



# Mount Calvary Connected

March 9, 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](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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## We value your input!

You will be receiving a separate email from us with the Congregational Self Study survey attached in the near future. Please print it out, complete it, and return it to the Call Committee as soon as you are able.

The Call Committee is working diligently to find our next pastor, and they value your opinion, ideas and thoughts.

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## A Message from Pastor Jonathan Adams

Last Saturday, a landmark Somerset County restaurant, Kings & Queens in Stoystown, burnt to the ground.

That morning, I was at home helping Bekah and the girls get ready for a bridal shower they would be attending later that day when I heard the initial report over the fire department radio that sits in our living room. "They'll be calling for Boswell before too long if it's actually on fire," I announced to no one in particular, and then a moment later my pager beeped, and we were in fact being sent to the fire. I gave my goodbye kisses and headed toward the fire station to hop into a truck, and then I spent the better part of

the next six hours directing traffic around the fire scene as tankers came in and out shuttling water to the scene, and everyone and their uncle tried to get a closer look.

I had been to Kings & Queens once quite a few years ago. A group of pastors had met together at the Lutheran church in Stoystown, and then joined there for lunch. I thought the food was good, and even tried to take my wife there for dinner a few weeks later, only to find that they were too crowded, and too long of a wait. Several other attempts to eat there over the years also fell flat.

When I finally came home from the fire on Saturday afternoon, I told Bekah, “remember how I had always wanted to take you to Kings and Queens for dinner? Well, I can’t anymore.”

Ironically, this isn’t even the first time I’ve been on scene while an iconic Somerset County restaurant burnt down before I got the chance to eat there; I was also there on Laurel Mountain a few years back when Walat’s (known for its massive ham sandwiches and ice cold beer) burnt.

All of this leaves me with a bit of a sense of loss.

But also a firm reminder of the importance of living for the moment.

On any given day, at any given moment, we could lose something or someone that we care about. So, why wait? If you have an opportunity to try something new, do it! Don’t get caught waiting for the right time, or the perfect conditions. We are called to do God’s work in the here and now, even though sometimes we might try to put it off.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Jonathan

### Events & Meetings

Ask – A Lenten Series (Benscreek) - Wed., March 15th at 7 pm

Property Committee - Thurs., March 16th at 6 pm

Social Ministry Meeting - Thurs., March 16th at 6:30 pm

WELCA - Mon., March 20th at 6 pm

Church Council - Tues., March 21st at 6:30 pm

Ask – A Lenten Series (Mt. Calvary) - Wed., March 22nd at 7 pm

Ask – A Lenten Series (Benscreek) - Wed., March 29th at 7 pm

ALPHA - Every Tuesday in March

### Donate your gently worn, used and new shoes!

From March 1st - May 1st, Mt. Calvary is partnering with the Greater Johnstown YWCA to raise funds for a new lunch/storage counter for their daycare. The more shoes collected, the more money we raise! A list of participating drop off locations and more information can be found here!

### The Giving Tree

Contributions will coincide with the shoe collection drive to raise money for the YWCA. Proceeds will help the Y buy a new lunch counter for their day care.

### Furry Friends

During March, you'll notice a marked bin in the Narthex for donations for the Cambria County Humane Society and Second Chance Stray Cat Rescue. The list of on-going needs is quite large and includes just about anything imaginable for puppies, dogs, kittens and cats. More information is available on the bin, on our website, or contact Erin Powell 814-244-0221 or erin.powell03@gmail.com.

### Easter Flowers

Easter Flower envelopes are available in the Narthex. The cost for each plant is as follows:

5 Bloom Lilies- \$12.00

6 Bloom Tulips- \$12.00

3 Bloom Hyacinths- \$12.00

Please return your envelope with your selection(s) and payment by March 20th.

### Ask – A Lenten Series

In partnership with Benscreek Lutheran Church, our 2023 Lenten midweek offering is entitled "Ask," a series that will encourage us all to remember that having faith and having questions are not mutually exclusive.

