



Mount Calvary Connected

May 4, 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

Skye, the puppy we adopted from the humane society in August of 2021 will turn two years old sometime in the next month... And she is STILL very much a puppy. When I had her at the veterinarian's office a few weeks ago, several people made a comment that I've heard countless times before, in reference to her and both of our daughters, "Don't you wish you could have half that energy?"

Despite her boundless energy, Skye has turned out to be a wonderful addition to our family, and while she is far from what I would consider "obedient," she has learned a lot in her two years.

Take for example our use of a crate or cage to confine her when we leave the house, or otherwise can't supervise her. She has learned "nap time" as a cue to head into the crate, and I would say about 90% of the time, all you have to say is, "All right Skye, nap time!" and she happily trots into the crate and lays down. It's the other 10% of the time that makes life interesting...

If she does NOT want to take a "nap," she will either play dead and lay on her back going limp, or she'll try to snuggle in close to Bekah hoping that she will protect her from being imprisoned. And if I reach for her collar, she'll playfully growl, stick up her paws to try and block me, or even nip at my hand. It's not the least

bit aggressive, but the message is clear, "I don't want to do that right now, dad!" And ironically, the second I give up trying to grab her, she will often hop up and happily trot into the crate and lay down.

It's funny the way that dogs can mimic human nature at times. Skye knows what's good for her, she knows it's time to go to bed, she's even willing to do it, but she doesn't want to be TOLD to do it. She wants to make the decision on her own terms, in her own time. Sometimes our relationship with God is the same way: we know what God wants from us, but we feel like we need to make the decision ourselves, we resist and half-heartedly fight back.

But wouldn't it save a lot of time and frustration if we just listened to God the first time?

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jono

A Message from Joan Hunter

Although I started out writing a short letter about the current "pandemic of loneliness" and isolation many people are feeling, and how important it is for human beings to have regular interaction with others, an article in today's Tribune-Democrat caught my eye.

The headline "Cops: Men were using drugs in church," jumped out at me. It's on page A3 of the May 4 edition, but I'll summarize here...

Police from 2 counties surrounded Calvary United Methodist Church on Stockholm Ave. in Windber at 3:30 AM April 21. An alert citizen, who obviously couldn't sleep, noticed a man walking into the church and called the police. Police noticed 2 vehicles in the parking lot, but no sign of forced entry. Several police departments arrived, surrounding the building. One man came out, telling the police one of the other 2 men inside "worked" there.

The fire department unlocked the church doors, police arrested all 3 men, and found cocaine and drug residue.

This is a PERFECT example of why we, after strong urging from Richland Township Police, locked down our church, went to a key fob system, and issued key fobs to church members who have a need to be in the church outside normal hours. Every key fob is assigned to an individual, and every time a key fob is used, the number on the fob lets us know who opened a door and when. Steps are in place to screen any individual or group who rents our facilities. And slowly, more of our entryways will be switched over to the electronic locking system.

The office, where business is conducted, and YOUR confidential and financial information is stored, will remain off limits to everyone except those who work in there. If you need to speak with someone in the office, please get buzzed in to the door at the counter. Don't take it personally.

Yes, the walls of Mt. Calvary definitely have ears, and I, along with most council members, have heard the grumblings about all of this, with our church becoming "like a prison," and comparing us to a jail. I don't know about you, but our building is extremely large, with many rooms, closets, and "hiding" places. It isn't just women who feel this way, because most of the men have commented the same thing...when you are in

our building alone, or at night, our building, despite being a church, is VERY SCARY. Stand in it some time when it's very quiet. The building, as do all buildings, creaks, rattles and you think people are walking above you or down the hall from you. Most agree that the building is large enough for someone to be living in it, and it could take days to discover it. We have bathroom and shower facilities, a kitchen, and lots of comfy areas in which to sleep...and do drugs. And hurt one of us.

Our intent is NOT to lock our church family out, but to keep our church family safe. Whether it's during services, or when committees meet, or you are here alone to set the altar, or drop off bread, etc. A little bit of inconvenience is meant to keep you safe. And yes, it's sad to think that these steps are necessary, but times have changed. Just ask the members of Calvary United Methodist Church.

