



Calvary United Methodist Church

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PARSON TO PERSON

A Message from Pastor Rob Carter

Why

I suspect that whenever a disaster, such as the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis in Japan occurs many of us are inclined to ask, “Why.” There are various forms of that question but they all just about boil down to “If God is so good and loves us so much why does he let these things happen?”

“Why” is a confounding question. Is it two year old or three year olds (I’m not as up on child development as I should be) who go through that stage where whatever you tell them they ask, “why?” Whichever age group it is, their parents quickly learn that our knowledge and understanding have severe limitations when faced with the why question.

“YOU can’t go outside” “Why?” “Because it’s raining.” “Why?” “Because the clouds are full of water.” “Why?”

You get the idea and I’ve already reached the end of my answers to that particular line of thought. Sooner or later, no matter what the subject, we all do. We can try to explain why earthquakes, hurricanes and floods happen. After we get beyond the scientific answers we’ll say things like “It’s God’s will.” And that creates a new set of “whys” doesn’t it? Why now? Why that particular place. Why those particular people? Ultimately,



“why” is a God question and we can’t see the answer. That’s a little frustrating for all of us. We’d like life and disasters to come in neat, little, explainable packages but that’s not quite the way we experience them is it?

I don’t have a very good answer to the “why” question but I do have a number of things to say about it. Let me caution you against assigning some kind of punishment motive to God. Televangelist Pat Robertson, reportedly, tried to blame last year’s earthquake in Haiti on some pact with the devil the Haitians made over a century before. Subsequent articles revealed that that story was just a legend and had little or no basis in fact.

I can’t outright dismiss the possibility that God metes out punishment. There are certainly plenty of biblical examples but we’d

Sharing Our Vision

"Where there is no vision a people perish." —Proverbs 29:18a

Sunday March 20th, a special meeting was held after the worship service to share Calvary's new Vision Statement with the congregation. Pastor Carter and Cheryl Merkle explained that the Vision Statement was developed as a result of much prayer and two planning retreats held in January and February. At the retreats, leaders reviewed Calvary's history—it's strengths and challenges. We looked at the demographics of the Waldorf area and learned that demographics can support church growth. We also considered the question, "Who is God calling Calvary to be," and discussed Calvary's role to fulfill the Great Commission to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the World." Based on all of this and the ideas collected from the leaders and the congregation, Calvary developed a new Vision:

"We see a diverse, multi-generational congregation, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in the community and the world."

Group leaders have been challenged to review the list of dreams and proposed ministry areas with their groups, then prayerfully identify ways the group can become involved in making the dreams become a reality. For Calvary to successfully meet its vision and its mission, to fulfill the Great Commission, everything we do must be bathed in prayer and point back to our vision. In other words, how does what each group plans to do support the vision?

Group leaders are asked to complete a template for each planned project or program and to identify which ministry or ministries that program or project will support. Blank templates and sample completed templates are located on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Templates are to be completed by May 15th and placed in the Church Council mailbox. Information from the forms will be used to coordinate planning efforts and to update the church calendar. Additionally, they may be displayed in the church to provide a visual reminder of what is planned for the upcoming 12 months.

In his book, "The Hole in our Gospel," Richard Stearns uses the story of Nehemiah's vision to rebuild the broken wall around Jerusalem to illustrate how each person or group can make a difference even when the task seems overwhelming. Nehemiah was a man of prayer and action. Rather than being overwhelmed by the task at hand, he divided the bigger goal into smaller pieces. In Nehemiah 3 more than 40 people and groups each rebuild the section of the wall nearest them. Each did what was doable. The result is that their collective efforts, harnessed and aligned with God's will, resulted in the wall being rebuilt in less than two months. This story is an appropriate reminder that by prayer, a shared vision and tackling the little pieces nearest to us, Calvary can achieve great things for God's glory. ~



Outreach/Evangelism Update

Calvary's outreach and evangelism committee has been actively seeking ways to put Calvary's new vision into action. So far, the following projects have been identified: Fiji book drive (see related article), free yard sale (see related article), and the enactment of an "Intensive Greeters" program in conjunction with the ushers.

