



# Mount Calvary Connected

April 21, 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 Special Announcement from Pastor Jonathan

Dear Mount Calvary Church Family,

For over three years, I have served alongside you as your part-time associate pastor, and over the last three months since Pastor Klimke's departure, I have gotten to know many of you even more closely. I have enjoyed these few months as what Lacey our communications coordinator once jokingly referred to as your "Lead Associate Interim Pastor in Charge," and I am glad that we were able to celebrate the resurrection together one more time on Easter Sunday.

I am grateful to you all for my time spent at Mount Calvary, and the ways you have helped me learn and grow as a pastor. And I feel I can speak for your neighbors at Benscreek Lutheran Church in telling you that they are grateful for the partnership between the two congregations that has allowed them to retain me as their pastor for nearly seven years.

And so, it is in that spirit of thankfulness that I share with you that I have accepted a full-time call as Pastor of Saint James Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ligonier, Pennsylvania.

In the interest of being able to “leave well,” transferring important information and materials to the relevant individuals and groups, saying goodbyes, and allowing time to coordinate with the synod office for coverage of regularly scheduled worship services as well as emergency coverage for funerals and the like, I anticipate my last Sunday will be the Festival of Pentecost, May 28, 2023, and after tying up any other loose ends, my last day as pastor of Benscreek Lutheran Church, and therefore also Mount Calvary Lutheran Church will be May 31, 2023.

I thank our God for the time we have been blessed with together, and even though I will no longer be your pastor, I will always remember the people whom God called me to serve with here.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Jono Adams

#### Upcoming Meetings and Events

Community Shoe Drop Off – Sat., April 29th from Noon - 3 pm  
Alpha Celebration Dinner - Tues., May 2nd at 6 pm

#### Mt. Calvary Lutheran/YWCA of Greater Johnstown Fundraiser We Need Shoes!

Mt. Calvary Lutheran is inviting you to participate in a shoe drive to raise money for a new lunch space at the YWCA’s daycare.

All donated shoes will be redistributed to partners thru Funds2Org, a for-profit social enterprise used in developing nations to help people start their own business.

Community Drop Off Event  
Saturday April 29th, 12:00 - 3:00  
Mt. Calvary Lutheran  
1000 Scalp Ave.  
“Open the trunk, and we will get the shoes for you!”

In addition to our collection at church, you can drive up to this special event and drop your shoes off with us! Please spread the word!

#### Alpha Celebration Dinner

Are you thinking about taking an Alpha course in the future? We would love to share our experiences with you!

Please join us on Tuesday, May 2nd at 6 o’clock in Sander Hall to find out what Alpha is all about. We will have dinner and watch a short video. Everyone is welcome! Please RSVP by calling the church office or Ruth Pozun (814-270-3525) by April 28th.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Thanks to everybody that helped with our annual weed and feed. We had over 18 shovel-ready helpers! We weeded, mulched, and cleaned up tons of leaves in record time! Afterwards, we enjoyed food and fellowship with one another.

### Ushers/Greeters:

April 22 – Dave and Stacy Saloka

April 23 – The Bower Family & The Swartz Family

April 29 – Tom and Kathy Rohrbaugh

April 30 – The Bower Family & The Swartz Family

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

## REMINDER!

Scheduled Worship Help Wanted

We need your help! We are trying to fill up our schedule with readers and communion assistants for the summer months. If there's a date that you are available and would like to serve our church in this meaningful way, please sign up by contacting Terrie in the office or registering online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA8A72EA5FB6-readerscommunion>.

## Featured Article

The novelist and the theologian

*I'm trying to live as Haruki Murakami writes: with questions but not an end in mind.*

by Brian Bantum

Have you ever woken up and felt your world had become completely strange, almost foreign? I'm sure this is a disconcerting feeling for anyone. For those of us trained to study and think about particular slivers of the world, the vertigo is especially distressing. Even before the pandemic, the acceleration of seemingly endless news cycles of economic, ecological, and social fraying was hard to keep up with. For me, this acceleration was coupled with teaching theology, coming to class every day with hope and some sort of explanation—something that would suggest it could be different. But it never seemed to be.

I've been telling people that the last few years "broke my brain." I just didn't have an explanation. But it was more than that. I didn't know what to pray for, so I stopped. I didn't know how to make a sense of the fragile psychologies of Whiteness and patriarchy, or of why institutions would let themselves crumble rather than see the possibility of life with God for all of us.

To be perfectly honest, I stopped trying. I did my job. I believed what I was teaching, at least, but I wasn't furiously pumping water out of the boat anymore. The waves were crashing, the water was rising. At some point I stopped bailing and just held my breath and wondered how long I'd be able to tread water.

Not exactly the picture of faith, I suppose. All that was left to do amid my treading water was to remember: remember why I believed in the first place, why I read, why I teach, why I write. I tried to read a few lines at a time, to write a few words.

