



Mount Calvary Connected

July 20, 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 Message from Mt. Calvary

Make Your Summer Break About God by Don Straka

No one should ever take a break from God, his glory, and the mission he gives each of us. When we break for the summer — from Sunday school, small group, community outreach, or wherever you serve in your local church — God still calls us to seek him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The Bible constantly calls believers to an all-out, full-abandoned pursuit of wisdom. For example, Proverbs 2:2–5 exhorts, “[Make] your ear attentive to wisdom and [incline] your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.”

This is not a seasonal calling. The summer does not give us permission to pull up a lawn chair and watch the race instead of running the race. When we say we are taking the summer off, we mean something radically different than disengaging from seeking God. Instead, we suspend certain ministry activities or events and fill that time with softball leagues, board game nights, and music in the park.

We’re not breaking from God, but swinging, competing, and listening for more of him. Filling our week with these activities does not transport us from engaging in the significant part of the Christian life (Sunday school and service projects) to the insignificant (ice cream cones and Florida vacations). No, it simply moves us from formal to informal (of course never neglecting to meet together in weekly corporate worship).

God designed all of our summer activities so that we would know him more, love him better, and have more fuel to live for his glory.

Indirect Godwardness

We cannot afford to take a break from the Bible’s call to search for wisdom with all our hearts. So, how do we search as we devour ice cream cones, watch the Minnesota Twins win at home, and paddle out on the lake? God says that we can enjoy each of these with a Godward gaze (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Now, we won't be able to engage in these summer activities in the same way that we drop to our knees to pray and study the Bible. Joe Rigney helpfully calls habits like studying the Bible direct godwardness. "Direct godwardness involves our conscious, intentional focus on God himself," writes Rigney (*The Things of Earth*, 120). He compares that with what he calls indirect godwardness: "a subconscious focus on God while engaging with the world that God made" (121).

Direct and indirect godwardness serve one another. This idea doesn't seem strange when we think of direct godwardness informing our indirect godwardness. This process happens when your Bible time informs how you go about your day. For example, Psalm 19:7 says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

How indirect godwardness serves direct godwardness may not be as obvious, though. Once again, Rigney helps us by explaining, "Indirect godwardness and a robust enjoyment of God's gifts serves and increases direct godwardness by creating new mental, emotional, and spiritual categories for our enjoyment of God. It keeps us from being vague and indistinct in our minds" (126).

New Categories, Deeper Joy

This summer, God plans to flood you with input that requires you to seek wisdom and pursue knowledge. So, how can we leverage our summers for the glory of God? We use our time engaging in the world God designed for his glory to build categories for our direct godwardness. God designed our activities of playing outside to serve our time in the word and prayer together. They keep us from being vague when we read about God in his word.

But what might it look like this summer? My small group has decided for several reasons to take a break this summer. I love my small group; I love meeting with my small group; and I love the reasons we have decided not to meet for the next couple of months. So, here are two examples of how I hope our indirect summer godwardness fuels our direct godwardness.

Overnight at a Cabin: A family has invited our small group to stay at their cabin over a weekend. How might that help us know and enjoy God more?

Although we go to sleep that night, we will wake up the next day and still be together. This is a foretaste of the never-ending fellowship we will have in heaven (John 14:1-4; Revelation 5:13; 7:9).

The wonder we feel when we taste bacon in the morning not only reminds us how sweet it is that God has made all foods clean, but also declares that we have dominion over all creation. God enables us to raise pigs to delight our taste buds (Genesis 1:28; Mark 7:19).

Drive-in Movie: Our group is already planning to watch a movie (or more) together outside during these weeks when we are not meeting.

The sense of anticipation we feel watching a thrilling scene unfold gives us a tangible experience that shows what it means to be waiting, longing, and feeling anxious for the second coming of Christ (Matthew 25:1-13; 1 Corinthians 16:22).

