictures of the spot in the Jordan River where it’s traditionally held that Jesus was baptized. And even though it’s an important religious site for millions of Christians all over the world, it’s not exactly the picture of a perfectly clean, healthy body of water. Two thousand years ago, it may have been a bit better.

But it still would have been a river, a river that passed through towns and agricultural areas, that had fish and who knows what else living in it, a river that had earthen banks of mud and clay, sometimes easy to get in and out of, but sometimes far more difficult.

I’ve had my fair share of experience in rivers: kayaking, canoeing, walking past or alongside them, and even falling in from time to time. You’re not going to get into a river without getting a little bit wet, and frankly, probably a little bit muddy, too.

That baptism that Jesus received in the Jordan River from his cousin John would have been quite a bit different from most modern baptisms where someone wearing clean and fresh white clothes gets water dribbled on their head from a little bowl.

It’s different. But it shows his humanity as much as his divinity.

Jesus went to great lengths to be baptized. Jesus went down into the muck and mud to be baptized. To be baptized by a simple man like John the Baptist.

He goes down into the deepest places of the human experience to prove that he is like us, so that like him, we can come up from the waters of baptism washed and clean, so that like him, we can be claimed by our God who loves us.

And so, as we begin our journey through the season of Epiphany, this season where we see Jesus as the light of the world, as more than human. Let us first be reminded of the Jesus who was truly human. Thanks be to God for a savior who is willing to go through a baptism like ours, and a death like ours, so that we can look forward to a resurrection like his. Amen.

### **Prayers of Intercession**

P: Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

P: Calling God, you speak with power to your church. Open our hearts and minds to the new things you are declaring. Strengthen bishops, pastors, deacons, lay leaders, and teachers of the faith. Equip the baptized for your reconciling and redeeming work. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

P: Renewing God, you provide the waters of the earth and in Jesus' baptism you reveal the waters of life. Cleanse and protect oceans, rivers, and watersheds. Bring relief to parched lands and to communities without access to safe water. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

P: Righteous God, you never weary of establishing justice. Increase cooperation and constructive dialogue between nations. Guide local, national, and international authorities to govern with equity, vision, and integrity. We pray for those in military service, for peacemakers, and for our enemies. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

P: Abiding God, your mercy is steadfast. Give sanctuary to people who flee from oppression, war, poverty, and famine. Sustain health care workers, caregivers, first responders, counselors, and all who help and heal. Comfort those who are grieving or experiencing crisis. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

P: Blessing God, in Christ you gather the beloved community. Kindle the gifts of your Spirit in your people. Accompany the newly baptized, those recently ordained, and any beginning a new ministry. Inspire synodical leaders and congregational councils to serve with imagination and wisdom. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

P: Promising God, your faithfulness endures throughout all generations. We give thanks for those who have died in Christ, trusting that we will be united with them and all the saints in Christ's resurrection life. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

P: We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in Christ crucified.

**A: Amen.**

## **Blessing**

P: The God of glory dwell in you richly, name you beloved, and shine brightly on your path; and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the † Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**