



# Mount Calvary Connected

July 14, 2022

*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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## A Message from Pastor Scott Klimke

I was able to speak with Pastor Jonathan yesterday. If you don't know, he was hospitalized on Friday after his heart began to race and would not slow down for a disturbing period of time. His time in the hospital began in Indiana, with him eventually being transferred to Shadyside Hospital in Pittsburgh where his heart procedure was done about six weeks ago now. Thankfully, Pastor Jonathan was able to come home from the hospital on Sunday evening, but the cause of his episode with a racing heart is unknown. There are presently three theories, with all of them still viable possibilities.

On Tuesday, Pastor Jonathan was cleared to begin cardiac rehab. He was also cleared to drive and lift more than was allowed previously. The clearances enabled him to hold one-year-old Andrea for the first time in about a month and a half. You can imagine this was a special treat. But still recovering, holding Andrea fatigued Pastor Jonathan in a relatively short period of time. The time of his return to work is still unknown and likely will remain so for the foreseeable future. Pastor Jonathan is itching to get back at it as soon as possible, but if you can't fight city hall, you also can't fight the limitations of flesh and blood. We'll just have to see how things go.

Covering some of Pastor Jonathan's responsibilities during his convalescence, I will be conducting a funeral service for a member of Benscreek Lutheran before Bible study on Wednesday evening. I will also be conducting a funeral service for our own Jane Hagins on Tuesday morning. Please know your pastors appreciate your prayers and need them whether it be for healing or the stamina and energy caring for you sometimes requires.

In Pastor Jonathan's absence, an ice cream social for our families with children has been planned for after the worship service on Saturday, August 20th. A similar event was held just before Pastor Jonathan's sick leave began. It featured a very heartening turnout and some of those involved told me

in late June they wanted to try something similar not just in August, but also at other points throughout the fall. And so, if you're a parent or grandparent, put August 20th on your calendar and come out with the kids in your lives for some fun and fellowship. I know Pastor Jonathan was excited to hear about the scheduling of the ice cream social when I spoke to him yesterday.

Pastor Scott

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### **Upcoming Meetings**

WELCA: July 18th at 6:00 p.m.

Church Council: July 19th at 6:30 p.m.

Bible Study on Psalms: July 20th at 6:30 p.m.

The Property Committee will meet on the second Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. in the old lounge.

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### **2022 Offering Envelopes**

Offering envelopes for 2022 are available in the narthex. Thank you in advance for your contribution!

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### **Help Wanted**

The Property Committee is looking to recruit a number of small job volunteers. Tasks might include replacing light bulbs, changing hardware on a commode, getting a lawnmower or snowblower ready for use, etc. The Committee believes we have a lot of talent in the congregation and wants to make greater use of it. Every small job handled by a member equals one less call that needs to be made to a vendor who may have a minimum visit charge or an hourly rate of \$50 or more.

Volunteers who can be available on short notice are needed to help with set-up, serving, and tear-down after funeral luncheons.

Interested parties should contact Mark Rychak or one of the pastors. A message could also be left with the church office at 814-266-4859. Thank you!

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### **Get Well Cards for Pastor Jonathan**

Cards can be mailed to:

Pastor Jonathan Adams  
219 Ohio Street  
Boswell, PA 15531

If you'd like to send a meal to Pastor Jonathan & his family to help during his recovery, visit the Meal Train website: <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/n15v0q> Thank you!

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### **Backyard Ministries Summer Club Volunteer Opportunity**

For the past 5 years, members of Mt. Calvary have been volunteering their time one day a week, for one hour to spend with the children of Coopersdale during the summer months. We have a core of about 5 people, but when one or more can't show up on a certain week, it makes things more difficult.

If you want to make a difference in underprivileged children's lives and share the word of God with them, then please consider this opportunity! All you need to do is show up. We already have games and activities, as well as the Bible lesson to share each week. If you are interested, or would like more information on this rewarding experience, please contact Mike Kozak at 244-6880. Thank you!

