



# Mount Calvary Connected

April 27, 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 Jonathan

Over the last week, more than one person has asked me something to the extent of "What are we going to do without you?"

I understand the shock of losing two pastors just a few months apart might be a bit overwhelming for some, but my answer to that question is pretty simple:

"You will keep on being the body of Christ that gathers at 1000 Scalp Avenue in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Even without me."

A pastor is a leader within a faith community like a church, and sometimes it can be hard to imagine a church separate from its pastor, but the church (this congregation and the church throughout the world) has gone through transitions before, and Mount Calvary will carry on its mission as long as the people here continue to gather around that mission of inviting, welcoming, and including.

The office of the bishop, the church council, and the call committee are all working in earnest to ensure that ministry here will continue until an interim or a full-time called pastor are able to begin. There may be some bumps in the road, but the wheels are certainly turning, and it's important to remember to trust God

in spite of all the other negative voices we might here in the world. So, remember what I told you during my sermon on Sunday:

The world says, be afraid, but Jesus says do not be afraid.

The world says, you are all alone, but Jesus says I am with you.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Jonathan

#### Upcoming Events & Meetings

Community Shoe Drop Off - Sat., April 29th from Noon - 3 pm

Alpha Celebration Dinner - Tues., May 2nd at 6 pm

Evangelism Meeting - Thurs., May 4th at 6:30 pm

Coffee Social - 8:00 AM - Sun., May 7th at 8:00 am

Flea Market/WELCA Bake Sale - Sat., May 13th

WELCA - Mon., May 15th at 6:00 pm

Church Council Meeting - Tues., May 16th 6:30 pm

#### CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATE!!

In order to update our database, we need information from the members of our congregation so we can keep in touch.

Over the next few weekends, ushers will hand out forms to all church members requesting updated contact information. Phone numbers, mailing addresses, and email addresses in our system may be outdated or unavailable to us at this time.

Pencils will be available in the narthex and in the pews to complete the form. Completed forms may be folded and placed in the collection plate, given to any usher, the pastor, or in the basket that will be at the door on your way out. Thank you for taking a few moments to help update our records!

#### 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.

#### Calling All Bakers!

The church is filled with many extremely talented bakers. Please share your talents by baking your favorite goodies and dropping them off the evening before the Flea Market or during our office hours in the days prior to the market. We would appreciate your donations!

Flea Market customer favorites include: gobs, nut rolls, biscotti, anything chocolate and peanut butter, mini-breads (zucchini, blueberry), and muffins if you're searching for ideas.

### Ushers/Greeters:

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.

### Featured Article

The Word became relationship

*Christianity is, finally, a story in which communication prevails over violence.*

by Samuel Wells

Fawlty Towers is getting a reboot. If you've seen the original series, you'll know it's one joke stretched out over 12 episodes. John Cleese's Basil Fawlty is the proprietor of an undistinguished hotel in the seaside town of Torquay. He's surrounded by foolish people—some of his staff, several of his guests—but he has to find a way to contain his barely suppressed rage enough to be polite to his guests and communicate with his staff. His attempts and failures to do so constitute the endless cycle of wild flailing and ultimately explosive violence that make the series agonizing, hilarious, and gripping viewing.

But what if it weren't a comedy? What if Fawlty Towers were actually a profound portrayal of human life, in which communication is largely impossible and conventions of civility are always on the point of snapping, whereupon violence inevitably ensues?

Think about what it's like to try to communicate with a relentless puppy that just won't calm down, a youth group that won't listen to instructions, a terrorist who won't be reasonable, or a roommate who's like a brick wall. In all these situations, violence lurks just beneath the surface. Words aren't helping. You're perilously close to a place beyond words. Civilization is about learning ways to resolve tension and conflict without violence. But sometimes the best of us can teeter toward becoming profoundly uncivilized.

Which is why some of the most moving stories are about how two people can make a journey from a standoff of frustrated and scarcely suppressed violence to a relationship of genuine peace. Virginia Axline was a primary school teacher in 1940s Ohio who went back to college and studied with psychologist Carl Rogers. She developed the practice of child-centered play therapy, which offers warm, nonjudgmental acceptance to children and patiently allows them to find their own solutions at their own pace.

In her famous book *Dibs*, she describes a child of that name who seldom speaks, is often withdrawn, and frequently lashes out in violence. Over the course of a year, by listening and not judging, Axline induces Dibs to find words for his feelings and begin to interact with his family and peers. She never asks questions like, "Did you have a good time?" because they require a particular answer, which can leave a child trapped. She never says, "See you next week," because she won't make promises that might not be kept. Gradually trust and space and permission develop, and eventually the words emerge and the violence ceases. The book is subtitled *In Search of Self*, but I'd call it *Establishing Relationship* or even *Finding Words*.