The laughter that overtakes you in a comedy demonstrates that you were made for joy. There is nothing you can do to stop laughter. God wants you to know that he designed you to be happy, ultimately in him (Psalm 37:4; John 6:35; 16:22).

Don't waste your summer by ceasing to pursue God in all you do. Taking the summer off from formal ministry is not a move from the significant to the insignificant, but from formal to informal, from direct to indirect. Overnights at cabins and drive-in movies serve our long-term ministry.

Use this summer to seek wisdom, to know God, to love him more, and to live for his glory.

Don Straka is a seminary graduate from Bethlehem College and Seminary.

Upcoming Events & Meetings

Car Wash Fundraiser - Cancelled!

Fri., July 21st - "Audience of One" Open Air Worship Gathering - 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Through Wed., July 26th - Marianna's Sub and Pizza Sale

Sat., July 29th - Picnic at Benscreek Lutheran - Noon

Car Wash Fundraiser

The car wash fundraiser scheduled for this weekend has been cancelled!

Audience of One

Are you looking for something to do this weekend to bless your heart and your mind? Consider taking a drive this Friday to the "Audience of One" Music Celebration at IRMC Park in Indiana! IRMC Park is in the heart of Indiana County, located on Jimmy Stewart Blvd, Indiana, PA 15701.

The WayMakers, a Christian Men's group in Indiana, PA that represents many different denominations, have invited musical artists from various churches to provide free entertainment from 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm.

This is an opportunity for believers to come together to enjoy praise and worship music, while giving glory to God and being a visual influence to those in our communities by sharing the truth in love.

Marianna's Sub and Pizza Sale

The Richland Learning Center is having a Marianna's Sub and Pizza Sale for \$10 each.

Payments and orders will be accepted through July 26th by either stopping in at the church office or a sign up sheet will be in the back of the church after services on Saturday and Sunday. Checks should be made payable to The Richland Learning Center.

You will be able to pick up your order at Sander Hall on Friday, August 4th after 12:30 pm.

Shoe Collection Total

Thank you to everyone who helped make our shoe collection a success!

We received our final total from Funds2Org and ended with 86 bags, weighing 2,219 lbs., for a total of \$900, which will be donated to the YWCA.

Thanks again for supporting our Social Ministry team! Our events would not be a success without the help from our amazing congregation!

Worship Help

Readers/Communion Assistants:

July 22nd Cindy Solarczyk and Todd Moss

July 23rd Mike Kozak

July 29th Kevin Oleska and Claudia Plows

July 30th Noelle Berkey and Ray Leverknight

Ushers:

July 22nd Volunteers needed!

July 23rd Volunteers needed!

July 29th Volunteers needed!

July 30th Volunteers needed!

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

Worship Leader Schedule for July

July 22nd Claudia Plows, Authorized Lay Leader

July 23rd Claudia Plows, Authorized Lay Leader

July 29th Bishop Paula Schmitt

July 30th Claudia Plows, Authorized Lay Leader

A Prayer for the Call Committee

Most Merciful God, you are the great head of the Church. Look upon us with your favor as we enter the call process. Through this time, empower us, as your people that we might continue the ministry and witness begun in this place. Grant us the strength and the spirit of cooperation to do your will so that we, as a congregation, might continue to be a shining witness to you. Make us ready to assist our new leader in the work that lies ahead. Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Claudia's prayers have been answered!

Let's celebrate Claudia Plows!!! She has officially been accepted into the seminary to become an ordained Lutheran minister!!! Continue prayers for her as she begins this exciting journey!

July 22 - 28, 2023 Birthdasy & Anniversaries

Anniversaries

July 23rd - Pat & Karen Giunta; Kevin & Chris Oleksa

July 24th - Scott & Julie Rickley

July 26th - Deborah & Roy Wicks

July 27th - John & Paula Daily Jr.

Birthdays

July 22nd - Kaiden Kunkle

July 23rd - Kim Haluska, Patrick Kovalsky, Wendy Reitnauer, & Joyce Spangler.