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### **Giving Tree**

For the months of July and August, the Giving Tree will be used to collect \$5 donations for the Jared Box Project. This is a charity that helps brighten the spirits of children in our local hospitals. The money collected will be used to purchase a small bag of activities for each child. The bags will be packed and delivered on God's Work, Our Hands Sunday, September 11th. Thank you for your continued support!

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### **Computer & Internet Connection Now Available**

Members may use the computer in the library during office hours: Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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### **Scheduled Worship Help**

#### **Saturday, July 16:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Pat Bittner & Linda Barnhart

**Communion Assistants:** Volunteers needed!

#### **Sunday, July 17:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Volunteers needed!

**Communion Assistants:** Volunteers needed!

#### **Saturday, July 23:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Mark & Debbie Rychak

**Communion Assistants:** Volunteers needed!

#### **Sunday, July 24:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Volunteers needed!

**Communion Assistants:** Volunteers needed!

There are sign up sheets in the Narthex for Greeters/Ushers and Communion Assistants. Please sign up for the dates that would suit you best. We appreciate you volunteering. If you have questions about these roles, please contact Christine Koshute at 814-421-4921 or Chris Oleksa at 814-244-9851.

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**Mt. Calvary's Adventures of "Flat Jesus":** This summer, Pastor Jono Adams invites you to adopt "Flat Jesus" and take him on your summer adventures! Please see the additional information below or visit Mt. Calvary's website.

**Pastor Jono's Sunday school class, and the nursery/childcare** has concluded for the summer. We look forward to seeing you all later this year!

**Synod Day @ DelGrosso's Amusement Park:** Monday, August 1st

**Lutheran Day @ the Curve:** Sunday, August 21st @ the Curve Baseball Field in Altoona

**IGNITE - Elementary Youth Retreat (Grades 2 - 6):** September 24-25 @ Camp Sequanota

**PLUNGE - Jr. High Retreat (Grades 6 -9):** October 1-2 @ Camp Sequanota

**Pastor Jonathan LOVES to get out and see our Mount Calvary youth in action doing the things they enjoy!** Be sure to share your schedules for sports, concerts, recitals, etc. You never know where he might show up!

Pastor Jonathan's office hours at Mount Calvary are Mondays & Wednesdays, 10am-3pm. He is available outside of those hours via email ([RevJonoAdams@gmail.com](mailto:RevJonoAdams@gmail.com)), cellphone (412-817-6704), or Facebook.

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### **Mt. Calvary's Adventures of "Flat Jesus"**

This summer, Pastor Jono Adams invites you to adopt "Flat Jesus" and take him on your summer adventures!

"Flat Jesus" was inspired by a children's book by Jeff Brown called, "Flat Stanley." In the book, a boy named Stanley becomes flattened and is able to be mailed to different places, having all kinds of exciting adventures.

"Flat Jesus" is a way to keep our church family connected as we enter into the summer traveling season. Bring home a "Flat Jesus" and take him with you as you travel...or to whatever you do this summer. Take a picture of him doing lots of different things: going out to dinner, having fun at the beach or the mountains, hanging out with friends or cousins, or whatever you are doing! It will be an amazing adventure! It is a great way to remember that Jesus is always with us, wherever we go. And it just might start up a conversation with someone about what you are doing...and why!

**AND THEN... SHARE HOW JESUS IS ON THE MOVE!**

When you have taken photos of "Flat Jesus," you can share your "Flat Jesus" pictures:

1. By emailing photos to [RevJonoAdams@gmail.com](mailto:RevJonoAdams@gmail.com) or texting them to 412-817-6704.
2. By uploading your picture directly to Facebook. Tag Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church of Johnstown, PA. Add the hashtag #flatJesus and/or #jesusisonthemove

It will be so exciting to see where Jesus is on the move this summer as you share your adventures! And remember, Jesus is with you ALWAYS!

