



Mount Calvary Connected April 1, 2021

Mount Calvary Connected is a weekly newsletter that will be sent out each Wednesday while the church is pressing "pause" on in-person gatherings. Our goal is to keep you connected to your faith and your church with messages from our pastors, health information, and ways to share Christ's love during our current national crisis.

Pastor Scott Klimke

Cell-Phone: 570-367-3421

Email: sklimke6@gmail.com

Pastor Jonathan Adams

Cell-Phone: 412-817-6704

Email: revjonoadams@gmail.com

CHRIST IS RISEN

In the beginning, God created our first parents to live in the Garden of Eden. They knew God, walked with God, and there was no death. They were granted life in perfect communion with the Lord who created both heaven and earth as well as themselves. But by the 3rd chapter of the Bible Adam and Eve broke the one command that God gave them for their safety; this meant a broken covenant and relationship with God. Sin entered into the world because humans did things their own way, rather than listen to the direction and loving care of their heavenly Father.

The good news is that even though our first parents left the garden, God never left them. The entire story of the rest of Holy Scripture is that of God calling us back to life with God. God is continuously calling all people back to God's eternal life and turning us from sin and our own destruction.

God was so committed to this work of reclaiming leaders like Moses, and David, he sent prophets like Isaiah and Elijah. All of them consistently telling them and us to turn from our evil ways and to follow the path that God has called us to. Frequently, neither they nor we listen.

If we search Holy Scripture we see that God is much more patient than any of us would ever be. Again and again God keeps sending God's Word and messengers to call people out of darkness and into the eternal light. Eventually, after thousands of years of calling to us, God did an amazing and unexpected thing. The eternal God took on a human body and came to live with us: Jesus. He is the living God who came into our existence to save us from our sin and our own self-destructive behavior.

God did this in Jesus Christ because God loves us. Jesus loves us. We matter, and are personally known, by the Lord who holds all eternity. You are loved more than you can ever know; loved by the creator and the source of all things.

We see that love poured out for us in the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ-- Jesus became flesh to save us. He gave up his body and his blood on the cross. On the cross we see that Jesus Christ loves us so much that he would die for us.

And then, when it looked like sin and death had won, Jesus rose from the dead-- showing us he is more powerful than death. Death cannot hold the one who is the source of all life. This same Jesus has claimed us in the waters of baptism, promises to be with us until the end of the age, and says he will not lose any of us who have been entrusted to his hand.

The one who is more powerful than death is the one who has you and has claimed you. God's answer to the original sin of our first parents was to come to save us from sin, death, and from ourselves.

The Risen Lord Jesus Christ shows us the power and love of God. The power to re-write the rules of reality and make death subject to his will. We see the love of God who stops at nothing to call us back and set us on the right path.

Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia! I pray that you are fully aware of the blessed presence of our Lord Jesus as we celebrate his resurrection and his victory over sin, death, and the devil. Happy Easter!

+Bishop Michael Rhyne Easter 2021

As I encountered light snow on the way to work today, I remembered a special Holy Week which took place nearly forty years ago. This Sunday, April 4th, will be the thirty-ninth anniversary of my confirmation. Back in 1982, April 4th was Palm Sunday, not Easter Sunday as it will be this year, and did it ever snow. My mother was brought to tears when a friend and co-worker drove through a lot of snow, and all the way across a town similar in size to Johnstown, in order to deliver an unexpected cake for my confirmation party. Many of the people who were at my confirmation party are no longer living. I still remember them and look forward to reunion in the Kingdom of God; the reunion made possible by the events Holy Week remembers and celebrates.

After riding my confirmation gift a few times, a ten-speed Schwinn bicycle, I received my first communion on Maundy Thursday. I think all the snow was gone by the time I took my first communion, but I don't remember for sure. Never having had alcohol before, I was worried about gagging when I received holy communion's cup. Being a smart man, my father devised a plan to get me over my confirmation fears. He gave me a spoonful of the strongest wine he could find, and predictably, I gagged and grimaced when receiving a spoonful of it. But when I received my first communion, the concord grape wine went down like Kool-Aid. Mission accomplished my father must have thought! Years later, when I arrived in my hometown to begin planning my father's funeral, the first thing the pastor of the congregation where I received my first communion did was celebrate the Lord's Supper with my mother, my sister, the funeral director, and me. To quote the beloved hymn "The Church's One Foundation," he wanted to remind us that thanks to the sacrament and the events Holy Week remembers and celebrates "we have mystic, sweet communion with those whose rest is won." It's a reminder that makes every communion and every Maundy Thursday extra special.

