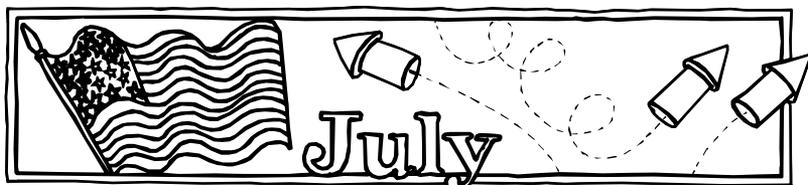


# FROM THE MOUNT



## Mount Calvary Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD



2019

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Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

James 1:17

Dear Friends in Christ,

One summer, I had the opportunity to return home to Tennessee for a few days. But the home of my youth did not feel the same. The contours of the mountains were still there but, there were new homes and new businesses and the roads were in some cases different. Not even the home I grew up in felt the same, as it was now empty, my mother having been called homeward to our Lord. Everything was still there, in its place, meticulous as always. But it wasn't the same. My friends were largely gone having spread out to many places. It left me with a feeling of sadness and loss.

There is a common prayer: Lord grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change what I can change, and the wisdom to know the difference. But the prayer does address changes that we cannot stop. It does not ask for serenity in the face of unwanted change. Nor does it ask the question that there may indeed be things that should not change. It does not ask for wisdom in knowing what should be preserved.

Some places back home have a magic. I have deliberately taken my family to those places to have them experience the timeless magic of the place – the lofty heights with rhododendrons in bloom on Roan Mountain, the deep forest along the Appalachian trail, the sound of waterfalls deep in the Smokies that have fallen for ages forgotten. But for me, other places have lost their mojo because they have become something very different from what it used to be. Dollywood in Pigeon Forge was once a place full of old-time country music, crafting stores; but now the quilt store is gone replaced with cheap trinkets and the park once filled with music is now filled with the roar of tall rollercoasters and the screams of delighted riders.

That visit home, I had a journey to make and I was dreading it. We were going to take Mom home to lay her to rest in southwest Virginia, in the town where she and Dad grew up. I expected it to feel like a very alien place. And yes, there were changes. A four-lane road where none had been before. A McDonalds, of all things. A brand spanking new subdivision with carbon copy housing. But then something happened that made it feel very much like home, like the home of when I was small running around those hills looking for blackberries. My family came. The children of aunts and uncles – people I had not seen since my youth – all now grown with children of their own – but the same. My family came out and I was once again home.

When we come into the doors of Mount Calvary, we find the family of God. Friends, neighbors, even family who we worship with, who we gather with to receive the gifts of God. And we find God; who does not change. We find His truth in His Word; which does not change. His Word confronting us with our own sin, our own shortcomings, but so quickly proclaiming the soothing promise of forgiveness of sin. We find the unchanging love of God. We find children still brought into the kingdom of God through the Holy Water of baptism. We find the forgiveness of sins given in; with and under the bread and the wine. The gifts of God for the people of God; from the God who loves Him and none of that changes. May God grant us serenity in the face of life changes and may He help us find comfort and value in those things that never change; for they are of God.

Christ bless you richly and abundantly; family of God.

*Pastor David Rees*





## Hi. It's me, the new pastor.

It's my special name, just for you. Pastor. It's sort of like mom or dad. It only works here. It's called vocation. It's not so much a title as it is an identity. It's a divine promise. Just like God

wanted you to have parents to raise you up, He wants you to have someone to give you His gifts. He grabs the people He wills for each and promises to work through them for good. Vocation. It's me, the new pastor. Now, my first name doesn't matter, which is good. Because my first name is different than the last pastor. I'm not him. We're different people with different strengths and different flaws. We'll do things a little different, but we share the same vocation. We teach the same thing. We give the same gifts. We're pastor. The first name doesn't matter. It's not about me, it's about Jesus for you.

That's the good news. It helps with the second part. I'm a sinner. You probably know that on some generic level, but you don't know my specific sins yet. I'll try my hardest, but that's going to change. I'm sorry. Truly. I hang on to the forgiveness just as much as you. It's why we're here. When I do sin against you, please see me as a sinner Jesus died for. Please forgive me.

Also, talk to me. I'm not Jesus. I don't know your thoughts. You have to tell me. When you're sick and you need me to visit you, tell me. When I mess up, tell me. I'm not always smart enough to figure it out on my own. When you don't understand why I'm doing something, tell me. Then listen, and I'll show you why. I teach the Bible, the Catechism, the Book of Concord. This is what we have in common. I might do a couple things different than what you're used to. Ask me why. This is one of the coolest places to start learning and growing together.

