

# The Valley Evangel

*Serving the Members and Friends of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, Arizona*

August 2018

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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 pm (ask Pastor Webber for login information)*

*Friday Bible Study: on hiatus until September 7*

## **Newsletter Staff**

*Editor: Pastor David Jay Webber*

*Contributor: Jennifer Price*

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## **From the Pastor's Desk**

Erica Olson has been a stalwart and reliable volunteer on the *Valley Evangel* editorial staff since the November 2010 issue. She was responsible for layout and design, occasionally contributed articles, and often shared with us photographs of church events that she had taken, and other graphics, to augment the attractiveness of the newsletter. She will now no longer be able to serve on the newsletter staff, and we will miss her. We thank her for everything she has done for our congregation in these and other ways.



For now, I, and contributor Jennifer Price, will do the best we can to keep things going. But we are very open to additional volunteers who would like to help out with the newsletter. In particular, help is needed with graphics and design. Try as I might, I was not able to figure out how to incorporate a calendar template that would work

the way I would like it to. So, in this issue, upcoming events will simply be listed, and will not appear in the form of a calendar for the month of August. Sorry. But if you can help us do it better in the future, on an ongoing basis – in a way that is compatible with the WordPerfect word processing program – please step forward!

On a completely different subject, I would like to design some outreach materials for our congregation that utilize, among other things, “testimonials” of the good experiences that the members and friends of Redeemer have had in or through our congregation. If there is some special reason why you value the ministry and fellowship of our congregation, and would like to formulate that sentiment in a couple or a few sentences – in a way that would be calculated to draw the interest and attention of people who may be looking for a church, or for a place where they can learn about God and experience his love – please write something down and share it with me. Most useful would be something beyond a general statement of satisfaction (if you are in fact satisfied!), that touches on a unique thing that you appreciate, or that has been a source of special blessing or comfort to you.

If your name could be used in the advertising together with your comment, that would be great. Inquirers are often interested to know that real people like themselves were looking for the same kind of things that they are looking for, and are now personally recommending a place where they found what they were looking for. But if you would prefer that your testimonial would be anonymous as it is used in an outreach campaign, that is also O.K. Your words might indeed serve an evangelistic purpose, as they touch the hearts and minds of people who don't understand the gospel or know who Jesus is, but who do sense a need for some kind of meaning and purpose in their lives. Your description of your relationship with God, and of how the things that go on at Redeemer have helped you to know Christ and his salvation, can be a tool that the Lord uses to draw others to the Christian faith, to the fellowship of his church, and to the ministry of Word and Sacrament that is available to all people within our congregation.

## TESTIMONIAL



You don't have to be a member of Redeemer to participate in this, just someone who has benefitted spiritually in some way from your connection to our church – and more specifically, someone who has grown in faith, been comforted by the gospel, and been blessed by the worship, teaching, and Christian fellowship that you have experienced in our church. So, we would like to receive testimonials from members and former members, from occasional visitors and frequent visitors, and from people who come in person and people who benefit from our online presence and the recordings of services and sermons that are available on our website. In our own way, we can do as Jesus asked the Gadarene man to do: “Go...to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you” (Mark 5:10, ESV). Thanks for your help!

– Pastor Webber

## Alpha Pregnancy Center Update



Thank you all for your continued donations to the Alpha Pregnancy Center!

I have made several visits to the center and the volunteers continue to express their gratitude for our support. They did not have to replenish their diaper supply until a few weeks ago because they received so many diapers in March and April!

Their special request this month is for diaper sizes T3-4. These are often distributed to mothers who already have older children. Kudos to Carole for bringing these size diapers a few weeks ago! I made a special trip to drop them off with a very grateful and busy staff. (Diaper sizes T5 and above are not needed by the center.)

Alpha was also pleased to report that in the last two months two more children became children of God through baptism at Santo Tomas.

– Jennifer Price, Alpha Center Liaison

## Journey with Jennifer

### *Second of a Series Exploring the Holy Land*

You might recognize Shiloh as a Biblical name but not ascribe any importance to it, much less recognize it as an important ancient city. Looking at pictures of Shiloh hardly leaves one breathless. But Shiloh is seared in my memory more than anything else I learned during my month in Israel...and that is saying something.

Shiloh is located in the West Bank and was part of the territory of the tribe of Ephraim, Joseph's younger son who, along with his elder brother Manasseh, replaced Joseph and Levi in the twelve tribal allotments. Joshua was the leader of the tribe of Ephraim, and one of the two spies (along with Caleb of Judah) who wanted to take the Promised Land after they surveyed it (Num. 13-14). For that honor, only Joshua and Caleb, from the original Exodus out of Egypt, survived the forty years of wandering in the desert. And Joshua succeeded Moses, leading Israel into the Promised Land of Canaan.

