



Mount Calvary Connected

May 18, 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 the Pastor

"Imagine the church is a boat, what kind of boat do you think it is?"

I posed this question during church council meetings at both Mount Calvary and Benscreek this week, and got some imaginative answers... A cruise ship, a party boat, a Navy hospital ship, a pontoon, one more pessimistic answer was, "the Titanic."

The thing that all of those ships or boats have in common though, is that they require some sort of fuel. Fuel that is in some way, shape, or form made by man. If your boat runs out of gasoline, coal, or whatever it uses to "go," you're out of luck.

Even smaller boats such as kayaks, canoes, and row boats require man-made fuel, although in those cases the fuel is literally manpower, and just like a motorboat, you will eventually run out of power when you get tired, and end up adrift.

As tempting as it is to imagine the church as the type of boats that we think it might most resemble, or maybe the type of boats we're most familiar with personally, I'd like to suggest that we should aspire for the church to be more like a sailboat.

Certainly, most modern sailboats have auxiliary engines, but the true power of a sailboat is the wind. And while the wind might calm down for a while, or even seem completely still, it is NEVER gone. An experienced sailor simply needs to listen and feel for where the wind is coming from and capture that power to go where they need to go.

Man-made energy can carry us a long way, but sooner or later it will eventually dry up. The energy that God gives us can always be used as the wind behind our sails.

The power of the church is more than the power of any one person: not the pastor, not the leaders, not even the entire congregation. The power of the church is the power that God gives us, the power that even though it may seem still, will always be there if we tune ourselves to be able to hear it and feel it, if we adjust our sails to capture it and go where God is taking us.

While some may feel that the church is “dead in the water,” I don’t think it ever will be. We simply need to raise our sails, feel for the breath of God, and head in the direction that God is calling us toward.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jonathan

Upcoming Activities & Events

Three Rivers Ringers - Sat., May 20th at 7:30 pm

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

Pond Raking Party - Tues., June 6th at 5:30 pm

Three Rivers Ringers Concert

Are you seeking a fun evening out? Join us for an entertaining evening with the Three Rivers Ringers!

Saturday, May 20, 2023 at 7:30 PM

First Presbyterian Church

309 Lincoln St, Johnstown, PA 15901

Additional information and tickets are available at johnstownmusic.org.

SAVE THE DATE

Pond Raking Party

The property committee will be hosting a pond raking party on Tuesday, June 6, at 5:30 PM. Rain date will be the following Tuesday, June 13 at 5:30. We have successfully killed the weeds that have been haunting us for years. Our next step is to rake down the hillside, reseed with bent grass, and then gently rake the new seed. We are looking for some younger people that can rake and stand on the hillside, since most of the people on property are already over the hill! Thank you!

Flea Market & WELCA Bake Sale

THANK YOU!

The Flea Market and WELCA Bake Sale was (once again) very successful. We are so thankful for all of our volunteers, donations, and baked goods. It took all of your help to manage the sorting and pricing, setup, shopping, checkout, bake sale, and more! We couldn't have done it without the generosity of our church members.

Over \$2,000 was raised and additional money is still coming in! The bake sale alone made \$395.00. Final totals will be coming soon.

A Blessing for Mother's Day

(read at the 5/13 & 5/14 services)

Today we celebrate Mother's Day, but we also honor the reality that not everyone experiences this holiday in the same way. This prayer, written by the Rev. Heidi Carrington Heath is adapted from a poem by Amy Young.

- May you know that God is with you if you are like Tamar, struggling with infertility, or a miscarriage.
- May you know that God is with you if you are like Rachel, counting the women among your family and friends who year by year and month by month get pregnant while you wait.
- May you know that God is with you if you are like Naomi, and have known the bitter sting of a child's death.
- May you know that God is with you if you are like Joseph and Benjamin, and your Mom has died.
- May you know that God is with you if your relationship with your Mom was marked by trauma, abuse, or abandonment, or she just couldn't parent you the way you needed.
- May you know that God is with you if you've been like Moses' mother and put a child up for adoption, trusting another family to love your child into adulthood.
- May you know that God is with you if you've been like Pharaoh's daughter, called to love children who are not yours by birth, (and thus the mother who brought that child into your life, even if it is complicated).
- May you know that God is with you if you, like many, are watching (or have watched) your mother age, and disappear into the long goodbye of dementia or Alzheimer's.
- May you know that God is with you if you, like Mary, are pregnant for the very first time and waiting breathlessly for the miracle of your first child.
- May you know that God is with you if your children have turned away from you, painfully closing the door on relationship, leaving holding your broken heart in your hands. And like Hagar, now you are mothering alone.
- May you know that God is with you if motherhood is your greatest joy and toughest struggle all rolled into one.
- May you know that God is with you if you are watching your child battle substance abuse, a public legal situation, mental illness, or another situation which you can merely watch unfold.
- May you know that God is with you in you like so many women before you do not wish to be a mother, are not married, or in so many other ways do not fit into societal norms.
- May you know that God is with you if you see yourself reflected in all, or none of these stories.

