



Mount Calvary Connected

June 8, 2023

Mount Calvary Connected is a weekly newsletter sent out at the end of each week. Our goal is to keep you connected to your church and your faith with messages from our church, information about upcoming activities at Mt. Calvary, and more!

WEEKLY WORSHIP BULLETINS

Weekly worship bulletins can be found at: www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/bulletins/

Meetings & Events

Thurs., June 15th -- Social Ministry -- 6:30 pm

Mon., June 19th -- WELCA -- 6:00 pm

Tues., June 20th -- Church Council Meeting -- 6:30 pm

Thurs., June 22nd - Sun., June 25th -- Well Festival at Camp Sequanota

Sun., June 25th -- Blessing of the Bikes -- 10:30 am

Sat., July 8th -- Faith Night at the Point

Faith Night at the Point

Join us at The Point on July 8th for Faith Night!

Mt. Calvary will be selling tickets in the church office, or after the church services, beginning the weekend of June 10th. Tickets will be \$6 per person.

Come celebrate your faith at Point Stadium! There will be a praise concert held in the stadium before the start of the game. All faith-based organizations and groups are eligible for \$6 tickets by using code FAITH at checkout! As well, the first 250 kids in the ballpark on Faith Night will receive a FREE Mill Rats baseball!

Well Festival

Faith-informed Learning & Community

June 22 - 25, 2023

Sequanota Conference Center and Camp

We strive to live authentically as God's people. Over the generations, people have found that it is easier to live and strive when we do it together. This is what the Well Festival is all about: living, learning, and loving together. A key component of the event is to simply provide open space for participants to engage one another. The idea is for spiritual explorers to gather to find community and support as we engage in a wide range of conversations. The festival is designed to offer different "tents" or learning experiences to provide opportunities for conversation. These tent experiences are designed for co-creation between the speaker and those who have gathered to engage the topic.

Sound like something you would enjoy? Learn more and register at: [Well \(sequanota.com\)](http://Well (sequanota.com))

Readers/Communion Assistants:

June 10th – Claudia Plows

June 11th – Rebecca Daly & Michael Kozak

Ushers:

June 10th – Chris & Kevin Oleksa

June 11th – Volunteers needed!

If you would like to volunteer, please sign up online or contact Terrie Crisi in the church office.

Featured Article

Deconstructed, reimagined faith

Five ways I see a new generation reorienting its Christianity.

by Peter Choi

We are at a moment of cultural and spiritual deconstruction. That word is often associated with evangelicalism, as exvangelicals move away from conservative religious positions and begin to take apart and reimagine that inherited faith.

But I see evidence that deconstruction is more broadly representative of our moment. John, an Episcopal priest, finds himself embroiled in a heated controversy at his church after talking about the long imperial history of the Church of England in a recent sermon. Jennifer grew up in a suburban Presbyterian church that has always affirmed her call to ministry, but all her close mentors are men encouraging her to go into academia. Josh is a talented worship leader whose fusion of Polynesian and hip-hop influences has elicited strong pushback from the lead pastor of his church. Each of them is in a moment of deconstruction, coming from diverse cultural positions and for different reasons.

In a time of far-reaching cultural upheaval, many spiritual deconstructionists find themselves ecclesially homeless, outside of churches that once nurtured their faith and identity. The way forward can appear daunting and bewildering.

But as I've studied the paths of deconstructionists, I've begun to see patterns in what often looks and feels like chaos. The following five shifts describe some of the ways people are reorienting faith after disorientation. This is not quite a road map, but each shift signals an important step in reimagining faith—via deconstruction—for another generation.

1. From triumphalism to lament. Deconstructionists often come to their moment of crisis because they are weary of the triumphant celebrations of their religious pasts. They're skeptical of overvaluing the contributions of a sectarian church to a pluralistic present. Western Christianity, in various forms, has often been obsessed with what theologian Shoki Coe has called a "cathedral mentality." That is, Western Christians often believe they must build permanent structures—physical and otherwise—that display and preserve their tradition's greatness. As a result, faith systems witnessing a disproportionately high rate of deconstruction appear to foster an urgency about drinking deep from a narrowly circumscribed canon (e.g.,

scrupulously reading the prayers of Thomas Cranmer, the treatises of Jonathan Edwards, the apologetics of C. S. Lewis, or the writings of some other hero of the past). The goal is almost always, by doing so, to ascend the heights again.

Who doesn't love a good mountaintop experience, especially when it means communing with spiritual giants? But many deconstructionists are learning that valleys and plains are also part of the spiritual journey. Or, to play on Isaiah 40, there is a time for soaring on wings like eagles and a time for running without growing weary and walking without losing heart.

