

As We Gather

Is it becoming more difficult to be professing Christian today? In some countries of our world, just letting people know you are a Christian puts you in danger of physical harm or even death. While we may not face such severe persecution in the United States, there is a growing "anti-Christian" sentiment in many quarters. How are we as Christians to deal with all of this? Our Old Testament reading gives us a hint in the words of Mordecai as he challenged Queen Esther to put her life on the line: "Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Holy Communion

Holy Communion is being celebrated today. It is the belief of the Lutheran Church, based on Jesus' own words, that in this Sacrament His body and blood are really present and that forgiveness of sins and the assurance of salvation are offered to all who come confessing their sins and believing in Him. Communion is therefore offered to those who share this confession of faith. Children who are not yet confirmed are invited to come forward with their parents to receive a blessing. Guests who may have questions about Communion at Mt. Calvary are encouraged to talk to Pastor Brighton.

PRELUDE**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GREETING****OPENING HYMN:***"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"***Hymn #425****THE INVOCATION**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS AND ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

(Please kneel)

Most merciful God,

We confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name.
Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

THE HYMN OF PRAISE: *“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”*

**O God, our help in ages past
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home**

**Under the shadow of Your throne
Your saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Your arm alone,
And our defense is sure.**

**O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
O be our guard while troubles last
And our eternal home!**

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, source of all power and renewer of health and life, draw us ever closer to You, and supply us with the living water that will quench our great thirst for time and for eternity. This we ask in the name of Jesus, who offered Himself as our Savior and our Redeemer.

Amen.

(Please be seated.)

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING: Esther 3:12-15, 4:12-17 *(Threatened by a decree from the king that could mean genocide for the Jews, Queen Esther is asked to intercede.)*

¹² Then the king’s scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king’s satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king’s signet ring. ¹³ Letters were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces with instruction to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. ¹⁴ A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day. ¹⁵ The couriers went out hurriedly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa the citadel. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

¹² And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. ¹³ Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" ¹⁵ Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, ¹⁶ "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish." ¹⁷ Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

MEN'S CHORUS: (8:00 am service)

"There Is a Green Hill Far Away"

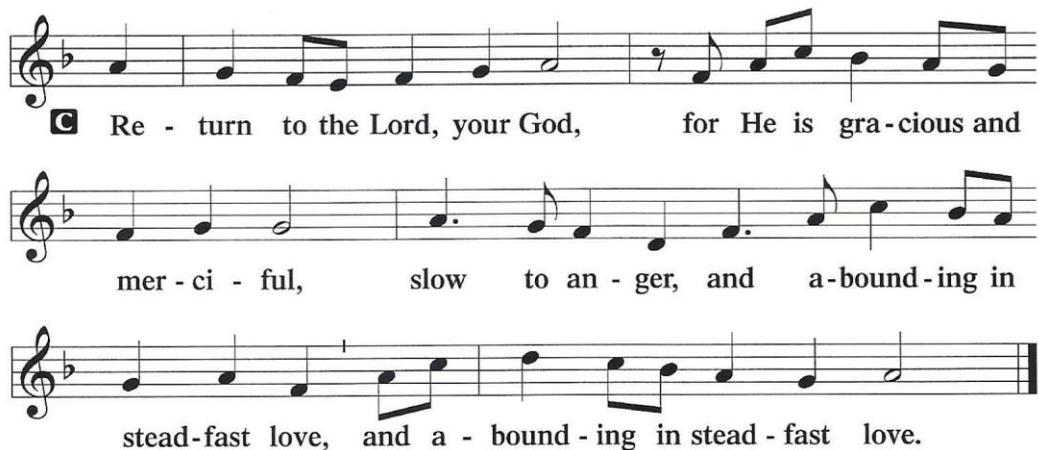
THE EPISTLE READING: Romans 5:1–8 (*Christ died for us while we were still sinners.*)

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE VERSE FOR LENT: "Return to the Lord"



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for He is gra-cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a-bound - ing in
stead-fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

THE HOLY GOSPEL IS ANNOUNCED:

The Holy Gospel according to St John the fourth chapter.



☐ Glo - ry to You, O Lord.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: John 4:5–26 (*Jesus meets with the Samaritan woman at the well.*)

⁵ So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷ A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸ (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

¹¹ The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." ¹³ Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." ¹⁷ The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

¹⁹ The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." ²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵ The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things."

²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



☐ Praise to You, O Christ.

