

CALVARY CURRENT

Special Edition for September 2020



*"For everything, there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven."
(Ecclesiastes 3:1)*

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 September and October.
- 2. Calvary Virtual Church on Sundays: Silent prayer at 10:55 am (opening from 10:30 am)**
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 began the fall semester!
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 (Calvary); Beth Earley, John Humphrey (Community).
For justice and equity among God's people in our nation.
For those who have been affected by the coronavirus, medical providers, and our leaders.
For those who are suffering from wildfire and hurricane.
- 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 visit "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 her parents, Dick and Alice Jarrell by Jane Wolcott.
In the love of my dear friends at Calvary by Jackie Davidson.

Christ's Church: A Cross-Bearing Community (Matthew 16:21-24)

Preached on August 30th by Rev. Jae Lee

When I began my ministry at First UMC in Brevard, a Staff Parish Relations Committee member told me, "Jae, I will support you because I want you to be successful while you are here." I was very grateful for his words because I wanted to be a successful minister, live a successful life, and grow as a successful church leader. All of us want to be successful in our vocations, jobs, and lives. Success is an important measurement in everything we achieve.

From the Gospel of Matthew 16, however, I would like to rethink of church's success and Christians' successful lives. What does it mean for us, the church, the body of Christ, to be successful? In our culture, there is a strong resistance against "failure, or becoming a loser." When my children were young, they often played games together. Whenever a game finished, winners used to tease the one who lost the game, calling them "loser." Then they worked hard to win the next game. I don't mind losing in a game, but I don't want to lose in my vocational works. I believe that Peter must be the same as me. He wanted Jesus' ministry to be a success!

When Jesus revealed his future journey to his disciples, Peter resisted Jesus whom he dearly loved. He called Jesus out and privately talked to him. "No, way. This must *never* happen to you!" As we know, 'never' is a very strong negation. Why was Peter so upset? Because Jesus said to his disciples, "I must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." Jesus mentioned four things to happen in his future:

1. Going to Jerusalem – Jesus went to the city of Jerusalem on regular basis to keep Jewish traditions throughout his whole life. However, this time he meant Jerusalem as the place where he would be captured, suffered, and killed. Jerusalem was the place for his persecution and martyrdom, and Peter could not allow Jesus to be suffered and killed there. We understand the great tension between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders by this time. Spiritually Jerusalem is a place of our suffering and death for God's missions.

2. Undergoing great suffering – Jesus was speaking of public punishment in front of the crowds, including his disciples and family. What a disgrace and humiliation for Jesus to be punished in public view. Peter could not see this disgrace and shame of his dear friend and teacher. However, Jesus' suffering was in order to save other human beings, and it was a necessary step for Jesus to take. Of course it was not an easy way to take, making Jesus cry out with agony on Gethsemane.

3. Being killed – We understand the pain of the cross, and its end was death. Jesus knew he must be killed to accomplish God's redeeming mission, and the cross shows God's love that God gave his only son up for us! It was also a way to show Jesus' faithful and unflinching obedience to God!

4. Being raised – I’m not sure if Peter heard this part of “being raised” because he was already upset with Jesus’ previous words. Jesus taught his resurrecting event to his disciples, but they did not understand until it happened to him. Even Peter did not fully understand what Jesus meant by this and he rebuked Jesus in front of other disciples. The resurrection is the victory from death and eternal hope for Christians as we will participate in our death and resurrection with Jesus Christ.

In Jesus’ own words, “I must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering, and be killed, and on the third day be raised,” what do we hear, “Success” or “failure”? Just like Peter, what we hear from Jesus is not a successful life, but it sounds like a failure. That is why Peter was very upset and rebuked Jesus.

However, Jesus did not want to focus on success in his life and ministry. Rather, he wanted to accomplish God’s plans in and through him. That is, Jesus wanted to obey and follow the way of the cross for the people of God. It was the way of going to Jerusalem, it was the way of undergoing suffering, and it was the way of being martyred. But that was not the end. It was also the way of being raised from death. Yes, it was the way of final victory! Most of us including Peter might not listen to the last one, “being raised” because we are preoccupied with the way of suffering and death on the cross.

Jesus immediately responded to Peter: “Get behind me, Satan! You are a *stumbling block* to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” Just before this scene, Jesus and his disciples visited the district of Caesarea Philippi where Jesus asked his disciples: “What do you say who I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the son of the living God.” Jesus was very pleased and blessed Peter: “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church on you!” As we know, the name ‘Peter’ means rock or stone. Jesus blessed him and promised to build his church on Peter, the rock.