We'd LOVE to see at least one "Flat Jesus" photo from every family in church. And if we get enough, we'll combine them into a video at the end of the summer!

If you won't make it to church to pick up a printed "Flat Jesus," but still want to participate, you can download and print your own by visiting Mt. Calvary's website: <https://www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/mt-calvarys-adventures-of-flat-jesus/>

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### **Youth/Family Ministry Ice Cream Event**

We'll hear screams for ice cream on August 20th after the 5:30 p.m. service. Our youth and their families are invited to enjoy an ice cream sundae in our side yard under the pavilion. Bring a chair or sit in the grass, meet new friends, eat ice cream, and enjoy summer before school starts! More details to come!

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### **1st Annual Cruise-In**

Sunday, July 24th from 1-4 p.m.

Mt. Calvary parking lot

Open to all cars, trucks, and bikes. A gift bag will be given to the first 25 vehicles. There will be food, dessert, and a DJ. Any questions, please contact the church office at 814-266-4859.

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### **Walk Thru Basket Party**

We are having a Walk Thru Basket Party on September 24th and September 25th. Tickets will be on sale in July. We are asking for your support of the event with the following: purchase tickets, filled baskets, gift certificates, or cash. Themed baskets, monetary donations, or gift cards for baskets can be dropped off at the office. Thank you!

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### **Clothing Sale**

The Social Ministry Team will be having their annual clothing sale on Saturday October 8th. We now have a storage area downstairs at the church that allows us to start collecting items earlier. If you have any clothes you would like to donate, please bag them by size and gender. This makes it easier during the sorting process. You can drop the clothes off at any time. If the church is locked, and no one is available in the office, please leave them by the blue bin outside. It will be checked daily. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Kozak at 244-6880. Thank you!

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### **14-Day Biblical Pilgrimage Adventure to Israel**

Jerusalem Seminary in Conjunction with Redstone Presbytery and Friends

October 15 to 28, 2022

Please see email sent May 31st for trip information, including the itinerary, or visit: <http://redstonepresbytery.org/>

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### **Give now for Eastern Europe Crisis Response**

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9).*

Friends, I write to you again about our neighbors in Eastern Europe. First, I thank you for your outpouring of prayers and generosity — you are making a difference in the lives of people impacted by the war in Ukraine.

Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response during this crisis are already at work. Because of your generosity, \$1 million will support the Lutheran World Federation and these member churches:

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Romania

They are distributing hygiene supplies, food, medicine, bedding and psychosocial and pastoral care to refugees and internally displaced people, most of whom are women and children.

**Your support has made this possible, but more work remains. Your gifts to “Eastern Europe Crisis Response” will be used to in full (100%) to address the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and neighboring countries.**

Additional responses through partners in these countries and others in the region are expected in the coming weeks and months, and Lutheran Disaster Response is committed to accompanying those partners as the situation evolves. We pray for the Roma communities and foreign nationals who are facing racial and ethnic discrimination at the borders as they flee Ukraine. Our companions are ensuring that people in these marginalized groups will be treated with respect and dignity as they seek safety.

We know there are many organizations that you can choose to support, but it is only by giving to Lutheran Disaster Response that guarantees your gift will fund ELCA-supported work through faith partners in the region.

I invite you to watch this [video](#) from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton about the situation in Eastern Europe and the ELCA’s response.

Together we pray for our siblings in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. May God be with them in their time of need.