We'll gather at 7pm for the five Wednesdays in March, alternating between the two congregations for a worship service that feels a bit more like a bible study. Or maybe it's a bible study that feels a bit more like a worship service? We'll figure it out as we go along.

Join us for one or two, or for the whole series!

March 15th – 7pm @ Benscreek

March 22nd – 7pm @ Mt. Calvary

March 29th – 7pm @ Benscreek

Benscreek Lutheran Church is located at 4459 Somerset Pike, Hollsopple, PA, one mile north of the Thomas Feed Mill, less than 20 minutes from Mount Calvary.

### Visitation Team Members Needed!

During Covid, our visitation team members had difficulties seeing our shut-in and homebound church members. We don't want our current Pastor transition to slow these visits down again.

If you have a few hours a week and feel called to visit some of our shut-ins, please let Pastor Jonathan, or long-time visitors Shirley Glova, Mary Ann Mapes, or Janis Daily know you are interested in learning more about it.

Pastor Jonathan will schedule a training session once the visitation team is identified. If you don't feel comfortable making visits by yourself at first, you will be paired with an experienced visitor.

Prior visitation team members who want to get involved again also need to let the Pastor, or one of the visitors listed above know to include you. And...if you no longer want to make visits, please return your communion kits (or other supplies) to Pastor Jonathan or to Terri in the office.

### Prayer Shawls

Anyone who is in need of a prayer shawl are more than welcome to take what you need from the container at the entrance of the church. Any prayer shawls located in the prayer shawl room, have NOT been blessed or labeled for others. If you are in need and there are none in the container, please contact Pastor and he will direct you to who you need to see. Thank you!

### Readers/Communion Assistants:

March 11 – Jack Weisbrodt & Marsha Pauley

March 12 – Todd Moss

March 18 – Cindy Buday

March 19 – Mike Kozak

March 25 – Kevin Oleksa

March 26 – Ray Leverknight

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

### Article

The Testimony of Water

by Isaac S. Villegas

When we bear witness to someone's baptism, we're called to remember our own. When I remember mine, I think of my grandfather, mi abuelo, who baptized me.

I was young, a preteen. Papi was a deacon at his church, part of the Vineyard movement in Southern California. He stood in the water, at the shallow end of a swimming pool. As I stepped in, he offered me his hand and I took it, wrapping my arms around his arm. Then he dunked me, saying, "En el nombre del Padre, del Hijo, y del Espiritu Santo." He baptized me into the people of God, his God becoming my God.

Years later I sit with him beside another pool, this one at my Aunt Mida's apartment complex in Redondo Beach. I wear a T-shirt; he bundles his aged body in sweatpants, a hooded jacket, and layers of blankets. One hand is in a mitten, while with the other he slowly massages his index finger with his thumb, slowly, circle after circle. He is slumped in the patio chair, weakened after a heart attack, but his hands are strong.

With those hands he once washed dishes in Miami restaurants, earning money to bring his family from Costa Rica—my abuelita and their seven children. Then he opened up a shop in Los Angeles where he sold and fixed bicycles, cut keys, and tinkered with whatever gadget a customer brought him until he figured out how to repair it. There was nothing he couldn't fix with those hands, nothing he couldn't do.

“Chito,” he whispers to me beside the pool. I turn my stare from his hands to the glow in his eyes. “Chito, remember when eras joven, pues como cinco años, y tenía un hammer allí en mi shop, y me ayudó with the bicycles?” I nod and laugh as scenes flash across my mind of him and me, side by side, his wrenches and screwdrivers laid out on the floor as he fixed a bike and me with a small hammer banging on blocks of wood, “helping.” Every weekday morning my mom would drop me off at his shop on her way to work, and I’d stay with him all day, watching his body hunched over bicycle frames as he welded joints, repaired gears, and rewired brakes. My abuelita would bring us café con leche and donuts in the morning, and in the afternoon he and I would walk across the street to Thrifty’s for ice cream.