This mother's day, wherever and whoever you are, we walk with you. You are loved. You are seen. You are worthy.

And may you know the deep love without end of our big, wild, beautiful God who is the very best example of a parent that we know. Amen.

Featured Article

God is enthroned with enthusiasm (Psalm 47)

Many religious services sit squarely at the sober end of the spectrum. Psalms of the praise type would beg to disagree.

by Victoria Lynn Garvey

My spouse was in a job search a few years ago. She was one of three finalists for the position of rector at a moderate-size parish.

Her experiences as a rector, diocesan committee chair and member, mentor of seminarians, and more commended her for the position. It was no surprise that the search committee was favorable to her and invited her to preside and preach at a Sunday service so the whole congregation could get a sense of her style.

She thought the morning had gone very well. She had felt comfortable in the space and with the people; many of them had spoken with her after the service, thanking her for being with them and noting that they appreciated her presence at the altar as well as the manner and message and ease of her sermon style. Some had even spoken of a future shared ministry.

She did not get the call. She asked for feedback, especially since she had thought the interviews and the service had been so successful. The response: she had too much energy. Her enthusiasm had apparently scared some members.

Ironically, enthusiasm, according to my handy etymological dictionary, is derived from the Greek en + theos which, roughly translated, means, "God's gotten into you."

Many, though obviously not all, religious services of any faith sit squarely at the sober end of the spectrum. Enthusiasm in such services need not apply. Psalms of the praise type would beg to disagree. Psalm 47, for instance, opens with "Clap your hands"—in the imperative mood, no less—followed by "loud songs of joy" and even "God going up with a shout," not to mention those trumpets.

Psalm 47 is an enthronement psalm. For a time in Israel's history, gods of other nations were a necessary given and often a stumbling block. The God Israel worshiped, the God of Abraham's family, the God Moses had met on Sinai/Horeb, was, early on, considered the national deity of Israel only, greater of course than alien gods, a God among gods. Eventually, the people of God/Israel recognized that the God of Israel was in fact the God, the only God, and therefore the God of all the nations whether they approved or not: "The princes of the peoples [= foreigners] gather as the People of the God of Abraham." Psalm 47 is one of the songs of praise that celebrates that fact and the enthronement of that God with enthusiasm.

It's something of a puzzle, lo these thousands of years later, that folks still don't seem to get it. "God's on our side" as opposed to that of our enemies, no matter who they are. And they often return the favor. The Israelites finally got it and got with the program. But some of the prophets—and later, Jesus—had to re-teach that truth. As have others since then. Our own Abraham Lincoln, not a churchy type himself, tried to teach it to a divided country a couple millennia later. Still, we persist. Will another psalmist or Honest Abe need to return to prod us out of this chauvinism? Will Jesus?

Victoria Lynn Garvey is a biblical scholar, church consultant, and lay leader in the Episcopal Church.

Readers/Communion Assistants:

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

Mt. Calvary Updates

Baptisms

Saturday, May 13, we welcomed Violet Andie Pozun, daughter of Andrew & Nicole Pozun, into the congregation through the sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Community Updates

- Lacey Fetcko, Social Media and Communications Coordinator at Mt. Calvary, will be serving as the volunteer coordinator for worship roles moving forward. She can be emailed at lacey@mt-calvarylutheran.org with any questions or changes to your volunteer sign ups. You can also contact Terrie via telephone at (814) 266-4859 or in person in the office to sign-up or make changes to dates you have already signed up for.
- A Note from The Hiltz Family - Good People of Mt. Calvary and Pastor Jonathan,
Thank you so very much for your thoughts, cards and prayers during Wilma's fall and entry into Arbutus Park Community. We all gain strength through you during this time. Wilma loves her Mt. Calvary family as do we. It means so much to us and we thank you her brothers and sisters in Christ. May God continue to bless Mt. Calvary. Thank you all again. - Wilma, Richard, Brian and Lori Hiltz
- It's with great joy and thanksgiving that Benjamin and Chelsea Hiltz announce the birth of their son Nolan William Hiltz on May 17th in Fairfax, VA. Nolan is the Grandson to Brian & Lori Hiltz and Great Grandson to Wilma Hiltz.

May 20 – May 26, 2023 Birthdays & Anniversaries

Anniversaries

May 20 – Jacqueline & Michael Cassidy; Christopher & Tiffany Swartz

May 22 – John & Susan Given; Ralph & Rosemary Manotti Sr.; Cynthia & Robert Solarczyk

May 24 – Monica & Nick Lawson

May 25 – Kathy & Joseph Paul Ponchione; Edward & Laura (Snyder) Wingard III

Birthdays

May 20 – Austin Nider, Debbie Thomas, & Charlotte Zada

May 21 – Bridgette Horn

May 23 – Krista Bassett

May 24 – Heath Ondesko

May 25 – Michael Philibin

May 26 – Sonya Herring

Remember those that prayer has been requested for:

Kim; Devin; Laura & Family; 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; Patty Creany; Rick Wagner; the family of Helen Finnegan; Brianna; Jackie; Mike; Lois; Wilma Hiltz; David Mathis & Austin & Family; Bell family.

