



# Mount Calvary Connected

October 6, 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!*

**Pastor Scott Klimke**

Cell-Phone: 570-367-3421

Email: [sklimke6@gmail.com](mailto:sklimke6@gmail.com)

**Pastor Jonathan Adams**

Cell-Phone: 412-817-6704

Email: [revjonoadams@gmail.com](mailto:revjonoadams@gmail.com)

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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 Jonathan

This week, in two separate services at Benscreek and Mount Calvary, I have had the opportunity to say words of blessing over at least 25 dogs and two very brave cats. I say "at least" because as a lover of dogs and cats myself, I get excited when surrounded by so much fluff and may not have been in the best frame of mind for actually counting; and so 25 is the best number I could come up with after trying to think through all of the dogs I got to pet and visit with.

It's been a few years since I've done a pet blessing, mostly due to COVID and the craziness of life these last few years, so it was neat to return to this fun way of bringing a faith perspective to a different aspect of many of our lives. While those of you who attended these services would have received the answer in my introduction, I felt like others might also appreciate a bit of my answer to "Why bless pets? And why now?"

The answer to that begins with the story of Saint Francis of Assisi. Some might immediately think, "I thought Lutherans didn't care about the saints?" But that's far from the truth. Whereas we don't pray TO the saints the way that our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters sometimes do, we still look to them as great examples of faith, and in faith consider all those who have died in the faith to be saints. But I digress...

Saint Francis was born sometime around 1181 and was part of a rich merchant family. But rather than joining the family business, he chose a life of poverty in service to the church. He was dedicated to charity, giving away all that he had, even at the expense of his own needs. But beyond that, he was known for his love of all of God's creatures and his call to care for all of God's creation. Among many things, he is considered to be the patron saint of animals, and for this reason churches throughout the

world celebrate his feast day (October 4th) by having a pet or animal blessing sometime during the first week of October.

At this year's pet blessing, I shared a short reading from Genesis 9:9-10. I'll leave it to you to read if you choose, but the gist of it is that Noah's Ark has landed, Noah's family and the animals have disembarked, and God is making the promise to never drown the earth again. And God makes this promise, this covenant not just with Noah's family, but with all creatures. It's just one of many reminders that God's love is truly for all of creation; and those of us who share our lives with pets of any sort can certainly give thanks knowing that God loves our dogs, cats, fish, lizards, etc. just as much as we do.

In closing, I share with you a variation of a prayer often attributed to Saint Francis,

*"Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are reborn to eternal life. Amen."*

I encourage you, especially if you are a lover of animals, to reflect on this prayer and consider whether your dog, your cat, or those animals you interact with might be an "instrument of God's peace" in your life. I imagine our pets are often better at this than we are, and so, maybe we'll just keep on praying this prayer, hoping that we might be instruments of peace in the world, inspired by the love shown to us by our pets.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Jonathan

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### **Upcoming Meetings/Events**

Evangelism Committee: October 6th at 6:30 p.m.

Clothing Sale: October 8th from 9-1

Property Committee: October 11th at 6:00 p.m.

Bible Study on Psalms: October 12th at 6:30 p.m.

WELCA: October 17th at 6:00 p.m.

Church Council: October 18th at 6:30 p.m.

Youth & Family Ministry Committee: October 20th at 6:30 p.m.

Youth & Family Trip to Weakland Farms: October 23rd at 1 p.m.

Bible Study on Psalms: October 26th at 6:30 p.m.

Stewardship and Administration: October 27th at 6:30 p.m.

Deadline for T-shirt & Sweatshirt Sale: October 31st

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### **Prayer Ventures**

Praise God for the work of the Spirit that equips us for lives of faith and service, gathers us in communities of faith and enables us — individually and together — to engage in vital ministries for the sake of the world.

Thank God for our special relationship with the Reformed Church in America, a full communion partner with the ELCA since 1997. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, that together we will find strength and resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor, especially in these challenging times.

Pray that the wisdom and knowledge of physicians, health care workers and medical researchers will continue to grow and be applied for the health and well-being of all people, especially those who suffer illnesses and conditions lacking effective treatments or cures.

Pray that we will respond generously to the immediate and long-term needs of people and communities impacted by flooding and wildfires, and that we will bear hope, encouragement and care to those grieving the loss of loved ones and neighbors and rebuilding their own lives.