Upcoming Events & Activities

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

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

Property Committee Meeting - Tues., May 9th at 6 pm

Flea Market/WELCA Bake Sale - Sat., May 13th 8 am - 1 pm

Camp Sequanota: Mother's Day Banquet - Sun., May 14th at 11:30 am or 1:30 pm

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

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

Pastor Jonathan's Last Day - Wed., May 31st

Monthly Coffee Social

Please join us at 8:00 am this Sunday for fellowship and refreshments prior to the service. We hope to see you there!

Camp Sequanota: Mother's Day Banquet

On Sunday, May 14th, celebrate the mothers in your life with a lovely meal at 11:30 am or 1:30 pm at Camp Sequanota.

Your table will be dismissed to the buffet line once your entire group is present. If you would like to sit with a group, please contact the camp office to make a reservation for your group. There is no cost but a free will offering will be received. RSVP: (814) 629-6627

Flea Market Donations

Flea Market items are to be brought to the church during office hours or before or after church. The last day for items to be dropped off is Thursday, May 11th.

Also, volunteers are needed to set up the Flea Market on Friday, May 12th at 6:00 pm. Please join us to volunteer if you are able.

Those persons donating baked goods for the Flea Market are to drop off items Friday night or early Saturday Morning. Those helping set up the baked goods are to be at the church on Friday after 6:00 pm. We look forward to your help!

WELCA Bake Sale

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.

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.

Readers/Communion Assistants:

May 6 - Jack Weisbrodt & Todd Moss

May 7 - Noelle Berkey & Rebecca Daly

May 13 - Claudia Plows & Cindy Solarczyk

May 14 - Joan Hunter & Noelle Berkey

May 20 – Volunteers Needed

May 21 - Marybeth Heinze & Carter Bower

May 27 - Claudia Plows & Additional Volunteer Needed

May 28 - Ray Leverknight & Laura Bower

Ushers:

Saturdays - Volunteers Needed

Sundays - Mary Ann Mapes & Bill Esrich

Seeking: Readers & Communion Assistants

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, please sign up here: Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church: Readers/Communion Assistants - Summer 2023 (signupgenius.com).

Several Saturdays in May are still available!

Contact Information Updates!

Ushers will be handing out forms requesting updated contact information from you for our records. Please complete the forms using the pencils in the pews. 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.

Fundraising Update: The Scalp Avenue Monument Sign

We raised \$1,385 since our last update. While this is progress, we still have a long way to go. Would you consider making a donation to support this initiative? A gift of \$5, \$50, or \$500 would go a long way towards helping us reach our goal!

May 6 – May 12, 2023 Birthdays & Anniversaries

Anniversaries

May 10 – Philip & Julie Reitnauer

May 11 – Gary & Betty Schofield

Birthdays

May 6 – Janet Getezy, Dustin Pringle, Brian Selepack, & Randall Sterner

May 7 – Eli Swartz

May 8 – Alyssa Gusmenotti & Shane Katrancha

May 9 – Susan Given, Donald McMullen, & Amilia Pawlowski

May 10 – Kierisa Hockensmith & Walt Mattern

May 11 – Ruth Fresh & Chuck Poydence

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; Brianna; Jackie; Mike; Lois.

Saturday, April 29, 2023 & Sunday, April 30, 2023

I am the gate for the sheep

Prayer of the Day

P: O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through 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: Acts 2:42-47

[The baptized] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

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

Psalmody: Psalm 23

L: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

A: The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.

L: You restore my soul, O LORD, and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

A: Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

L: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

A: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:19-25

It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

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

Gospel: John 10:1-10

P: The holy gospel according to John. **A: Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

The gospel of the Lord, **A: Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

Easter 4A – April 30, 2023 – Acts 2:42-47

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from Christ Jesus our risen Lord and shepherd. Amen.