The "Intensive Greeters" idea was originally discussed when the church studied "The 5 Practices of Fruitful Congregations." One of those practices is radical hospitality. Calvary is already a very hospitable congregation, so how do we make ourselves radically hospitable? We propose starting with a few small changes such as, posting a couple of greeters outside the church doors, having "new friends" for visitors, providing tours of the church, and having designated "well-wishers" at the exits to greet worshipers as they leave and to express our thanks to congregants for choosing to worshiping with us. Each of us has a small part in this. So, be friendly, look for new faces, but most importantly, share the love of Christ with all those around you! ~

Children's Sunday School

May Lessons

May 1 - Woman at the Well (John 4:3-15, 27-29, 39-42)

The children will learn the story of Jesus meeting the woman at the well and how she shared all that she learned from Jesus. Jesus can save our lives.

May 8 - Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

This story gives us an opportunity to teach the children about love. Jesus loved Zacchaeus even though he had done things that were wrong.

May 15 - Paul (Acts 9:1-19)

The story is about a man who did some bad things to other people. Paul knew that God wanted him to change and he began to share God's love with others. Children will learn that God can make us a better person.

May 22 - Lydia (Acts 16:11-15)

The children will learn the story of a woman named Lydia who believed in Jesus and how her life was changed. Lydia and her friends were happy to know that Jesus loved them. Children can tell people that Jesus loves them.

May 29 - Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48)

Children will learn how Peter and Cornelius showed their love for others. They will learn when we see

someone different, that God wants us to love them. God loves all people and we should too.

Easter Activities

Everyone had fun at the Easter Egg Hunt. There was something for everyone—from looking for eggs and eating hotdogs to the fellowship. We all enjoyed it.

Easter Sunday, we had a get together for the Sunday School children. We had a "Jesus cake" that was made by Ms. Janet. Then a couple of balloons were blown up and released, as we all said "Christ is risen!" Before the party, we heard the story of Jesus' resurrection. Our celebration ended with a pray.

May Birthdays



Jenna Short	4 th
Ryan Feldman	5 th
Kaelyn Bramell	9 th

Happy Birthday to you all!

Free Yard Sale

August 2011

(exact date to be determined)



Calvary is hosting a free yard sale again this year. So start thinking about what you can donate now. The event will be held in August; watch Sunday bulletins and monthly newsletters for additional information including exact date of the event. Meanwhile, please keep it in mind, as you do

your spring cleaning, that donations of household goods, school supplies and clothing in good condition (clean and reusable) will be accepted. All donations will be given away free of cost to families in need throughout Charles County.

We hope to make this a joint event with the other Methodist churches in Waldorf. If you are a yard/garage sale guru, we need your help and organizational skills for planning this event. Contact Karen Smith at musicladykaren@yahoo.com or any member of the Outreach Committee if you are gifted in this area. Remember, God has given each of us gifts and talents; it's our calling to use them for his glory. ~

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The United Methodist Women's Pajama Breakfast was the buzz talk for several weeks after the event. The women had lots of fun and fellowship and enjoyed delicious pancakes prepared by the UMM. We also collected many wonderful articles for needy children in shelters and foster care that were distributed by the Pajama Collection in the tri-county area.

Our next fellowship is our Annual Tea Party which is scheduled for May 7th at 2:00 p.m. Those who attended last year can attest the enjoyment we all shared. This year we anticipate an even greater fellowship as we celebrate not only mother and

daughter; but granddaughters, nieces and friends as well.

On May 14th at our regularly scheduled monthly fellowship Sandy Washington, our guest speaker, will be sharing with us about the "SAFE NIGHTS" program. This program provides an excellent opportunity to outreach to the community. All women are encouraged to come out and learn how we get involved.

June 19th right after church is our Annual Ice Cream Social. And everyone loves ice cream so we'll plan on seeing you there!

Remember to check the UMW's bulletin board, near the choir room, for a continuous listing of upcoming events. And

watch the announcement section of our weekly Sunday bulletin for specific details of each event. All women of the church are encouraged to come out and participate in all the UMW's functions.

As you can see, the UMW have been busy and we strive to continue to be God's hands and feet and to serve him in doing his will for our community and our world.

*Marlene Phillips
President, UMW*

Why Pray?

- To communicate with God by speaking and listening;
- To give Him praise for who He is and all that He does;
- To express our gratitude with thanksgiving for all our the blessings and trials that make us stronger;
- To submit our petitions—our concerns, to Him;
- To intercede for others;
- To feel His peace and comfort;
- To draw closer to Him as our Savior, Comforter, Counselor and Friend.