Suffice it to say I have many, many special memories related to the observance and celebration of Holy Week. In my former calls, attending a Good Friday service from 12 to 3 was a part of my piety. Sometimes I preached. More often I just listened. I still remember a number of the sermons I heard. Then a parish pastor, the current bishop of the synod to our west, Bishop Kurt Kusserow, once gave a phenomenal sermon on what Jesus meant when from the cross, he told his mother to behold her son and St. John to behold his mother. Up in Centre County, my dear friend and colleague Pastor Steve Lynn, a Methodist minister named Pastor Ed Zeiders, and a Presbyterian minister named Chuck Curley, often rose to the occasion with a faithful and inspiring word. As to Holy Saturday, I have fond memories of many an Easter Vigil held at either Faith Lutheran in New Florence or at St. Luke Lutheran in Centre Hall. Many, many baptisms were administered in a unique atmosphere. When celebrated, the Easter Vigil is definitely one of my favorite services of the year. Again, I have a lot of wonderful memories related to Holy Week.

Without a doubt, one of my best memories to date involves what happened here in Johnstown a year ago. COVID-19 had shut down churches and businesses. People were on edge and worried about much. The virus was less-researched than it is today. It looked like there would be nothing even close to a traditional Easter. But then the team at Mount Calvary, and I do stress "team," came up with a plan to hold two services on Easter morning at the Silver Drive-Inn. Leading up to the services, we were pressured to cancel and some called on local authorities to shut us down. To this day, if you don't know already, there continue to be numerous churches in our synod which remain closed. But on the basis of expert medical advice and a faith in God's people to follow health-related instructions, we went ahead anyway and the results were incredible; among the most satisfying of my entire career. In the words of more than one of those present, it was an event that put Mount Calvary on the map as far as the rest of the community was concerned. But what shall come next?

At this point, the answer is unknown. Holy Week and Easter still aren't going to be quite back to normal this year. But here's the thing about the kinds of memories I've been sharing. There are always more of them

on the way. With Christ forever raised from the dead and the Church full of the Holy Spirit's gift of faith, it can be no other way; with new life-giving experiences always coming out of the shadows. And so, again, I ask: What shall come next at Mount Calvary? With the crucified and resurrected Christ sure to do his part and the Holy Spirit still creating and sustaining faith, I look forward to experiencing what the answer will be with you.

In the Crucified and Risen One, Pastor Scott



Holy Week and Easter Services

Good Friday: 3:00 pm drive in behind the church
7:00 pm in house
Easter Saturday: 5:30 and 7:15 pm in house
Easter Sunday: 7:00, 8:45, and 10:45 am in house
9:30 am drive in behind the church

Please do not park behind the church on Easter Sunday unless you plan to attend the 9:30 AM drive in service.

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 can also stream the service live over the internet.

By clicking the following link, you can gain access to the live stream audio. <https://streams.radiomast.io/96172026-6cba-407b-9090-e150b471ae0e>

The following Services will be broadcasted and streamed: Good Friday at 3:00 pm drive in service & 7:00 pm service. Easter Sunday, 9:30 am drive in service.

Weekly worship bulletins can be found at: www.rebrand.ly/MtCalvaryWorship

Backyard cookie collection will be Thursday, April 15, 2021.

Cookies can be placed in the bin outside the church, or the labeled one inside. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Kozak at 244-6880. Thank you for your continued support!

Stimulus Challenge

A member of our congregation has challenged others to put their economic stimulus money to good use!

One morning in March, a member of the congregation presented Pastor Scott with a check for \$140. She shared that she had received her "economic impact payment" (stimulus check) and since she had not been adversely impacted by the pandemic she was giving a portion of it as a tithe, and wanted to challenge others to do the same.