So, after barely reading for the last few years, I committed to a book in January, a Christmas gift from my son: Haruki Murakami's *Novelist as a Vocation*. I was hoping for a balm, but like so many things that heal, there was also a sting. Its lines are still picking at me, the theologian, teacher, and theorist. He writes,

In my considered opinion, anyone with a quick mind or an inordinately rich store of knowledge is unlikely to become a novelist. That is because the writing of a novel, or the telling of a story, is an activity that takes place at a slow pace—in a low gear, so to speak. . . . For the most part, novelists are trying to convert something present in their consciousness into a story. Yet there is an inevitable gap between the preexisting original and the new shape it is spawning. . . . This is quite a roundabout way to do things, and it takes a great deal of time. Someone whose message is clearly formed has no need to go through the many steps it would take to transpose that message into a story. All he has to do is put it directly into words. . . . Quick thinkers are capable of that kind of thing.

I write a lot about certainty every day. Maybe I am trying to convince myself more than anyone else, because when I read these lines, I realized just how much Christian faith has been a journey of brilliance for me. How can I distill these ideas? How can I communicate them clearly? How can I express wonder at the way a writer describes God or our world in such precise and incisive ways? These are not bad things; certainly we need people who can do this work. Maybe I'm even doing it right now.

It's the first bit from Murakami that hasn't left me: we theologians tend to write about what we already know, while the novelist writes out of the gaps. Now, I know many of my friends in the academy would say that they write to find out, that their work is not unlike what Murakami is describing here. And I know this to be true. But we also teach certainty; we introduce students to guilds with settled questions and answers and methods. And we serve churches and pastors who desperately want God, their church, and their worship life to answer questions—rather than provoke new ones or ask us to walk slowly in the gaps to discover what the story might be.

What if the life of faith has less to do with answers and more to do with writing from those inchoate presences, trying to convert them into a story in our life? In our communities? Maybe most of us are already doing this in some form or another.

In the face of problems that increasingly do not make sense to me, this has been my prayer, the little piece of the boat's bow that found its way to the surface to let me rest a bit. What if even amid the crumbling of the world we thought we knew, our faith was more in the living to find the answer instead of living out the answer? What if this is the point of Jesus' life and death and resurrection?

Maybe God invites us to live a life the way a novelist writes a story: not with the end in mind, but sitting every day with questions and wonder and making marks until form begins to take shape. I wonder if this begins with embracing the pieces floating in our midst and grabbing what we can, even if they are a few pages of a book gifted to us. Scratching out a few lines when we don't know how it will end.

Maybe this is how we get free. Maybe this is the Good News, the kingdom already here, all of us writing, living, sharing, and finding after some time that a story is bubbling up around us.

*Brian Bantum is professor of theology at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and author of Redeeming Mulatto and The Death of Race.*

Original Article: The novelist and the theologian | The Christian Century

### A PRAYER FOR OUR PASTORAL SEARCH

Please take a moment to pause and say a prayer for our congregation and our search for our new pastor(s). We know that God has a plan for Mount Calvary that is unfolding right in front of us.

Gracious Lord, you know the skills and spiritual gifts that are needed to do ministry within this congregation. Please guide one with these qualities to us to be our shepherd. Lead this congregation in the way that you see best for all of your Church. Help us to continue to witness to your truth, and bless each member that we might remain strong in the faith. Keep each member faithful through this time that we might be regular in our worship, diligent in the sharing of the Eucharistic feast, eager to learn, and ever ready to do your will. We pray in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Have a blessed day!

### April 22 – April 28, 2023 Birthdays & Anniversaries

#### *Anniversaries*

April 23 - Robert & Nicole Allison

April 25 - James & Cynthia Colvin; Matthew & Jin (Qu) Osborn; Charles & Caroline Palm

April 28 - Linda & Tom Haberkorn

#### *Birthdays*

April 23 - Linda Barnhart, Sally Hessler, & Brittany Spangler

April 24 - Brett Morgenstern & Brianna Tunnison

April 27 - John Given, Sandy Plunkard, & Stacy Pollino

April 28 – Lisa Gusmenotti, Matthew Karnes, Phil Mertz, Penelope Pozun, & Logan Rickley

### 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 Family; Wilma Hiltz; Johnny Nerone; Cheryl & Roger; James; Denny & Ellen; Bill; Sue; Stan McQuaide; El Warshel; Kathy Price; Beth Oldham; Stacy & Josh; Bill; Janet; Landon; Harold; Gonzales Family; Mary; Elaine, Patty and Betty Shaffer; Theresa Lydic and Family; Jim Haberkorn; June Gresh Family; Susan Peters; Patty Creany; Rick Wagner; the family of Helen Finnegan.

## Saturday, April 15, 2023 & Sunday, April 16, 2023

### My Lord and My God

#### Prayer of the Day

P: Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**A: Amen.**

#### First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd], "You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

"Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne.

Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, 'He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.' This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses."

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

#### Psalmody: Psalm 16

L: Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you; I have said to the Lord, "You are my Lord, my good above all other."

