



# Mount Calvary Connected

August 10, 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!*

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## WEEKLY WORSHIP BULLETINS

Weekly worship bulletins can be found at: [www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/bulletins/](http://www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/bulletins/)

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### **Upcoming Meetings and Events**

Thurs., August 10th - Social Ministry Meeting - 6:30 PM

Tues., August 15th - Sunday School Sign Up Deadline

Sun., August 20th - Blessing of the Backpacks - 8:45 AM

Tues., August 22nd - Church Council Meeting - 6:30 PM

Sat., August 26th - Women's Day of Renewal hosted by The Allegheny Synodical Women's Organization

Sat., September 9th - Touch-a-Truck - 10 AM - 1 PM

Tues., September 12th - Rake n' Bake Pond Cleaning - 5 PM (Rain date: Thurs., Sept .14 at 5 PM)

Mon., September 18th - WELCA (No August Meeting) - 6:00 PM

Tues., September 19th - Fall Alpha Course Begins

### **It's almost time for Sunday School!**

Sunday school sign ups have begun! Sign-up sheets are in the back of the Narthex. Please fill them out and drop them in the basket beside the sign-up sheets. We will be offering preschool to second grade, third through sixth grade, and junior/senior high school.

Sunday school will follow Sunday morning service from 10 AM to 10:30 AM. The deadline for sign up is Tuesday, August 15th.

If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer as a teacher, please call Mike Kozak at 814-244-6880.

### **Blessing of the Backpacks**

Blessing of the backpacks will be Sunday, August 20th, 2023. All school-age thru college kids are welcome to bring their backpacks for this special event.

### **"Refresh, Relax, Recharge"**

Saturday, August 26, 2023

9:00 AM to 1:30 PM

Altoona Grand Hotel—Tropical Courtyard

All women are invited to attend!

You won't want to miss this opportunity to renew your body, mind, and spirit with likeminded women. Pastor Rebecca West will be the keynote speaker and the conference will include a variety of inspiring activities including paint pouring, exercising, crafting, and global service.

Join us for a day of fellowship and fun to re-energize your body, mind and spiritual life for only \$10 per person. The deadline to register is quickly approaching on Wednesday, August 16th. Registration forms & information sheets are in the WELCA mailbox in the Church Hallway.

If you have any questions, please contact Lois Gallus at 814-241-3470 or Kathy Ling at 814-262-7714 for more information.

### **Rake n' Bake Pond Cleaning**

We will have our Rake n' Bake pond cleaning on Tuesday, Sept. 12 at 5:00 PM. Rain date would be Thurs., Sept 14 at 5:00 PM.

We will be raking down all the dead weeds and then reseeding the hillside with bent grass which will be much more manageable in the future. We are reaching out to all church members, but particularly younger people who can stand on a hillside.

Bring your favorite rake! As always, food will be served!

### **Fall Alpha Course**

Mount Calvary will be hosting a fall Alpha course on Tuesdays, beginning on September 19th.

You can call the church office to sign up or sign up sheets are available in the narthex.

### **Worship Help**

*Readers/Communion Assistants:*

August 12th Jack Weisbrodt

August 13th Volunteers needed!

August 19th Volunteers needed!

August 20th Volunteers needed!

August 26th Volunteers needed!

August 27th Ray Leverknight

*Ushers:*

August 12th Noelle Berkey

August 13th Mike & Lori Zerby

August 19th Volunteers needed!

August 20th Volunteers needed!

August 26th Volunteers needed!

August 27th Volunteers needed!

*Altar Guild:*

August The Hockensmith Family

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

*Worship Leader Schedule for August*

August 12th Gary Mickle, Authorized Lay Leader

August 13th Gary Mickle, Authorized Lay Leader

August 19th Rev. Bob Kaltenbaugh

August 20th Rev. Bob Kaltenbaugh

August 26th Pastor Nathan Pile

August 27th To Be Determined

**A Prayer for the Call Committee**

Holy God, help us to see that the Church continues forever. Even as we go through the call process, allow us to use this time to pause and reflect upon the past and vision for the future. Allow us to make decisions that will empower this congregation and will please you. All this we ask in Jesus name. Amen.

**Funeral Service for Dr. Dalton G. Blough**

Dr. Dalton G. Blough, 94, Richland, passed away on July 25, 2023 at Laurel View Village, Davidsville. On Saturday, August 5, 2023 a funeral service was held at Mt. Calvary to celebrate his life and commend Dalton to the mercy of God, our maker and redeemer.

