

# FROM THE MOUNT



## Mount Calvary Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD



2018

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Church Office 210-824-8748

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Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. – 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Dear Friends in Christ,

**Well done** Mount Calvary folks. I'm writing this just after the closing ceremony and picnic for Vacation Bible School. I had several parents come to me and thank the church for its service to their children and brag on the quality of our volunteers. We are blessed to have so many talented and dedicated volunteers and you made an incredible week of ministry possible.

Mount Calvary will be experiencing some transitions in the coming months. Bob and Sylvia Matthys are retiring from bookkeeping, but thanks to excellent leadership on the part of our treasurer, services are being put into place to make sure our transition is as seamless as possible so our ministries are not impacted.

Pastor Mark and DCE Laura will also be departing us. Their last day will be August 5<sup>th</sup>. The prayers of our congregation are with them for this exciting opportunity as Mark is now called to plant a church in a growing area of north Houston. Pastor Craig and I shall meet with the Board of Elders the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of July to discuss our contingency planning for ministry continuity and to start initial conversations regarding the call of an Associate Pastor. By our Constitution the Board of Elders does serve as our call committee. Our first order of business is to ensure that ministry needs are met in the interim. We will not rush to a call but we plan to be deliberate in the process seeking input from the congregation so that we may find the right person for the position.

We are blessed to have Pastor Craig with us who will of course continue to work with the youth group and assist with pastoral care. In addition we have many excellent volunteers, some who are relatively new members and are stepping up with energy and zeal, who will continue to provide the vital work that makes our ministries

happen. Mount Calvary will remain, even in the interim, a place where high quality ministry is conducted.

I observed just how talented and hardworking a bunch of people we had in those early months that I was first with you back in 2015. Mount Calvary weathered the loss of Pastor DeVries very well. Attendance did not drop. Activity and ministry continued. Pastor DeVries had done exactly as God had commanded:

*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. (Eph 4:11-12)*

The departure of Pastor Mark and DCE Laura will provide opportunities for people to serve in various capacities. As we develop our ministry plan we shall call upon volunteers to help step in and assist us.

Right now we are in need of teachers for our early childhood class. Mrs. Lauren Hannemann who was very active in the class is moving on as her husband has orders to a new location for his military service. In addition, Jacob Jenkins our current Sunday School Superintendent, will be stepping away from this position by the end of the year but is open to having someone come in to assist and learn the job which would free him up to assist with some of the teaching responsibilities. So if you would be willing to assist in these capacities please speak with Jacob or myself.

There will be more to follow, but thanks to our talented and dedicated folks who make up Mount Calvary, I think we will weather this time of transition well, and once God leads us to the our new Associate Pastor we shall see where God leads us forward in ministry to our flock and to the people around us.

Once again, all who were active in VBS this year, well done! Well done indeed!

Christ bless you richly and abundantly family of God.

*Pastor David Reed*



Dear Christian Friends,

After several weeks of prayerful consideration, Laura and I have accepted the call to plant a church in Spring, TX.

We are so grateful for the time we have shared with our church family (and family-family) in San Antonio! Church planting is something God has been quietly pulling our hearts toward for almost a decade. We are both excited and nervous about the next steps, but confident in His abundant care for Mt. Calvary San Antonio and the church He is sending us to plant.

Once again, I am grateful for all the prayers that have been said on mine and my family's behalf over the last several weeks and ask that they would continue. Could you join with us in praying for the people in the target area, especially that their hearts would be receptive to the good news about Jesus? If you have any contacts in the Spring/Woodlands/Bender's Landing area, we would love to get in touch with them as we get to know the community. Finally, if through prayer God leads you to support this mission with your gifts (personal skills, finances, or even becoming a local missionary with us), I would love to talk with you more.

God's kingdom is coming in Spring and in San Antonio, and we are so honored to be a part of it!

### **Getting Directions**

I was sitting before a panel of pastors in the conference room at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Austin. The year was 2010 and as part of my application to seminary, Laura and I were interviewed by the Austin pastor's circuit. After learning that we were both trained DCEs, they asked how we planned to navigate those professional roles through seminary and beyond. We smiled and started telling them stories of how we had been doing projects together from the time we first met. We had discovered that our unique gifts were complementary to each other, and had already spent a few years figuring out how to work together to accomplish more than either of us could individually. It was then that one of the pastors asked a question that has reverberated in my mind for almost a decade:

“Have y’all thought about church planting as a team?”