We're the church. The baptized sinners Jesus died for. It's the thing we all have in common. It's what joins us together. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. Lean into that. It's His true word that builds up the body of Christ and holds us together so we're not tossed about by every wind of doctrine, human cunning, and deceitful schemes.

And those are real things, so please, pray for me even as I pray for you. Pray that I teach the word purely and administer the

sacraments ritely. Not just rightly, but ritely: according to the rites that have been handed to us from the pastor before me and all the way back to Jesus. His truth norms us. So please pray for me in the part of the job I hate most. Pray that I say "no" because His way goes.

It's no fun for me to ruin your day, but you don't want me around just to tell you what you want to hear. Nobody ever "got along" into heaven. Jesus pulls sinners out of the tomb. God called me to speak the truth here. We're sinners. Sin breaks stuff. We can't say it's ok. It's so not-ok that Jesus had to die for it. Pray I never waver in telling the truth about what hurts you and your neighbor. We're not generic sinners, but specific ones that need to hear God's truth about our sins that we would flee from them and find shelter in the mercy of God. It's painful to face the law, but there is always forgiveness for you. Jesus died for you. There, we can see the 10 commandments as true and good. We can see ourselves as sinners in need of help, forgiveness, and salvation. And we can see that salvation given in word and sacrament is the most important thing we do here.

That's the law and the gospel of God's word. If you won't be a sinner condemned by the law, I'm not sure what I have for you. The gospel is only for sinners. The healthy have no need of a physician. Just the sick. So I'll tell you the truth about God's law and I'll readily forgive you in the stead and by the command of the Lord who is merciful without end.

This is what I vowed when I was ordained. Preach the word truly. Administer the Sacraments ritely. Visit the sick and the dying. Forgive sinners, and never divulge those sins. Admonish you to holy living. But when I was asked to do these things, I didn't say yes. That would be a disaster. This is not about me. This is about Jesus, for you.

So I said, "Yes, with the help of God." This is His church. I thank God He made us a part of it together. Please know that I'm even more excited about this than you are. Because God is working here for us. He'll speak His word and administer His sacraments through me. God will help us, which means I can be blunt here.

I will not save your church. In all the excitement that wants me to be the magic pill that gets the youth involved, increase attendance, giving, and somehow make you finally get your life together,

remember this thing stands on God's back. It has to. I cannot save your church, but God already did. He died. He is risen. We are baptized. So relax. That's been enough to bring us forward 2000 years through persecution and famine, plague and war. We can survive today too. Christ is still risen. Let's look to that for hope, not the new guy. He promised never to leave you or forsake you. Besides, Jesus is way better at this stuff anyway.

One last thing. Love my family. I make life hard enough on them. They have to deal with my real first name. I'm a sinner. They're stuck with me, and they're far from home and family. They need you. My wife is not the church worker. My kids are not on stage. Let them be your family and your friends. They need that more than you know. They aren't here to perform, but to receive the same gifts of God we all need. Please, welcome them to the place you see sinners forgiven. That's the greatest gift you can give me.

Thank you for having us as a part of your own. I thank God for you. Now, with the help of God, we have work to do.

In Christ,  
Pastor Goodman

## **Memorials**

### **In memory of:**

June Wendt

Mark Hagedorn

### **Given by:**

Elaine Ward, M/M O. T. Fisher, Peter Heide,

Linda Ontiveros, Marlene Walker, Shirley Wille

M/M Terren Kammeyer, Peter Heide

## **ELDERS FOR JULY**

	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
July 7 (Communion)	B. Stolhandske	Jim Koenig
July 14	Jim McNeel	Spencer Hasch
July 21 (Communion)	Jason Strawn	Mike Wille
	R. Maxwell	Jim Koenig
July 28	Brad Boeckner	Marshall Leiber

## **USHERS FOR JULY**

<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
Steve Melancon	Richard Miyauchi
Jeff Harwood	David Timmons
Phil Glaspy	Nathaniel Aguilar
Walter Friend	

## **GREETERS FOR JULY**

	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
July 7	Bonnie Haumann Carol Gilg	Bonnie Koenig Sarah Paseur
July 14	Kim Hendrix Rexann George	Carolyn Friedle Lisa Gerlich
July 21	Leslie Smetzer Linda Ontiveros	Judy Hanson Mary Marks
July 28	Linda Dietz JoAnn Koehn	Judy Ganoza Sarah Paseur

## **ACOLYTES FOR JULY**

	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
July 7	Josh Smetzer	Joe Morrison
July 14	Corben Perankovich	Daniel Morrison
July 21	David Meissler	Wyatt Wilson
July 28	Josh Smetzer	Wyatt Wilson

# **FAMILY *Matters*: A Matter of FREEDOM**

by Wanda Laxson

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the truism "FREEDOM IS NOT FREE" is carved in stone on a wall of the Korean War Memorial in our nation's capital. The reality of this claim is seen throughout the history of the world and our nation as we consider all the conflicts that have been fought and the lives that have been lost or forever changed as people have sought to gain or defend their freedom. The statement is also very apt for us as Christians because of Christ's sacrifice of His life on the cross, which won our eternal freedom from sin, death, and the devil. (See John 8:31-36 for what Jesus had to say about freedom to the Jews who believed in Him.)