His thin shoulders bounce up and down as he tells me the story about the time he found me hiding behind the office door at the shop, picking my nose in solitude. He tells this one frequently, and every time I blush and smile, embarrassed at a memory I don’t remember. As he laughs his body shakes, and I picture his leaky heart valve trickling out more and more blood. The doctors did the best they could, my aunt tells me, but fluid is still bleeding into his lungs.

As the sunlight shimmers on the pool’s water, I stare at his hands and then reach over to hold them. After our communion of silence, when I finally say that I have to go, he tells me to scoot my chair closer. He begins to pray, asking God to watch over me and go before me, asking the Holy Spirit to lead me further and further into Christ’s presence. He rests one hand on my shoulder and the other reaches toward my face. He lays his palm on my head, dropping his thumb to my forehead, where he gently marks the sign of the cross as he offers a benediction.

“El Señor te bendiga y te guarde,” he says, gathering all the strength his body allows. “El Señor alce sobre ti su rostro, y te dé paz.” Then, with my hands in his, his gaze locked into mine, he assures me that God is with me: “El Espíritu Santo está with you,” he says, “en tu corazón, always with you.”

This was the last time I saw Papi. He died soon after my visit.

To remember our baptism is to testify. We reach into our memories to notice God’s grace, to recount the communities that have made us who we are and the people who’ve extended the Spirit of Christ to us with their own hands and lives. To ask each other to remember our baptisms is to invite testimonies of God’s grace made flesh, to help one another notice the presence of Christ.

When I remember mine, my mind returns to Papi’s words of blessing: “El Espíritu Santo está with you.” Baptism manifests that promise, made as real as the people who’ve surrounded us with God’s love. As real as the water in that swimming pool where Papi dunked me into Christ’s resurrected life. The water is a witness—it testifies.

“God of grace, creator of waters,” we pray in our Mennonite baptismal liturgy, “your Spirit hovered over the deep.” God’s grace is as diffuse as the waters, rippling within the cellular life of our world. All of life is graced—every person, every community, every creature. We can’t extract ourselves from water, and we can’t separate ourselves from God’s care. To remember our baptism is to recognize, again and again, that we are as reliant on grace as our bodies are on water.

Baptism is a material acknowledgment— a sacramental proclamation—of our fundamental dependence on the one the Eastern churches call Christ Pantokrator, the sustainer of the world. From the font flows a spirituality of yieldedness—Gelassenheit, as the 16th-century Anabaptists preached—to the movement of the Spirit, a daily awareness of the presence of God’s grace in the world. “Although you only receive the sacrament of baptism once,” said Martin Luther, “you are continually baptized anew.”

Our baptismal waters live with us—around us and in us. The testimony of water reminds us of God’s grace and of the people who’ve shared it with us. Papi with me in the pool—and el Espíritu Santo, a companion to all of us, a presence as common and ubiquitous as water.

Isaac S. Villegas is an ordained minister in Mennonite Church USA and a PhD student in religion at Duke University.

Original Source: The testimony of water | The Christian Century

### March 12 – March 18, 2023 Anniversaries & Birthdays

#### *Anniversaries*

Mar. 12 - James & Mary Huerth

Mar. 16 - Jonathan & Melanie Perry

Mar. 17 - Michael & Christie Philibin

Mar. 18 - John & Marcie Kist

#### *Birthdays*

Mar. 13 - Monica Lawson, Mary Miller, & Thomas Rohrabough Jr.

Mar. 14 - Zane Lishka, Nancy Peretin, & Emerson Williams

Mar. 16 - Cynthia Buday, Autumn Goehres, & Donald Osborn Jr.

Mar. 17 - Drew Berkebile & Gary Morningstar

Mar. 18 - Makenzie Kunkle, Caroline Palm, & Melissa Pringle

Mar. 19 - Carolyn Makin

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

Kim; Devin; Laura & Family; Dorothy; Jo Ann; John Alt; Jan Mertz; Denny; Jill Lisson; Jaci 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 & 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; Sue; Stan McQuaide; El Warshel; Kathy Price; Beth Oldham; Stacy & Josh; Bill; Janet; Landon; Harold; Gonzales Family; Mary.