We are living in times of economic uncertainty, a continuing pandemic, unresolved racism, political turmoil and human suffering. Pray for God to renew our spirit, calm our anxiety, strengthen our resiliency, draw our attention to the needs of our neighbor and help us make healthy choices.

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### **Scheduled Worship Help**

#### **Usher Team for Saturdays (October):**

Jerry Pozun, Ruth Pozun, David Saloka, and Stacey Saloka

#### **Usher Team for Sundays (October):**

Family of Keith & Wendy Mayket and Family of Chris & Tiffany Swartz

#### **Readers/Communion Assistants (October):**

**Saturday, October 8:** Shirley Sholtis-Glova and Jan Layton

**Sunday, October 9:** Dan Bantley

**Saturday, October 15:** Bill Layton and Cindy Solarczyk

**Sunday, October 16:** Joan Hunter

**Saturday, October 22:** Todd Moss and Kevin Oleksa

**Saturday, October 23:** Noelle Berkey

**Saturday, October 29:** Anita Brodt and Missy Brodt

**Sunday, October 30:** Joan Hunter

There are sign up sheets in the Narthex for Greeters/Ushers and Readers/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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### **"Praying with a Thankful Spirit"**

by Rev. B. Keith Haney

In her book *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom relates an incident that taught her always to be thankful. She and her sister, Betsy, had just been transferred to the worst Nazi prison camp they had seen yet, Ravensbruck. On entering the barracks, they found them extremely overcrowded and flea infested.

### **Thank the Lord for Everything**

One morning, the sisters read through 1 Thessalonians. The passage encouraged Corrie and Betsy to “rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:17–18).” This command didn’t sit well with Corrie, but her sister pleaded with her to give thanks to God for the building that they were living in now. Although Corrie stubbornly declined to thank the Lord for fleas, Betsy continued with her request, and eventually, Corrie gave in. Throughout their confinement at Ravensbruck, the two women were amazed at how easily they could meet for prayer and Bible study, without any conflict or arguments from the guards. Much later, Corrie and Betsy discovered why: the guards refused to enter the barracks because of the fleas.

This illustration points out an interesting dilemma. We Christians need to pray with a thankful spirit. This becomes even more challenging during times of oppression, persecution, or grief. I have heard both new and seasoned Christians ask this question: “Please tell me how I am supposed to ignore all the pain and suffering and have a thankful attitude—what exactly I am thanking You for, Lord?” Have you been there? Have you wanted to ask God this question? I want to explore the answer. We will see what answers God provides. For our story, Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians:

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:15–18

### **Be Joyful**

One key to understanding this is to realize that thanksgiving is addressed to God. The significance of this distinction is that our thankfulness is connected to God. We are to be thankful to God regardless of circumstances despite whatever may happen. We are not thankful for what happens to us. Our dedication is to God. The psalmist models this. We see the psalmist pour his heart out to God in lament. He is not thanking God for his situation, but he lays his case before God. Once he gets the pain off his chest, he acknowledges his thankfulness for God’s faithfulness and strength.

A sample of this is found in Psalm 142:1–5. Examine the format below:

1. Address and Introductory Cry  
With my voice I cry out to the LORD;  
with my voice I plead for mercy to the LORD.  
I pour out my complaint before Him;  
I tell my trouble before Him.  
When my spirit faints within me,  
you know my way!
2. The Lament (The Real Problem)  
In the path where I walk  
they have hidden a trap for me.  
Look to the right and see:  
there is none who takes notice of me;  
no refuge remains to me;  
no one cares for my soul.
3. Confession of Trust  
I cry to You, O LORD;  
I say, "You are my refuge,  
my portion in the land of the living."

### **Rejoice Even in Persecution**

The Christian, through faith, can rejoice in spite of meanness and persecution. The joy of the Christian is the end result of the entire Gospel of Jesus Christ welling up and overflowing in the soul of the believer. This salvation is theirs in Christ. Although our earthly joys fade, if only for brief moments due to our circumstances, we can remain thankful because the joy of salvation never fades. It is this joy of salvation that allows us to pray with a thankful spirit. It is not the situation or some Pollyanna view of a broken world that shapes our thankfulness. We need to be reminded to rejoice in spite of the many little adversities that Satan will attempt to use against us to lessen and even darken our joy. But the Christian stands at the cross of Christ in bold defiance and declares, "Satan, you will not take my joy. You will not ruin my happiness, because my life merges into eternal joy."

