

The Valley Evangel

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

April 2017

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From the Pastor's Desk

Easter will be observed on Sunday, April 16, at our 9 a.m. festival Divine Service. But in preparation for Easter, our congregation will also observe Maundy Thursday, with a Divine Service on April 13 at 7 p.m., and Good Friday, with a Service of Tenebrae Vespers on April 14 at 7 p.m. The Thursday service commemorates Jesus' institution of the Sacrament of his body and blood, given and shed for the remission of sins, during the last Passover meal that he shared with his disciples. The Friday service commemorates Jesus' death on the cross, by which humanity's transgressions were atoned for, and God was reconciled to fallen man.

The events that these days in Holy Week commemorate would have no meaning for us, or for anyone, if Jesus had not later been raised from the dead. Jesus' last Passover would have been just like the last Passover of thousands of other Jews whose deaths happened to be approaching at Passover time. And his crucifixion would have been just like the crucifixions of hundreds of other men who were executed by the Romans for various crimes. Without the resurrection, these events would not have been outstanding historical events. No one, through the centuries, would have taken note of them, and no one would remember them today. But these Holy Week services, and what they represent, are of fundamental importance to us as Christians and as Lutherans, precisely because the resurrection of Jesus did in fact happen. In hindsight, from the perspective of Jesus' profoundly miraculous victory over death and the grave, the events of the first Maundy Thursday and of the first Good Friday were elevated to the highest level of meaning. The resurrection was God's vindication of his Son, which validated the truthfulness of

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everything Jesus had taught about God's grace and forgiveness, and which – in effect – declared that Jesus' death really did open the way of salvation to the human race.

And so, in conjunction with our celebration of Easter, we also celebrate, as a congregation, our forgiveness before God, and our reconciliation with God, through public worship on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. In fact, we consider these observances, together with our Easter observance, really to be one continuous service. You will note that there is no benediction at the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday service. The service does not really end, but merely pauses, until it is resumed on Friday. And the Good Friday service, with its starkness and simplicity, likewise has no benediction. It is, rather, the "middle section" of a multi-day service that begins on Thursday evening, and that does not conclude until late Sunday morning. Easter gives meaning to the Thursday and Friday services, and the Thursday and Friday services are in turn joined to Easter, as an organic part of it.

People tend to come to church in greater numbers on Easter, in comparison to Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. But the attendance for all three services should actually be the same, because all three services are really one big service. Each of these services, in its own way, basks in the light of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Christ's institution of the sacrament of his living and forgiving presence in the church points forward to Easter, which makes that continuing presence possible. Christ's innocent suffering and death on the cross points forward to Easter, and to his Easter victory over death once and for all time. And of course, Easter points back to these two services, and gives them meaning, as we have already noted.

And so, as you plan out your worship for Holy Week and Easter, plan to come to all three services. As you invite your friends and relatives to come to church with you, invite them to all three services. Be here for the whole experience, and absorb the full meaning of your Savior's resurrection. Be renewed in your faith in everything that Jesus has done for you, and continues to do for you, as your living Lord.

– Pastor Webber

New Books in the Church Library

***Luther: Man Between God and the Devil* by Heiko A. Oberman** Highly recommended by Pastor Webber, this book is written by one of the world's greatest authorities on Martin Luther, and is the definitive biography of the central figure of the Reformation. "In Oberman's startling portrait of Martin Luther, we meet an obstinate monk of volcanic temperament, for whom Christ and the Devil were equally real. 'Luther proclaimed the Last Days, not the modern age,' asserts this University of Arizona history professor. The rebellious monk, we learn, called himself doctor, preacher, or professor, but never 'reformer,' and never spoke of his movement as the 'Reformation.' His achievement lay in 'horizontalizing' Christian ethics by proclaiming that good works are crucial for survival in a threatened world. This weighty study gives full attention to aspects of Luther's career that other biographers have sought to minimize, such as his savage

attacks on Jews and his scatological invective against the Devil. Oberman brings us closer to the real Luther.” Illustrated. (*Publisher’s Weekly*)

***An Introduction to New Testament Criticism* by Harold J. Greenlee** F. F. Bruce commented on the first edition, “I am glad to give it my warm commendation. As an introduction to the criticism of the New Testament it has...no equal in English.” Since Bruce’s comments on the original edition thirty years ago, this clear and comprehensive introduction to New Testament textual criticism has remained a popular text for beginning and intermediate students. Diagrams, an appendix of Latin terms, supplementary readings, a bibliography, and an index make this revised edition an invaluable resource. (Amazon)

