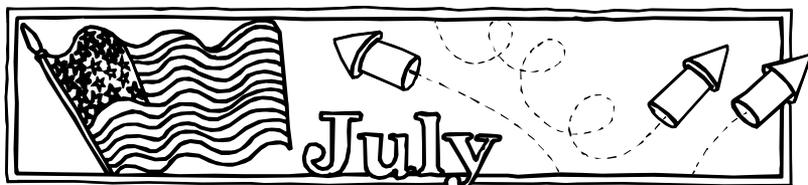


FROM THE MOUNT



Mount Calvary Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD



2017

Church Office 210-824-8748

mtcalvary@mtcsa.org

www.mtcsa.org



the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (Rom 3:22-24)

The last Sunday in June, we commemorated the presentation of the Augsburg Confession. In many ways Articles 4 and 5 are the heartbeat of the Augsburg Confession.

Article IV: Of Justification.

1 Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for 2 Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. 3 This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

Article V: Of the Ministry.

1 That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, 2 the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear 3 the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake.

4 They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.

When I first visited a Lutheran church, the worship was quite strange. Lots of standing up and sitting down and lots of talking. Strange too

was the idea that we are saved by “grace alone” and that such grace is bestowed on us through the Word and the Sacraments. But my pastor began to teach me and I began appreciate the true Gospel and how it was so deeply integrated into our liturgical worship.

As we proceed through this 500th anniversary year of the Reformation, I am so very thankful to be pastoring a congregation that appreciates and dedicates itself to our liturgical heritage and identity. Now don't get me wrong, worshipping in a liturgical form does not get us bonus points in heaven. Such thinking would fall into one the theological errors that required the Reformation, that teaching that merely performing the outward forms conveys a spiritual blessing just by doing it, a fancy latin term “*ex opera operato*” or it works just from the working of it. However, the liturgy focuses on God's Word and that Word as our Lutheran fathers confessed, along with the Sacraments, are the only instruments God uses to create faith and save us. And so a young man I learned the value of the liturgy, of hearing God's Word, of speaking God's Word to one another in worship and speaking back God's Word in response. All grounded in Scripture alone.

August Menuge, a brilliant Lutheran theologian of our day, writes of how at the time of Luther and the Reformers, the church and the world, that is the culture around it, we deeply intermingled. Following the lead of the premier Roman theologian of that time, Thomas Aquinas, the church was viewed above the world leading people to heaven but yet encouraging all that is best in the world. While that idea is not dreadful in and of itself, this deep penetration lead to some of the abuses Luther had to correct, such as the church coming to rely on controlling the civil authorities in the world and relying upon the state to make people live by the church's teachings.

Menuge says that Luther held the church and the world to be in paradox, existing side by side, independently with different modes of operating and different goals. Luther saw that sin so deeply infected the world that it was fool's errand to try to expect the world to look like heaven on this side of heaven. Luther also recognized that the world uses temporal authority (policing, military and so forth) for the concerns of this world (law and order, security etc...) The church

governs by the delegated authority of Christ using the means that He has authorized, namely the Word and the Sacraments.

Each Christian finds himself or herself with a foot in both kingdoms, that is in the world and in the church, and so may pursue earthly vocations (jobs, and so forth) in good conscience seeking to put our gifts into action in a God pleasing way and reaping the temporal rewards of our actions. But the church does not stand with a foot in both kingdoms. The church exists as the kingdom of grace. Nothing about who are we in this kingdom is about anything we have worked for or deserve. Our status as citizens in God's Kingdom is by grace alone. And how does that grace get to us, through Word and Sacrament.

Liturgical worship is nothing but Word and Sacrament. Far from being something we may claim as a deserving work, it is gift for it contains nothing but gift: Word and Sacrament.