Since sharing this news, other families in the congregation have come forward and over a thousand dollars has been collected. Soon, we'll poll those who contributed to this challenge and mutually decide on a worthy cause in the community to direct the money toward. But, in the meantime, there is still opportunity to make YOUR tithe!

If you'd like to make a gift, simply write a check to Mount Calvary, with "Stimulus Challenge" in the memo line. Checks can be included in the offering plate during worship, dropped off at the church office during business hours, or mailed to the church at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, 1000 Scalp Ave, Johnstown, PA 15904.

Weekly Wednesday, Drive in Services

Our weekly Wednesday evening “drive-in” services are planned to start back up on Wednesday, April 14th. Beginning Wednesday, April 14th, we will be resuming our Wednesday evening drive-in services each week at 6:30pm. This relaxed service set in the back parking lot of the church property allows folks to participate in a full liturgy from the comfort and safety of their own car.

Download a bulletin from: <https://www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/bulletins/>, bring your own bread for communion, and tune your radio to 88.3FM and you are set! See you there!

Easter Flowers

Given to the Glory of God!

Church Office

Closed on Monday, April 5.

Church Meetings

Evangelism Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 13 instead of April 6 at 6:30 pm.

All Parish, Youth, and Property committee meeting will be held on
Tuesday, April 20 at 6:30 pm.

Council Meeting will be at 7:30 pm, Tuesday, April 20.

Tuesday Noon Recitals

April 6 - Benjamin Bugaile. Organ

April 13 - Johnstown Christian School Bell Choir Kristen Lloyd, Director

April 20 - Bruce Schettig. Classical Guitar

April 27 - Henry Davis. Piano. Gospell Improv

Note: Because of Covid-19 restrictions lunch is not served after recitals. Attendees must wear masks and follow social-distance guidelines.

Invite family and friends to this weekday gift of music

Birthdays and Anniversaries for the Week April 4 – April 10.

Apr. 4 - Kathy Ponchione

Apr. 5 - Linda Habercorn

Apr. 6 - Evan Burns

Apr. 7 - Deanne Coyne, Dawn Morningstar, Julie Reitnauer

Apr. 8 - Brett Barker, William Gorzelsky, Susan Penrod

Apr. 9 - David Evans, Mattison Evans, Deborah Wechtenhiser

Apr. 10 - Logan Reitnauer

Apr. 4 - Ed and Amy Brandau (34 Years), Craig and Brenda Kuyat (34 years)

About Our Members:

Catherine Kinzey passed away on Monday, March 29, 2021

Peg Felix passed away on Saturday, March 20, 2021

Edith Miller passed away on Sunday, March 21, 2021

Reminder to please pray for our members and their families that are affected by COVID 19.

Remember those that prayer has been requested:

Dolly & Chis Palm, David, Karen, Lauren, Billy, Patti Sliko, Mark & Kayleigh Lucia, Palmer, Maxine Hale, Sandy, Alex, Dave, Joyce Morgenstern, Kadence, Jack, Denny, Gina, Rick, Linda & Dick, Buster, Colley Family, Jose and Family, Irene, Midge, Vic, Felix Family, Miller Family, Kevin, Kinzey Family, and Anita

Financial Update through February

Mount Calvary went into the red during the month of February. Two factors were largely responsible for this development.

On the expense side, approximately \$1300 was required to repair a water leak and weather-related expenses exceeded expectation, with the difference hopefully resolving itself over time once warmer weather arrives.

On the income side, we continue to reckon with the relocation of one of our largest donors, the varied timing of once-a-year gifts, and the reduced giving caused by the disruption of our normal worship schedule. With much of it already expected, none of this represents an impassable hurdle for us. For our current plan to work, everyone simply needs to repeat their 2020 giving, regardless of the form of worship they are using at present and regardless of how often they choose to worship. Where possible, increases in excess of 2020 giving or a return to generally higher levels of 2019 giving would also be most helpful. If we all do our part, we can very easily overcome a sluggish start to the new year without breaking the bank. Because we live in an aging community where retirees and younger professionals regularly relocate, our giving patterns and histories are always going to require vigilance on our part. It's just part of doing mission in Johnstown; the place we call home.