THE CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:

Vicar Aaron Sterling

SUNDAY SCHOOL ANTHEM: (10:45 am service) *"There is a Green Hill Far Away"*

THE MESSAGE: **"Standing Against Persecution"** Pastor David Brighton

THE HYMN OF THE DAY: *"On Eagles' Wings"* **Hymn #727**

THE NICENE CREED:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS: After each petition, the Worship Leader will say, *"Lord in Your mercy,"* and the congregation will respond, *"Hear our prayer."*

THE GATHERING OF THE TITHES AND OFFERINGS

++ The Stewardship Thought ++

The Lenten season calls on us to remember that we are but dust and ashes. It is not WE who can present anything to God to merit forgiveness – it is GOD who comes to us and speaks the words every sinner longs to hear: "Your sins are forgiven you. Go in peace!"

OFFERTORY HYMN: *"Praise and Thanksgiving"*

**Praise and thanksgiving, Father, we offer
For all things living, created good:
Harvest of sown fields, fruits of the orchard,
Hay from the mown fields, blossom and wood.**

**Father, providing food for Your children,
By Your wise guiding teach us to share
One with another, so that, rejoicing
With us, all others may know Your care.**

THE ORDER OF HOLY COMMUNION

THE PREFACE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God. And now we thank You that by the working of Your Holy Spirit through the Gospel You have called us as Your own and given us eternal promises through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. As the perfect offering, He has taken upon Himself the sins of the world and has, by His rising from the grave, opened to us the very gates of heaven. Therefore, with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heav-en and earth are full of Your glo - ry. Ho - san-na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high - est.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

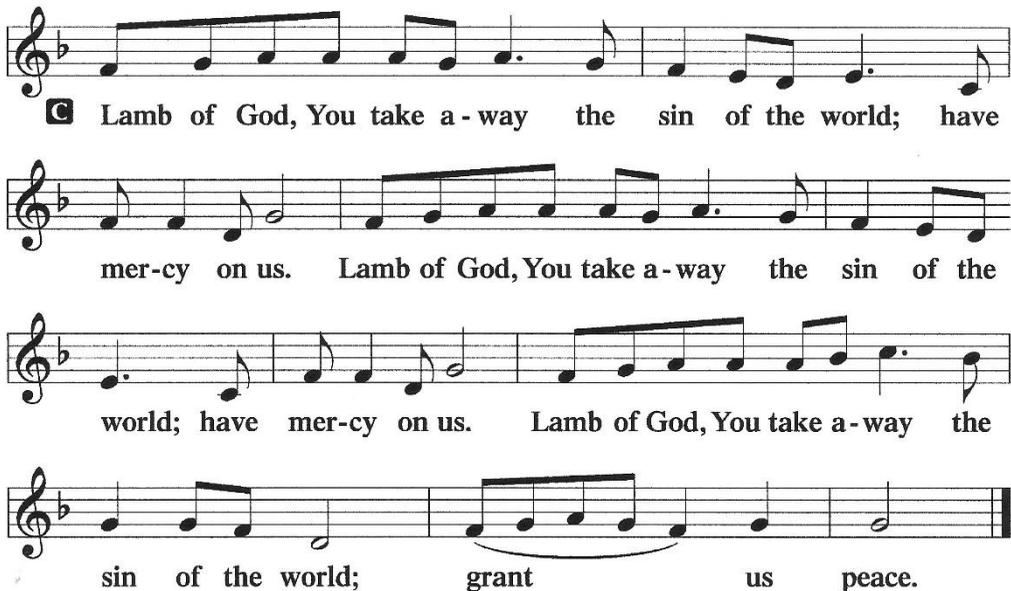
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.



☐ Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

THE DISTRIBUTION *(The center cup in each tray is white grape juice for pregnant moms or those allergic to alcohol.)*

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS:

"Thy Body, Given for Me, O Savior"

Hymn #619

"Not All the Blood of Beasts"

Hymn #431

"Children of the Heavenly Father"

Hymn #725

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your great love for us is beyond comprehension. We thank You for granting us peace, pardon, and comfort at Your blessed Table, where we find satisfaction and sustenance. Strengthen us through what we have here received and keep us steadfast throughout our pilgrimage on earth, bringing us at last to that heavenly banquet in Your kingdom. This we ask through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

Amen.

THE CLOSING HYMN:

"When Peace, Like a River"

Hymn #763

A MOMENT FOR SILENT PRAYER

THE POSTLUDE

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our Altar Flowers were provided this week by Steve & Jan Kirchoff, in honor of their wedding anniversary, and by Cheryl Hernandez, in memory of Roberta Anderson (mother) and Hortensia Hernandez (mother-in-law).

Georgia Special Election Day is Tuesday, March 21st, for the 2018 Houston County SPLOST. A "Yes" vote would continue the additional 1% sales tax in Houston County (total tax rate would remain the same at 7%). A "No" vote would mean the SPLOST allocations would run out on September 3, 2018. SPLOST funds are used for a number of capital improvement projects in the county, especially roads.