Prayer is a very important part of one's personal life as well as our churches. If you would like to enrich your prayer life, please join us the first Sunday of each month at 12:00 p.m. directly after Sunday school for *Prayer Partners*. You won't be asked to pray out loud. The first gathering will be Sunday, April 3, in the Sunday school classroom behind the altar. For more information see Becky Merkle. ~



Where can you go to have great fellowship with friends and enjoy FREE delicious snacks and coffee or tea? I'll tell you . . . The 2nd Cup Café. Every Sunday morning, starting at 8:30 a.m., you can find folks greeting each other before the worship service. And for those who get to church just in time for the 9:30 worship service, you can meet after the service until 11:00 a.m. There will be plenty for everyone! If we haven't seen your happy face around the café, located in the fellowship hall, we hope you will make a point to join your friends there! Thanks to all who help make this a great time of fellowship each Sunday. ~

Calvary's 2011 Graduates

Robert Allard, son of Robert and Natalie Allard, will graduate from La Plata High School in June and plans to attend CSM in the fall.

April Brown, daughter of Jimmy and Lisa Brown, will graduate from La Plata High School in June and plans to attend the University of MD in the fall.

Rachel Fenlon, daughter of Joe and Linda Fenlon, will graduate from La Plata High School in June and plans to attend CSM in the fall.

Madison Fields, daughter of Julian and Darla Fields, will graduate from Thomas Stone High School in June and plans to attend CSM in the fall.

Shelby Starke, daughter of Craig and Lynette Starke, will graduate from Thomas Stone High School in June and plans to attend Coastal Carolina University.



Graduation Day

On this day, we honor the memories.

We honor the past as well as we look to the future.

I still remember learning to tie my shoes, and taking the school bus on my own.

But now I am a high school graduate

and want to thank those who helped along the way; those who helped teach me to walk, and to grin and bear.

Thank you for all of your love and attention.

I hope to make you proud.

—*Author Unknown*

PARSON TO PERSON

(Continued from Pg. 1)

be sadly mistaken to say that every disaster and downturn is sent by God to punish the victims. In any given situation I don't know for sure whether God is punishing someone or not but I do know that I'm not the one to discern that that is God's motive in any given situation. If God acts in that manner, it's not so you and I can point fingers. I believe that if God acts in a punitive way it is with the intent of inspiring repentance in those impacted. If we think God is acting to punish, we might be better served, rather than pointing fingers, to ask how WE should be in repentance.

I also want to say that the "It is God's will" or "There is a reason for everything" answer is a terrible

answer. It's really just a cop out. If we can't explain it, let's blame God. I've known people who were irretrievably turned away from God because some thoughtless person explained their tragedy as God's will. All that does is make people angry at, even hate, God. It certainly drives non-believers farther away from God. Again, even if we think it, even if it might be true it's probably better not to say it. It is cold comfort to hear that your personal heartbreak is God's will.

What I do believe about that is that when tragedy strikes God has not inflicted cancer on us, or pushed someone we love into the path of a drunk driver or picked out Japan, or Haiti or the Gulf Coast to devastate. I believe that, regardless of purpose, when these things do happen God is right there with us, with them, in

midst of the chaos, suffering and grief. God is at work in those circumstances to bring good from those disasters, to support and to heal. "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). God is at work in our lives when terrible things happen. God is at work in non-believers' lives when something terrible happens. God is at work in the Gulf Coast, Haiti, Chili, New Zealand, Japan, Washington D.C. and Waldorf—wherever people are suffering and struggling.

Maybe we shouldn't ask "Why" but instead look to see God's redemptive work and ask, "How can I help?"

God Bless
Pastor Rob

HEALTH & WELFARE

The past three months Calvary provided food to 277 adults & 179 children.

We continue to receive food from the state and to purchase food for 18 cents a pound from Southern Maryland Food Bank.

In January of this year, Maryland's Governor, Martin O'Malley, allocated one million dollars to the Maryland Food Bank to buy food for the food banks/pantries throughout the state of Maryland. Having membership in the SMD Food Bank, this entitles Calvary to receive free food for six months. We usually receive five cases of nine different items.

In February Kathy Peters attended a Safe Food Handling Class, which is a requirement of membership in the SMD Food Banks.

In March we prepared a meal for the women's shelter in Hughesville.

