



1 W. Wyomissing Ave., Mohnton, PA 19540

August 11th, 2024 – August 17th, 2024

[www.calvaryumcmohnton.org](http://www.calvaryumcmohnton.org)  
Summer Worship: 9AM

*Connect with God.  
Connect with each other.  
Connect with the community.*

### **My Return to God**

8/4/24 Personal Testimony by Dave Svetz

If you were here for Pastor Matthew's farewell service you heard him, say how important our stories are. What path did we take to get to our relationship with our Lord. This is my story, how I ran from God, and He patiently waited, and brought me back home to Him.

Welcome to you all this morning. We're sitting here today as followers/believers of God, worshiping Him in this very building. But have you ever thought about how this happened, what was the event, or impetus that caused you to get to this place, sitting in a pew in Calvary Church. Parents, friends, marriage, what did it take to get you close to our Lord?

In 1950 I was born to the original idea of a "blended family". My father was Catholic, my mother was Lutheran. Back then Ann my mother had to sign an agreement that any children she and George my father had, would be raised Catholic! No signature from mom, no marriage in the Catholic church! Mom signed, I was born, and I was raised Catholic. Dad and I went to a church literally a block from our house. Mom had to take a bus to church into Wilkes Barre as neither she nor dad drove. I was a good Catholic, attended church every Sunday, observed all the Holy Days of Obligation. I went to confession and took communion often. I was a firm believer and close to God, or so I thought!

Bonnie and I met in 1969, dated, and after a 3-year engagement, during which I finished college, we married in September of 1973. I came to Berks County in January of 1973, working for a small computer service bureau. I later found out that ACI, Advanced Cybernetics Incorporated was financed by Mr. Albert Boscov. Bon and I set up housekeeping in a Shillington apartment, 4 years later bought a home which brought us to Mohnton in September of 1977. I attended St John Baptist de la Salle Catholic church in Shillington. Bonnie was raised Methodist, very devoted, attending church with her mother at Courtdale United Methodist church.

After we were married Bon didn't seek out a methodist church down here. Being a nurse, working rotating first and second shifts, weekends and holidays, she felt our time off together was too precious.

1980 arrives, and with it a new season for our lives together, becoming parents. August 30<sup>th</sup> Scott was born. 3 ½ years later our Leap Year baby girl, Carrie arrived on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 1984. Even though Bonnie didn't attend her own church, she was deeply devoted to her background and raising our children in a church was paramount. So, we agreed Scott and Carrie would go to St. John's with me.

Allow me to digress for a moment. I began this message with our reaffirmation of God, us having a solid belief in Him, then asked the question, how did we get here? How did our strong faith, commitment, belief, whatever you want to name it, place us in this building of worship?

In my case, here's my answer. I told you Scott was born August 1980; Dad was diagnosed with cancer that September.

~Testimony *cont'd* on pg. 3



**August 11th, 2024**

**9:00AM**

**A New Sermon Series:  
PLUGGED IN  
Week #1**

**Plugged into Community**

Worship services are also available via livestream from our home page at [www.calvaryumcmohnton.org](http://www.calvaryumcmohnton.org) or click below.

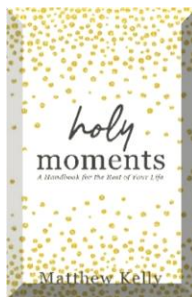
**SUNDAY LIVESTREAM  
CTRL + CLICK HERE**

## It's Not Too Late to Join in an All-Church 6 Week Book Study

Every Thursday, beginning Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> from 6PM-7PM, all are invited to participate in a 6-week study using the book, *Holy Moments – A Handbook for the Rest of Your Life*, by Matthew Kelly.

[excerpted from the back cover]

*You have so much more to offer. You know it. You have sensed it for some time now. ... But you have never known quite what to do about it. All that is about to change. Some ideas are so powerful that simply becoming aware of them, changes our lives forever. Holy Moments is such an idea. It is profoundly simple, astonishingly practical, and once you discover it, your life will finally make sense...It's time to explore your soul-potential.*



Please pick up a book from the brown shelving unit in the Chapel. A donation of \$2 will defray the shipping cost.

Participation in person is preferred, but Zoom will be available, if needed, using the same Zoom log-in as Sunday worship. (see pg. 1)

**Next Dates:** Aug. 15<sup>th</sup>, Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup>, Aug. 29<sup>th</sup>, and Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>.



## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- 12 – David Eshelman  
137 W. Summit St.  
Mohnton, PA 19540
- 14 – Ryck Spengler  
1531 Meadowlark Rd.  
Wyomissing, PA 19610
- 15 – Keri Morton  
1029 N Clayton St.  
Wilmington, DE 19805
- 17 – Riley Pearson  
53 Shea Dr.  
Mohnton, PA 19540

**This Sunday  
is your last  
chance to  
donate!**



Mifflin Food Ministry is collecting school supplies (**needed by Aug. 11**): Extra-large bookbags (sufficient smaller sizes are on hand), two pocket folders, spiral notebooks, pocket size tissues, pink erasers, pencil top erasers, glue sticks, highlighters, colored pencils, markers, and Sharpies.

Drop off donations in the gray bin in the Gathering Area.

Items will be distributed to school-age kids next Saturday, August 17<sup>th</sup>.



**The IGNITE Youth Conference will be held Oct. 11-13 at the New Jersey Wildwood Convention Center.** The deadline to register any 6th-12th grader is September 8th. Justin Thomas, our new Director of Children and Youth Ministries, is making the arrangements for interested youth to attend. The cost is only \$65.00 (check payable to Calvary UMC) with IGNITE in the memo section.

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE BELOW:

Parents/Grandparents of youth: If you haven't already, please contact Justin (cell: 517-331-2665; or email: [christened.calvmohn@gmail.com](mailto:christened.calvmohn@gmail.com) or [jthomas.sitka@yahoo.com](mailto:jthomas.sitka@yahoo.com)) ASAP if you have a youth interested in participating in this amazing annual event!

*IGNITE is more than just a high-energy youth conference with powerful music and profound speakers. It's about a generation united and energized as young disciples of Jesus Christ. They are a generation, guided by dedicated adult leaders, who are becoming ready, willing and able to "Go into all the world" (Mark 16:15) and share their faith with others from the inside out. Website: [2024 IGNITE](https://2024.ignite.org)*

## Upcoming Plans ~ Mark Your Calendar!

Aug. 11 <sup>th</sup>	Calvary Summer Camp Kids sing <i>Father, I Adore You</i> @ 9AM service
Sept. 1 <sup>st</sup>	Labor Day weekend; Communion
Sept. 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>RALLY DAY!</b> 10:30AM Service
Sept. 15 <sup>th</sup>	8AM Praise service Sunday school for all ages begins: 9:00AM Adult class & 9:15AM children & youth 10:30AM Traditional Service

### The Pharmacist

*Chaplain Kenneth E. Dearstyne, Sr.*

I was sitting with the admitting staff when he came to one of our psychiatric wards. He was articulate and, obviously, very intelligent. He had been employed by one of the large chain pharmacies in the area, was married with two young children. To the casual observer, he was not a candidate for psychiatric care. But emotional illness has little to do with intelligence or education. In his case, it had everything to do with the trauma and violence of war.

Like so many young graduates in the field of pharmacy during the Vietnam years, he was given the rank of Staff Sergeant and trained as a combat medic.

The months with an Army unit in the jungles of southeast Asia were a continuing nightmare that he would spend his life trying to forget. He was, by nature, a quiet, peaceful man, deeply scarred by the suffering and death that became part of his daily experience. But, he survived and returned home to marry a young woman he had known since childhood. They soon became the parents of a boy and girl.

His career was progressing well until the epidemic of drug addiction became ever more apparent in the 1970's. Addicted young veterans on the streets became a constant reminder of the cost of a war that the nation seemed to be determined to forget. He thought that volunteering at a city clinic might be something that would be therapeutic for

him. Instead, the memories of battlefield death and trauma returned with a vengeance. Finally, his career was affected, and the family could no longer deal with the nightmares, unprovoked anger and silent isolation. He sought help from the Veterans Administration and became our patient.

I knew him as a personable, quiet young man, determined to regain control of his life and return to his vocation of pharmacy and to his family. His was not a short journey.

The wife was hopeful and optimistic, visiting regularly with the children. He was a participant in the services and activities of his own faith and, though not a protestant Christian, became a regular member of our Sunday choir and Tuesday evening discussion group. Our "chorister", Hagar Lillico, became his second mother, a role she filled for so many other young veterans at the chapel.