Help Needed! Due to a number of circumstances our faithful teller teams have suffered a number of losses recently. To avoid over extending our current teams we need several members to fill a number of vacancies. Ideally, teller teams take turns counting every five or six weeks. Experience is not a requirement as new team members can be paired with experienced people for training. If you are willing to help, please contact a member of the Board of Stewardship. Steve Hetes 478-919-4432.

Newsletter Deadline: Please have all items for the April newsletter in to the office by March 27th.

An Oops and a Happy Birthday: Somehow, in the process of preparing the "March Birthdays" list for the newsletter, I accidentally deleted an entry. Dick Kesler will have his 80th birthday on March 22nd. - Jack

Mount Calvary has received memorial donations in memory of Betty Ragan, Regina's mom, from John & Liz Hunter & Vivian Stilley.

Mount Calvary has received a memorial donation in memory of Phyllis Yeager, Bob's mom, from John & Liz Hunter.

Mount Calvary has received a memorial donation in memory of Barbara Arnold, Cindy Schafer's sister, from Steve & Jan Kirchoff.

The Gideons will be giving a short updated report on their worldwide evangelism efforts at the Saturday, 3/25/17 and Sunday, 3/26/17 services. Mt Calvary has three men from our congregation who are members of the Gideons and we have generously supported the Gideons in the past. They will be taking up a free will offering at the end of the service. Please prayerfully consider donating to this international ministry.

Spring Workday – The Spring Workday has been slipped one week and is now scheduled for next Saturday, March 25th. The Trustees will be heading up our SPRING workday and plan to work from approximately 9 am to Noon. We plan to clean and organize the Garage/Shop areas as well as the MFH storage areas. Other items that may be on the agenda, weather permitting, are sanding and painting a few of the outdoor guard railings. Bring your gloves and clipping tools if you would like to help with any cutting or pruning areas that may need attention. All are encouraged to come out and help beautify our church property. Contact John Hunter at 335-3426 for more information.

Food Drive News: Keep up the great job of donating! Keep your reusable paper and plastic bags coming! Thanks for all your help. Items needed for March 25/26 – Spring Break – Please donate any canned good items of your choice.

Red Cross Blood Drive: MCLC is sponsoring a blood drive on Monday, March 27, from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm. in the fellowship hall. Minimum requirements to donate are age 17, 110 pounds, and good health. There are two ways to schedule an appointment: use the signup sheet on the information counter or go to the Red Cross website, "redcrossblood.org" and key on "Give Blood", and then "By Date" or "By Distance." Donating a pint of blood can save up to 3 lives. We also need volunteers to register donators for just one hour beginning at either 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 5:00 pm, or 6:00 pm. To volunteer or ask questions, contact Bruce Bauman.

New blanket project this year! It's Blankets for Puerto Rico's Head Start Program. The blankets will be given to the 4-year-olds at the end of the school year. The fleece has already been purchased. Needed: people to cut & tie fleece (4" fringe, please); people to tie the fringe after it's been cut; and people to turn under the edges of the fleece & top stitch. Please pray for the success of the project. For questions see Diane Doyle cell #217-898-3836 email dldoyle67@live.com.

8th Grade Confirmation Workshop: Youth planning on being confirmed this spring should make sure they attend the 8th Grade Confirmation Workshop this Sunday, March 19th, Noon – 3:00 in the Conference Room. They will review Prayer and the Means of Grace with Pastor Brighton AND learn more about their projects and other details for their Confirmation.

High School Spring Retreat: The High School Youth will be going to the Calvin Center the weekend of April 7-9 for the Spring Retreat. The cost for the weekend is \$75/person (covers housing and meals). The purpose of the retreat is to get away and reconnect in our relationship with our Lord and Savior and one another as we get refreshed for the last stretch of the school year. (Pete still needs one dad to help with chaperoning.)

High School - TAG Night: The next High School TAG Night is this Sunday, March 19th, from 6:30-8:30 pm in the Annex. TAG Nights are a great way to start the week off right! Join us as we gather for food, fun, and fellowship & explore God's Word.

Party With Marty: This week Marty will be hanging out at Church Workday next Saturday, March 25th. Between 11 am and noon! Come for the picture, stay and help clean!

Thank you to my Mt. Calvary Church family; your prayers, cards, phone calls and flowers help make those first dark days much brighter. I am doing good, in therapy and expect to make a full recovery. God is good! - Pat Aldredge

PRAYER CONCERNS

D. J. Nelson, who is awaiting biopsy results from a pancreatic cyst.

Cynthia Trichinotis, who is resting at home, awaiting test results.

Shirley Ermi, who is very ill.