Luther and his fellow Reformers were forced by theological errors of his day to make certain changes to the liturgy that was then existing. But they did so carefully and only to preserve the truth of God's Word. Their careful approach finds it way into our Lutheran Confessions. For example, in the Augsburg Confession is stated, "We on our part also retain many ceremonies and traditions (such as the liturgy of the Mass and various canticles, festivals, and the like) which serve to preserve order in the church." (Augsburg Confession XXVI:40)

When challenged following the presentation of the Augsburg Confession, the Reformers in the Apology (meaning "defense") stated how careful they had been in making these changes. "From this description of the state of our churches it is evident that we diligently maintain church discipline, pious ceremonies, and the good customs of the church." (Apology XV:4)

The Reformers were dedicated to maintaining a historical connection with the church of all ages, that is one common identity built in Christ alone and His Word alone, echoing down through all the centuries as the church stands alongside the world around us.

Luther was no sectarian leader who as intent on building a church is his image or even with his name. He and his fellow Reformers dedicated themselves to continuity with the church of the Apostles and the ancient Christian father which gave birth to the Apostle's, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds.

As the Reformers stated when they stood at Augsburg making their confession:

...our churches dissent from the church catholic in no article of faith but only omit some few abuses which are new and have been adopted by the fault of the times... (Augsburg Confession, prologue to XXII,1)

...nothing has been received among us, in doctrine or in ceremonies, that is contrary to Scripture or to the church catholic. (Augsburg Confession, epilogue to XXVIII,5)

...no novelty has been introduced which did not exist in the church from ancient times...
(Augsburg Confession XXIV:40)

A wise faithful practice in the 16th century. A wise faithful practice in the 21st century. 500 years after the Reformation I am thankful for Mount Calvary strong faithful witness through our worship to the world that we continue to stand in a worship form that hears God's Word, speaks God's Word to one another, and responds back to God with His Word. We are his by grace alone, through faith alone, as proclaimed through Word alone because of what Christ alone accomplished on His cross. Grounded in Word and Sacrament we remain "Mighty and Victorious".

Christ bless you richly and abundantly family of God.

Pastor David Reetz



"Identity"

Dear Christian friends,

"This is who I am now." - Those were the words that appeared on my screen in a conversation I had with a close friend of mine. He had reached out to me over Facebook because he wanted to tell me that he had come to the realization that he was gay.

His words hit me like a punch in my gut. My mind started racing around one thought: How should I respond? My friend had grown up in church. He still professes to be a Christian today. I did my best to turn our conversation back to the subject of faith, and communicate as kindly and clearly as I could that a Christian's identity is not found in what he/she does. Our identity is found in what Christ has done for us.

One of the great failures of our culture is the false assumption that our identity is based on what we do. The "Pride" movement has used this failure to its full advantage, encouraging people struggling with the temptation toward homosexual acts to embrace these actions because it is an expression of their identity. Their logic goes something like this: if a person is fundamentally a certain way, no one can judge them for acting according to that unchangeable identity.

Of course, we Christians know the truth of Scripture. Our identity is not found in what we do, or how well we do it. Our identity is found in Jesus. This is why we Lutherans so greatly emphasize the importance of our baptism. In baptism our sins are washed away and we receive forgiveness, life, and salvation, AND we receive our new identity as a child of God!

The world around us will try to convince us that our identity is found in what job we have, how much money we earn, and how well we perform. The Scriptures affirm that our identity is found in the grace of God claiming us as His own without any merit or worthiness in us.

Our sin-affected minds will try to convince us that our identity is found in being a good spouse, or brother, or sister, or parent, or child - the kind of person who lives up to the expectations of the people

around us. The Scriptures affirm that our identity is found in one family relationship: Our Heavenly Father who claims us as His child.

Our sin-tainted desires will try to convince us that our identity is found in doing what makes us feel good, regardless of what God's Word says on the subject. The Scriptures affirm that our identity is found in Christ alone.

I pray that my friend will find his identity in Jesus. I pray that God will lead him to remember his baptism, just as I pray that God will remind us of the Gospel truth of what Jesus has done for us. There is nothing we can do to improve our situation with God, because He has done it all for us already! We are children of God by grace. May that identity be our comfort and strength!

In Christ,
Pastor Mark

P.S. For additional reading, be sure to check out Romans chapter 6, 7, and 8, and *Luther's Small Catechism* on the subject of Baptism for more information on the topic of our identity in Christ!



