



Mount Calvary Connected

February 16, 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!

Pastor Jonathan Adams

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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/

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/>

A Message from Pastor Jonathan Adams

Dear Friends,

My message today is brief, but important, and rather than focusing on my own words I thought I'd bring in the words of someone else:

"God already knows who the next senior pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church will be."

That's something that our Bishop Paula Schmitt has already shared via email with your congregation leaders, and that I know she will share again when she meets with them in person next week. God knows who the next senior pastor will be, even though we don't.

And so, as we prepare to enter into the season of Lent next week with Ash Wednesday, a season that lends itself to renewed devotion in prayer, why not pray that God would open our eyes and ears, and help lead us toward that person.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jonathan

Upcoming Meetings/Events

Social Ministry - Thursday, Feb. 16th at 6:30 pm

Pancake Breakfast - Saturday, Feb. 18th from 7-11 am

Soup-er Bowl Sunday Donations - due Sunday, Feb. 19th

Liturgical Jazz at First Lutheran Church, Johnstown - Sunday, Feb. 19th at 3:00 pm

WELCA - Monday, Feb. 20th at 6:00 pm

Alpha begins! - Tuesday, Feb. 21st at 6:00 pm

Church Council - Tuesday, Feb. 21st at 6:30 pm

Stewardship Meeting - Thursday, Feb 23rd at 6:30 pm

Alpha - Week 2 - Tuesday, Feb. 28th at 6:00 pm

Ash Wednesday Worship Service

Please join us on Ash Wednesday for a special worship service led by guest pastor Reverend Nathan Pile. Wednesday, February 22nd at 7:00 p.m.

Soup-er Bowl Weekend

Help us tackle hunger this weekend by donating cans of soup, boxes of dried soup mixes, or anything used to make soup (non-perishables only) and put them on the display table in the narthex. Donations will be accepted until Sunday, February 19.

This weekend is your last chance to show your support for the St. Vincent dePaul food pantry!

We're not a restaurant, we're family!

Join us for fun and fellowship on Saturday, February 18th from 7 a.m. – 11 a.m. at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church. For only \$7, you will receive 2 sausage patties or bacon, pancakes, and your choice of beverages. If you are bringing guests under the age of 12, breakfast is only \$5!

Jazzing Up Your Weekend

First Lutheran Church, Johnstown, is pleased to present Deanna Witkowski, jazz liturgical pianist in a program of sacred jazz music, original compositions, and hymns on Sunday, February 19, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. in the First Lutheran Church sanctuary.

Join us for an inspiring afternoon!

It's not too late!

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 6:00 p.m. Register today!

Mount Calvary's Annual Flea Market

Please keep Mt. Calvary in mind during your Spring Cleaning!

Our annual flea market will be held on Saturday, May 13th. The funds raised provide a means to purchase big ticket items for the church. In the past, we purchased new appliances and assisted with the upgrade of the church's security system with some of the proceeds. This year, the flea market pledged \$1,000 towards our fundraising campaign for a digital sign on Scalp Avenue.

We will begin collecting donations in April. Stay tuned for additional information and ways you can help or contribute!

Scheduled Worship Help

Readers/Communion Assistants:

February 18 – Cindy Buday & Courtney Haluska

February 19 – Laura Bower

February 25 – Cindy Solarczyk & Kevin Oleksa

February 26 – Ray Leverknight

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

Special Fundraising Campaign: The Sign Project

We have officially launched our fundraising campaign to build a new monument sign along Scalp Ave. The new sign will replace the existing one and will include a new electronic message board. A few of us just finished picking up the remnants of our old white message board, so this comes just in time.

The final cost of the sign is \$50,000 of which approximately 1/3 of that has already been raised. We would consider this a "special appeal campaign". So if you feel that you would like to support this project, please put your extra offering in a separate envelope and mark it "Sign Project". The garage sale/basket party committee has generously donated \$1,000 to kick off this campaign. Thank you very much.

Our goal is to have the new sign installed by late summer. There is a conceptual drawing on the table in the narthex. Thank you for your consideration!

We appreciate your generosity!

The flowers on the altar on February 18th are given in appreciation for all who offer their time, talents, and treasures to Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church. Thank you for everything that you do for Mount Calvary!