The Health and Welfare Committee continues to send get well & thinking of you cards, and Gideon Bibles to families when loved ones passed away. Please let a committee member know if you know someone to whom we should send a card or has a need in which the committee can help.

Committee members are as follows: Hannah Ayers, Ramona Black, Bertie McConnell, Kathy Peters, Janet Talbert, Marsha Thompson & Jean Turner. Three additional members have recently volunteered to help with the food pantry: Darla Fields, Sharon French & Ruth Taylor.

The Committee would like to thank everyone who continues to support our outreach efforts by providing food and monetary donations. For your convenience, non-perishable food items can be placed in the shopping cart in the narthex. The First Sunday of each month has been allocated to request a special offering in support of the food pantry, your monetary donations can be placed in the collections plate on any Sunday of the month.

We express a special thanks to Doug Peters, Everett Currie, Archie Verdiglione and Doc. Proctor for all their help with picking up and stocking the food pantry; and to Mildred Jackson, our office administrator, for handling the distribution of food, in cases of emergency, to people during the week when the pantry is not open, and for handling requests for gas vouchers.

The pantry is always in need of peanut butter, jelly, sliced cheese, and juice.

The Health and Welfare Committee

Birthdays

April

Bobby Russell	6
Janet Talbert	6
Chom Suk Boettcher	7
Victoria Hardy	8
Lexi Bradbury	10
Jennifer Lynn Santos	10
Joanne Olsen	15
Dorothy Daniels	16
Jennifer Frahm	24
Dawn Townsend	25
Elaine Welsh	25
Griffin Bailey Fields	27
Kathy Peters	29
Dylan Joseph Santos	30

May

Katherine Akins	1
Robert Winters	2
Jennifer Drummond	2
James Olsen	3
Pastor Rob	3
Spencer Schliep	4
Jenna Leigh Short	5
Joseph Johnston	6
Rachel Lynn Fenlon	7
Sharon French	12
Cherie Souder	15
Ian Black	18
Keith Akins	20
Rhonda Honeycutt	21
Julie Olsen	23
Robert Boettcher, Jr.	25
Carrie Akins	25
Carson Fields	28
Belinda Musterer	30
Ruth Robey	31

Anniversaries

April

Mr. & Mrs. Morgan Fields	2
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Allard	6
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Welsh	24

May

Mr. & Mrs. J.R. Souder	1
Mr. & Mrs. Zacheus Maggett	2
Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Russell	27

My Fiji Adventure

By Susan Cunningham

Daiana Nacewa worked at the resort where I stayed while on travel to Fiji and we became friends. She is a single mother of a 4 year old and lives with her Mother. The locals live in villages made up mostly of their family members. I did not have the opportunity to visit Daiana's village but through our conversation, I learned she is Christian as most of the local Fijians are and that English is their second language. Fiji living conditions are quite poor compared to our US standards but they are such happy people and truly appreciate their blessings. I did visit one of the other villages we were invited to, and there were many children in the village but I didn't see any toys or games or any of the many things we take for granted in the US. They were some of the nicest people I have ever met in my travels.

Daiana brought me a parting gift, which I hate she spent money for, but I accepted very graciously and was honored she thought so much of me. I had very little to offer her and I asked what I could send to her and her daughter from the US. She quickly responded, children's books. I thought, I will send her many books. Then I thought (or God spoke to me) to have our congregation join in and let's send enough books for the whole village. They would love to have any and all books, for all ages, to give to their church.

Fiji Book Drive

Moved by Susan's experience, Calvary's Outreach Committee decided to sponsor a Fiji Book Drive. Susan along with the Committee asked the congregation to help share Christ's love by donating new and gently used children books to send to Fiji. Collection boxes were placed in the fellowship hall and narthex. The book drive ended on April 17th and Calvary held a "blessing of the books" ceremony during Palm Sunday worship celebration. The books were later packaged and shipped to Fiji.



Susan & Daiana



Local village children selling golf balls they found.



Chief of the village. He sings like Elvis (he used to sing in the local resorts).



Pauliasi Gavidi, his wife and family (they invited us to lunch).



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STAMP

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Calvary

HORIZONS

The Newsletter of
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Deadline for input in next issue: 5/27/11

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

July 11-15 (5:30 - 7:45 PM)

Volunteers needed!

Contact Marlene Phillips or Becky Merkle
at (301) 645-5247 for more details
or to register your child to attend.