"In the beginning was the Word." This sentence says that communication—the desire to share and relate, the urge to engage and listen and receive and open up—is at the very core of all things, indeed the reason for the creation of all things. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). In other words, the essence that created existence, the forever that conceived of time, the everywhere that brought about

here is at its heart about communication—nonviolent communication, partnership, relationship, togetherness. In fact, that’s the purpose of existence—to communicate fully with one another and to communicate back with God. There’s nothing more important than that.

But here we run into two problems. First, not all communication is healthy—some words are cruel and destructive. (This was true even before Twitter.) Second, words are sometimes only words. Words aren’t always rooted in feelings, actions, or integrity; sometimes words are just lies.

Which brings us to the next important sentence from John, a sentence about communication and how it turns into trust and relationship: “And the Word became flesh, and lived among us” (1:14). Here lies the fulfillment of the whole reason for the existence of all things. Everything that happened before this moment is backdrop and preparation. Everything that’s happened since has been echo and embedding. This is the central moment, in which God’s original desire to be with us becomes more than words. Jesus appears, fully human, but Jesus is also fully divine. Jesus is the perfect communication of God to us, and Jesus is the perfect communication of us to God.

The whole of Jesus’ life is like Axline’s year with young Dibs. Jesus is creating an environment for us where we can live beyond cruelty and lies and finally find ways to dwell beyond violence in patience, understanding, and trust. He’s in search of our self, listening and not judging, offering open enquiry and not closed questions, inviting us to wonder and discover and allowing us to find our own solutions at our own pace. Jesus is the Word of God that offers us the epitome of communication, through which we may find a relationship that lasts forever.

Cruelty and lies enter Christ’s story soon enough. They catch up with Jesus in the end, when his communication meets the world’s violence, and for a moment violence prevails. But the light of communication and relationship shines in the darkness of violence and promises that, if we can only find time and patience, we will eventually see trust and relationship emerge from even the most violent of our failures to find words. *Fawlty Towers* remains a comedy; it doesn’t become a tragedy.

Christianity is, finally, a story in which communication prevails over violence. This is the wonder of the incarnation. The Word becomes more than words. And it inspires us to let the Holy Spirit of patience and tenderness turn our own violent frustration and anger into relationship and trust—and eventually to let those words become flesh, in embodied gestures and commitments of solidarity and love.

*Samuel Wells is the vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London and author of *Humbler Faith*, *Bigger God*.*

#### Birthdays & Anniversaries April 29 – May 5, 2023

##### *Anniversaries*

April 30 – Timothy & Dianne Verostick

##### *Birthdays*

April 29 – Timothy Bassett II & Leslie Morgenstern

April 30 – Dennis Eschrich

May 1 – Shirley Brendle

May 2 – Eric Jones & Harper Pozun

May 3 – Kathleen Harriger, Max Lawn, Danielle Singer, & Harold Wilson

May 4 – Laura Gusmenotti

May 5 – Marcie Kist

Need a location for your next family reunion, birthday party, or other event?

Mt. Calvary church members have been invited to consider Benscreek's Picnic Grove as a site for possible family reunions, parties, group picnics, etc. It's a beautiful place with both outside facilities and a wonderful indoor building for inclement weather. Located a few short miles from the church itself, the grove is surrounded by farmland, a beautiful landscape and sky, and even the occasional cow or two so you know you're "in the country."

Because we are "sister" congregations, Benscreek is extending a special \$35 rental fee for Mt. Calvary members, waiving the usual \$100 fee. Take a Sunday drive soon and check it out. If you would like more information, please contact Benscreek Lutheran Church at 814-479-7013.

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.

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## **Saturday, April 22, 2023 & Sunday, April 23, 2023**

### **Jesus took bread...**

Prayer of the Day

P: O God, your Son makes himself known to all his disciples in the breaking of bread. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in his redeeming work, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**A: Amen.**

First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd], "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God.**

Psalmody: Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

L: I love the LORD, who has heard my voice, and listened to my supplication,

**A: for the LORD has given ear to me whenever I called.**

L: The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave came upon me; I came to grief and sorrow.

**A: Then I called upon the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I pray you, save my life."**

L: How shall I repay the LORD for all the good things God has done for me?

**A: I will lift the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.**

L: I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all God's people.

**A: Precious in your sight, O LORD, is the death of your servants.**

L: O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.