That simple question is one that God has brought up time and again over the years. I studied church planting in seminary, but the opportunity never really presented itself. In seminary and after graduation I started the church planter assessment application several times, but would always be pulled back at the last moment because the timing just wasn’t right. It was shortly after our son was born that the irresistible urge hit to complete the application and turn it in. I’ll come right out and say it, the timing couldn’t have been worse. We were incredibly short on sleep. This was the season where we should have been trying to make things more stable, not less. The initial assessment came back positive, and after an intensive personality test and an in-person interview, Laura and I were fully recommended for church planting from the Texas District of the LCMS. Even though we now knew we had the necessary gifts for that endeavor, we still didn’t know what God’s plan was. We were open to planting, but not seeking a position. Then we got a phone call from a friend’s dad.

## **Finding the Way**

“We’d like to plant a church in north Houston, and we thought we had a guy, but God had other plans for him. We were praying in the area last week, and one of the pastors prayed that by the next time we met, we would have the name of a person to talk to about this plant. I’m calling because your name was given to me, and I wanted to see if you would be open to talking with us.” The voice on the other end of the line was my college friend’s dad, Al Doering. The church he serves at as well as two other congregations had been praying over this target area for several years already. They felt that this would be an ideal area for a new church to begin, and research proved them right.

A couple of years ago, an extensive toll road called the Grand Parkway (or 99) was completed. This highway converted formerly hour long commutes into twenty minute treks. With the completion of that road, the population along the Grand Parkway began to explode and is projected to grow by another 18% in the next five years. Sixty percent of that population are young families. As with

many people in this age group, they tend to be open to spiritual conversations, but are less inclined toward organized religion. Many of them express no religious affiliation, but believe that faith in Jesus is important. What is most astounding about the target area (along the Grand Parkway, west of IH 45) is that there are only a handful of churches in the area with nowhere near the capacity to be able to reach the growing population. This community needs Jesus.

## **Taking Some First Steps**

We did an initial visit to the area after that phone conversation with Pastor Doering followed by a formal visit after the call was extended. God wouldn't let us dismiss this opportunity. Finally after lots of prayer and heartfelt conversations with wise mentors and friends, it became clear that God was sending us to be missionaries to this area.

A church planter's role has many similarities with the role of a foreign missionary. In a foreign mission field, a worker learns the language of the community, builds relationships with key people in the community, listens to people's needs and tries to fill those, all while pointing people to Jesus. A worker begins to assemble a team of locals who hear the good news about Jesus, respond by following Him, and then begin to tell their local friends the good news too. As more and more people become disciples, the church is born.

Several people have asked us what we will be doing when we arrive in Spring since we don't have a church building. Our goal is to be local missionaries. We will be getting to know people in the community and starting to build relationships and friendships where the good news about Jesus will be shared. We will be visiting the supporting congregations to talk about the mission God has laid on our hearts and inviting them to participate through prayer, introducing us to people, and partnering with us with their gifts of personal skills, finances, or time in becoming local missionaries with us. We will be teaching and discipling those who are led to join us, equipping them to follow Jesus and share the Gospel along the way. As people are discipled, the church will be born.

## **What's Next?**

There's an incredible story in your Bible in the Gospel of Luke (24:13-35). After Jesus is resurrected, two of His disciples are traveling to a town named Emmaus. They don't quite understand yet what Jesus' death really meant, and they don't actually believe that Jesus rose from the dead... yet. As they walk along, they are met by a fellow traveler who joins them on their journey and begins asking about what they were discussing as they walk. They begin telling him all about Jesus' life, His trial, His crucifixion, and the fantastic claim by some of their friends that He had risen from the dead. This traveler begins explaining to them from God's Word why the Messiah had to die and rise. They get to their destination, invite this traveler to join them for a meal, and as he blesses and breaks the bread, their eyes are opened and they realize that it's Jesus! He has been walking with them the whole time and finally they see Him for who He is!

That's what we want for the people we have been sent to serve in Spring. We want them to encounter Jesus through His Word and have their eyes opened to who He is. If that mission excites you, we'd love to talk with you more about what church planting in the U.S. mission field looks like. We don't know fully what God has in store for us in Spring, but we are confident that as He has faithfully led us so far, He will continue to lead us forward!