**A: All my delight is in the godly that are in the land, upon those who are noble among the people.**

L: But those who run after other gods shall have their troubles multiplied.

**A: I will not pour out drink offerings to such gods, never take their names upon my lips.**

L: O Lord, you are my portion and my cup; it is you who uphold my lot.

**A: My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; indeed, I have a rich inheritance.**

L: I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel; my heart teaches me night after night.

**A: I have set the Lord always before me; because God is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**

L: My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; my body also shall rest in hope.

**A: For you will not abandon me to the grave, nor let your holy one see the pit.**

L: You will show me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

#### Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is

imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith— being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

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

Gospel: John 20:19-31

P: The holy gospel according to John.

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

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name. The gospel of the Lord, **A: Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

Easter 2A – April 16, 2023

Grace, mercy and peace to you from Christ Jesus our risen Lord who reveals himself to those who doubt. Amen.

If I can be completely honest for a moment, I don't necessarily remember a lot of the Sunday school lessons I was taught in elementary school, but for whatever reason, the story of Doubting Thomas is one that sticks in my head.

And the thing I remember, the thing that I can still imagine, during the beginning of that particular lesson, was our teacher telling us about how different states had nicknames. Pennsylvania was the Keystone State, New York was the Empire State, Florida was the Sunshine State.

And Missouri... Missouri was the Show-Me State.

Now, I had never been to Missouri before, and I'm pretty sure I still haven't. But that piece of that lesson stuck with me. The idea was that people in Missouri don't like to just believe whatever they're told; they want to see PROOF. SHOW ME!

Because seeing is believing. And at least in Missouri, people are proud that they won't believe something they can't see.

But that's not always the case, is it?

A lot of times we consider being overly skeptical a negative trait. In our gospel reading today, Thomas gets a bad rap, he gets a nickname that sticks for all of history, Doubting Thomas, simply because he felt left out, because he wanted to see the risen Lord in order to believe in the risen Lord.

Hardly anybody ever calls him "Thomas who had a perfectly normal reaction to hearing a story about something that's kind of hard to believe." Nope, he's "Doubting Thomas."

But it is a perfectly normal human reaction to doubt. It's a perfectly normal human reaction to want to see and experience things for yourself.

If you doubt me on that, you're kind of proving my point, but I did come with another example.

One of the things I end up doing quite frequently as a volunteer firefighter is blocking and closing a road when there's something like a wreck or a fire. A few years ago, we bought a few signs that say "Road Closed Ahead," and as often as we can, we set those signs up at the last major cross street or detour before an emergency scene, and then go up a bit closer to the scene to REALLY block the road after the last house or driveway. It cuts down on having to talk to every curious person, and give directions to every person who claims to only know one way home.

But without fail, people will still cautiously drive past that sign until they come around the bend and suddenly see my pickup truck, or a fire engine sitting across the middle of the road. They've been told what's happening, "Road Closed Ahead," they know what to expect, but they doubt. They need to see to believe...

Being skeptical, having doubt, having reservations. Those are perfectly normal human reactions.

And since God created humanity, God knows that. It's why Jesus appeared to the women, Jesus appeared to the disciples, Jesus made a special visit just for Thomas.

If we doubt what God is doing in our world, in our lives, God will keep finding ways to show us. To reveal God's power. In the moment, we might not always recognize the work that God is doing for us and through us. But in hindsight, when we look back, it's always so much easier.



Because seeing IS believing. And God will always do what needs to be done to help US believe. Thanks be to God. Amen.

### Prayers Of Intercession

L: United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

L: God of rebirth, the good news of your resurrection brings refreshment to a weary world. Following the women at the tomb, empower us to boldly share your radical love through our words and our work. Hear us, O God.

**A: Your mercy is great.**

L: As you breathed your Spirit into the disciples, breathe your spirit of healing upon all creation. Nourish the earth with sufficient rains. Strengthen us to counter the effects of pollution and destruction. Hear us, O God.

**A: Your mercy is great.**

L: You prepared the disciples for their ministry by calming their fears and granting them your peace. Equip our communities' leaders. Give them a spirit of peace and hearts that burn for justice, that their leadership reflects your love. Hear us, O God.

**A: Your mercy is great.**

L: You come among us in unexpected ways. Send us to those who hide in fear or question your love. Be a healing presence for any isolated by addiction, incarceration, mental illness, chronic pain, sickness, or grief. Hear us, O God.

**A: Your mercy is great.**

L: As you met the disciples on the road to Emmaus, show us your presence along our journeys. Bless our doubts and questions. Provide trusting and safe relationships for all ages, to nurture our connection to you and one another. Hear us, O God.

**A: Your mercy is great.**

L: Resurrecting God, you bring us to new life every day. Thank you for blessing us with companions on our faith journey, especially those who now rest in your love. Strengthen us with the eternal peace of your promises. Hear us, O God.

**A: Your mercy is great.**

L: Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

**A: Amen.**

### Blessing

P: The God of all, who raised † Jesus from the dead, bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit to live in the new creation.

**A: Amen.**