For me, the triumphalist dynamic became most visible in my study of early evangelicalism and George Whitefield, the celebrity preacher known as the "Grand Itinerant." When people heard that I was working on the later years of Whitefield's life, not knowing I was attempting to place him in his imperial context, they would offer comments like, "Oh, that God would raise up more Whitefields in our day!" and "They sure don't make 'em like they used to!" When I moved to San Francisco to work for an organization named after missiologist Lesslie Newbigin (which had an early flagship program called the William Wilberforce Fellowship), I saw how triumphalism rooted in hero worship could impact the life of organizations, often in surprisingly deleterious ways.

A cathedral mentality has shielded many Christians from the necessity of lament. As we come to understand more deeply the histories of empire, race, and slavery, turning away from triumphalism and toward lament feels like an appropriate spiritual response. Honest historical reckoning becomes part and parcel of a faithful spiritual life in the present. It's a road that has led many deconstructionists from triumphalism to confusion, sorrow, and lament.

2. From morality to dignity. Many deconstructionists come from churches that have drawn a moral line between themselves and the rest of society. And they've come to experience deep weariness with the hypocrisy that has resulted, especially in the public performance of religion. As Cole Arthur Riley writes, "injustice has survived by cowering behind the guises of morality and ethics." Deconstructionists have watched this dynamic with alarm as it plays out in the public square. They know well the dangers of theological convictions driving a political agenda while insisting one group knows better than another group what is best for all. In contrast, Arthur Riley argues, "true justice . . . is much more interested in protecting and affirming dignity with tangible actions."

This does not mean that morality has no role to play in reimagining faith. Deeply moral questions fuel much of the spiritual discontent that leads to deconstruction. Passionate concern for the wrongs of misogyny, patriarchy, racism, and homophobia animate deconstructionist advocacy. But there is a shift in emphasis that begins to happen. Rather than moralizing, reconstructing faith leaders begin by affirming the dignity of every human being—and emphasizing the primacy of loving ourselves and each other in our moral complexity.

Teaching morality is easy; turn to just about any heroic story of scripture and even a novice preacher can find the plot of a sermon by exhorting, "Be like so-and-so." Loving complicated people in the face of irresolvable ethical conflict is much harder. This doesn't mean that vexing questions of biblical interpretation over contested moral issues are unimportant; it's just that people are hurting and dying, and there are many more pressing matters of neighborly love vying for our attention on any given day. The shift

from morality to dignity means remembering that when Jesus faced a choice between rule following and affirming a person's dignity, it was never a hard choice.

3. From certainty to mystery. Disorientation comes when moments of absolute certainty give way to disappointment, when things don't turn out as we hoped. For deconstructionists, it's often the realization that biblical faith and interpretation are not so clear-cut, especially on any number of present-day social issues. Words mean multiple things, interpretations diverge, and mystery prevails. Just as American Christians once killed each other over racial slavery, often insisting they had the Bible on their side, scriptural arguments have the potential to spill over into violence today. Certitude is not faith, many are realizing, and the dogmatic imposition of a debatable interpretation is not love.

The danger is that many deconstructionists might simply embrace new certainties, rather than allow mystery and humility to prevail. We see this kind of certainty versus certainty everywhere in our society, but the way of faith leads us into deeper mystery. Faith remains, and confidence too, but there is a different hierarchy of belief, and mystery has a high place. After a long period of running for his life, the prophet Elijah appears vindicated on Mt. Carmel. He experiences a moment of empirical certainty: God had just answered his prayer by fire, after all, over and against all those people who had gotten it wrong. The story in 1 Kings 18 paints a scene of Elijah standing tall before all of Israel and slaying every false prophet of Baal and Asherah.

Before we know it, however, Elijah is on the run again—and close readers see that he retreats from the certainty of Mt. Carmel to the mystery of Mt. Horeb. After a ministry of power, coercion, and violence on Mt. Carmel, Elijah enters into quiet, rest, and a cloud of mystery and intimacy with God on Mt. Horeb. The second mountain deconstructs the first mountain as God appears to Elijah not in the wind, earthquake, or fire but in a still, small voice.

It may seem trivial, but for Elijah, after deconstruction comes delegation. God tells him to leave Mt. Horeb and go anoint others to lead. In other words, despite his loud protestations to the contrary, Elijah is not "the only one left," and the time has come to make way for others to do the work he thought only he could do.

4. From superiority to mutuality. It should be clear by now that deconstructionists have grown skeptical of any claims to spiritual superiority. They understand how tempting it is for those who believe they have grasped universal truth to feel entitled to teach everyone else. Many were model Sunday school students who became exemplary teachers and preachers, rising pastoral stars, and influential denominational leaders. But when they questioned the wisdom of their community's sense of religious superiority, deconstruction was not far behind.