ELDERS FOR JULY

	<u>8:30 am</u>	<u>11:00am</u>
July 2 (communion)	Bill Stolhandske	Alex Hansmann
July 9	Jim McNeel	Mike Wille
July 16 (communion)	John Smetzer	Jim Koenig
	Mac McNamara	Marshall Leiber
July 23	Marshall Leiber	Walter Marks
July 30	John Gilg	Gary Franzen

USHERS FOR JULY

<u>8:30am</u>	<u>11:00am</u>
Chuck Samuel	David Cobb
Jeff Jones	Jim Roberts
Don Cummings	Trey Roberts
Gary Palmer	Nick Hartman

ACOLYTES FOR JUNE

	<u>8:30am</u>	<u>11:00 am</u>
July 2	Josh Smetzer	Colton Roberts
July 9	Sammy LaRue	Joe Morrison
July 16	Josh Smetzer	Jake Wille
July 23	Sammy LaRue	Colton Roberts
July 30	Josh Smetzer	Joe Morrison

GREETERS FOR JUNE

	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
July 2	Kim Hendrix	Rexann George
	Leslie Smetzer	Deidra Thompson
July 9	Grace Morris	Mary Marks
	Elaine Ward	Judy Ganoza
July 16	Brenda Hoffmann	Judy Hanson
	Denise LaBonté	Clara Cobb
July 23	Olga McGlothing	Jill Cott
	Donna Dickert	L.J. Cott
July 30	Jo Ann Koehn	Bonnie Koenig
	Sarah Hanson	Carolyn Friedle

In the past few weeks, we have witnessed the following at Mount Calvary. Major replacement of the air conditioning system for the main sanctuary, complete replacement and upgrade of the existing video and sound system, the first stages in the installation of the new pipe organ, Vacation Bible School for 60+ children; a 4 day Summer Service event with over 90 area Lutheran youth, a complete rework and updating of the membership directory, two weddings including one that filled the church to standing room only, we have had three deaths; all this In addition to all the normal business of Mount Calvary. Our staff really stepped up these past few weeks to insure that these items along with all the normal responsibilities were handled in an excellent manner. The Church Council and Senior Pastor would like to say thank you to all our staff but especially to Chuck for managing three major projects at one, to Nolan and Tina for providing much needed support to Chuck, to Mark and Laura for their work with VBS and Summer Serve, to Susan and Janice whose hard work enabled these things to happen as well, to the Pastors for their service to our member with weddings and pastoral care and to Butch Watson who continues to insure that our homebound receive regular visitation. And we want to say thank you to all our volunteers and church members involved in supporting all these things for without you we could not have accomplished these ministries. And finally we wish to extend a thank you to our newest member, Beverly Kokos, who installed the new air conditioning into the sanctuary at his cost donating his time and labor.

VOTERS' MEETING: The congregation will hold a special Voter's Meeting on July 17th at 7pm to consider two items: the calling of the Associate Pastor (Minister of Music and Visitation) and to approve the updated Constitution. Copies of the Constitution can be requested through the front office.

Memorials

In memory of:

Rudy Biedermann

Rev. Harold Schroeter

Given by:

M/M Winstor Curry, Esther Lundy, M/M Don Morris, M/M June Wendt

Cathy DeVries

WE THANK GOD FOR ANOTHER WONDERFUL VBS AT MOUNT CALVARY!

Some highlights of this year's ministry:

- We had over 60 children in attendance!
- Mount Calvary members supported this ministry generously, with over 40 individuals volunteering their time and efforts to make the week a success.
- Donations were collected for Christian Assistance Ministry. In addition to monetary donations, we collected 230 sticks of deodorant (per CAM's special request)!
- This is the first year our VBS has been led by a Core Team, a group of 5 volunteers who met with me months in advance to make preparations for VBS. Not surprising, being able work with these amazing leaders made our VBS *even better* this year!