***One Plus One Equals* by Palmer L. Gedde** From the Author: “There are dozens of books written on or about marriage. I have not read them all. I doubt if anyone has. One reason for that may well be because many of them are just too long. That is why this is a little book. I am not a psychologist or psychiatrist. I am a pastor. This book is not a sex manual. It does not presume to have all the answers to all the questions that confront a couple, married or about to be married. It is, however, an attempt to share some things that I have heard and learned over the years with the hope that they may help a couple find some answers for themselves.” (Amazon)

***Does the Bible Contradict Itself?: A Discussion of Alleged Contradictions in the Bible* by William Arndt** William Arndt, a noted educator and theologian, helps to clarify the chief difficulties and apparent contradictions that are encountered by most people while they read the Bible. The most frequently cited “discrepancies” in the Bible are examined in great detail. (Concordia)

Church and Ministry Today: Three Confessional Lutheran Essays This book contains three essays, written by highly-respected Lutheran theologians, on subjects that are still very pertinent to Lutherans in our time: “The Doctrine of the Call in the Confessions and Lutheran Orthodoxy,” by Robert Preus; “It is Not Given to Women to Teach: A Lex in Search of a Ratio,” by William Weinrich; and “Church Growth As Mission Paradigm: A Confessional Lutheran Assessment,” by Kurt Marquart.

***The Abortion Revolution and the Sanctity of Human Life* by Allen Quist** Allen Quist was Professor of Psychology at Bethany Lutheran College from 1968 to 1982. He holds two graduate degrees. He was also active in Minnesota politics and has written two books, *The Marks of the Nail* and *The Abortion Revolution and the Sanctity of Human Life*, both published by Northwestern Publishing House.

Spiritual Fathers: A Treatise on the Lutheran Doctrine of the Ministry, with Special Reference to Luther’s Large Catechism, Second Edition, by David Jay Webber This is the revised and expanded second edition of Pastor Webber’s book on the doctrine of the Ministry.

Free Concert

Enjoy a free concert at ASU Gammage Auditorium in Tempe on Thursday evening, April 27, at 7:30 p.m. The ASU combined choirs and Symphony Orchestra present the 2016-17 season finale concert, featuring Stravinsky’s “Fireworks,” Bartok’s “Concerto for Orchestra,” and Beethoven’s “Mass in C.” For more information visit <https://music.asu.edu/content/asu-choirs-and-symphony-orchestra-fireworks-stravinsky-bartok-and-beethoven>

Ladies Guild News

Easter Lily Donations: Members and Friends of Redeemer are invited to donate funds for Easter lilies to beautify our sanctuary on Easter Sunday. Donations are \$10 per plant. The Ladies Guild will remove the plants from the Altar after the Easter Sunday service and provide wrapping materials for the donors to transport the plants home for your enjoyment on Easter Monday. If the donors do not want their plant they can inform one of our Ladies Guild members and we will find a home for their plant. Do not dispose of the plant after the flower wilts and the stem dies, since the bulb in the soil is still alive. Keep the soil moist during the year and by next January you notice a new plant emerging. Please submit your donations by Sunday, April 9, 2017. A sign-up sheet attached to a clipboard is located on the “cracker snack table” in the Fellowship Hall. Attach your donation to the clipboard or submit it to Carole Clingan, Susan Muth, Erika Schmeissing or Marilyn Bonnell.

Easter Sunday: Beginning on Sunday, March 26, a sign-up sheet attached to a clipboard will be located in the Fellowship Hall on the snack table for anyone wishing to bring a side dish for the Easter Sunday Brunch on April 16. The Ladies Guild will provide the ham and beverages. Please label with your name any dishes, lids and utensils you wish returned to you. On Easter the Ladies Guild will also provide an Easter Egg Hunt for all Sunday School age children. Baskets will be issued to all interested children. The Hunt will start immediately following the Easter Divine Service.

The Ladies Guild would like to thank the members and friends of Redeemer Church for their support of our activities throughout the year. Most recently we have noted with appreciation the generosity displayed for our “Diaper Drive” benefiting the Alpha Crisis Pregnancy Resource Center, and the donations received for our Women’s Mission Rally on February 11 in Bishop, California. Both beneficiaries are most worthy of our continuing support!