In Christ,  
Pastor Mark

## **Memorials**

### **In memory of:**

Lea Koehler  
Doris Hensley  
Gaither Walker  
Naomi Peters

### **Given by:**

M/M Charley Michalk  
M/M Charles Koch, M/M Winstor Curry  
Barbara & Sandie Krywoszej  
M/M Charles Koch

# WE THANK GOD FOR ANOTHER WONDERFUL VBS AT MOUNT CALVARY!

## Some highlights of this year's ministry:

- We had over 65 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 over \$350 collected in monetary donations, we collected 748 pairs of socks (per CAM's special request)!
- This is the second 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 Leadership:** Caelen Cowan, Jan Miyauchi, Linda Aguilar, Sarah Paseur, Debbie Reedy
- **Registration & Greeting:** Virginia Hernandez, Barbara Rablee, Lamar Gillian, Martha Brenz
- **Nursery:** Sarah Loudenback
- **Photographer:** Brent Groves
- **Volunteer Breakfast:** Bonnie Haumann
- **Celebration Picnic:** Tracy Paseur, Marshall Leiber, Lamar Gillian
- **Fun & Games:** David Kelly, Mikayla & Marissa Stai
- **Music & Teaching:** Pastor Mark, Pastor Craig, Billy Morrison
- **Crafts & Snacks:** Inkie Gillian, Coni Kelly, Rebecca Reedy
- **Family Groups:** Raegen Cowan, Rexann George, Emma Grier, Raquel Mencke, Cheryl Ann Cobb, Virginia Axtell, Michelle Thompson, Shirley Wille, Pat Leiber, Roy Lane, Cathy DeVries, Shirley Wille, and visitors Maddie, Laizcha, Bama, & Kelly.





**Historic Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church**, Milwaukee, Wisconsin gratefully acknowledges your generous gift toward our organ. Thank you.

**To our dear church family,**

Thank you very much for all your prayers and beautiful cards. Herb and I are very blessed. Thank you Veronica and Alex Hansmann; Evelyn and James Lee for taking care of the flowers. God has given Herb and I many blessings and all of you are blessings from Him to us. God be with all of you.

Much love,

Lilo and Herb Strait

Dear Mount Calvary,

I wish to express my deep gratitude for your prayers and kind words these past few weeks as well as for excusing us the weekend after VBS so we could be with my family. After my grandmother passed away, we were so grateful for the time to be with family; my mother, in particular, sends her greetings and thanks.

On another note, many of you have asked what's next for me. I wish to share that I have received and am accepting a call from the church plant's mother congregation (Resurrection Lutheran in Spring) to serve as a co-planting DCE. While the details of what this may look like are as yet undetermined, I am excited to share in this mission to which God is calling us in a professional, as well as personal, capacity. Thank you for the prayers that have been said on our behalf these past few weeks and I ask that you would pray for God to be preparing hearts in Spring to receive the Good News. It is a growing area with lots of young families, many of whom don't know Jesus.

It will be difficult to leave you all next month. And there's no getting around the fact that change is hard; which is why I am thankful that the Lord is the One directing the steps of those who serve Him. It has been an honor to serve as your DCE and it will be an honor to serve as DCE in Spring. But in the words of St. Paul, "I am confident that He who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Your Sister in Christ,  
Laura Pulliam

# PARENT-TO-PARENT

GAYLE PULLIAM | STUDENT MINISTRY MENTOR TEAM : PARENT SUPPORT

## The Way They Learn

I stood there in front of my dining room table just...staring...at the stacks and stacks of textbooks that were laid out before me. I knew this day was coming, but I wasn't prepared for the onslaught of melancholy that muscled its way over my resolve. It was time to purge, to simplify. I knew that, but it seemed also somehow sacrilegious to destine these wonderful "tools," tools that had served us so well, to the recycle bin. It was too disrespectful an end for items that had been such an impactful part of our lives.

There it sat. An actual, visual representation of twenty years of my life, spread out in both neat rows and messy piles all over my dining room table, chairs, and floor. The elementary stuff and the middle school stuff had long given way to the "Big Boys" of high school curriculum, but there were still shelves and shelves of materials, now outdated, that needed to go. Scattered among the algebra, chemistry, and Spanish books were masses of folders full of creative writing assignments, term papers, critical book reviews. I wanted to go back and read them all again. There was no need to look for the name in the heading, for the handwriting -so distinct to each of my children-gave the authorship away. All that work. All those hours upon hours, years upon years came flooding back in an instant.