Condensed Worship

Saturday, May 13, 2023 & Sunday, May 14, 2023

Because I live, you also will live

Prayer of the Day

P: Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, 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 17:22-31

Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to

inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’ Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

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

Psalmody: Psalm 66:8-20

L: Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of praise be heard.

A: Our God has kept us among the living and has not allowed our feet to slip.

L: For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us just as silver is tried.

A: You brought us into the net; you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.

L: You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

A: I will enter your house with burnt offerings and will pay you my vows—

L: those that I promised with my lips and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

A: I will offer you burnt offerings of fatlings with the smoke of rams; I will give you oxen and goats.

L: Come and listen, all you who believe, and I will tell you what God has done for me.

A: I called out to God with my mouth, and praised the Lord with my tongue.

L: If I had cherished evil in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me;

A: but in truth God has heard me and has attended to the sound of my prayer.

L: Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, nor withheld unfailing love from me.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you— not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

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

Gospel: John 14:15-21

P: The holy gospel according to John.

A: Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.” The gospel of the Lord, **A: Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from Christ Jesus who sends an advocate to be with us forever. Amen.

Today’s Gospel lesson follows along with the Gospel that we heard last Sunday, it’s part of the “farewell discourse.” Jesus is trying to calm and comfort his friends on his final evening together with them, the night of the last supper.

They just heard him explain the things that we heard last week, that heaven is a mansion with many rooms, a place that Jesus will bring them to. Some of the disciples though are starting to put the pieces together. They’re starting to wonder if Jesus is trying to tell them something. They’re beginning to get worried and confused.

It seems like the only person that ever truly cared for them is saying that he won’t be around for too much longer. And that’s exactly what he says, Jesus says, “I was your advocate, I was the one here on behalf of you, I was here to help take care of you. If you love me, you will keep following my commandments even after I’m gone, and if you do that, I’ll make sure that God sends you another advocate.”

But the advocate that Jesus is sending to the disciples is not just any old advocate, Jesus sends THE advocate. The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit through which God the father, and Christ Jesus reveals themselves to all of us. We have an advocate that will continue to be with us for the long haul, an advocate that will always be with us no matter what.

With everything that’s going on in the world and in each of our lives individually, it’s easy to begin to think that we’re all alone. You know, I’ve been getting out of the house more than I’m sure some of you have, but I can probably count the number of people I’ve interacted with on my hands and feet. It feels like we’re alone when you don’t get to experience the mutual support of gathering around other people.

Even if you haven’t felt alone or lonely over the past few months, you’ve probably experienced that at some point in your life, right?

But we’re never truly alone. God is with us.

God came in Christ to allow us to see what God wanted for us: health and healing and community, and more than that. All of which could be summed up by what John calls “abundant life.”

God came to us through Jesus, and he lived and offered abundant life, even when it upset those who wanted control over other people. God offered abundant life through Jesus even when it cost Jesus his own life.

God came to us in Christ and was willing to suffer and die on the cross so that we could know just how much Jesus loves us, just how much God loves us. So that God could show us just how far God is willing to go to show love and affection.

But that wasn't enough. God raised Jesus from the dead to show us that there is nothing, not even death itself, that can separate us from God's love. And then, as if THAT wasn't enough, God continues to us through an advocate, THE advocate, THE Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit encourages us to look out and see God all around us. The Holy Spirit winds around in between us even when we are separated to remind us that God is still present, that God is still with us, that we are never alone.

In short, God comes to us through the Holy Spirit, through the Advocate, to remind us that Christ died for us, to remind us to be like Christ in we interact with other people, in how we show love to our neighbors near and far.

God comes to us through the Holy Spirit to be our advocate. Even when we feel alone, even when we feel like no one is listening to us, and no one is fighting for us. The advocate was sent here to stand beside us. We know that God hears our prayers and we know that God is whispering in our ear, saying, "do not feel alone, I'm here for you, I'll always be here for you."

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 our faithful companion, you promise to never leave us and to send your Spirit to guide us in wisdom and truth. Send your people into the world to serve as mirrors that reflect and magnify your love. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: All the earth sings praises to you. Grant your care to the creatures, plants, and places that are suffering, and equip us to respond to their song. Make us agents of restoration and refreshment for all your beloved creation. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: You call all people of the world your children. Judge the nations justly, show mercy to all who are oppressed, and speak truth to power through your prophets. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Nurturing Lord, you sent your Spirit to grant us peace. Make your presence known to those who feel abandoned or alone, and to all who are sick or grieving. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: You hold us in your loving care. We pray for mothers and mother figures. Console all who long to be mothers, children estranged from their mothers, anyone grieving the death of a mother, and mothers who have lost a child. Support all for whom this day is difficult. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Almighty God, you give life and breath to all things. We give thanks for the apostle Matthias and all your saints. Sustain us by your love until we join the saints in glory. 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.