*Rev. B. Keith Haney is Assistant to the President for Missions, Human Care, and Stewardship of Iowa District West. He has been an ordained pastor for twenty-seven years and has served multi-ethnic urban congregations in Detroit, St. Louis, and Milwaukee.*

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### **Birthdays and Anniversaries for the Week: October 9 – October 15, 2022**

**Oct. 9** - Patricia Cox & Liz Katrancha

**Oct. 10** - Kimberly Spangler

**Oct. 11** - Margaret Costlow, Austin Foor, & Audrey Rubis

**Oct. 12** - Lois Gallus, William Layton, Teresa Lumley, Frances Prisk, Jr., & Debra Zilch

**Oct. 14** - Susan Brandau, Elias Kozak, & Brent Williams

**Oct. 15** - Robert Allison, Rachael Brandau, & Robert Jeschonek

**Oct. 10** - Greg & Cathy Gawlas  
**Oct. 10** - Brian & Lori Hiltz (35 years)  
**Oct. 11** - Larry & Jeanne Hockensmith  
**Oct. 12** - Alvin & Linda Leech Just  
**Oct. 12** - Glenn & Liz Katrancha, Jr.  
**Oct. 12** - Michael & Ashley Kozak  
**Oct. 13** - Benjamin & Chelsea Hiltz

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### **Updates from Our Members & Community**

#### **A GREAT BIG THANKS TO ALL OF YOU**

To Pastor Scott & Mt. Calvary Members,  
You are so very nice! Thank you all for the kind words, prayers, and thoughts.  
-Joanne & Mary Miller  
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#### **A THANK-YOU FROM WELCA**

A GIANT "thank you" isn't enough for all everyone who baked for our recent basket party bake sale. Mt. Calvary is soooo blessed to have so many talented bakers willing to go above and beyond when asked to bake. We made over \$500 because of the wonderful, delicious, fantastic, fabulous goodies you so lovingly shared. We had a wide variety of things, including gluten free and doggie treats! Everything was nicely packaged. Many of you should be professionals! Thank you again. Your willingness to help, and your talent for baking was noticed and very much appreciated.  
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#### **Help Us Fill in the Blanks!**

Our birthdate, wedding anniversary, and church membership records are incomplete. We have been working on moving records from paper to electronic and it's a huge undertaking. Please help Terri or one of our volunteers if they contact you for missing information. You can be a bigger help by calling the church office to verify birth and anniversary dates with Terri. Thanks for your cooperation!  
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#### **Visits to Shut-Ins, Hospital or Nursing Home Patients**

Never hesitate to contact the church office if you, or a loved one, desires a visit from one of our pastors, or a lay visitor. If you, or someone you know is homebound, hospitalized, or in a nursing/care home, and wants or needs a visit or more frequent visits, we are happy to do so. We never want anyone to be missed. We try to get information on those hospitalized or placed in nursing homes, but please don't assume that info is given to us automatically. Call us!  
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#### **Sign Up Sheets for All Saints' Day**

Sign Up Sheets for All Saints' Day for DEATHS and BAPTISMS since November 1, 2021 are on the table in the Narthex. Or you can call Terrie in the office at 814-266-4859 and give this info to her.

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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, Ken, John Nerone, Dane Wisner, Jeff, 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, Linda Haberkorn, Lorraine, Joe, Donna, Danny & Family, Becky Jo, Bill, Linda & Family, Mary, Mary Jane, Janice, 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., Nicole, Trent, Kyle, Anna, Beverly, Sondra, El Warshel, Audrey Rubis, Carol, Katey, Janice, Trina & Family, Jake Wissinger, Candi Walker, Dave Brehm, Chrissy-Baby Emma, Wyatt, Gerald Barrick, the Shreffler Family, Louise, Kim, Devin, Laura & family, Dorothy, Jo Ann, John Alt, Jan Mertz, Denny, Jill Lisson, Jaci, Dominic Megia, Jackie Hauger, Sharon, Barbara, Louise & Family, Dennis, Mary M., & Joel Penrod.

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**Condensed Worship for Sunday, October 2, 2022****Prayer of the Day**

P: Benevolent, merciful God: When we are empty, fill us. When we are weak in faith, strengthen us. When we are cold in love, warm us, that with fervor we may love our neighbors and serve them for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**First Reading: Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4**

The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw. O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous—therefore judgment comes forth perverted.