How could I throw it all away? For a moment I mourned the loss of my identity as a teacher, as a homeschooler, but that moment was brief because of the realization that those tools and that time, accompanied by God's gracious help, had produced four wonderful, accomplished, Christ-professing individuals of whom I am incredibly proud. The books, the papers, the transcripts...none of those were my legacy. My legacy is embodied in my precious children. As I have said often, to God alone be the glory.

I also thought about *why* we began the journey of teaching our children at home all those years ago. There were several reasons, all

of them good and valid for our family at the time, but there is one in particular that I'd like to share most with you today. I think It happens to be as relatable to "The Great Commission" as it is to homeschooling. You ready for it? It's the **way** they learn. Specifically: *The Way They Learn*, a book written by Cynthia Tobias which explains the different learning styles and encourages parents to teach to their children's strengths. Before that book had even made it into print, I became aware that my kids were quite different from one another when it came to learning skills and mastering new concepts. That's because God didn't make them all from the same mold. He individually sculpted and gifted and combined talents and personalities in each of them to form the unique creations He had in mind. For me, as for all teachers, that meant needing to have a "bag of tricks" to pull from when one method of instruction clearly wasn't working.

For some of my kids, tackling multiplication and division was a cinch. After some initial explanation, flashcards and memorization were all that was needed to do the trick. Others benefited from the specific language of "groups" of things...4 groups of 5, 8 groups of 10, etc. Some needed manipulatives, tactile things they could feel and maneuver, in order to make those connections. One way wasn't better than another. They were just variations on the same theme, and all those variations came together to form a more complete understanding of the concept of multiplication and division, which was the ultimate goal.

Oddly enough, revisiting all of this got me thinking about our church body, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. I began wondering about the unique ways individuals might relate to the Gospel message and to worship. We are incredibly blessed to belong to a church body that understands and respects the need for people to be able to comprehend and relate, in a way most relevant to them, to the saving message of grace that we are trying to proclaim. We have Martin Luther to thank for that. For many, that way will be a traditional, conservative, liturgical setting, as we have here at Mt. Calvary. For others, it will be a more contemporary version...a different variation on the same theme. One way isn't better than another, and they are

not in competition. Rather, they work in tandem within the whole church body to reach the masses, to take the Gospel to all nations, to make disciples. Our church body has embraced these different variations without altering in any way the theme of grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone, Christ alone. For that I am thankful.

It's all about Jesus. It has always been about Jesus, and **He** was relatable....to Jews, to Gentiles, to religious leaders like Nicodemus, to tax collectors, prostitutes, fishermen, children. He always knew the way to a person's heart. He met them where they were, and He changed them forever.

We live in a mixed society. We are not a homologous people. Our cities are filled with diversity in everything from age, background, socioeconomic status, education, and ethnicity. People from all walks of life are living and dying in these very cities without the knowledge of Jesus, without saving grace. How do we reach them? I'm not sure it would be realistic to expect these masses all to walk into a traditional sanctuary, to experience traditional worship on their own....especially those who had never before been exposed to a church setting. Perhaps the answer lies in following Jesus' example...meeting people where they are...letting Him change them forever.

Have you ever given much thought to the happenings surrounding Pentecost? Specifically, did you ever think about the Holy Spirit's second option? I have. We are familiar with the story of how the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in the sound of a mighty, rushing wind and how flames like tongues of fire rested upon their heads. We read in Scripture about the power with which the disciples spoke to the multitudes gathered there and how each person heard the Gospel message proclaimed in his own language. But...what if the Holy Spirit had chosen to get the message across in a different way? What if instead of the disciples speaking in different languages, He had given the masses the simultaneous ability to understand the disciples' native tongue? Wouldn't that have accomplished the same thing?

Why did God choose to do it the way He did? I can only speculate that it was because God is always the one coming to us. He is always the one who meets us where we are. He does the coming, the meeting, the changing, and aren't we fortunate that this is so. Our job

as Christians hasn't deviated from the day Jesus gave that command at His ascension...to go and make disciples of all nations. His job was to come. Ours is to go. Let us passionately continue in our great Lutheran heritage and tradition to do just that. Let's reach people where they are. Let's teach them the way they learn best. Let's present God's relevant Word and our relevant doctrine in the most relatable ways possible, and then...let us together mightily rejoice as the ranks of heaven swell with the souls of those touched by the Holy Spirit through it all.

