

CALVARY CURRENT

Special Edition for August 2020



"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22)

CHURCH NEWS

- 1. Calvary's Worship & Ministries:** Calvary follows the guidelines set by our Bishop and the Cabinet of WNCC regarding "in-person" worship and ministries. Calvary will continue virtual services during the months of August and September.
- 2. Calvary Virtual Church on Sundays 11am (opening from 10:30am)**
By computer: CalvaryUMCnc.org -> Click Virtual Church Info under Worship
By phone: Call at 301-715-8592 and enter Meeting ID: 854 324 5409#
*Our zoom service will be recorded and posted on the church website.
- 3. Special Prayers**
For students, teachers, administrators, staff, and parents as they begin the fall semester!
For the family of Joe Black who lost his brother and the family of Becky Pinion who lost her aunt in July.
For Ted and Brenda Alexander, Mary Arnold, Buck Bailes, Margaret Bumgardner, Mason Butler, Daisy Dunlap, Henry Forrest, Betty Matthews, Betty Pinion, Kathleen Shaw, Faye Smith, Ray Smith, Ruby Vincent; Karen Cobb's brother, Bill; Nancy and Peggy's sister, Sue; Sandra Brown's brother, Ricky; June's son and daughter-in-law, Tim, and Suzanne, and Marsha Smith's brother, Michael.
For justice and equity among God's people in our nation.
For those who have been affected by the coronavirus, medical providers.
For the victims in Beirut, Lebanon.
- 4. Let's be a generous & cheerful giver!**
*Mail your offerings to Calvary UMC at 512 West Blvd. Charlotte, NC 28203.
* Use "bill pays" at your online banking or use "Conference Online Giving" at <https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches> (Calvary UMC, Charlotte / Metro District / Pastor Jae Lee / Your email address)
*Special offerings:

In memory of Gene Black by Ted & Brenda Alexander, Harding Shinn.
In memory of Barbara and Bill Pressley's 64th Anniversary on Aug 3 and Mary Hoover's 101st Birthday on Aug 4 by Herb & Pat Tesh.
In memory of Tom and Mary Hoover by their grandson, Thomas Tesh.
In memory of Donnie Smith by Terry Frye, Harding Shinn, Ted and Brenda Alexander, June Severs, Michael Johnson, and Tom Phillips.
In appreciation of Calvary's Virtual Worship Service by Cathie Hargreaves.
In honor of Ray Smith on Father's Day by Bob and Terry Smith and family.

5. **Upper Rooms** for September and October are available for your daily devotion in front of church office. If you cannot pick it up at church, please let Pastor Jae know.

NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM GOD (Romans 8:31-39)

Preached on July 27th by Rev. Jae Lee

Last Sunday while preaching the first part of Romans 8, I shared the touching story of Justin Boyd's adoption and reminded all that we are also adopted by the love of God. Yes, we are the children of God! By adoption of God's grace and love, we belong to God! The sense of belonging is crucial when we face difficulties and challenges because God will protect his loving children!

What we need to do is accept the invitation of God's love and live in the spirit of God. However, we still have questions and doubts during our journey of faith. When everything seems to be troublesome and going wrong, we tend to ask God why bad things happen to us. This week, one of our church family's aunt passed away due to the coronavirus, and we cried out to God: "Is it real oh God, you loved me and adopted me as your daughter or son? If it were so, how much do you love me and why do you allow bad things happen to me?"

In the later part of Romans 8, Paul teaches us that we are to believe in the strong relationship with God. Before we dig into the Word of God in Paul's letter, Romans 8:31-39, let's begin with reality checks from our learning so far.

1. God's adoption of us is done by God's grace, not by our own accomplishments! In other words, We Christians are not better than other people. We are just ordinary people who are struggling with our own weakness, frailty, and unfaithfulness. We are simply indebted to the love of God who adopted us as children of God. This week I hurt my back. I was sitting in my chair and sensed a little pain in my back. The following day I could not move at all due to severe pain. This is who we are. We are very weak, vulnerable, and easily hurt. We cannot claim anything special in God's adoption but give thanks for God's loving grace!

2. Our only work is to accept the love of God. As a little baby welcomes his or her mother's loving care, we are to open our hands, surrender our human desires, and put our total trust in the Lord. If we insist to stay the same, we cannot accept the invitation from God. We are asked to turn around from our lives of living for the flesh and to take God's hands toward living for the spiritual.

3. If we want to grow and deepen our relationships with God, we need to practice 'means of grace' every day in life. 'Means of grace' are all the things that we do in order to come closer to God. For example, our daily devotions, prayers, public and private worship services, reading and meditating the Word of God, doing good for others as missions and outreach, and so on. In fact, all we do in the name of Jesus Christ can be the means of grace. When we live, do, and even breathe in the name of Jesus Christ, we become more intentional, more outward, and more loving!