I will stand at my watchpost, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. Then the Lord answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith.

P: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**

**Psalm 37:1-9**

P: Do not be provoked by evildoers; do not be jealous of those who do wrong.

**A: For they shall soon wither like the grass, and like the green grass fade away.**

P: Put your trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and find safe pasture.

**A: Take delight in the Lord, who shall give you your heart's desire.**

P: Commit your way to the Lord; put your trust in the Lord, and see what God will do.

**A: The Lord will make your vindication as clear as the light and the justice of your case like the noonday sun.**

P: Be still before the Lord and wait patiently. Do not be provoked by the one who prospers, the one who succeeds in evil schemes.

**A: Refrain from anger, leave rage alone; do not be provoked; it leads only to evil.**

P: For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who hope in the Lord shall possess the land.

**Second Reading: 2 Timothy 1:1-14**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

P: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**

**Gospel: Luke 17:5-10**

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. "Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table'? Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat



and drink'? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'"

P: The gospel of the Lord.

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

### **Sermon by Pastor Scott Klimke**

Last week, I said the Bible isn't all that hard to understand if given time and undivided attention. I acknowledged there are all kinds of strange places, names, and practices. But if one compares the Bible to a song, the places, names, and practices that bedevil us are just the bass and the drums. They undergird and anchor what we hear; giving it shape and structure. But all the strange places, names, and practices also aren't the lyrics or the guitar solo. Where Scripture is concerned, the lyrics and the guitar solo are two, recurring questions. Number one, what does it mean to be human and how can God help us be better humans? And number two, what does it mean to be the Church collectively and individually and how can God help us be a better church and better Christians? It's really this simple. How can God help me be a better human being? And then, how can God help all of us be a better church and each of us a better Christian?

If we start with the second of these questions, the one about being a better church and better Christians, we hear a lot this week about being a follower; about being a servant rather than a seer or a supervisor. In our reading from Habakkuk, for instance, the prophet wants to know what God knows. In advance, Habakkuk wants to be privy to every last part and piece of God's purpose and plan. God won't have it. God tells Habakkuk there is no escaping the vocation of faith; the vocation of following; the vocation of being a servant rather than a seer or a supervisor. Our job, God says, is to go where we're told to go in faith; not to know every stop on the itinerary in advance. The disciples in our reading from Luke are told much the same.

On the face of it, the disciples just ask for more faith. Who doesn't want more of that! But underneath this seemingly simple request is the plea to make faith more recognizable; less of a profound break from the rest of our lives. This becomes clear when we understand Jesus has just told the disciples they must forgive everyone who repents and be prepared to do it seven times a day. For resentful, vengeful, grudge-bearing people like you and me, this kind of radical grace and forgiveness does not go down like cookies and cream. In asking for increased faith, the disciples are in essence asking Jesus for more cookies and cream; to start watering his message down; to stop being so other. Like God the Father in our first reading, Jesus won't have it. Jesus tells the disciples to shut up and get back to work. There shall be no reprieve from the vocation of faith. There shall be no reprieve from following after our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in trust. Which, when combined with our reading from Habakkuk, is again to say that being Church both individually and collectively is all tangled up with following after Jesus; with serving rather than calling the shots. And this brings us to how our appointed scriptures address the first question I identified earlier and that's the question of how we can be better humans.

As human beings, life gives us two options as long as life continues for us. At every stop along the way, we can embrace who we are or attempt to escape from who we are. If you haven't figured it out by now, escape doesn't work. We are who we are in real and time space. But this doesn't stop us from trying to escape; from trying to make ourselves somebody else.