If it helps, credit card donations can be made through our website at mt-calvarylutheran.org and non-credit card donations can be mailed to our church at 1000 Scalp Avenue, Johnstown, PA 15904.

CONDENSED WORSHIP FOR THE WEEKEND OF SUNDAY, March 28, 2021.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Sovereign God, you have established your rule in the human heart through the servanthood of Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, keep us in the joyful procession of those who with their tongues confess Jesus as Lord and with their lives praise him as Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: JEREMIAH 31:31-34

The Judeans in Babylon blamed their exile on their ancestors, who had broken the covenant established at Sinai. Here the prophet looks to a day when God will make a new covenant with the people. There will be no need to teach the law, because God will write it on their hearts.

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

SECOND READING: PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Christ did not act to attain status and glory but was obedient to God even to the point of death. Following Christ's example, we do not seek personal status or glory but care for others as God cared for us in Christ's death.

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

GOSPEL: MARK 14:1--15:47

The passion story in Mark's gospel presents Jesus as one who dies abandoned by all. He shows himself to be the true Son of God by giving his life for those who have forsaken him.

¹It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; ²for they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

³While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. ⁴But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? ⁵For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her. ⁶But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. ⁷For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. ⁸She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. ⁹Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

¹⁰Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. ¹¹When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

¹²On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" ¹³So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, ¹⁴and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹⁵He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." ¹⁶So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

¹⁷When it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." ¹⁹They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?" ²⁰He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. ²¹For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that

one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.”

²²While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” ²³Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. ²⁴He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

²⁶When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷And Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ ²⁸But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” ²⁹Peter said to him, “Even though all become deserters, I will not.” ³⁰Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” ³¹But he said vehemently, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And all of them said the same.

³²They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. ³⁴And he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.” ³⁵And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.” ³⁷He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? ³⁸Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ³⁹And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. ⁴¹He came a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴²Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

⁴³Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. ⁴⁴Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” ⁴⁵So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. ⁴⁶Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. ⁴⁷But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ⁴⁸Then Jesus said to them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? ⁴⁹Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.” ⁵⁰All of them deserted him and fled.

⁵¹A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, ⁵²but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

⁵³They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. ⁵⁴Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire. ⁵⁵Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. ⁵⁶For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. ⁵⁷Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, ⁵⁸“We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” ⁵⁹But even on this point their testimony did not agree. ⁶⁰Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” ⁶¹But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” ⁶²Jesus said, “I am; and ‘you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,’ and ‘coming with the clouds of heaven.’” ⁶³Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses? ⁶⁴You have heard

his blasphemy! What is your decision?" All of them condemned him as deserving death. ⁶⁵Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" The guards also took him over and beat him.

⁶⁶While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. ⁶⁷When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, "You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth." ⁶⁸But he denied it, saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about." And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. ⁶⁹And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." ⁷⁰But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean." ⁷¹But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know this man you are talking about." ⁷²At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

^{15:1}As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. ²Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." ³Then the chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." ⁵But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

⁶Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. ⁷Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. ⁸So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. ⁹Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" ¹⁰For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. ¹²Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" ¹³They shouted back, "Crucify him!" ¹⁴Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" ¹⁵So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

¹⁶Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁷And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. ¹⁸And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. ²⁰After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

²¹They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. ²²Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). ²³And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. ²⁴And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

²⁵It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰save yourself, and come down from the cross!" ³¹In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³²Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

³³When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ³⁵When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." ³⁶And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." ³⁷Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

⁴⁰There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

⁴²When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. ⁴⁷Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

SERMON BY PASTOR JONATHAN

I think one of the first books that I truly remember reading, the first real book, with chapters and lots of words, and no pictures, was "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone." It was probably towards the end of elementary school or the beginning of middle school when my mom bought it for me. I remember it taking a while to get into at first, but that the story quickly drew me in and hooked me, so that I eventually read all seven books in the series as they were released (and have read them again several times since then.)

