



Mount Calvary Connected

June 22, 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/

A Letter from Joan Hunter, Council President

Now THAT'S what I'm talkin' about! We've all heard the Homeland Security saying, "see something, say something," Mt. Calvary's new motto should be, "see something, DO something!"

That's exactly what I hoped for during this transition time at Mt. Calvary. It is exciting to see members DOING something left undone. Sunday morning, there was no greeter at the door. I do believe I saw Dianne Thoburn head to the door, ready to smile and say hello to anyone coming in. Saturday evening, we had no ushers, then we had ushers, then we lost those ushers because of a grandson's sporting event, and magically we had ushers again (and a few to spare). Thanks to the Brodts, Pozuns, Solarczyks, Jeff Penrod, and anyone else I'm not aware of, for that "dance for duty." The important thing is that all spots were covered, with volunteers. I overheard many people coming into the church and immediately asking if help was needed to cover anything.

Others checked to make sure the grape juice was cold, on the altar when needed, and back in the fridge when service is finished. Even though the newsletter or sign-up sheets might indicate that "volunteers are needed," every spot has been filled by someone who stepped up when asked or saw no one in a spot where someone should be. The newsletter is sent on Thursdays. Much happens between then and Saturday evening!

We had a visitor at one of the services. I was so happy when several of you grabbed me, pointed him out, and had a welcome bag ready to give. You know why he told me he stopped in? He's noticed this church seemed "alive and active." We chatted for a while, and he said he'd be back and bring his wife next time.

Since Pastor Jonathan left, I've attended both the Saturday and Sunday services, mostly to greet our visiting pastor or lay minister, and to make sure everything is ready to go (not that I know anything about electronics, microphones, or the HVAC system). I tell myself each time I'll just pop in, and once the worship leader is situated, I'll leave. I have yet to do that. You know why??

The friendly atmosphere, and the ability to socialize with my church family is something I really look forward to, and something we all need, for our souls and our mental well-being. We've all heard a lot over the past 3 years about loneliness and isolation, and how detrimental the pandemic was to many of us. God made us social

beings. The sense of belonging, and being together with other human beings, especially family and friends, is as important to our health as air, food and shelter. I'm meeting people who have started attending regularly, some brand new to our church, and others who used to attend, left, and are now coming back. I like to think it's because they sense friendship, acceptance, and a welcoming spirit from us that they are looking for.

Keep it up. Please say hello to everyone, especially those you don't know. Just smile, say "hello," and see what happens. I've met a lot of new, really nice people. And....I've been leaving church energized and happy, looking forward to coming back again. We want that for everyone walking through our doors. It's happening because God is with us, we're leaving negativity and criticism outside the door, and we're joining together as a church family to take a leap of faith, smile, say hello and welcome. God is watching us, smiling, and thinking "keep it up, church family, keep it up."

Upcoming Events & Meetings

Sun., June 25th -- Blessing of the Bikes -- 10:30 am
Sun., July 2nd -- Coffee Social -- 8:00 am
Thurs., July 6th -- Evangelism Committee -- 6:30 pm
Sat., July 8th -- Faith Night at the Point
Mon., July 17th -- WELCA -- 6:00 pm
Tues., July 18th -- Church Council Meeting -- 6:30 pm
Sat., July 22nd -- Car Wash Fundraiser -- 10 am - Noon

Blessing of the Bikes

This weekend is our 2nd Annual Blessing of the Bikes. We'll bless motorcycles as they head back home from the Thunder in the Valley weekend.

Pastor Mark Fischer from First Lutheran Church in Portage will bless individual bikes on Sunday starting at 10:30 am.

Thanks to those of you who have volunteered to help set up Sander Hall, make coffee, serve refreshments, and welcome our guests.

Coffee Social Sunday

Please join us at 8:00 am on July 2nd for fellowship and refreshments prior to the service. We hope to see you there!

Car Wash Fundraiser

We will be holding a car wash to raise money for our electronic sign.

Volunteer sign-up sheets are on the table in the narthex. We will need help making signs, holding signs at the top of our parking lot to attract dirty cars, help directing traffic into the car wash line, and help to wash and dry cars. We'll provide lunch to all helpers at the end! Pray for dirty cars and great weather!!

The Car Wash will take place on Saturday, July 22nd from 10 am - Noon at Mt. Calvary in our front parking lot. A free will donation will be taken. Please tell your friends to join us!

Worship Help

Readers/Communion Assistants:

June 24th – Joan Hunter

June 25th – Ray Leverknight

Ushers:

June 24th – Volunteers needed!

June 25th – Volunteers needed!

Claudia Plows will be leading worship for the remainder of the month of June.

If you would like to volunteer, please sign up online, contact Terrie Crisi, or sign up on the signup sheet in the Narthex.

Pastoral Search Update

Our Call Committee has accomplished the first big hurdle, as our MSP, or Ministry Site Profile is now submitted, approved and live on the ELCA website. Call Committee members will spend July preparing themselves to be ready to meet with and interview any possible candidates, making sure Mt. Calvary puts its best foot forward as a welcoming, alive and active congregation. Please keep the Call Committee in your prayers as they continue to work for all of us.

Special Report: Allegheny Synod Assembly Report 2023

The Blair County Convention Center hosted the 35th Annual Assembly of Allegheny Synod on Saturday, June 17, 2023. The theme for our Synod Assembly this year was Christ Unites Us. The annual business meeting, learning times, and worship were conducted during the Assembly.