**A: I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call upon the name of the LORD.**

L: I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all God's people,

**A: in the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah!**

Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:17-23

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

P: The holy gospel according to Luke.

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

Now on that same day [when Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene,] two [disciples] were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he

interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. The gospel of the Lord, **A: Praise to you, O Christ!**

### Sermon

#### **Easter 3A - Luke 24:13-35 – April 22, 2023**

*Grace, mercy, and peace to you from Christ Jesus our risen Lord who reveals himself to us in the stranger. Amen.*

Gastonia, North Carolina... A six year old girl and her parents are shot when the girl and her friends chase a stray basketball into a neighbor's yard.

Elgin, Texas... Two teenage cheerleaders, having been dropped off in a grocery store parking lot, are shot when they accidentally try to get into the wrong car.

Kansas City, Missouri... A teenager is shot when he rings the doorbell of a home where he believed he had been sent to pick up his younger brothers. It was the wrong address.

Hebron, New York... A 20 year old woman is shot and killed when she and her friends pull into a driveway while lost looking for a party.

These are the sorts of otherwise unrelated incidents that we probably would not have heard about before the days of the internet. But even though they are unrelated, there is certainly a pattern to be found...

Each of these incidents involved young people being the victims of violence while doing the sorts of everyday, normal things that young people do, that anybody might do.

Each of these incidents involved someone acting out in violence more or less because they didn't recognize the other person.

And each of these incidents happened within the last week.

Frankly, this sort of thing almost undoubtedly happens all over the country every single day, but these ones in particular strike a nerve. Who hasn't turned into the wrong driveway, or even rung the doorbell while looking for an unfamiliar home? Who hasn't nearly gotten into the wrong car in a parking lot? Who hasn't chased a child or a child's toy into a neighboring yard?

And the unfortunately reality is that this sort of thing is probably going to continue to happen, maybe even happen more frequently, as we are constantly bombarded with a message that we need to be afraid: afraid of the world around us, afraid of people we don't know or recognize.

Our Gospel lesson today is a beloved favorite for so many people. But think how it might be different if the disciples on the road to Emmaus had acted similarly to some of the people in these recent news stories? They were highly anxious in the days after Jesus' crucifixion, they were hiding, they were afraid; every person they encountered could have been the person that turned them in to the authorities, the person that got them arrested, the person that got them crucified...

But this man who joined them on the road to Emmaus did not seem to know *anything* about what had happened in recent days. And yet, he actually knew EVERYTHING. On the walk to Emmaus, those two disciples had the ultimate experience of Jesus and the divine, and they didn't even realize it.

At the time, all they knew was that they were talking with a particularly well-read stranger.

And then when they arrived at their destination, rather than letting him continue on the road, they invited him to join them. They shared a meal. And it was when they broke bread that they saw him for who he really was.

And that is the reason why we as a church continue in the example set in the words of institution, when Jesus said, "this is my body, this is my blood," and he shared the meal with them. It is in sharing the body and blood that strangers become family.

The world says, be afraid, but Jesus says do not be afraid.

The world says, you are all alone, but Jesus says I am with you.

The world says, I don't know these people, but Jesus says, together we are the living body of Christ.

So, take a chance, meet a stranger on the road, journey with them in faith. You just might be meeting Christ in an unexpected place. 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: Ever-present God, you make yourself known in the breaking of the bread and in the bonds of community. Reveal yourself to us in the faces of all we meet. Strengthened by your body and blood, let us boldly live out your good news. Hear us, O God.

**A: Your mercy is great.**

L: As we know you in the breaking of the bread, we know you in the grains of the field and the flowing waters. Care for the earth you lovingly create. Strengthen those who safeguard threatened land and water. Hear us, O God.

**A: Your mercy is great.**

L: You are the authority to whom we dedicate our lives (like Toyohiko Kagawa, whom we commemorate today). Help us keep the needs of those most vulnerable at the forefront of our community. Move us to care for any who are disregarded or oppressed. Hear us, O God.



**A: Your mercy is great.**

L: Mothering God, you feed and comfort those who hunger. Open the hearts of those who hoard resources and lead them to share your abundance. We pray for anyone hungering for your comforting presence this day. Hear us, O God.

**A: Your mercy is great.**

L: You pour out your love on those who are oppressed. Support and comfort anyone who is marginalized by gender or sexuality and those whose stories are not believed. Form this community to listen faithfully and speak honestly in our ministry together. Hear us, O God.

**A: Your mercy is great.**

L: We remember with thanksgiving all your beloved saints. As you have raised them to eternal life, abide with us in your promise of resurrection. 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.**