July 24th - Andrew Pozun & Fred Schellhammer

July 25th - Richard Gallus, Graham Kylor, & Elizabeth Wingard.

July 26th - Meleiah Dusack, Melissa Fisher, Ken McCutcheon, & Shari McQuaide.

July 27th - Marybeth Heinze, Kadiya Lingenfelter, Kinsley Ann McKool, Patricia Molnar, Kevin Oleksa, & Mark Williams.

July 28th - Kadence George

Please say a prayer for those on our prayer request list:

Cathy T.; Paul Brodt; Kim Stayrook; Alan; Frank Robison; Sandy; Louise; Brooke & Bill; Chuck; Dawn; Cherie; Lorrie & Bill; Jamie Bloom; Wilma Hiltz; Johnny Nerone; Cheryl & Roger; James; Denny & Ellen; Sue; El Warshel; Beth Oldham; Stacy & Josh; Janet; Landon; Harold; Mary; Elaine, Patty and Betty Shaffer; Jim Haberkorn; Patty Creany; Rick Wagner; Brianna; Jackie; Mike; Lois; David Mathis & Austin & Family; The Bell Family; Suzzane Miller; Cindy; Danny & Donna Crowson; Bert; for the Call Committee as they seek our future pastor; Jerry Pozun; Pastor Dave Louder and his wife, Corlee; Milo; Jill Lisson; Krista Miller; The Cullens Family; The Wilson Family; Cecilia Baum; The Dickerson-Bair Family; Richelle; The Rohrbaugh Family; Tom & Gretchen; Makenzie Miller.

Condensed Worship July 15 & 16, 2023 A sower went out to sow

Prayer of the Day

P: Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **A: Amen.**

First Reading: Isaiah 55:10-13

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God.**

Psalmody: Psalm 65:[1-8] 9-13

L: [You are to be praised, O God, in Zion; to you shall vows be fulfilled.

A: To you, the one who answers prayer, to you all flesh shall come.

L: Our sins are stronger than we are, but you blot out our transgressions.

A: Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there! They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness of your temple.

L: Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation, O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans far away.

A: You make firm the mountains by your power; you are girded about with might.

L: You still the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.

A: Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvelous signs; you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.]

L: You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water. You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth.

A: You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.

L: You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty.

A: May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, and the hills be clothed with joy.

L: May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; let them shout for joy and sing.

Second Reading: Romans 8:1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

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

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

A: Glory to you, O Lord.

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!" "Hear then the parable of the sower. Then anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing.

“But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

The gospel of the Lord, **A: Praise to you, O Christ!**

Prayers Of Intercession

L: Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

L: Guide your church, O God, to sow seeds of forgiveness and righteousness on good soil. Direct your people to proclaim your love in this congregation and throughout the world. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Sustain your creation, O God, by sending favorable weather, causing trees and fields to grow, protecting waterways from pollution, and instilling in all people the need to be good stewards. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Maintain peace among all people, O God, and raise up lawyers to work for justice in the courts, advocates to speak for the downtrodden, and politicians to work on behalf of the common good. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Heal those who are sick, O God. Guide health care workers to care for those who suffer, scientists to conduct lifesaving research, and counselors to care for victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Answer the prayers of those gathered in worship, O God. Protect those who travel near and far, accompany visitors to this congregation, and nurture our faith. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Gracious Lord, you know the skills and spiritual gifts that are needed to do ministry within this congregation. Please guide one with these qualities to us to become our shepherd. During our transition, lead this congregation in the way that you see best for all of your Church. Help us to continue to witness to your truth, and bless each member that we might remain strong in the faith.

L: Keep each member faithful through this time that we might be regular in our worship, diligent in the sharing of the Eucharistic feast, eager to learn, and ever ready to do your will. We pray in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Inspire us by the faithful departed, O God, examples of your embodied love, whose confidence in the resurrection guides us in living lives worthy of the gospel. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior.

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.