For those of you who may have forgotten (or just don't know) where we fit into the three expressions of our "church," here's a summary. There's churchwide separation we belong to (ELCA – Chicago HQ) which has 65 Synods (ours has the Allegheny – Altoona HQ) and numerous congregations (like Mount Calvary). Each have their own governing documents and administrations. The highest decision-making authority of all three is the annual meeting of each division.

We are the mission center at 1000 Scalp Ave. but our mission field can reach much farther through the other expressions (see below). The day of the meeting, we:

- heard reports/messages from Bishop Paula Schmitt (including Play Dough exercises!) & from the Assistant to the Bishop/Director of Evangelical Mission, The Rev. Kevin Shock (Define: Vitality vis a vis your congregation).
- watched videos from partner ministries (Camp Sequanota, Penn State Campus Ministry, and ALSM) and learned of their continuing ministries and our part in each.
- adopted the 2025 Mission Spending Plan (i.e. the budget) based on estimates of revenue (our benevolence and interest income) and anticipated expenses reflecting a change in staffing of DEM position and effect on our reserve position.
- adopted the 2025 Compensation and Benefits Manual.
- approved changes to the Synod's Constitution and By-Laws to remain congruent with the ELCA's documents and clean up some noncongruent issues.

- elected lay and rostered members to open positions on a few Boards and Commissions. (Note: many open positions remain open, especially the ones designated “lay” due to lack of a volunteer to be nominated.)
- listened to and participated in bible study with the ELCA Churchwide Representative and Bible Study Leader, Kristen Opalinski from Latrobe, PA. Our texts were Ephesians 4: 11-16, Philippians 2:1-9, and Acts 1: 6-11.
- watched a video from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton on churchwide ministries that highlighted an old downtown Minneapolis congregation, started by Swedish immigrants, that now ministers to current-day immigrants.
- celebrated the Ministry anniversaries both of Congregations and Pastors.
- provided feedback on future meeting format possibilities (in person, Zoom, or a combination). In Bishop election years, the Assembly take place face-to-face.

Voting on items for/during the meeting was through an e-ballot system.

A final note on seating arrangements – in years past there were designated tables for delegates to sit close to other delegations from the assigned Caucus (Mt. Calvary is in the Johnstown Caucus). This year there were no such “guidelines.” Sit wherever you’d prefer and make new friends from across our Synod because . . . Christ Unites Us.

I could go on a few more pages but . . . should you have any questions or wish for additional information, contact me or log onto the Synod website (www.alleghenysynod.org) and look under the Synod Assembly tab for the printed BOR (Bulletin of Reports).

In His service – Your brother in Christ,
Ray Leverknight

June 24 – June 30, 2023

Anniversaries

June 25 – Donald & Carol Sauter
June 29 – Sandy & Larry Bruce Shumaker
June 30 – Garrett & Madison Anderson

Birthdays

June 24 – Amy Brandau, Willard Colvin III, & Wyatt George
June 26 – Steven McQuaide & Edward Wingard III
June 27 – John Marsh
June 28 – Lillianna Swartz
June 29 – Becky Lilja, William Lonsinger, & Ruth Pawlowski
June 30 – Beverly Specht & Judith Stinebiser

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; David Mathis & Austin & Family; Bell family; Esther Zane; Suzzane Miller; Cindy; Danny & Donna Crowson; Bert; for the Call Committee as they seek our future pastor.

Condensed Worship
Saturday, June 17, 2023 & Sunday, June 18, 2023
Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers

Prayer of the Day

P: God of compassion, you have opened the way for us and brought us to yourself. Pour your love into our hearts, that, overflowing with joy, we may freely share the blessings of your realm and faithfully proclaim the good news of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

A: Amen.

First Reading: Exodus 19:2-8a

[The Israelites] had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain. Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites." So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. The people all answered as one: "Everything that the LORD has spoken we will do." The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God.**

Psalmody: Psalm 100

L: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all you lands! Serve the LORD with gladness; come into God's presence with a song.

A: Know that the LORD is God, our maker to whom we belong; we are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture.

L: Enter the gates of the LORD with thanksgiving and the courts with praise; give thanks and bless God's holy name.

A: Good indeed is the LORD, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from age to age.

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-8

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. **A: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel: Matthew 9:35—10:8 [9-23]

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

A: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. [Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. “See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”] **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: For the church here and around the world, we pray. Seek out disciples and send them out with authority to proclaim good news, bring healing where there is pain, and counter the forces of evil. God, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

L: For the earth and all its creatures, we pray. Equip farmers, farm workers, and all who labor on the land to produce a harvest. Nourish crops with ample rainfall and abundant sunshine. Restore lands ruined by pollution or misuse. God, in your mercy,

A: hear our prayer. L: For those who govern, we pray. Empower those who seek peaceful solutions to conflict and embolden those who advocate for all who are oppressed. Work through systems of government to establish justice throughout the world. God, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

L: For those who suffer, we pray. Accompany those who feel helpless, alone, or abandoned. Embrace any who long for successful treatment for mental illness or freedom from addiction. Heal those who are sick. God, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

L: For fathers and father figures, we pray. Console all who long to be fathers, children estranged from their fathers, anyone grieving the death of a father, and fathers who have lost a child. Draw near to all for whom this day stirs up difficult emotions. God, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

L: Almighty God, giver of every good gift; look upon this congregation with grace. Guide the minds of our Call Committee members as they discern which of your servants will be our next pastor. Please grant that we might receive a faithful shepherd who will care for us and continue to equip us for ministry in this place. God, in your mercy, **A: hear our prayer.**

L: For all the saints, we give thanks. Receive into your eternal care all those who have died and fill us with hope that does not disappoint. 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.

A: Amen.