Freedom is something that is often on my mind these days. I think about persecuted Christians in other countries whose very lives are on the line for their faith. I think about American Christians who are being persecuted in other ways because their beliefs do not align with the increasingly post-Christian culture. I wonder if I or my family will someday face persecution for holding to the orthodox (true) faith. I examine my life through the lens of God's Word to see if I am using my freedom in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. I ask for forgiveness for the times that I have misused my freedom or taken it for granted.

How about you? I hope freedom is on your minds, too, and not just because our nation celebrates its Independence Day this month. In fact, I pray that we would have freedom on our minds every day and be grateful for it. God has truly blessed us with freedom as citizens of the left-hand (earthly) kingdom of the United States and the right-hand (heavenly) kingdom of Christ's invisible Church. (For more information on Luther's "Two Kingdoms" theology, check out this brief article from a 2014 Lutheran Witness:

<https://blogs.lcms.org/2014/two-kingdoms/>.)

Coming home from Houston on Memorial Day, Larry and I saw rows and rows of flags lining highway 90A as we approached and left the small towns along the route. These were not tiny little flags, either. They were big flags on metal poles that were at least 6 feet tall. Thought, time, and money were invested in those displays. It was an

unexpected sight that warmed our hearts and stirred our souls. Those flags reminded us to be thankful for the freedoms we have in the United States (especially religious) and to be grateful for those who have fought (or are currently fighting) to keep those freedoms for us. This includes not only our military, but also people in other organizations who fight in various ways to maintain our liberties. Our own church denomination has established an organization, the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, whose mission "is to ignite and fuel a uniquely Lutheran response to increasing intrusions, limitations and challenges by the government in the life of the Church, while educating, encouraging and equipping LCMS members and organizations to take informed action in support of marriage, life and religious freedom." The LCRL website is [www.lcrlfreedom.org](http://www.lcrlfreedom.org) and there I found out that you can sign up for "Word from the Center", a semi-weekly e-publication written and presented by Dr. Rev. Gregory Seltz, Executive Director. Check out the site and while you are there, click on the PRAYER tab, scroll down past the Bible verse, and read a wonderful prayer for our nation. If you don't have internet access, I'll have copies of the prayer available in the gym during July.

May we be ever mindful of God's blessings and do whatever He would call us to do to preserve both our secular and Christian freedoms, because freedom isn't free. God Bless America!

### **LADIES OF MT. CALVARY - SAVE THE DATE!**

Women's Retreat - November 1st - 3rd @ Camp Lone Star

Early Registration will open September 1<sup>st</sup>!!

Please contact Jennifer Pate for additional info!

210-601-5402

### **2020 Germany Passion Play**

Hi everyone! Our 2020 Germany Passion Play Trip is on and we still have room. Don't miss out on this TRIP OF A LIFETIME! If you've considered it and thought time had passed, it hasn't. Why not just sign up on a Waiting List, if nothing else. You will have an entire year now to save as no further monies are due until next May 2020. If you are interested or know of anyone interested, please have them contact me at 210-240-5044. Thank you! Debbie Nitsche



Dear Mt. Calvary,

We want to thank the congregation for their support, prayers and cards sent to Rexann for her upcoming back surgery! But I have no idea how to reach everyone, so I thought maybe if I sent this message to you, that in some way you might be able to pass it on. It is very gratifying to know that our church family is there for her, and that in the power of prayer all things are possible! And thank you for the church e-mails....since we have not been able to attend the services, it helps us to keep up to date with the church activities. Blessings to all,

Stan & Rexann George

Dear Mt. Calvary Family,

We are so very thankful for your generous donation of all the diapers, wipes, clothing, and baby items! It was such a blessing to us and will be to all the families who come to receive them. These families are so appreciative to be able to come in and earn through Bible Study & classes these items.

May God richly bless you all as you serve Him.

Sincerely,

The staff at Life Choices medical Clinic

## SUNDAY 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.
- **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>.
- **Tuesday Morning 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 | Pompeii Italian Grill*  
This group is studying the book *The Formula of Concord*. Contact Spencer Hasch at 210-535-2973 for details.
- **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.