In Christ’s service,



The Rev. Daniel Rift  
Director, ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response Fund  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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**Birthdays and Anniversaries for the  
Week: July 17 – July 23, 2022**

**July 17** - Michelle Corle, Caden Dusack, Todd Esposito, Brian Hiltz, & Stephen Konkula

**July 19** - Barbara Goehres & Jillian Kovalsky

**July 20** - Makena Philibin

**July 22** - Kaiden Kunkle & Randy McQuaide

**July 23** - Kimberly Haluska, Patrick Kovalsky, Wendy Reitnauer, & Joyce Spangler

**July 21** - Bill & Bernice Cononie

**July 23** - Pat & Karen Giunta

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**Remember those that prayer has been requested for:**

Linda & Dick, Claudia Plows, Maddie Pierce, Gladys Haupt, Bill & Linda, Jose & Family, Dave, Tom, Lt. Hunter Bergman, and Lt. Dylan Merchant, Harold, Rick, Shirley, Debbie, David, Lauren, Billy, Barb, Sara Solarczyk, Jackie Janak, Jack, Corinne, Joan, Dan, Natalie Zerby, Pastor Scott Custead, Luella Koontz, Al Lindner & Family, Bob, Dawn, Stacy & Josh, Bob Trotter, Bill Layton, Deb Zilch, Bennett, Cassy Sojak, Paul Miller, Keith Mayket, Ruth, Pete, Teplitza Family, Melanie, Ken, John Nerone, Dane Wisner, Jeff, Dorothy, Irene, Karen, Erin, Susan Dyers, Bob McMullen, Wyatt George, Larry Hockensmith, Jean Pellon, Mike, Corey, Pastor Jonathan & Family, Roxanne Horner, Miriam Horner, Becky Lilja, Kathy P., Al Johnson, Chris, Donna & Danny, Cheryl, Jennifer & Family, Jaime, Matt & Ashley, Landon, Max Lawn, Linda Haberkorn, Lorraine, Joe, Donna, Danny & Family, Becky Jo, Bill, Linda & Family, Mary, Mary Jane, Janice, Dennis, Rick, Don, Mabel Ann, Betty, Cathy, Cindy, Jill, Theresa & Family, Dean, Madi & Family, Patty & Family, Sydney & Family, Paulette, Ron, Andrea, Mary Ann, Midge, Rayford, Lois A., Dwane, Nicole, Trent, Kim, Kyle, Anna, Beverly, Sondra, E. Warshel, Audrey Rubis, Carol, Katey, Janice, & Trina & Family.

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**Financial Update**

When the congregational council recently reviewed financial reports for May, very little had changed. By way of example, last year's property expenses and this year's property expenses were separated by just \$250.14 and last year's wages and this year's wages were separated by just \$74.89. This stability in Mount Calvary's largest areas of expense speaks to the great job being done by your elected leaders. Have you said, "Thank you" to one of those leaders lately? Are they regularly a part of your prayer life?

There's also stability when it comes to the income side of the equation. We continue to feel the impact of the pandemic slowdown and even more so the impact of members moving out of our area, but May income was still slightly higher than it was a year ago. This too speaks to the effective job being done by your elected leaders. Please pray for them. Please be encouraging and grateful. They're doing a great job. Along with those effective leaders, may we all just continue doing our part; maintaining our previous giving as a baseline and increasing when and where possible.

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**Condensed Worship for Sunday, July 10, 2022**

**Prayer of the Day**

P: O Lord God, your mercy delights us, and the world longs for your loving care. Hear the cries of everyone in need and turn our hearts to love our neighbors with the love of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**First Reading: Deuteronomy 30:9-14**

The Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your soil. For the Lord will again take delight in prospering you, just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors, when you obey the Lord your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law, because you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you

should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

P: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**

### **Psalm 25:1-10**

P: To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

**A: My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

P: Let none who look to you be put to shame; rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

**A: Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.**

P: Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

**A: Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.**

P: Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

**A: You are gracious and upright, O Lord; therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

P: You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

**A: All your paths, O Lord, are steadfast love and faithfulness to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.**

### **Second Reading: Colossians 1:1-14**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit. For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

P: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**



**Gospel: Luke 10:25-37**

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

P: The gospel of the Lord.