Many thanks to our VBS Volunteers:

- **Core Team:** Lauren Hannemann, Linda Aguilar, Jessica Elbert, Gayle Pulliam, Kay Hudson
- **Registration & Greeting:** Virginia Hernandez, Nathaniel Aguilar, Martha Brenz, Angel Weatherholtz
- **Photographer:** Coni Kelly
- **Volunteer Breakfast:** Bonnie Haumann
- **Celebration Picnic:** Carol Gilg, David Kelly, Loretta Camp
- **Fun & Games:** Mikayla & Marissa Stai
- **Teaching:** Pastor Mark, Jacob Kelly, Shirley Wille, David Cobb, Steven Camp, Millie Sunstrom
- **Crafts & Snacks:** Abby Jones, Jan Miyauchi, Debbie Reedy, Chelci Barnett
- **Family Groups:** Billie Potter, Avery Foster, Moira Stai, Katie Mueller, Raquel Mencke, Cheryl Cobb, Sue Weller, Kristen Foster, Caelen Cowan, Rebecca Reedy, Pat Leiber, Katy Goggio, Emma Grier, Virginia Axtell, Cathy DeVries



SUNDAY MORNING CLASSES

Adult Bible Class | This large, lecture-style class meets in the gym and is taught by Pastor Mark.

Bread of Life Adult Class | This class is smaller and meets in the Parish Hall, allowing for more discussion. This class is not meeting until June. Jeff Harwood will lead the class.

PreK through College | Children and students in are divided into classes that teach the Bible in age-appropriate ways. We offer classes specific to: PreK-K (small gym classroom), 1st-2nd (room 210), 3rd-4th (room 206), 5th-6th (Pre-Confirmation, room 204), 7th-8th (Confirmation, room 208), High School & College (room 218)

MIDWEEK CLASSES

Adult Information Class (AIC) | *Wednesdays* | 7:00-8:00 pm | *Church library*

New to Lutheranism? Just want to brush up on the basics? This is the class for you! Each course is 10 sessions. Taught by Pastor Reedy. If you are interested, speak to Pastor Reedy.

Pastor Mark's Bible Study | *Tues* | 10:00-11:30 am & | *Wed* | 6:30-7:30 pm

Men's Bible Study | *1st & 3rd Saturdays* | 8:00-9:30 am

This group is led by Jeff Harwood {Parish Hall}.

Women's Bible Study | *3rd Mondays* | 7:30-8:30 pm Talk to Shirley Wille for more information {Meets at members' homes}.

Mothers' ChristCare | *2nd & 4th Mon* | 6:30-8:00 pm

This group is led by Wanda Laxson {Room 218 upstairs}. Will resume late August or early September.

Night ChristCare | *1st Thurs* | 7:00-8:30 pm

This group is led by Jan Miyauchi and meets at 2219 Peach Blossom {Miyauchi Home}. Resumes in September.

Theological Pub | *1st Wed* | 7:30-8:30 pm

For adults of all ages {Nosh Restaurant}. Resumes in September.



PARENT-TO-PARENT

GAYLE PULLIAM | STUDENT MINISTRY MENTOR TEAM : PARENT SUPPORT

Anticipation

Anticipation: An emotion involving excitement or anxiety in considering an expected event

We've all experienced it... anticipation; waiting for that wonderful, spectacular, undeniably life-altering event. When we were kids it was Christmas, our birthday, the last day of school that had our imagination enraptured. As we became older we looked forward to things like going on a first date, getting our driver's license, and celebrating high school graduation. Acceptance letters, degrees, proposals, weddings, babies... all hoped for... all anticipated with the greatest delight.

Sometimes our fondest dreams are realized, and we rejoice. Other times it is the worst of fears that breaks through our sweet slumber to become the starkest of realities. **That.** That is anticipation, too, only with a much different connotation. This life, this life within the context of a fallen world unfortunately affords ample opportunities for both. Anticipation, after all, holds within itself a degree of ambiguity, and whether we are looking forward with joy or with trepidation, the page before us always lies blank.

How do we move courageously through the chapters of our lives when facing so much uncertainty? **That answer is easy.** We trust.

Trust. Easy?

Yes, trust **is** easy when we know the Author. Our page may appear empty, but He, the Creator, has the original manuscript. Not a detail is missing. Page after page is filled with the story – our story – that He has scripted from the very beginning. As all good stories go, there will be both heroic protagonists and unpleasant antagonists. There will inevitably also be conflict and resolution, adventure and struggle. Tears will be shed and laughter will overtake us at points, but always,

always... lessons will be learned, and our lives will be richer for having ventured there. These are all part of **our** life stories too with one major difference. There isn't one single, solitary syllable of it where the Almighty is not in complete and total control.