Just as there are valid scholarly disputes around the cultural imperialism of missionary enterprises, some Christians are asking if they can hold on to their faith without feeling the need to make everyone else believe as they do. They can't help wrestling with these questions, because they have seen the dangers of theological hubris, which is sometimes perilously indistinguishable from theological supremacy and its close kin White supremacy.

The whole situation brings to mind the folly of young Moses, schooled in the ways of Egypt, who went around "helping" those he saw in need because he felt he had an obligation to "save" them (the Hebrew

verb attributed to Moses in Exodus 2:19 is *yasa*, which means “to save”). Moses in Exodus 2 is a veritable action hero, saving Hebrew men and Midianite women, putting ruffians in their place at a high cost to himself. By Exodus 3, it may be easy to miss that 40 years have passed, and we encounter a different Moses, older and less cocksure, more bent over, who says no to God five times. Moses has the audacity to beat around the burning bush!

The critical lesson might be easy to miss: Moses’ leadership shifts from superiority to mutuality. (To be clear, this does not make him immune to leadership blunders, as anyone who reads the rest of the story will see.) Young Moses, who had grown up in Egypt, could not imagine a world where he did not exercise his gifts to enact the justice he felt sure the world needed. Forty years later, slow of speech and with far more questions than answers, he finally musters the strength to return to Egypt only when God promises to send someone to walk alongside him. It turns out Moses, who once had the solutions to all the problems he saw in the world, needs his brother. (It will take longer, but in time he will also come to see how much he needs his sister.)

Moses’ frantic “saving” activity gives way to God’s deep relational activity: God “heard,” “remembered,” “saw,” and “knew” the suffering of the Israelites (Exod. 2:24–25). The last one especially, God knew (*yada* in Exod. 2:25), represents a sharp contrast to Moses who rescued (*yasa* in Exod. 2:19). For many deconstructionists, turning away from the lonely and harmful worldview of superiority (the way of *yasa*) is opening new pathways to the joy of mutuality (the way of *yada*).

5. From rhetoric to embodiment. It can be hard to keep up in the fraught, ever-evolving landscape of political and rhetorical correctness. Catchphrases and dog whistles abound, and many feel it’s easier to keep silent than to risk offending.

But the path of deconstruction does not allow its followers to be silent. Often people who come to deconstruction do so because they have seen people they love wounded by structures of power and religious certainty that can only be called abusive. They care above all about righting wrongs and repairing what unjust people and systems have broken. They want actions more than words, not exalted sermons but sacrificial service.

Once again, historical memory enables bold sobriety for the work of deconstruction. The much-celebrated civil rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s gave way to the less celebrated but no less important critical race theory in the ’70s because too many had conflated lofty rhetoric with actual change. Early scholars of CRT pointed out that *Brown v. Board of Education* did not end segregation in America, just as the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act did not stamp out racism. Instead of mighty waters of justice, they had witnessed some bursts and mostly trickles. Because of their disappointment, they expressed doubt about the achievements of the previous decades. They dared to assert that racism may be an enduring, perhaps permanent, feature of American civil society. In other words, soaring rhetoric did little to effect change on the ground, as the mountaintop gave way to valleys and plains.

In CRT’s pessimism, we might hear echoes of the hopelessness of Psalm 88, the one lament psalm to conclude without an expression of assurance or hope. Sometimes life—and scripture—must strain to make room for inexpressible sadness by turning away from easy answers, trusting that the last word today doesn’t have to be the final word for all time.

Deconstructionists are thus skeptical of aspirational language that enables privileged leaders to preserve the status quo. They want to see fundamental change, even if the costs are high, the loss of revenue streams inevitable, and the way forward unclear. They desire the quiet, rare embodiment of values: change on the ground.

In keeping with the spirit of deconstruction, it may be helpful to point out that these shifts do not represent the only way of virtue or progress. They do, however, appear to reflect the way of Jesus, who lived and wept in a world of sorrows, affirmed the dignity of every person he encountered, recognized the mystery of God and the world, and sought out relationships of mutuality. And all of this he did—despite being in very nature God—by embodying human flesh.

There's no denying the work of deconstruction presents many pitfalls. I hope this survey has shown it's also a profoundly hopeful, life-giving activity—precisely because of its very downward movement and its willingness to sit in the rubble and sift through the debris. Out of the chaos of deconstruction, there are signs of a faith renewed, stronger for having plumbed the depths. After halting steps in the dark, which many have experienced as refuge and rest, new pathways appear to be emerging. It turns out that dissatisfaction with inherited Christianity doesn't always lead to a diminishment of faith.