Altar Flowers

Schrader's Florist & Greenhouse will now be delivering our altar flowers.

Your council heard many complaints about the previous florist and delivery/quality issues. Schrader's will not charge us a delivery fee and cost will be \$40. We are trying Schrader's out this weekend.

Please take note of the flowers on the altar and let the council know your thoughts. Anyone wishing to place flowers on the altar for a loved one, please sign up on the flower board in the narthex. But don't forget, once lent starts, no flowers will be placed on the altar until Easter.

February 19 – February 25, 2023

Anniversaries

Feb. 21 - Paul & Anita Brodt

Birthdays

Feb. 19 - Jerry Heinze & John Plunkard

Feb. 20 - Corey Nider & Joshua Nider

Feb. 22 - Deborah Finnegan

Feb. 23 - Reagan Daly & Penny Miller

Feb. 24 - William Eschrich, June Gresh, Paul Pollino, & Meghan Swartz

Feb. 25 - Sandrina Gusmenotti

Remember those that prayer has been requested for:

Linda & Dick, Claudia Plows, Maddie Pierce, Gladys Haupt, Jose & Family, Dave, Tom, Lt. Hunter Bergman, and Lt. Dylan Merchant, Harold, Debbie, David, Lauren, Billy, Barb, Sara Solarczyk, Jackie Janak, Jack, Corinne, Joan, Dan, 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, 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, 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, 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, Kim, Devin, Laura & family, Dorothy, Jo Ann, John Alt, Jan Mertz, Denny, Jill Lisson, Jaci, Dominic Megia, Jackie Hauger, Sharon, Barbara, Dennis, Mary M., Joel Penrod, Tim Miller, Cathy T., Paul Brodt, Kim Stayrook, Alan, Pastor David Louder, Frank Robison, Sandy, Louise, Brooke and Bill, Chuck, Dawn, Cherie, Sandy, Lorrie, & Bill, Jamie Bloom, Nancy Moore, Wilma Hiltz, Johnny Nerone, Cheryl & Roger, pray for the Alpha Course participants that they may receive the holy spirit, James, Denny & Ellen, Bill.

Condensed Worship

Saturday, February 11, 2023 & Sunday, February 12, 2023

Therefore

Prayer of the Day

P: O God, the strength of all who hope in you, because we are weak mortals we need nothing good without you. Help us to see and understand the things we ought to do, and give us grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **A: Amen.**

First Reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

[Moses said to the people:] See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

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

Psalmody: Psalm 119:1-8

L: Happy are they whose way is blameless, who follow the teaching of the LORD!

A: Happy are they who observe your decrees and seek you with all their hearts,

L: who never do any wrong, but always walk in your ways.

A: You laid down your commandments, that we should fully keep them.

L: Oh, that my ways were made so direct that I might keep your statutes!

A: Then I should not be put to shame, when I regard all your commandments.

L: I will thank you with a true heart, when I have learned your righteous judgments.

A: I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

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

Gospel: Matthew 5:21-37

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

A: Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell. "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. "Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one."

The gospel of the Lord,

A: Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

Matthew 5:21-37 - February 12, 2023

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God and Christ Jesus who call us into meaningful relationships with one another. Amen.

I think it is safe to assume that none of you came to church today hoping for a good sermon on anger, adultery, divorce and sin.

And let me be clear, that's not what today's sermon is about, or at least not completely. Passages like what we hear from today can be incredibly uncomfortable for preachers like myself who like to focus on grace, and forgiveness, and kindness and love.

It can be easy to think that if we just practice those simple steps, if we just love one another, that nothing else matters. ...But there are rules to be followed.

In the portion of the sermon on the mount immediately before what we hear from today, the portion we heard last week, Jesus says one very important thing that is the key to unlocking today's message.

"I have not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it."

All of these old laws that Jesus is referencing, the ten commandments chiefly among them, they are still in full force, they are still in effect. Jesus is not throwing them out the window. He's telling us how to follow them. He's reminding us that we can't just skate by doing the bare minimum...

Let me tell you about a person I know, that I like to call "8th Commandment Jono."