Then in the right next conversation, Jesus called him, “Satan!” and continued, “You are a stumbling block to me.” From a strong and faithful rock to a stumbling block, Peter hears both compliments and criticism from Jesus. Why did Jesus change his attitude toward Peter? Because Peter was speaking from the human mindset rather than divine.

Focusing on divine things rather than human things is never easy. During the last 17 years of my ministry, I have tried to carefully set a boundary with my church friends. I would love to become a good friend with wonderful church saints. However, when we became too close, we might set our minds on human relationships, not on divine things. Maybe I am too sensitive to this issue, but as a pastor, I have carefully kept some distance from my church friends. I still don’t know what an ideal relationship between pastor and member entails. I hope you understand the mind of Jesus here who had to carry out the mission of God and had to call his dear friend, Peter, a stumbling block to him!

Finally, Jesus taught his disciples: “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” Do we want to follow Jesus? Then we must deny ourselves and take up our crosses! Denying ourselves means that we must put divine things over human things. We must put God first in our lives. Putting down our human agendas and desires, we must lift God’s holy name in our doing and living!

Taking up our cross means that we must become a cross-bearing church. A cross-bearing church is a faith community where we seek God’s heart who loves all. Nowadays we cannot meet inside the church building. Whenever I have a phone conversation with you, you say to me that you are truly missing the church. When you say it, you do not mean the church building but you mean the church itself, the body of God’s people, the relationships with one another, and God’s holy presence in the fellowship among people. A cross-bearing church must keep God’s loving heart which is alive and beating here and now for God and others!

A cross-bearing church is an equal community – whether small or great, young or old, black or white, or yellow, men or women, poor or rich, lay or clergy, and visitors or members – all God’s children are recognized, welcomed, and embraced as God’s loving children without discrimination or favoritism.

A cross-bearing church is a missional community where each person has a missional heart based on their spiritual gifts. As Jesus carried his cross and faithfully walked on the way of salvation, we are to take up – whether they are heavy or light – and continue our journey and do the missions of God!

A cross-bearing church may not be a large church. A cross-bearing church may not be a popular or attractive church for young people. A cross-bearing church may not be a successful church. However, a cross-bearing church will be a rock where Jesus Christ is present and becomes the center.

Are we willing to be a cross-bearing church? Are we?

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

REPAIR & REPLACE (R & R) FUNDS

Through the R & R Funds, we have repaired, upgraded, and taken care of our church buildings for many years. Calvary’s Trustees has a special request for you to give a special offering and donation to have a new “breezeway!” It has serious cracks and needs to be replaced very soon. We ask you to participate in the “go beyond” offerings for R & R Funds so that we can have a new breezeway in our church. The estimated cost is \$12,500, and we can make it together! When you make a check to CALVARY UMC, please 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

HOMECOMING SUNDAY



October 11th is Calvary's Homecoming Sunday. This year's Homecoming will be very different from that of other years. However, we will still celebrate our "HOMECOMING" together! There will be a gathering among people through zoom, lighting candles for those whom we love, a message from our own Dr. Rev. Jae Lee, and prayers for one another. As we will virtually celebrate 2020 homecoming, please invite your families and friends anywhere. Let's all gather together and have a meaningful homecoming together on Oct. 11th!

BLESSING CABINET NEWS



Calvary and Outreach Team appreciate your missional support to reach out to our local community through the Blessing Cabinet. Unlike other food pantry ministries, there are no forms to complete, no verifications, and no judgments to make with Blessing Cabinet. Brenda and Kathy have 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

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY



"A Journey toward a Community" - Pastor Jae is leading a Wednesday Bible Study from Sept. 9th at 11 am-12 pm. Under the pandemic, it will be a little different from our regular Bible study: First, it is virtual, using zoom; second, it will include spiritual formation through the study so that we may become and grow as a faith community. If you want to be part of this spiritual journey Wednesday morning, please let Pastor Jae know. He will send a zoom invitation to you!

LAY LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

As we prepare the Annual Charge Conference on Nov. 15th, there will be a Lay Leadership Team meeting on Sept. 20th at 2 pm through zoom. Lay Leadership Team members will be receiving a zoom invitation. If you do not have computer access, you can still attend the meeting through your home phone.

Becky Pinion, Lay Leader

COMMUNITY YARD SALE UPDATE



The health and safety of our church family and community must come first so we will delay our yard sale. We envision a great fall or spring community event for the sale. Many wonderful donations and treasures have already come in. While we wait, we will share our blessings of clothing with charities such as Dress for Success and Second Chance Prom. If you or someone you know still have donations or would like to arrange a private shopping time, please contact Patty Pressley or Julie Gray.

Patty Pressley & Julie Gray, Co-coordinators