**A: Praise to you, O Christ!**

**Sermon by Pastor Scott Klimke**

Two weeks ago, in our reading from Luke, Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem where a cross awaited him. Jesus was going to love God and neighbor with everything he had and no matter what came next; even if next was a shameful and torturous death. But there was always the chance he might change his mind. In the construction of his gospel, Luke draws unique attention to this prospect. There are fourteen chapters and six hundred and fifteen verses between the moment Jesus sets his face towards Jerusalem and the cross itself. By way of comparison, there are six hundred and some verses in all of Mark's gospel. Luke draws unique attention to all the temptations which could have turned Jesus back from the cross and our salvation. And guess what! Many times, we were the temptations. Sinning and sinning we could have at any time convinced Jesus we weren't worth the price of the cross.

Imagine what it must have felt like when the lawyer in today's reading from Luke tried to demonstrate that he was smarter than God in the flesh. God's upbraiding of Job in the Old Testament tells us it probably didn't go over well. Or imagine what it would have felt like when some Samaritans refused to welcome Jesus just after he turned towards Jerusalem and its cross. We know James and John wanted to torch the offending Samaritans with fire from heaven. Such was the enmity between Jews and Samaritans. They were like our own Hatfields and McCoys. Received so ungraciously in Samaria, Jesus was tempted to participate in this feud. He could have said, "I'm not dying for you dogs." But it didn't happen. Going there to die for all, Jesus kept walking towards Jerusalem and its cross. In fact, not so long after being insulted in Samaria, Jesus today tells us a parable that puts a Samaritan in the best possible light. It just goes to show there's Jesus and then there's us. Even though he shares in our humanity, Jesus is way more gracious, way more obedient, way more steadfast in his love than we are and we had best not forget it. But unfortunately, we can forget that there's Jesus and then there's us.

I'd suggest the temptation to forget that there's Jesus and then there's us becomes particularly strong when we encounter Scripture's dos and don'ts. This part of Scripture, often referred to as the Law, is very much present in our readings from Scripture today. In our reading from Deuteronomy, God's commandments and ordinances are presented as Israel's path to prosperity in the Promised Land it shall soon enter. In our psalm, the psalmist asserts God's steadfast love and faithfulness shall not depart from those who walk God's way. And in our reading from Luke, where the Law is referenced by Jesus himself, a lawyer, a supposed expert on the Law, shows himself to be aware that Scripture often encourages us to love God first and foremost, as we also love our neighbors as an extension of self. If we're not careful, all of these laws and calls to achievement, calls to be superman or superwoman, can lead us to forget there's Jesus and then there's us.

If we want and with the seeming encouragement of all of God's dos and don'ts, we can very easily read the Bible not as testimony to how we desperately needed Jesus to keep his face set towards Jerusalem and its cross, but as a how-to-manual detailing how we can save ourselves all on our own. This likely happens in today's reading from Luke. Charitably we might say the lawyer it describes takes it upon himself to test Jesus because he wants to make sure Jesus is the real deal so he's not misled by Jesus in his faith journey. But as things develop, we're also told the lawyer wants to justify himself. For Lutherans, in particular, this smacks of what we often call works righteousness; the desire to justify ourselves before God on the basis of our own works. For Lutherans, there's only one way to be justified before God and that's for God to do it God's self through the grace at work in Jesus' blood and the Holy Spirit's gift of faith. We've been striving to keep the Church honest and open about this for over five hundred years now. But all the commandments featured in Scripture can complicate this endeavor.

As one strong indication of this possibility, when today's lawyer asks about eternal life and Jesus brings us the Law, the lawyer automatically assumes God's dos and don'ts are there to get us into heaven on our own. In referencing the Law, Jesus was likely testing the lawyer who was testing him. As he referenced God's dos and don'ts, Jesus likely wanted the lawyer to say, "It's not me, Jesus, it's not the commandments Jesus, it's you Jesus who are the resurrection and the life." But the lawyer flunked the test given in response to his own test. He said the personal knowing and keeping of God's commandments was the resurrection and the life. Jesus neither agrees nor disagrees. He simply says those who love God and neighbor as an extension of self shall live. Is this to be for one second, one minute, one hour, one week, one month, or for all eternity? Jesus doesn't say. How are we going to fill in the blank he leaves open?