According to the conservative [Biblical] dating, the Exodus was from 1446 to 1406 B.C. (or B.C.E.). At the conclusion of seven years of conquest in the year 1399 B.C., the Bible records in Joshua 18:1 that "the whole congregation of the people of Israel



assembled at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The land lay subdued before them." The "tent of meeting" housed the tabernacle and was the only approved location for the priests of Israel to inquire of the Lord and make atonement for the sins of the people. It is the precursor to the later Temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem, just 25 miles to the south, which in 1399 B.C. was still occupied by the Jebusites and was known as Jebus. (David doesn't take the city until 400 years later.)

Politically speaking, it is unsurprising that Joshua, the leader of Israel, would set up the religious center in his tribal land and along a major ancient highway through the hill country. Besides being a politically strategic move, Joshua probably also chose this site for the tent of meeting because it is a low, flat area and surrounded on all sides by hills, except to the southwest. There are large pasture lands and a water supply necessary to support many men and beasts for tabernacle sacrifices. The site was not elevated or strategic and therefore accessible to anyone, Israelite or Gentile, who wanted to worship Yahweh. We see the heart of God to be with His people and to be known by them.

In 1399 B.C. Israel took God's command to sacrifice and worship only at Shiloh so seriously that not long after the conquest ended and their brethren were blessed at Shiloh to return to their tribal lands east of the Jordan River, the tribes threatened war on the same brethren because their "altar of remembrance" built

at the border was misconstrued. The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh respond in Josh. 22:29: “Far be it from us that we should rebel against the Lord and turn away this day from following the Lord by building an altar for burnt offering, grain offering, or sacrifice, other than the altar of the Lord our God that stands before his tabernacle!”

If only their cry resonated with subsequent generations of Israel! But as the Bible records in Judges, the people sinned and strayed from the Lord their God. In approximately 1120 B.C. Hannah pours out her heart to the Lord before corrupt priests at Shiloh. Several years later the Lord reveals himself to her son, the prophet Samuel (1 Sam 3:21) at Shiloh. Not long after, in approximately 1104 B.C., the archaeological record indicates a layer of destruction that is believed to be due to the Philistines. Interestingly, the Biblical historical narratives are silent on the actual destruction of Shiloh, but David’s chief song writer Asaph (ca. 1000 B.C.) records God’s judgment on Shiloh in Psalm 78:56-68, due to Israel/Ephraim’s idolatry:

*Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God and did not keep his testimonies, but turned away and acted treacherously like their fathers; they twisted like a deceitful bow. For they provoked him to anger with their high places; they moved him to jealousy with their idols. **When God heard, he was full of wrath, and he utterly rejected Israel. He forsook his dwelling at Shiloh, the tent where he dwelt among mankind, and delivered his power to captivity, his glory to the hand of the foe. He gave his people over to the sword and vented his wrath on his heritage. Fire devoured their young men, and their young women had no marriage song. Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows made no lamentation. Then the Lord awoke as from sleep, like a strong man shouting because of wine. And he put his adversaries to rout; he put them to everlasting shame. He rejected the tent of Joseph; he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loves. He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever. He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance. With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand.** (ESV)*



After the destruction of Shiloh, the tabernacle moved around Israel until Solomon gave it a permanent home in Jerusalem in the 900s B.C. While some occupation and even cultic presence continued at Shiloh, as indicated both by 1 Kings and the archaeological record, Shiloh essentially disappeared off the radar. Looking at the pictures, you can see that the site in 2007 was desolate. How remarkable for a location in which the

presence of God dwelt for approximately 300 years! By comparison, the Temple was active only 400 years

before its destruction. And that is where the history of Shiloh becomes most pertinent. The southern kingdom of Judah had survived the Assyrian onslaught in the 700s B.C., but only for another 150 years before Babylon came knocking down their door in the mid-500s B.C. Jeremiah, the prophet to whom Jesus was most often compared, was called by God to warn and prophesy against Judah/Jerusalem for its sin of idolatry. He reminds them of Shiloh's destruction to make the point that God does not hesitate to destroy a place associated with His name. The residents of Jerusalem did not think God would dare allow their city to be destroyed because the Temple was the house of Yahweh! The residents of Jerusalem were trusting false prophets who prophesied safety and salvation from Babylon. Read Jeremiah 7:8-20 (noting the use of Shiloh and how similar the language is to Psalm 78 and Jesus' own words in Matt. 21:12-13):

*“Behold, you [residents of Jerusalem] trust in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’ – only to go on doing all these abominations? Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the Lord. **Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel.** And now, because you have done all these things, declares the Lord, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, **therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen, all the offspring of Ephraim.**”*

*“As for you [Jeremiah], do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I [the Lord] will not hear you. Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven. And they pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger. Is it I whom they provoke? declares the Lord. Is it not themselves, to their own shame? Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, upon man and beast, upon the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground; it will burn and not be quenched.” (ESV)*

As we know, Jerusalem was destroyed and its leadership, including Daniel and Jeremiah, were taken into exile to Babylon. Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem is often perceived as the singular catastrophic event for Israel. But before David even took Jebus and renamed it Jerusalem, the same catastrophe befell Israel at Shiloh. God strenuously reminded Jerusalem of what He did to Shiloh, but they ignored the warning. The pride of Judah was their downfall, but God preserved a remnant that ultimately bore the Savior, Jesus Christ, from the ashes of both Shiloh and Jerusalem. We need no less a strenuous reminder of God's future holy judgment of all mankind and the need to repent and teach a Christ-centered gospel.