Helen Giese, who is awaiting heart surgery on March 23rd.

Keep In Your Prayers

John Steese (Joan's son), Katilyn Yarbrough, Jeanne Day (Bob's mom), Bev Ellgass, Pat Aldredge, Mary Jean Boyette, Jeannie Hawkins, Jan Clark, Kim Rekau, Bill Bohm, Cynthia Trichinotis, Neal Cowan, Margaret Jennings, Opal Key (Dianne Damron's mother), Denise Forehand, Hiltraud Culpepper, Gunner Burnam (Carolyn's great-nephew), Deloris Denzine and Karen Johnson.

(NOTE: Those listed under "Keep in your prayers" are removed from the list after eight weeks. If there is someone you would like to keep on the list for another eight weeks, please contact the church office.)

Those Battling Cancer

Chet Branscom, Jace Cumbie (Amanda McVay's boyfriend's son), Diana Iverson (Bonnie Hudlin's sister-in-law), Barry Rice (Becky McVay's brother), Norma Young (Melinda Hopf's aunt), Kathy Grube, Mary Schwope (Michele Durbin's aunt), Jeannette Poniske (Fred Tamer's mom) and Bruce Oswalt (Krystal Ferguson's father).

Those Serving our Country in Dangerous Areas

Darrin Landis, Denver Yarbrough, Jonathan Fetchik and Christian Corbitt, for safety and good health as they serve our country in dangerous areas.



Walk with Jesus and Easter Egg Hunt- Mark your calendar for this year's Walk with Jesus. Join us on April 15, 2017, from 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. as we follow Jesus on a step-by-step journey to the cross and then see the empty tomb on Easter morning! We will also have an Easter Egg Hunt. Sign-up sheets are on the information desk! Don't miss out on this opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with family and friends at Mount Calvary!! Any questions, please ask Cynthia at mt-cal-dcm@att.net.

SERVING US TODAY

PREACHER: Pastor David Brighton. **LITURGIST:** Pastor David Brighton/Vicar Aaron Sterling. **ELDERS:** Darron Counselman (8 am) & Bill Gragg (10:45 am). **ACOLYTES:** Tucker Gossman (8 am) & Colton Wurdeman (10:45 am). **USHERS:** Early – Dick Kesler, Brent Durbin, Doug Fingles & Doug Branham. Late – D. J. Nelson, Don Netzinger, Adam Beecher, Dave Miller, Bob Day & Larry Ellgass. **ALTAR GUILD:** Lois Harter, Melinda Hopf, Ruth Miller, Suzanne O'Daniel & Maureen Young. **LAY READERS:** Dick Kesler (8 am) & David Miller (10:45 am). **SLIDE PREPARER:** Gary Webb. **PROJECTIONISTS:** Early – Nick Jenkins. Late – Josh Johnson.

SERVING US NEXT WEEK

ELDERS: Darron Counselman (Wed 7 pm), Open (Sat 6 pm), Glen Thompson (Sun 8 am) & Don Netzinger (Sun 10:45 am). **ACOLYTES:** Caleb Durbin (Wed 7 pm), Sway Cronin (Sat 6 pm), Abigail Halsell (Sun 8 am) & Zoe Babcock (Sun 10:45 am). **ALTAR GUILD:** Cindy Branham, Anita McIntyre, JoAnn Smith & Arlene Zeuner. **LAY READERS:** Roger Moeller (Wed 7 pm), Pruett Burge (Sat 6 pm), Brian Harper (Sun 8 am) and Dave Radcliff (Sun 10:45 am). **GREETERS:** Barbara Locke (Sun 8 am), and Betty Cummings & Nancy Hoar (Sun 10:45 am).

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

1 Kings 18:20-40 and Ephesians 5:8-14

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK

Wednesday – 118 Saturday - 32 Early – 79 Late - 146 Total –257
Karenni Worship: 62

THIS WEEK AT MOUNT CALVARY

Today	11:00 am	Karenni Worship Service (Annex)
	12 – 3 pm	8 th Grade Workshop
	6:00 pm	Concert
Monday	6:20 pm	Evangelism Callers
	6:30 pm	Women's Small Group
Tuesday	4 – 7 pm	Rebecca's Garden of Hope Tutoring
Wednesday	6:00 pm	Dinner
	7:00 pm	Worship
	7:45 pm	Sanctuary Choir (after Worship)
Thursday	10:00 am	Ladies Bible Study
Saturday	9 am-12 pm	Work Day
	3:00 pm	Karenni Bible Study (Annex)
	5:00 pm	Adult Bible Study
	5:00 pm	Praise Team Rehearsal
Next Sunday	11:00 am	Karenni Worship Service (Annex)
	6:30 pm	Teens About God Night