Hopefully not by forgetting there's Jesus and then there's us. As they did for a lawyer, the commandments of God shall always be there to tempt us to think we can save ourselves apart from Jesus, but we can't. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Jesus is the vine and we the branches who have no life apart from him. It's why our reading from Colossians clearly says we don't rescue ourselves, but that God rescues us through Jesus who is our Redeemer. There's Jesus and then there's us. He's the Redeemer and we're the redeemed. When the commands of Scripture begin to take us where a certain lawyer took himself, we need to say what he didn't say. In, by, and through the Holy Spirit, we need to say, "It's not you, commandments, it's not me, it's Jesus who is the resurrection and the life." But even so, we can remember that there's Jesus and then there's us and still give the commandments of God their due.

This happens when we remember there's now and then there's later. Being the resurrection and life, Jesus has later handled. But as for now, it's more up in the air and much more responsive to what we do or don't do. As we live out now rather than later, we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. We also know that no matter how things go, very good, very bad, or in-between, God shall make all things work together for good. But now, as in now rather than later, we can make things easier for God as God sews and weaves all things together for good. It happens when we know and keep God's commandments.

As we remember there's Jesus and then there's us, this is the present purpose of God's commandments. The commandments teach us how to make our here and now as good as it can be. The commandments teach how we work with God rather than against God as God makes all things work together for good. It's why our psalmist describes himself as a sinner who has no personal claim to salvation, but nonetheless shall have a better life when and if he keeps God's commandments. It's why Israel received the Law after it was already out of Egypt and on its way into the Promised Land. The commandments hadn't saved them from nasty, old Pharaoh. God did. The commandments hadn't gotten them through the wilderness. God did. But the commandments would make life in the wilderness and in the Promised Land far better than it would otherwise be. As we remember that there's Jesus and then us, the commandments teach us how to make our here and now as good as it can be.

And so, go be a Good Samaritan. It's how Jesus concludes our reading from Luke. He doesn't say, "Go and earn yourself eternal life." He says, "Go and be a Good Samaritan. Go and practice love and mercy for the benefit of all." It's what we're here to do and what the commandments of God encourage us to do. We're not here to become the resurrection and the life ourselves. We're here to be Good Samaritans; to practice the love and mercy for all prescribed by the commandments of God. It won't make life perfect. But our love and our mercy for all will make things better. And better is all there shall be until Jesus himself brings eternal life forward forever and ever for all who have the Holy Spirit's gift of faith in him. Amen!

### **Prayers of Intercession**

P: United in Christ and guided by the Spirit, we pray for the church, the creation, and all in need.

P: Good and gracious God, you have placed your word of love in the heart of your church. Fill your church with compassion, that we bear the fruit of your healing mercy to a broken world. God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: You created the earth with seeds sprouting up to new life. We pray for the flourishing of fruit trees and orchards, vines and bushes. Prosper the work of those who plant, tend, harvest, and gather. God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Show us your ways and teach us your paths of justice and love. Raise up community and national leaders to challenge and dismantle societal structures that perpetuate ethnic, racial, and religious profiling and discrimination. God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Come near to all in need. Orchestrate kindness in the face of cruelty, hope where there is despair, love in the face of neglect, comfort where there is death, and healing in illness (especially). God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Turn this community toward neighbors in need. Bring aid and support to those who are poor, beaten down, abused, forgotten, silenced, or avoided (local outreach ministries may be named). God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: We give thanks for the saints who revealed your love and mercy in this life. Inspired by their witness, strengthen us to live in hope. God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: God of every time and place, in Jesus' name and filled with your Holy Spirit, we entrust these spoken prayers and those in our hearts into your holy keeping.

**A: Amen.**

### **Blessing**

P: Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.  
**Amen.**