On Saturday, April 15, 2017 starting at 9:00 am, the Ladies Guild will sponsor an Easter church decoration morning. The activities include setting up the Fellowship Hall for the Easter brunch, hiding the Easter eggs for the children's Hunt, decorating the Altar and hallways with Easter Lilies, refurbishing the Old Rugged Cross with Lilies and a white shawl, stocking the restrooms with soap and tissue, and tidying up the Sanctuary and classrooms (decorating can sometimes be messy). Everyone is invited to participate in these essential activities because many Easter service attendees are new visitors!

– Carol Clingan, Ladies Guild President



Devotion: The Resurrection Proves You Are Forgiven

*He's
Risen!*

Where is the evidence? We are fortunate to live in a country where one must be proven guilty. The presumption of innocence is central to our legal system. The lawyers involved in a court case present evidence to support their claims of guilt or innocence for the accused. A baseless claim will be met with the question, "Where is the evidence?"

All truth claims should be proven valid by supporting evidence. Christianity is held to the same standard. What are some of the truth claims of Christianity?

The first is that everyone is sinful. The evidence for this is overwhelming. Just think. Have you ever told a lie? Have you ever taken something that didn't belong to you? Have you ever had sexual desires for someone who is not your spouse? Have you ever hated someone? The evidence proves that you are sinful.

The Bible claims that God sent His Son, Jesus the Christ, to live a perfect life, to suffer and die innocently, and to rise triumphant from the grave so that the sins of all people are forgiven. It says, "He was delivered over to death for our offenses, and raised to life for our justification (forgiveness)." (Romans 4:25) The resurrection is the crux of the matter. If Jesus rose from the grave, then everything else claimed holds true.

What evidence is there for the resurrection of Jesus? Here are some things to consider.

- The disciples never changed their story. There are no inconsistencies in the different accounts of the resurrection.
- The disciples were willing to die for their faith in the resurrected Jesus. All of the Apostles but John were martyred – killed for their faith. Why would they die for a lie?
- Over 500 men saw the resurrected Jesus at the same time. Jesus appeared to people for 40 days after He was raised to give many convincing proofs that He was alive.
- Where is the body? No event has had such a great impact on the world. To prove Christianity a hoax, all one must do is produce the body of Jesus. His enemies certainly would have if it was possible. But they haven't because Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!

The resurrection of Jesus is a valid event in human history. It really happened. Therefore, everything that the Bible claims about Jesus is true. He did live a perfect life. He did die an innocent death for the sins of all people. He rose from the grave to prove that God has accepted Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. Here is the greatest claim: Your sins are forgiven. Jesus' resurrection proves that it is true.

Gather with us for our Easter services and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Celebrate because it proves that you are forgiven.

From the ELS Board for Home Outreach



*Join us for Worship
in Holy Week and on Easter!*

Palm Sunday: April 9, 9 a.m.

Maundy Thursday: April 13, 7 p.m.

Good Friday: April 14, 7 p.m.

Easter Sunday: April 16, 9 a.m.



<i>Redeemer</i>	<i>Lutheran</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>April</i>		<i>2017</i>	
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
						1
2 Lent 5 8:30 am Choir 9 am DS 10:30 am SS/AC	3	4	5 6-6:30 pm Soup Supper 7 pm Vespers with Spoken Communion	6 7 pm Internet Study Group	7 10 am Bible Study at the Muth residence	8
9 Palm Sunday 8:30 am Choir 9 am DS w/ Confirmation Reception after the service 10:45 am SS/Congregational Forum	10 7 pm Voters Meeting, at church	11	12	13 Maundy Thursday 7 pm DS	14 Good Friday 7 pm Tenebrae Vespers	15 9 am Church Decorating for Easter
16 Easter 8:30 am Choir 9 am DS 10:30 am Brunch & Easter Egg Hunt (SS/AC canceled)	17	18	19	20 7 pm Internet Study Group	21 10 am Bible Study at the Muth residence	22
23 Easter 2 9 a.m. SW w/Spoken Communion 10:30 am SS/AC	24	25 Pr. Webber in Tacoma, WA, for ELS West Coast Pastors' Conference and Emmaus Conference	26 Pr. Webber in Tacoma, WA	27 Pr. Webber in Tacoma, WA Internet Study Group canceled	28 Pr. Webber in Tacoma, WA Bible Study canceled	29
30 Easter 3 9 am DS 10:30 am SS/AC						

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, usually 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
 usually on the 2nd and 4th Sundays

Refreshments are served after the Sunday morning Services.

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The Valley Evangel
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First Class Mail

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.