As a teenager and through my first couple years of college, I worked at Lauer's Food Market. Employees were told that decisions about who was left up at the registers and who was sent out into the aisles would be based upon seniority. Early on in my employment this standard didn't hold. An older employee who had less seniority than me was sent out into the aisles and I was left up front at a register. I let my supervisor know this didn't sit well with me and the next day it was me, not my older coworker, who was out in the aisles. I thought I had escaped the bounds of youth and inexperience. I thought I could be twenty or thirty or forty or fifty or sixty or seventy or eighty or ninety at the tender age of sixteen or seventeen. I came to know better a year or so later when a high school graduate who had started after me ended up with some managerial responsibilities which should have been mine by the rule of seniority. I again protested, but this time to no avail. Earlier on in my employment, I may have gotten a temporary reprieve from the strictures of youth and inexperience, but there would be no permanent reprieve. And now forty years later, my eligibility for an AARP card would undoubtedly color the assumptions some people would make about my capabilities. Try as we might, there shall be no escaping who we are at any point along the way; only attempted escape. Rather than try to escape and inevitably fail, it's better to embrace who we are as we grow and change. But it's hard; hard as following after Jesus in faith and trust. And yet, Scripture routinely promises that God can make it easier to follow rather than lead; serve rather than supervise; embrace rather than escape.

Today this promise of divine assistance comes in the form of Jesus' response to the disciples' request for more faith. Before he tells the disciples to shut up and get back to work, Jesus does employ a bit of a lighter touch. He tells the first disciples and us that if we just tried to follow, just tried to serve, just tried to embrace who we are at any given moment in time, we'd want to do it again because the first time went so well. Often much of church and life is about getting out of the gates so we can actually discover the ongoing joy and satisfaction of following after Jesus and of being the unique people Jesus has called and equipped us to be. Once we get running, once we get out of the blocks, once we get moving, we don't look back because the race is going so well.

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak with a member of the congregation I served straight out of seminary. We hadn't seen each other or talked to each other in thirteen years. There was a lot to cover, but eventually our brother in Christ turned to what had been a scary chapter at Faith Lutheran Church in New Florence. A mission start which brought two, small, rural churches together under one roof and in a brand new building, Faith Lutheran Church in New Florence was out of money. We're not talking in the red for the year. We're talking about being out of money to the point where there weren't the funds to sustain another full year of ministry. Was this ever scary for me. There were times when I shook my fists at heaven and said to God, "Why did you put me here! What were you thinking!" And as I was shaking fists at heaven, members of the congregation were shaking fists at one another. There was the feeling that warnings about savings and spending had not been heard, as there also was the feeling that those warnings hadn't been loud enough or clear enough. Eventually, we stopped our whining and fist-shaking and got to work. It took the daring that leaps of faith require, as it also took embracing our identity as pastor and leadership group at one, particular moment and place in time. And guess what! Just as Jesus promises in our reading from Luke, it worked. I don't know that we moved a mulberry tree. They grow to be thirty to sixty feet high and twenty to forty feet wide. That's a pretty big tree for just a mustard seed of faith to throw around like a football. But what happened was still pretty significant. Once out of money, the bills got made, no pay cut or freeze was necessary, savings grew, and extra mortgage payments were being made when I left. It's a prime example of how good things happen we get out of the gates even as life changes and even as it's sometimes scary to

follow after Jesus. And all I've done is share one of many examples I have to share after three churches and going on twenty years of experience.

And so, how are you going to follow after Jesus and embrace the unique person he has called and equipped you to be at this moment in time? And how are we as this congregation going to encourage everyone, be they here are on the way, to do the same? Whatever the answers may be, I know we'll continue once we get started. A little faith, a little gumption, a little hope, a little confidence, a little daring is all we need before the results God makes possible keep bringing forth more of the same from us. Amen!

### **Prayers of Intercession**

P: As scattered grains of wheat are gathered together into one bread, so let us gather our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of God's good creation.

P: We pray for your holy church in every place and for those who serve following the example of Christ. Help them to live by faith and walk by the light of your gospel. God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: For parts of the world ravaged by natural disaster (especially those affected by Hurricane Ian): relieve those affected by floods, wildfires, droughts, earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes. God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: For every nation and for those entrusted with authority: grant our leaders self-discipline in all things, and inspire them with love for your people. God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: For victims of violence, abuse, and neglect: heal those who have been harmed and protect those who are vulnerable. For all who are sick (especially). God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: For this and every congregation: rekindle your gifts within your people, and inspire councils, committees, and individuals to plan and work together that all may know your love. God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: In thanksgiving that you have abolished death, and for the saints who have died (especially). Bring us all to eternal life with you. God of grace,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Gathered together in the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, gracious God, we offer these and all our prayers to you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**A: Amen.**

**Blessing**

P: The God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus.

**A: Amen.**

P: The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**A: Amen.**

P: The God of all grace † bless you now and forever.

**A: Amen.**