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## Condensed Worship

**Saturday, March 4, 2023 & Sunday, March 5, 2023**

### Simple Questions

#### Prayer of the Day

P: O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

#### First Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a

The LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God.**

#### Psalmody: Psalm 121

L: I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come?

**A: My help comes from the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth.**

L: The LORD will not let your foot be moved nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.

**A: Behold, the keeper of Israel will neither slumber nor sleep;**

L: the LORD watches over you; the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

**A: the sun will not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.**

L: The LORD will preserve you from all evil and will keep your life.

**A: The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth forevermore.**

#### Second Reading: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness. For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")— in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God.**

### Gospel: John 3:1-17

P: The holy gospel according to John.

**A: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.'"

The gospel of the Lord,

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

### Sermon

*Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our creator and redeemer. Amen.*

When I was younger, when I would ask a question to a teacher or group leader, I had a habit of typically beginning it one particular way...

"I know this is probably a stupid question, but..."

And then, I'd ask my question.

Over the years, I've heard the saying that "*there are no stupid questions*" enough to break me of that particular habit, but still, I can tend to be pretty self-conscious about the way that I ask questions. I'm worried what people might think *about* my question, or **about me**. And so, I'll build up to it by trying to explain all of the things that I **do** know about the topic, or detailing *why* the question is important to me.

Or, maybe, every once and a while, I do spit out the question, and when I get a relatively simple answer, I respond with, "well, the reason I'm asking is..."

There's always more to the question. There's hardly EVER a simple question.

And if you've ever asked me a question that is even slightly more complex than "yes" or "no," than you know it's hard for me to answer questions without thinking through multiple layers of information, presenting different directions of thought, trying to be as thorough as possible.

Over time, I've learned that's just how my brain works, even though I'm not as self-conscious about it as I used to be, it's still hard for me to ask, or answer questions, succinctly.

There are no simple questions.

And it's because of this that I personally relate pretty strongly with Nicodemus in our Gospel this evening, sneaking to Jesus under the cover of darkness, afraid to seen at the feet of this new rabbi who teaches with authority, afraid to betray his own ignorance.

For Jesus, the questions are simple.

But for Nicodemus, the questions are incredibly complex.

And incredibly important.

But for as simple as the questions are for Jesus, he doesn't try to dismiss Nicodemus, he asks his own, leading him to challenge his assumptions, to build new beliefs. Rather than giving a simple answer, Jesus invites Nicodemus to consider the layers and directions that are involved.

I can't help but think that for as much as I relate to Nicodemus, I would love the way that Jesus could invite people into conversation, to invite them to learn by asking questions, questions that they already know the answer to.

How is this possible?

Because God so loved the world. Thanks be to God. Amen.

### Prayers Of Intercession

L: Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

L: O God, you so love your church. Raise up leaders who care for your people. Bless lay theologians, seminary and college professors, and all who are called to the ministry of teaching, that they form and inspire us for the work of the gospel. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

L: O God, you so love your creation. Breathe new life into our planetary home. Guide the work of researchers, scientists, and activists who love your earth and who inspire us to care for the natural world. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

L: O God, you so love the world. Uphold leaders who resist tyranny and oppression. Strengthen organizations that promote peace and harmony (especially). Direct their work to alleviate human suffering and to address its root causes. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

L: O God, you so love your people. Draw near to all who live with mental illness, depression, or addiction, and accompany them in healing and recovery. Hear the cries of those who look to you in their distress. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

L: O God, you so love your children. Bless the young in our midst, and delight us with their joy, wonder, and curiosity. Revive our ministries with children and youth and equip us all for faithful discipleship. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

L: O God, you so love your saints. As our ancestors in the faith have been a blessing to us, so inspire us by their example of holy living to be a blessing to those who come after us. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer.**

L: We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Merciful God,

**A: receive our prayer. Amen.**

### Blessing

P: May God who has called us forth from the dust of the earth, and claimed us as children of the light, strengthen you on your journey into life renewed. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you ☩ peace. **A: Amen.**