He made bus trips to the Vietnam Memorial with other young veterans. Seeing and touching familiar names on that wall became part of his healing, as it did for so many others. Post traumatic stress groups helped him deal with the memories.

About the time of my retirement from the VA in 1984, the pharmacy where he had been employed decided to take him back in his former position. He left us and returned to his family.

I know little of his life after that point, except that he has never been readmitted to the hospital. But, knowing him, I can almost guarantee that, even in retirement, he continues to attend PTSD groups. And, I am quite certain, he makes occasional visits to that "wall" in Washington, D.C. that has had so much to do with his healing. In my mind, I can see him touching the names and remembering the faces. Like so many other veterans, his healing is a work in progress. Like them, he will never forget.

*Testimony cont'd from pg. 1*

He had surgery in late September and what was the case many times back then, they opened dad up, looked around, closed him back up! Dad, as people would tell me, looked good for Christmas of 1980. We have a great picture of him sitting holding Scott on his lap. Dad died the end of January that following year, 1981, 5 months after Scott was born. Mom and dad, their first grandchild,

carrying on the Svetz name, would have been down here a lot to enjoy their grandson and later granddaughter.

I believed in God, trusted Him, I was a faithful Catholic..... Right!

Slowly within the next two years I went to church less and less, eventually stopping. I was angry at God. All the good times, between mom & dad, Scott, Bonnie & I --- poof, not going to happen. Asking myself, why did God do this to our family?

Forward now to 1985, Scott's 5, Carrie's 2. For a while Bonnie was after me, "when am I going back and start attending church again? Scott and Carrie needed to be raised knowing God". I told her yeah, yeah, I would start going again. I never did! After months, into 1986 Bon finally decided that I wasn't going back to church, so she would. A friend, a fellow co-worker I think named Barbara Prosser went to a small Methodist Church in Mohnton, Calvary United Methodist. Bonnie became a member in late 1986 transferring from Courtdale United Methodist to here, going every Sunday she could, with the kids, while I stayed at home. They enjoyed going to Calvary, people were so warm and kind.

Now how did Dave get here? One Saturday evening in early 1987, Scott came to me asking "daddy, how come you don't go to church with mommy, Carrie, and me? He did this on his own. I gave him a nonsense answer, don't remember what it was, but it satisfied him. I looked up and Bonnie was peeking around the corner into the living room. Hearing the whole thing, she didn't say a word, just gave me a small wry smile! In the coming weeks Scott asked me the same question, I gave him the same answer. Finally, I told him I would go with them to church. I told Bonnie when we were alone, what's it gonna hurt for me to go? So, I started coming, enjoyed the people. Dick and Sally Keene sat right behind us, Bob Epler to our left in the same row, Gladys of course was up in the choir loft. So many good people to talk to and more importantly listen to. Of course, Bill Garrett, the pastor, warm, welcoming, always a smile on his face.

Even though I was now going to church, a Methodist not Catholic church, and I was still mad at God! But I started to feel a change inside, we were coming to church as a family. Scott and Carrie were happy as was Bonnie and I. Now God was to make His presence really known to me. For months Pastor Garrett always gave your Methodist invitation to communion, "This is God's table, open to all that accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, come and partake". But I couldn't take communion, I was a Catholic,

that would be a mortal sin in God's eyes! So, I stayed seated in the pew while Bonnie, Scott, and Carrie went.

Finally, on a Sunday in late 1987, months down the road, Pastor Garrett voiced his invitation, and I got up with my family to partake. We all knelt in front of the piano, and I cried! I could feel Jesus' arms around me, welcoming me back home! Finally, I was no longer mad at God. In 1991, we were accepting new members into Calvary's family. Known only to Pastor Garrett, I would be one of them. Scott, Carrie, and Bonnie were surprised but so happy for me. I told my mother. She was happy, since she knew her son had been sad for so many years, holding pain and anger deep inside. People asked me what my dad, if he were alive would say, me a Catholic becoming a Methodist. I think dad would have been angrier with me for pushing God off to the side this whole time.

God works in our lives all the time, sometimes we're aware of His presence, more times were not. Let me through examples show you how God knowingly worked in my life and why I believe and love Him so much. Ken Dearstyne Jr. stated in his testimony that he's feels we need to be born again, and again, almost daily. For me it's God's reminders, little incidents, actions that affect us, and stir our hearts and souls.

- After dad's death, I left the church; it was my son who started the process to return to church – Coincidence?
- Finally accepting the invitation for communion, my feelings at the communion rail – Coincidence?