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Now a special thank you to you, Mt. Calvary, for giving me the opportunity to share with you my heart through these Parent to Parent articles. I have been doing this now for two and a half years, and this month's entry marks the thirtieth one I have written for the Mount. I am not an expert in anything, nor do I claim to be. Neither am I a philosopher or a theologian. I'm just a mom who hoped that through sharing, parents would find a little encouragement for their journey from someone who's been there. Thank you for all your kind and gracious remarks and responses. I have appreciated them all. It's time though for me to turn this over to someone new. There is a great deal of talent and wisdom here at Mt. Calvary just waiting to be tapped. If you are interested in contributing, please let the church office know. I, for one, look forward to reading what *you* have to say.

## **ELDERS FOR JULY**

	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
July 1 (Communion)	Toby Elbert John Smetzer	Marshall Leiber Jim Koenig
July 8	Jim McNeel	Walter Marks
July 15 (Communion)	Charles Koch Brad Boeckner	Spencer Hasch Bill Stolhandske
July 22	John Gilg	Mike Wille
July 29	Russell Maxwell	Jim Koenig

## **USHERS FOR JULY**

<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
Robert Axtell	Roy Stepan
Robert Wieding	Troy Wilson
Charles Koch	Walter Marks
Lamar Gillian	

## **ACOLYTES FOR JULY**

	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
July 1	Josh Smetzer	Joe Morrison
July 8	David Meissler	Wyatt Wilson
July 15	Corben Perankovich	Jake Wille
July 22	Josh Smetzer	Daniel Morrison
July 29	David Meissler	Joe Morrison

## **GREETERS FOR JULY**

	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
July 1	Brenda Hoffmann Sarah Hanson	Eunice Stepan Rexann George
July 8	Elaine Ward Kim Hendrix	Bonnie Koenig Judy Hanson
July 15	JoAnn Koehn Leslie Smetzer	Deidra Thompson Randall Thompson
July 22	Carol Wilson Virginia Axtell	Sarah Paseur Mary Marks
July 29	Bonnie Haumann	Jill Cott L.J. Cott

## MORNING CLASSES

- **Adult Bible Class** | This large, lecture-style class meets in the gym and is taught by Pastor Reedy.
- **Men's Bible Class** | lecture & discussion style | Led by Larry Laxson. This class is currently studying The Bible on Trial. On July 15th, they will begin the series The Great Deceiver {Coffee and Jesus room}.
- **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), Special Education (room 112), and Nursery (room 117)

## MIDWEEK CLASSES

- **Adult Information Class (AIC)** | *Wed* | *7:00pm* | *Church library*  
New to Lutheranism? Just want to brush up on the basics? This is the class for you! Each course is 10 sessions. Speak to Pastor Reedy if interested. Begins July 11<sup>th</sup>.
- **Pastor Mark's Bible Study** | *Every Tuesday* | *10:00-11:30 am* | *Room 212 (upstairs)*
- **Men's Bible Study** | *1st & 3rd Saturdays* | *8:00-9:30 am* | *Parish Hall*  
Nothing starts the weekend off right like breakfast tacos, coffee, and Christian fellowship! This group is led by Jeff Harwood.
- **Triple F Men's Bible Study** | *Mon* | *6:30-pm* |  
A new men's Bible study followed by fellowship/food.
- **Women's Bible Study** | *3rd Mondays* | *7:30-8:30 pm* | *Meets at members' homes*  
Talk to Shirley Wille for more information.
- **Mothers' ChristCare Small Group** | *2nd & 4th Mondays* | *6:30-8:00 pm* | *Room 218 (upstairs)*  
This group is led by Wanda Laxson and is a great way for moms to get to know one another and be encouraged for the coming week!
- **Night ChristCare Small Group** | *1st Thursdays* | *7:00-8:30 pm* | *Miyauchi Home*  
This group is led by Jan Miyauchi and meets at 2219 Peach Blossom.
- **Other** | *TBA*  
Would you like to participate in a study but don't know where to begin? Contact the church office for more details about any of these classes *or* to let us know if a class at another time or in another location might be beneficial to you and a few friends. We'd love to provide support for starting a Bible study in your workplace, neighborhood, or school!

***Save the date for the  
Mount Calvary Women's Retreat!***



***Camp Lone Star Retreat Center  
November 2-4  
Registration Opens September 2nd***