I have not lived as long as some, but I have lived long enough to know this truth: I may not be privy to the plans God has for me or even claim to understand them, but as long as **He** is the one doing the planning, I will be o.k., because God's got this! Strange as it may seem, there have been moments in my life when I have looked forward to – and fully expected – joyous circumstances that without warning took a turn for the worse; and there have been times when I have absolutely dreaded the day coming that ultimately ended in unexpected triumph. Life is strange that way, and ever unpredictable... but only to us.

As parents, we flip daily through blank pages. The setting for our story begins in a hospital... entering as a couple and emerging days later, a family. We stare into the face of this precious little gift and wonder **how** we're ever going to raise him or her to maturity. The task before us seems daunting, to say the least. There are no hard, fast rules for doing it all right... no owner's manual to accompany. Nothing but a still, small voice reminding us, "God's got this."

The years pass quickly between toddlerhood and teens, and we're thrown into the chapters of "Broken Limbs," "Broken Hearts," and "Broken Dreams" with a pace hard to manage. We wonder if we're saying the right things, doing the right things... helping, counseling, encouraging the right way. We cry out to the Lord for help and guidance, and when we are most at wit's end, we hear that still, small voice again reminding us, "God's got this."

Before we know it, high school graduation is upon us, and it is time for our fledgling to leave the nest. We are hit with a mixture of emotions from elation to melancholy and even dread. The future looks nothing but bright to our graduate, but we are not so sure. We remember the blank page... sometimes all that space can be scary. We help them pack up the car and unload all the boxes in the dorm room. We give a lingering hug.... and it hits. As we turn to give one

last wave goodbye, it's there again. That still small voice saying, "God's got this. It's going to be o.k."

Not one syllable. Not one solitary syllable of our story is unknown to Him.

Is there anything you are "anticipating" today? Are you facing that next page with excitement or is there an element of fear somewhere in the mix. God's Word has a great deal of encouragement for us when we face the unknown.

- **Zephaniah 3:17** *"The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty one will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."*
- **1 Corinthians 2:9** *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*
- **Romans 8:28** *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."*
- **Proverbs 3: 5-6** *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight."*
- **Philippians 1:6** *"Be confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

These verses bring comfort and hope to us whenever a page in our life turns. Wherever we are in the story, whether we are just beginning the journey as new parents, as parents of toddlers or teens, or perhaps entering the empty nest phase... facing that next blank page isn't nearly as intimidating when we are related to the One holding the pen.

**This month's Parent to Parent is lovingly dedicated to Pastor Mark and Laura as they "anticipate" the arrival of Baby Pulliam. Every day remind yourselves, "God's got this."*

Summer Serve Update

Summer Serve is a “beginners” mission trip for students who have just completed 5th-8th grade. This ministry began in San Antonio in 2007, making this its *tenth* year! Mount Calvary began hosting Summer Serve four years ago when it outgrew the facilities at Lutheran High School.

This year our theme was “X Marks The Spot” based on Matthew 6:19-21 – *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* Our evening Bible studies focused on teaching students that Jesus is our true Treasure and He treasures us!

During the day, youth served at a variety of locations and in partnership with the following ministries:

- Christian Assistance Ministry
- Christ our Savior Lutheran Church / LINC San Antonio
- VA Fisher House
- St. Paul Lutheran Church
- Redeemer Lutheran Church
- Terrell Heights Neighborhood Association
- Shady Rest Mobile Home Park
- Brookdale Oakwell Assisted Living Facility
- Parklane West Assisted Living Facility
- Seniors 2000 Adult Day Care
- Christian Senior Services / The Grace Place Adult Day Care

Once again, we are very thankful for Mount Calvary serving as our host congregation!

In Christ, The Summer Serve Planning Team

DCE Hailey, DCE Harmony, Pastor Aaron, DCE Nick, Pastor Chris, DCE Kathryn, Pastor Mark, DCE Laura

**Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church
308 Mt. Calvary Dr.
San Antonio, Texas 78209**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED