

The Valley Evangel

Serving the members and friends of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, Arizona

April/May 2016

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Worship and Study

Sunday Divine Service

9 am; Refreshments after the service

Sunday School/Adult

Bible Class: 10:30 am

Thursday Internet Study

Group: 7 p.m. (Ask Pr. Webber for login info.)

Friday Bible Study: 10

a.m. at the Muth residence

Newsletter Staff

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From the Pastor's Desk

Easter is now behind us, and summer is approaching. The snowbirds are getting ready to leave and go back to parts north, while the year-round residents are hunkering down for another hot summer. But at this time of transition, in the annual cycle of the life of our congregation and of its members and friends, Easter is behind us only in the chronological sense. The truth of the matter is that Easter is never behind us. It is always with us, and it is always in us.

This truth is recalled to our minds on every Sunday of the year, since every Sunday is a little "Easter." Every Sunday is "the Lord's Day," because our Lord *consecrated* Sunday by his resurrection. Every Sunday therefore celebrates our Lord's victory over sin and death for us, and his living presence in his church. As the resurrected Savior of the world, who can never die again, Jesus promised his church: "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20b, ESV). In this world, we, as members of Christ's church, are never alone. As Jesus also said, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them" (Matthew 18:20, ESV).

The risen Lord is with us also according to the mystical union that we have with him, and with the whole Trinity, through faith in his gospel. Jesus is present in our faith, and in *us through* faith. And also by means of our faith in him, he draws us into himself, and into his life. He has said: "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23, ESV).

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And so, as the seasonal visitors go, Christ, and the spirit of Easter, go with them. As the permanent residents remain, Christ, and the spirit of Easter, remain with them. As all of us move forward into the uncertainties of our life's future, and sometimes into a very scary and unsettled future, the risen Savior is our companion. He is not in the grave any more. He is alive, and is with us wherever we are, to comfort and to protect.

And regardless of what may be swirling around us in life, as we brace ourselves for whatever challenges or temptations come our way, Jesus will not abandon us. Nothing can threaten him any more. Not even the grave could hold him. And so, when he is with us – and he is always with us! – nothing can truly threaten us either. We are safe with him. We are secure in him.

So, is Easter now behind us? Well, as far as the days on the calendar are concerned, the answer is yes. We are now heading into the season that follows the festival, and after that will come Pentecost with its season. But as far as the person and work of Jesus Christ are concerned, the answer is no. Easter is always with us, and in us, because the risen Lord is always with us, and in us. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

– Pastor Webber

Interview with Missions Administrator Steven Petersen

Conducted by Erica Olson, Editor Assistant



Erica: Hi, Pastor Petersen. And thank you for agreeing to this interview. It was wonderful to have you as part of the Women's Mission Rally in February, and to listen to your presentation. When did you first become involved with mission work?

Pr. Petersen: I was serving as pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin, when in 1987 I was elected to the Board for Home Missions (BHM) and became its Field Secretary.

Erica: Did your work initially involve foreign or domestic missions? What did you do?

Pr. Petersen: As Field Secretary for the Board for Home Missions, I was the liaison between the Board and the individual home missions around the U.S. So I was involved in selecting sites, Calling missionaries, church construction, etc. In 1997, the Board for Foreign Missions joined the BHM in issuing me a Call to also serve them, and I became the synod's Missions Counselor, serving as staff to both boards. In 2009, when we absorbed the Thoughts of Faith affiliates in Europe, I became the Administrator for the Board for World Outreach and focused solely on foreign mission work in Europe (Ukraine, Czech Republic and Latvia), South America (Peru and Chile) and Asia (India and Korea).

Erica: Have you always been a Lutheran?

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Pr. Petersen: My father was a Lutheran pastor, so I was raised in our Synod.

Erica: What kind of work has your family done with you on missions?

Pr. Petersen: My wife has traveled with me to mission fields occasionally. She's very supportive of my work. My travel takes me away from home about 75 days each year.

Erica: Tell me about your favorite mission destination and the work you did.

Pr. Petersen: I can't pick a favorite among our seven fields, but each has special features that are memorable. India is crowded and noisy, Korea is pretty sophisticated, Peru has a very well developed clergy roster since we've been training and ordaining pastors there for many years, Chile has a very strong English as a Foreign Language program that draws prospects toward the church, and Ukraine, Czech Republic and Latvia have the remnants of communism in their history so their cultures are shaped by that.

Erica: What have been your greatest difficulties and challenges in your mission work?

Pr. Petersen: Financing work in foreign countries is challenging. Understanding the complicated nuances of different cultures can be difficult, too.

Erica: Was there ever a time when you considered discontinuing mission work?

Pr. Petersen: Well, for the sake of stewardship, sometimes mission boards must try to judge whether God is blessing their work in certain areas and determine if resources should be used elsewhere. That's not easy.

Erica: How has your faith helped you, your family, and others, before, during, and after a mission trip?

Pr. Petersen: We can only trust God to watch over us when we travel, bless our efforts to serve in the church, and grant success according to his gracious will.

Erica: Where have you gone recently, and for how long?

Pr. Petersen: I visit all seven fields at least once each year. Including the opportunities to attend Women's Mission Rallies, it usually amounts to 10 or 11 weeks of travel each year.

Erica: Do you have plans to do more or different work in missions?

Pr. Petersen: We have recently started Seoul Theological Institute to train ministers to serve the Korean (ethnic) Chinese (citizenship) population in China and Korea. This marks an expansion for the ELS World Outreach program.

Erica: Of all the places in the world, where have you most enjoyed going, for mission work or otherwise?

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Pr. Petersen: Besides our mission fields, I'm grateful that I've been able to visit the Luther sites, and Norway where my ancestors came from, and the French Alps where my father and his World War II bomber crew spent six weeks hiding from the Nazis after their plane crashed in occupied territory.

Erica: Thank you so much for talking with me. I hope we get to learn more from you in the future.

Pr. Petersen: Thanks to the ladies of Redeemer for hosting a very successful Women's Mission Society Rally in February!

Ascension Day Service



“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.”

(Acts 3:19-21, ESV)

Join us for the Ascension Day Divine Service on Thursday, May 5, at 7 p.m.

Devotion: "Spring Cleaning"



In the northern hemisphere, the season of spring is upon us. Not only are we likely to be done with cold weather and snow for a while, grass is beginning to turn from brown to green. Trees are budding. Annual flowers are popping up and some beginning to bloom. Certain species of birds are returning from their trek south. We usually associate spring with new life. Some might also associate spring with *cleaning*. The house has been closed up tight all winter, and so we feel the urge to open the windows and let some fresh air and sunlight pour in. But when we do, maybe we notice all the dirt and grime that has built up over the winter. Windows are cloudy with a dull haze. Dust bunnies have been multiplying in corners that haven't seen much light for a while. The floors of our garages (at least for those "up north") are caked with salt residue from our cars. Seeing all this dirt we feel the need to clean!

A famous man from Old Testament times once asked God to help him with his cleaning. "Create in me a clean heart, O God," King David prayed in Psalm 51. David was not asking God to help him live a more healthful life so that he could avoid clogged arteries. The heart disease he wanted to avoid is caused by the dirt that all of us have in our lives, the dirt of sin. This filth is in us all and eventually, if it is not cleaned out, it will kill us. Forever. In hell.

But God does not want us to die forever. He sent his Son Jesus to clean out our sin. That's why Jesus died on the cross—to take our sin away. In baptism, God washes us clean of our sin and gives us a new start. He creates trust in us, trust in him to keep taking our sin away, trust in him that he will bring us to heaven someday.

"Spring cleaning" may give us a new outlook on life, but God's cleaning gives us life itself. Come and hear more about this good news this Sunday.

From the ELS Board for Home Outreach

<i>Redeemer</i>	<i>Lutheran</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>April 2016</i>			
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
					1 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	2
3 Easter 2 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	4	5	6	7 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	8 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	9
10 Easter 3 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. SS/Congregational Forum	11 7 p.m. Voters meeting at the church	12	13 Pastor at ELS West Coast Pastors Conference in Yelm, WA	14 Pastor in WA Internet Study Group canceled	15 Pastor in WA for ELS West Coast Pastors Conference Bible Study canceled	16
17 Easter 4 9 a.m. DS Ladies' Guild meeting 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	18	19	20	21 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	22 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	23
24 Easter 5 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	25	26 7 p.m. Elders Meeting	27	28 Internet Study Group canceled	29 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	30

Abbreviations:

DS—Divine Service; SW—Service of the Word; SS/AC—Sunday School/Adult Bible Class

Divine Service—Full Word and Sacrament Service with Communion, on 1st, 3rd and 5th

Sundays, and on major festivals

Service of the Word—A brief spoken order of Holy Communion follows the public service on the 2nd and 4th Sundays

Refreshments are served after the Sunday morning Services

<i>Redeemer Lutheran Church</i>					<i>May</i>	<i>2016</i>	
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	
1 Sts. Philip and James, Apostles 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	2	3	4	5 Ascension 7 p.m. DS Internet Study Group canceled	6 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	7	
8 Easter 7 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	9 7 p.m. Church Council meeting at the Muth residence	10	11	12 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	13 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	14	
15 Pentecost 9 a.m. DS Ladies Guild meeting after the service 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	16	17	18	19 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	20 10 a.m. Bible Study (location to be announced)	21	
22 Trinity 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	23	24 7 p.m. Elders Meeting	25	26 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	27 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	28	
29 Pentecost 2 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	30	31					

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About Redeemer Lutheran Church

Our mission is faithfully to preach the Word of God, both Law and Gospel, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; correctly to administer the Holy Sacraments for the forgiveness of sins; and to reach out to those who have not yet come to faith in Christ Jesus.



We're on the Internet!
redeemerscottsdale.org

Audio recordings of Pastor Webber's sermons, and of entire services, are posted each week on the church website.