If you think that I am a kindhearted, easy-going, laidback guy, "8th Commandment Jono" is even moreso. It's who I strive to be, who I try to channel when someone has really ticked me off.

8th Commandment Jono tries his hardest to live into Martin Luther's explanation of the 8th commandment. The one that says, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

Now, when we learned that commandment in Sunday school, we probably just focused on the idea that we're not supposed to lie about other people, but Luther takes it one step further in the small catechism, he says "We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light."

Eighth Commandment Jono is forgiving even to a fault. Eighth Commandment Jono constantly assumes that the person who cut him off in traffic had more important places to be. Eighth Commandment Jono constantly assumes that the person who hurt his feelings or broke his heart didn't mean to, didn't even realize what they were doing.

I strive to be Eighth Commandment Jono. And sometimes I really am.

But sometimes I fall flat.

Because even something as seemingly simple as one of the ten commandments can have huge implications for every aspect of life.

And there are nine more of them. And Jesus didn't abolish any of them.

His teachings in today's passage follow a single, repetitive form, "You have heard it said that.... But now I say this..."

And while "but" is usually used to cancel out what's before like, "Yes, I did that bad thing, BUT I had a good reason," in this case, Jesus uses it to strengthen. Jesus is not cancelling out the old laws, he's stressing how important they are.

Maybe we'd be better served by removing that word, "but" completely. Maybe we'd understand what Jesus was trying to tell us if we took "but" back to the word store, and exchanged it for "therefore."

"You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord," becomes...

"You shall not swear falsely, therefore carry out the vows you have made to the Lord."

You can do the same thing every time.

Jesus did not come to abolish the law, therefore, he came to fulfill it.

Jesus would not want us to skate by doing the absolute minimum amount of good that we can. That's why he elaborated on the laws that he did. I think that's why Paul does that in his letters. That's why Luther keeps going on in the small catechism.

None of them threw out the laws. They just built upon them to help us understand the true intent: that life as human beings, life as children of God, life as Christians is about the relationships we build, and how we continue to honor and cherish them throughout our lives.

When we properly read the Ten Commandments, I think we will see that their purpose is not to limit our lives but to expand and enrich them. The first Three Commandments are about our relationship with God. The second section, Commandments Four through Ten, speak to our relationships to other people.

And when we understand it this way, the whole law, the whole of the ten commandments, and everything that came after, is actually a way to challenge us to honor those with whom we are in relationship. Our spouses, our parents, our children, our friends, our neighbors.

We honor and love our neighbors, just like we honor and love our God.

And the more we do that, the more we shape the world to be that good, kind, gracious, loving place that God envisioned for us all along. Amen.

Prayers Of Intercession

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

L: Inspire your church that it may be a sign of life throughout the world. From the exploration of faith with children and new believers to missionaries and bishops, shape lives of faithfulness, so that all find abundant life in your ways. Merciful God,

A: receive our prayer.

L: Nourish your creation. Accompany all who plant and water. Bless the work of farmers; provide for subsistence farmers facing drought and climate change. Guide the work of agricultural scientists toward sustainable ways to feed the world. Merciful God,

A: receive our prayer.

L: Give growth where there seems to be no hope for life. In nations and regions where reconciliation seems impossible, empower peacemakers with your Spirit. Where death holds sway through violence, disease, and hunger, equip relief workers to bring hope. Merciful God,

A: receive our prayer.

L: Nurture all in need. Bring healing to all who experience trauma caused by systems of injustice and destructive relationships. Give courage to those struggling to repent and those seeking reconciliation. Sustain all who work for restoration. Merciful God,

A: receive our prayer.

L: Encourage this congregation. Call us to a common purpose and keep us from quarrelling. Turn our hearts toward you and guide our leaders, so that our choices may be lifegiving for all. Merciful God,

A: receive our prayer.

L: Thanks be to you for the lives of all who have died in Christ. Teach us to follow them in your ways and gather us with them into the promise of eternal life with you. Merciful God,

A: receive our prayer.

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

A: Amen.

Blessing

P: God the Creator who delights in you, Jesus the Savior who is born for you, and the lifegiving Spirit who shines on you, ✠ bless you and keep you in hope and peace.

A: Amen.