If you're somehow not familiar with Harry Potter, it's a story about an eleven year old orphan who discovers that there is an entire magical world of witches and wizards hiding from the rest of us, and that he himself is a wizard. The books follow his adventures during seven years of education at a school called Hogwarts, where wizards are taught and trained.

The thing is, without pictures, and before there were movies made of the books, you had to use some brainpower and imagination to immerse yourself in the story as you read. I didn't know what a school of magic would look like, but oftentimes, I imagined its hallways looking slightly like the school where I attended at the time. I pictured the train that carried them to school looking a bit like the DC Metro that I had ridden on several trips to Washington. I imagined the various magical creatures to look the way I had seen them in other picture books or cartoons or movies.

It's not that the author, JK Rowling, didn't give enough detail to fuel one's imagination, but in order to really appreciate the story, I had to take what she gave me and weave it in with the things I had seen and had experienced in order to paint a picture of it all in my mind, to have something I didn't just read, but that I truly experienced while I was reading. Frankly, it's something we all do to a certain extent when we read a story: one way or another you place yourself inside of it.

This week, we throw ourselves into the single most significant story in our lives as people of faith, The Passion of Our Lord. We heard it in part just a few moments ago, but in these next days, we have the opportunity to not just hear it, but live it. To pull together the details that we read in scripture, provided for us by Mark & John, & Matthew & Luke, with the real-life experiences we've had in our lives.

We may not know exactly what Jerusalem looked like, but we can imagine Jesus and his disciples making their way into the city triumphantly welcomed by joyful crowds.

We may not know what the seating arrangement was at the Last Supper, but we can imagine what it might have been like to hear Jesus say “This is my body given for you,” for the very first time.

We may not know how each individual disciple felt when they saw their friend arrested, interrogated, tortured, and murdered, but we can imagine how we might feel in a similar situation.

What we have before us is an exceptionally important sacred story of faith, and we owe it to ourselves to not just read it, but also experience it, and that is the opportunity that is afforded to us in Holy Week.

And so, today, we start fresh. Most of you have heard this story hundreds of times, but imagine yourself hearing it for the first time. Imagine yourself living it out minute by minute. If you do, the surprise of good news at the end becomes all the more powerful, and the promise of eternal life and forgiveness of sins made real through Christ’s resurrection becomes all the more meaningful. So allow yourself to dwell in the story, these final days of Christ, and the first days of our new faith in God’s covenant. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

P: In Jesus you came among us as a suffering servant. Give your church humility. Redeem your people from pride and the certainty that we always know your will. Heal us and empower us to confess Christ crucified. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: In creation, life springs from death. Redeem your creation awaiting resurrection: restore lost habitats and endangered species. Create new possibilities for areas affected by climate change (*especially*), grant relief from natural disasters (*especially*), and nurture new growth. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: Jesus was handed over to the powers of this world. In all nations, instruct the powerful, that they would not exploit their power but maintain justice. Sustain soldiers, and guide those who command them, that they serve those in greatest need. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: On the cross Jesus joined all who feel forsaken. Abide with those who are condemned to death. Defend those who are falsely accused. Console and strengthen those who are mocked or bullied. Accompany all who suffer (*especially*); grant respite and renewal. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: You called followers to tend Jesus’ body in death. Sustain hospice workers and funeral directors. Bless this congregation’s ministries at times of death: those who plan and lead funerals, those who prepare meals, all who offer support in grief. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: You inspired the centurion to confess Jesus as your Son. We praise you for the faith you have given to people of all places and times. Give us also such faith to trust the promises of baptism and, with them, to look for the resurrection of the dead. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: Lord Jesus, your Holy Spirit is at work. We continue in this season as we prepare for the call of our next Bishop. Lord we pray for all those who will be part of the call process at our Assembly. We pray for those who are discerning this call. We pray that your will, will be done among us.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

LILIES/TULIPS IN MEMORY OF:

George & Ann Sotak by Deborah Wicks
Robert Culp by The Kozak Family
Great-Grandparents by Hadley & Harper Pozun
Catherine Oleksa by Kevin & Chris Oleksa
Albert Sojak by Kevin & Chris Oleksa
Linda McQuaide, Our Mother & Grandmother by Bill, Cara, Kyle, & Jordan Lonsinger
Zakary McQuaide Lonsinger, Our Son & Brother by Dad, Mom, Kyle & Jordan
Phyllis & Benny Petrarca by Joyce, Jason, Suzanne & Sophia Hite
Mary & Otto Kendzora by Joyce, Jason, Suzanne, & Sophia Hite
Dorothy & Raymond Hite, Sr. & Joyce, Jason, Suzanne, & Sophia Hite
Ray Hite, Jr. Joyce, Jason, Suzanne, & Sophia Hite
Loved Ones by Susan & Rachael Brandau
Grandparents, Jim & Dorothy Pozun and Clair Solarczyk by Kymm George & Sara Solarczyk
Great Grandparents, Jim & Dorothy Pozun and Clair Solarczyk by Kadence, Wyatt, & Colton George
Loved Ones by Bill & Jan Layton
Luther & Kathleen Horner by Cindy & Al Buday
Jenneal F. Crowley by Cindy & Al Buday
Our Children by El Warshel

LILIES/TULIPS IN HONOR OF:

Austin & Savannah Foor by William & Ruth Ann Wolfe
Thomas & Petkosh Families by Rodger & Debbie Thomas
Grandparents by Hadley & Harper Pozun
Healthcare Workers by Hadley & Harper Pozun
1st Lt. Hunter Bergman by Paul & Cathy Bergman
Family by Bill I& Jan Layton

WORLD HUNGER IN MEMORY OF:

Loved Ones by Dick & Lois Sholtis
Loved Ones by Wilma Hiltz & Family
Glenn A. & LaVerne M. Trent by Joyce & Brittany Spangler
Loved Ones by Joan Bunnell
Rev Ron Reed by Gloria, Shannon, Justin, & Kate
Kathryn Zeger, Rev. Henry Reed, & Viloet Reed by Gloria, Shannon & Justin
Luther & Kathleen Horner by Cindy & Al Buday
Jenneal F. Crowley by Cindy & Al Buday
Bill McMullen by Linda & Family
Brett, Ami, Marion, & Shawn by Lee & Dot McQuaide
Parents, Jim & Dorothy Pozun and Clair Solarczyk by Bob & Cindy Solarczyk
Loved Ones by Bill & Jan Layton
Jean Wechtenhiser, Beloved Mother by Robin Wechtenhiser
Loved Ones by Rick & Lois Gallus
Parents, Charles & Louise Ling, Sister, Beverly Kocis, Sister-in-Law, Maxine Ling by Kathy Ling
Kenneth & Stella Stull by Sharon Stull
George C. & Jean Tressler by Wayne Tressler
Brian, Debbie, & Linda Jean Tressler by Wayne Tressler

Mother, Nellie & Father, Paul Henry, Sisters, Phyllis Ferguson, & Jean Jordyn, Husbands, Clarence Cramer & Thomas Haupt by Gladys Haupt
Mom & Dad, Nellie & Paul Henry by Audrey Rubis
Husband, Joe, Sisters, Jean, Phyllis, & Barbara by Audrey Rubis

WORLD HUNGER IN HONOR OF:

Our Grandparents & Our Parents by Katie & Jamie McMullen
Shannon, Justin, & Kate by Gloria Reed
Family by The Laytons
Our Children & Grandchildren by Dick & Lois Sholtis
Our Children by El Warshel
Family by Bill I& Jan Layton
Kelly, Jessie, Taylor, Mason, Caden, Brody, & Peyton by Jack Weisbrodt
Children, Grandchildren, Great Grandchildren, & Great-Great Grandchild by Gladys Haupt
Nancy, Dave, Butch, & Dan by Gladys Haupt
Cindie, Dave & Dan, Grandchildren, & Great Grandchildren by Audrey Rubis
Ethel Warshel by Cindy Solarczyk

EASTER DONATION:

In Memory of Linda McQuaide & Zak Lonsinger by Christopher & Dana Begley & Family

Thanks to your kindness, \$3,230 was given to World Hunger.