Now let's look into the Scripture together and find the answers to our intrinsic questions:

First, how much does God love me? Does God really love us? We'd love to know the depth of God's love for us. As God's adopted children, these are all things that we ponder. Paul states that God did not withhold his son Jesus but gave him up for us in verse 32. Paul refers to the love of God on the hill of Calvary where God gave up the life of Jesus Christ, the son, in order to save and redeem our lives. This clearly speaks to us how much God loves us. Can we give up our own child in order to save others? No way! While we can't give up our child for others, God willingly did it for us! That is the depth of God's love for you and me!

Second, why does God allow bad things happen to good Christians? Paul understands the bigger picture of our intimate relationships with God. As we are God's adopted children, we inherit God's mission in the world as well as God's glory in heaven. In other words, we share sufferings, pain, and difficulties of Jesus and the heavenly glories with Christ. According to Paul, our suffering and pain becomes a sign of our privilege as God's children. As we are the family of God, we share all things with Jesus Christ, including suffering, pain, and hardships. Therefore, these challenges are not bad things according to Paul. Rather, they are the signs that we are God's children and inheritors.

In fact, this explains the nature of God. God, the Creator, can simply watch and observe what is going on with us. In our troubles, hatred, divisions, and wars against one another, however, God did not remain far as the spectator. Rather, God put on human flesh, came into our own lives, took over our sins, our pain, our problems, and our mortality, and died on the cross. God's active involvement in human affairs is from the love of God for you and me. God's suffering was not necessary, but God through Jesus Christ was actively engaged with human sins, suffered our pain, and died for us.

Because of God's love, Jesus Christ suffered, experienced pain, and died, taking over our burdens. Paul understands that our daily suffering is not God's punishment, but our privilege as God's children to share God's suffering together. In this sense, we shall welcome our suffering, pain, and difficulties because we are joining in the suffering, pain, and difficulties of Jesus Christ. Even in our loved one's death, we gather together and share our gratitude because we believe that by our death we join in the death of Jesus and eventually join in the glory of Christ's resurrection.

Finally, Paul gives us courage and confidence, saying "If God is for us, who is against us?" in verse 31. He reminds us of the truth that God is for us and God is standing on our side! When we face

fears, suspicions, and insecurities today, we are to remember that God works for us and fights with us. "If God is for me, who is against me?" Paul sensed God's final victory against all the powers, rulers, and even death.

Therefore, nothing can separate us from the love of God and the love of Jesus Christ. Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, nothing! Even death cannot separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Dear church, this is the reason and hope that we can rejoice in the Lord while we confront the very challenges in life today. As Paul proclaims, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who loved us. For we are convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Yes, this is our solemn conviction today that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ!

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

REPAIR & REPLACE (R & R) FUNDS

Calvary UMC has a special fund called "R & R" Funds which is used to keep up with our church facilities. Through R & R Funds, we have repaired, upgraded, and taken care of our church buildings for many years. Even though we do not meet together in the church nowadays due to the COVID-19, we are to take care of church facilities. Recently, we have fixed water leaking in woman's bathroom, some parts of ceiling in Education Building, and air conditioning at church office with R & R Funds. We ask you to participate in the "go beyond" offering for R & R Funds so that we can prepare our church for life-giving ministries. When you make a check to CALVARY UMC, write "R & R Funds" on the memo, then your giving will be used for this designated purpose. Thank you for your generous support and gifts!

Earl Beckham, Trustees Chair

COMMUNITY YARD SALE FOR CALVARY



Our "Community Yard Sale" will be on Sept. 12th Saturday 8am to 12pm. Collecting of items will be until the week of. Everything is welcome for donations except for books. We have a ton of those already! Please feel free to give Julie or Patty a call to schedule a time to drop off your

items. After 12pm, we will have a charity come to collect the leftovers and take them away. As always, we will be looking for volunteers to assist us during the yard sale. Depending on Covid-19, we are hoping to have a bake sale as well as selling hotdogs and chips. We are very excited and extremely thankful for all of the donations we have received. The more we get, the more we sell, the more we can benefit our wonderful Church! Thank you all again!

Patty Pressley & Julie Gray – Coordinators for Community Yard Sale

BLESSING CABINET



Calvary and Outreach Team appreciate Wade Cobb volunteering to build the Blessing Cabinet and Curtis Gary for the signs on the cabinet. Unlike other food pantry ministries, there are no forms to complete, no verifications, and no judgments to make with Blessing Cabinet. Brenda has stocked the cabinet with various types of food and noticed that many people have taken food for the last several weeks. The Blessing Cabinet is available 24/7. Food from our congregation or outside our church will be welcomed, but the expiration date must be at least a year out. Monetary donations to the Blessing Cabinet can be made via payable check to Calvary UMC and on the memo line, you may write "Blessing Cabinet." Thank you for being a blessing to our needy neighbors!

Brenda Alexander, Chair of Outreach Team

ZOOM MEETINGS & WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Worship Team Meeting on August 16, 2pm

– All are welcome to share your feedbacks and ideas to develop our online worship service.

Youth Time on August 16, 7pm

– We will listen to our youth and bless them as they begin the fall semester.

Wednesday Bible Study from September 9, 11am

– We will resume our spiritual journey together through our reading, learning, and living the Word of God in our daily lives.