**Property Committee Subcommittee Formation**

The property committee is reaching out to the congregation for volunteers interested in forming an Emergency Preparedness subcommittee. Examples would be “who should call 911 in a medical emergency”, or “where should members go in case of a fire.” These plans are much like every school or nursing home has in place now. We are particularly interested in anyone that is a volunteer firemen, EMT, police, or medical background to head the committee. If interested, or for more information, please see Mark Rychak.

**Supplies for First Responders**

For July and August, the Social Ministry Committee and the Giving Tree will collect supplies for first responders in the area. Cases of individual Gatorade, energy drinks and bottled water, peanut butter, individually wrapped snack crackers, granola bars, energy bars, coffee, hot chocolate packets, cup-a-soup mixes, etc.

These items will be given to the first responders and Cambria County's Box 11 truck. Box 11 is the vehicle that responds to fires and other disasters to provide rest and refreshments, heating or cooling to first responders on scene.

These supplies will be distributed to first responders who participate in our "Touch-a-Truck" event in September. Monetary donations will also be used to treat participant first responders to hot dogs and snacks at Touch a Truck. This will be our "God's Work, Our Hands" project, too.

Please join us in donating to our local first responders!

### **Clothing Sale Collection**

The Social Ministry Team is currently collecting donations for our annual clothing sale.

Clothes can be dropped off at the church at any time. Clothes left outside in the blue bin will be brought in daily.

Please try to separate your clothes by size and gender, and to label each bag. This makes the sorting and set up process much easier for the volunteers working the sale.

The clothing sale will take place on Saturday, October 7. Save the date!

### **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

### **August 12th - 18th, 2023 Birthdays & Anniversaries**

#### *Anniversaries*

August 13th - Stanley & Lucille Badowski; Gary & Lisa R. Gusmerotti Gusmenotti

August 15th - Bob & Jessica Zada

#### *Birthdays*

August 12th - Davanee Anderson, James Custer, Ashlyn Kobal, Robert Miller, & Kaia Selepack

August 13th - Beth Esposito & Jan Mertz

August 14th - Mark Rychak & Robin Wechtenhiser

August 15th - Felicia Beglin & Luella Koontz

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

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 Rohrabough Family; Tom & Gretchen; Makenzie Miller; Alex; Jan Layton; the Dalton Blough Family; Jan; The Jeanjaquet Family; Christine.

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**Condensed Worship**  
**August 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**All ate and were filled**

Prayer of the Day

P: Glorious God, your generosity waters the world with goodness, and you cover creation with abundance. Awaken in us a hunger for the food that satisfies both body and spirit, and with this food fill all the starving world; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **A: Amen.**

First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-5

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God.**

Psalmody: Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21

L: The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**A: LORD, you are good to all, and your compassion is over all your works.**

L: The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up those who are bowed down.

**A: The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD, and you give them their food in due season.**

L: You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

**A: You are righteous in all your ways and loving in all your works.**

L: You are near to all who call upon you, to all who call upon you faithfully.

**A: You fulfill the desire of those who fear you; you hear their cry and save them.**

L: You watch over all those who love you, but all the wicked you shall destroy.

**A: My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD; let all flesh bless God's holy name forever and ever.**

Second Reading: Romans 9:1-5

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew. **A: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now when Jesus heard [about the beheading of John the Baptist], he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. 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: You gather your church together by the Holy Spirit. Inspire all the baptized to proclaim your abundant love throughout the world. Guide us in the mission of the gospel through word and deed. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: You cherish your creation, from the smallest microbe to the largest mountain. Protect fragile ecosystems, send favorable weather, supply food and water to nourish creatures, and raise us up to care for all you have created. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: You desire peace and justice in the world. Instill within all political leaders your desire, support the work of international peace organizations, and provide relief for those in war-torn areas. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: You comfort those who are hurting. Accompany those who are alone, heal those who are sick, provide for all who hunger or thirst, console the bereaved, bring joy to the sorrowful, and attend to all who call on you. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: You place us within communities for mutual support and love. Reveal yourself to us in worship, fellowship, and ministry with our neighbors. Provide for feeding ministries and food banks in our area, that we share your abundance with all who hunger. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: Heavenly God, we lift before you all members of this congregation. We especially ask your blessing upon those who have been given the responsibility of finding a new pastor. Grant wisdom and right judgment to those who serve on our Call Committee. Guide them to the one who you have chosen to lead us. Grant them the vision to clearly see the leader who is to come among us. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: You have placed before us examples of faithful living who have witnessed to your promises throughout time and space. Rouse us by their lives of service and dedication to be your hands and feet in this world. 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.**