Peter Choi is executive director of the Center for Faith and Justice in San Francisco and author of *George Whitefield: Evangelist for God and Empire*.

Original Article: Deconstructed, reimagined faith | The Christian Century

June 10 – June 16, 2023

Anniversaries

June 10 – Jack & Janis Daily

June 12 – Steven & Shannon (Turner) McQuaide

June 15 – Jaclynn & Mike Hauger; Mark & Shari McQuaide; James & Janice Pozun II

June 16 – Mark & Deborah Rychak

Birthdays

June 10 – Kimberly Stayrook & Christopher Swartz

June 11 – Sharon Ashcraft

June 12 – Thomas Reed III

June 13 – Abigail Corle & Barbara Miltenberger

June 15 – Greg Gawlas, Colton George, Richard Michaels, & Jessica Zada

Remember those that prayer has been requested for:

Kim; Devin; Laura & Family; Jo Ann; John Alt; Jan Mertz; Denny; Jill Lisson; Jaci; Sharon; Barbara; Dennis; Mary M.; Joel Penrod; Tim Miller; Cathy T.; Paul Brodt; Kim Stayrook; Alan; Pastor David Louder; Frank Robison; Sandy; Louise; Brooke & Bill; Chuck; Dawn; Cherie; Sandy; Lorrie & Bill; Jamie Bloom; Nancy Moore Family; Wilma Hiltz; Johnny Nerone; Cheryl & Roger; James; Denny & Ellen; Bill; Sue; Stan McQuaide; El Warshel; Beth Oldham; Stacy & Josh; Bill; Janet; Landon; Harold; Gonzales Family; Mary; Elaine, Patty and Betty Shaffer; Jim Haberkorn; June Gresh Family; Patty Creany; Rick Wagner; Brianna; Jackie; Mike; Lois; Wilma Hiltz; David Mathis & Austin & Family; Bell family; Esther Zane; Suzzane Miller.

Condensed Worship
Saturday, June 3, 2023 & Sunday, June 4, 2023
I am with you always, to the end of the age

Prayer of the Day

P: Almighty Creator and ever-living God: we worship your glory, eternal Three-in-One, and we praise your power, majestic One-in-Three. Keep us steadfast in this faith, defend us in all adversity, and bring us at last into your presence, where you live in endless joy and love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

First Reading: Genesis 1:1--2:4a

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea

and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

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

Psalmody: Psalm 8

L: O LORD our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!—

A: you whose glory is chanted above the heavens out of the mouths of infants and children; you have set up a fortress against your enemies, to silence the foe and avenger.

L: When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,

A: what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them, human beings that you should care for them?

L: Yet you have made them little less than divine; with glory and honor you crown them.

A: You have made them rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet:

L: all flocks and cattle, even the wild beasts of the field,

A: the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.

L: O LORD our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

[Paul writes:] Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

A: Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

A: Glory to you, O Lord.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” The gospel of the Lord, **A: Praise to you, O Christ!**

Prayers Of Intercession

L: Trusting in God’s abundant mercy, let us offer our prayers for a world in need.

L: Holy three, holy one, you call the church to make disciples of all nations. Encourage bishops, pastors, and deacons in their proclamation of the gospel and direct all the baptized into lives of humble service. God, in your mercy,

A: hear our prayer.

L: Holy three, holy one, you spoke creation into being and called it good. Protect lands and waters threatened by human misuse and sustain living creatures of every kind: wild animals, birds, fish, and every creeping thing. God, in your mercy,

A: hear our prayer.

L: Holy three, holy one, you have given humankind authority over the earth. Raise up leaders who listen earnestly, speak honestly, and govern thoughtfully. Heal divisions between nations, that we might agree with one another and live in peace. God, in your mercy,

A: hear our prayer.

L: Holy three, holy one, you promise to be with us always, to the end of the age. Surround those most in need of your healing presence: any who are lonely, all who are grieving, and those who are sick. God, in your mercy,

A: hear our prayer.

L: Holy three, holy one, you set the earth on its axis, and we experience the seasons. Strengthen those enduring challenges this summer: those who suffer in the heat, parents overwhelmed by childcare responsibilities, and children experiencing food insecurity outside of school. God, in your mercy,

A: hear our prayer.

L: Holy three, holy one, you give rest when our work is done. We give thanks for all the saints who now rest in you, confident in the promise of resurrection life in the age to come. God, in your mercy,

A: hear our prayer.

L: Receive our prayers and answer us, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ.

A: Amen.

Blessing

P: The God who calls across the cosmos and speaks in the smallest seed ✠ bless, keep, and sustain you now and to the end of the age.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Share the harvest.

A: Thanks be to God.