In the wider church, this weekend, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, is sometimes referred to as Good Shepherd Sunday. And that's because the appointed Gospel lesson is Jesus referring to himself as a shepherd, and it gets pair with other shepherd-ish imagery like the 23rd psalm.

But... I'd like to draw your attention to something else about this week's assigned readings.

This is, in fact, the third week in a row that our first reading, which normally comes from the Old Testament, hasn't. In these post-resurrection days, we've been hearing post-resurrection stories from the

Book of Acts. Stories that tell about the apostles and the early church as they tried to spread the word, as they grew the movement that was Christianity.

This is the third week in a row that we've heard from the second chapter of Acts, and these last two weeks, we've heard part of a sermon from Peter, but today we change gears a bit. We're not just hearing Peter's sermon, we're back to hearing about what happened.

Verse 41, immediately before what we read tonight tell us, "41 So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added."

In other words, three thousand sheep were added to the flock of the Good Shepherd. Seemingly more than any earthly shepherd could EVER manage on their own. If you didn't already know this, sheep are pretty dumb, they don't necessarily have the strongest sense of self-preservation, they NEED a shepherd to survive and thrive.

Thank God we are at least slightly smarter than a sheep. And we have ways to allow our faith in our own Good Shepherd to bond us together. And that's where we begin tonight...

42 [The ones who were baptized] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

That right there is how you be a Good Sheep for the Good Shepherd.

God and Christ Jesus will care for you and take care OF you no matter what, but in response to that love and care, there are things we can do to make ourselves as individuals and as part of the flock, better sheep.

Devoting ourselves to the teaching of apostles, learning what it truly means to be Christian, to be a Lutheran Christian.

Devoting ourselves to fellowship, realizing that our faith needs other people in order to grow and be strengthened, that it is crucial to surround ourselves with a community of faith and not just hide in some dark corner away from everyone else.

Devoting ourselves to breaking bread together, because it is in the meal that we share together in this worship, and every other meal we might gather around, that we truly become one.

Devoting ourselves to prayer. Because what kind of relationship could we ever really have with God if we don't ever actually talk with God?

Those who were baptized the apostles devoted themselves to these things because the Good Shepherd was adding sheep to his flock at an exponential rate. God would always watch over them, but they needed to learn to be a bit more independent than your average dumb sheep, and they needed to learn to help one another more than your average dumb sheep.

And it was in devoting themselves to these things, these very basic ideas, that the early church continued to grow, continued to be a movement that drew people in, continued to be a force to be reckoned with.

I've had more than a few conversations over the past few months about the future of the church as a whole, and some people are pretty pessimistic, they think that Christianity is already a thing of the past, irrelevant and impotent.

But maybe we're expecting the Good Shepherd to do a bit too much, and not owning our own responsibilities as members of the flock. Think what might happen if we, the baptized, devoted ourselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer with the same fervor that those first people baptized by the apostles had?

I think the Good Shepherd might have his hands full once again as new members continued to be added. And that's a good thing. A VERY good thing. So how can you re-devote yourself to being a part of Christ's flock? 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: You are the shepherd who gathers us in your mighty and loving arms. Help your church to listen for your voice, especially when the voices of sin, idolatry, and oppression threaten to overpower us. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: The green pastures, still waters, and dark valleys of this earth all belong to you, O Lord. Sustain your creation with a love that is both mighty and just. Where there is destruction, bring healing. Where there is desolation, bring abundance. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: You proclaim shepherding love, comfort, and protection for all people and all of creation. Direct leaders in our own time to learn from your example and instruction. Give them servant hearts, that they generously seek the good of all. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: You journey with us wherever our paths may lead. We pray for those feeling overwhelmed by anxiety or depression or suffering in any way. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: You are the sheepgate that gives safety to your beloved flocks. Provide protection for refugees, victims of domestic violence, those who are imprisoned, and all people who are vulnerable to violence and mistreatment. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: You call your sheep by name and lead them through the valley of death. We give you thanks for those who have died and now dwell in your house forever. Be with those who mourn, and give them hope in the 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.**