After several years, Pastor Garrett had left, Pastor Jack Grove assumed the pulpit here at Calvary. A while later, life groups were started, and Bob Werner invited me to one that was at 6:30 AM Wednesday mornings. I talked to Bonnie, and I decided what the heck; what's it gonna hurt? You heard that earlier. Talk about a group of men; Pastor Grove, Stewart McCleary, Charlie Wolfe, Bob Werner, Bob Wagner Jim Kuhle, Shawn Steffy. What did Dave get into? But my growth, coming closer to our Lord, which was never the case in my Catholic beliefs, it was so, so wonderful because of that group of men! – Coincidence?

Years later, our life group changed due to ~~death~~ death, movement of people, etc. But our core group of Bob's Wagner and Werner and myself, along with the addition of Lyle Neal and Tom Wocklish. One Christmas Tom invited our weekly meeting to be held at his home; we were a couple of weeks away from Christmas. Tom's topic for discussion for the night was not the birth of our Savior as you might expect, but death! What were our thoughts on the subject? Unbeknownst to Tom, I had been wrestling with this subject for about a year. I was afraid. Would I be



saved? Am I good enough to get into heaven? The questions that a lot of people have. – Coincidence?

I had now been working at ACI and now current company Boscov's for 25 years. An advancement position came up, and I felt with my experience, seniority with company, a good working relationship with everyone, that I should get the job. I did not, our manager of the division gave the position to someone with less expertise and experience within our area, but whom our manager seemed to be mentoring! I was angry, so I wrote and sent a very long company email to our CIO, Richard Mader, who happened to be out of the country at the time, on company business. I gave him my thoughts of why "Jim" was getting the position. It appeared "Ron" the manager was replicating how he was brought into Boscov's, by someone he worked with at a former employer. When our CIO returned, we sat down to chat. Dick listened as I explained why I felt the way I did, and either I needed to move to another division within Boscov's or quit! Within a couple of days Dick did something totally unexpected, he "created", within Tech Support, a position for me, where I transitioned and remained for 15 years until retirement. Coincidence?

December 2019: About 18 months after Bonnie died, I got a call from a very dear friend, Jan Klee. Bonnie, Pat Maderia (member of Calvary along with her husband Bruce), and Jan worked together for over 10-12 years. It was the first contact I had had since the day Bonnie was buried, following her memorial service at Calvary. We talked: the normal "How's everyone doing?", "How is Parker?", etc. Then came the reason for the call. Jan was wondering, now that I had time to mourn, process Bon's and my time together, might I be ready to start going out, meeting, (and I'll say it), dating other women! I don't think it was out of shock, but rather Jan caught me at the right time, I said yes. Her and husband Paul lived at Phoebe Berks She knew this very nice woman that worked at Phoebe in the Real-estate office, who sold them their apartment. Joan and I met each other at their apartment, had a very enjoyable evening with them, exchanged phone numbers and left. It was Christmas season, so I didn't contact Joan until January 2020, we went out for dinner. Our relationship continued to grow, finally getting married here at Calvary, November 6, 2021. God brought two wonderful, very different women into my life. Each bringing their own unique gifts and talents into our relationship. – Coincidence?

If you've ever had a deep conversation with Bob Wagner, a great friend to me and many here at Calvary, you will hear from Bob, "there is no such thing as coincidence". I'm here before you today as an example, that in regard to our relationship with God, He does not do coincidences! Ken

Dearstyne Jr. suggested in his testimony that we should maybe be "born again", every day. I don't know if born again is the right term, but I do know that through every single incident I've mentioned, each initiated by God, my very being was changed, for the better, bringing me closer to Him.

As our good friend Michelle Daniels will say, "We all have a story to tell."

So, I ask you for the last time, what brought all of you, my friends, here today, what is your story?

His Blessings to you all.



**Sunday, September 8th  
at 10:30AM**

**THEME: INVITE OTHERS TO CHURCH!**

This will be the time when we **ALL** gather back together to:

- worship and give praise to God as a
- community of believers...
- personally invite someone to church...
- and kick-off a new Sunday school season.

**INVITE A FRIEND...  
A MEMBER YOU'VE MISSED...  
OR A NEIGHBOR...**

**Everyone needs the Lord!**

Please plan to stay after the service  
for a time of  
refreshments and fellowship.