For more information and pictures of Shiloh, see [www.bibleplaces.com/shiloh](http://www.bibleplaces.com/shiloh)

Since my visit in 2007, there is now a Shiloh visitor center and website: [www.a-shiloh.co.il/en](http://www.a-shiloh.co.il/en). I have not viewed everything on this site so I can't vouch for the accuracy of all the information presented. Excavations started at this site in 1838 with subsequent excavations in 1926, 1929, and 1932. The decision was made to recover the ruins to preserve them, which is what you see in my photos from 2007. The videos on the website indicate excavations have since resumed in earnest.

To learn more about Jeremiah, I recommend a recent *Issues, Etc.* podcast that was re-aired on June 26, 2018, with Dr. Dean Wenthe of the Concordia University System discussing the Prophet Jeremiah: [issuesetc.org/2018/06/26/encore-the-prophet-jeremiah-dr-dean-wenthe-6-26-18](http://issuesetc.org/2018/06/26/encore-the-prophet-jeremiah-dr-dean-wenthe-6-26-18)

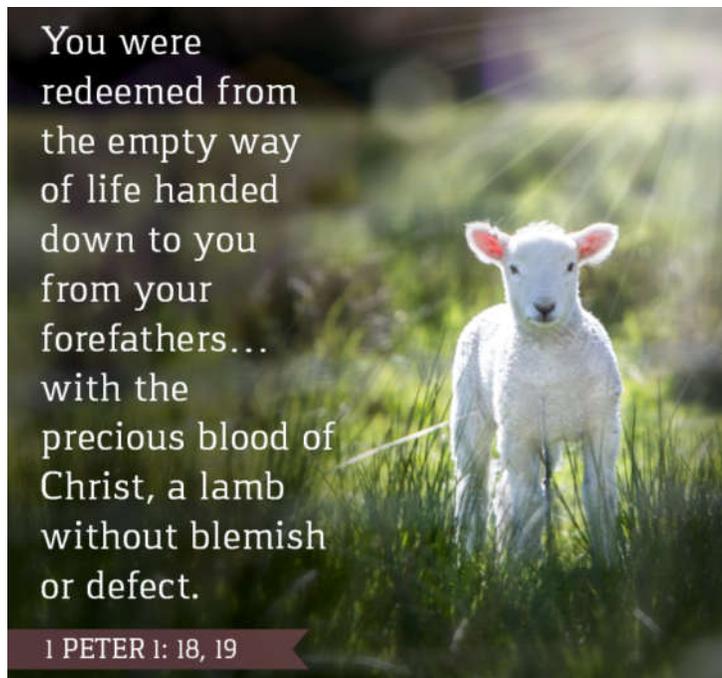
– Jennifer Price

## Empty Life? God Wants to Fulfill It!

**1 Peter 1:18-19** “You know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, not with things that pass away, such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish or spot.”

The celebrity world has been shocked recently with the deaths of fashion mogul, Kate Spade, and also celebrity chef and TV personality, Anthony Bourdain. Especially saddening is the fact that both of these individuals took their own lives. For regular people it is easy to look at such individuals and wonder how they could ever be unhappy. “Don’t they have everything?! Great wealth, prestige, rubbing shoulders with and influencing the movers and shakers of our society?! Why would they do that?!”

This puts things in perspective for us when we are tempted to think, “If only I had...” Even with more money, better looks, greater popularity, or anything else, people still find themselves to be completely miserable and hurting. The solution isn’t more *stuff*. A fulfilling and happy life does not depend on wealth or status. As we see with these celebrities and others, who appear to have it all, many still feel as if they have a completely empty life—that it is worthless and meaningless!



How sad this is! What a trap the devil lays for us, thinking that silver and gold, the things of this world—what the King James Version of the Bible labels as “*Mammon*”—will fulfill us! Turns out that even a wealth of worldly things will still leave people feeling empty, alone, and of little value.

Do not put your hope or your trust in *stuff*! Do not let your heart be carried away by the god of “*Mammon*”! Instead, take to heart the encouragement that Peter offers when he says: *We were “redeemed from our empty way of life.”* (1 Peter 1:18) God has ransomed us—bought us back—from our guilt, sin, and shame. God has intervened so that death and the devil no longer have any say or control over us!

God has come that we might find true fulfillment and find value in our lives. He fills us with something far more precious than any amount of

gold or silver, or any other earthly thing. He fills us with His Love. It was Love for YOU that God the Son, Jesus Christ, sacrificed His own blood. Our Savior Jesus was willing to sacrifice Himself upon the cross so that we might be filled with the peace of God! And because of this peace, we can have absolute confidence that God is at our side—He has promised to never “*leave us or forsake us*” (Hebrews 13:5). He reassures us that we are tremendously valuable and loved by Him!

As we face challenging times, when we feel down and are struggling, God has promised to be at our side. He invites us to cling to His love and to the promises that we find in His Word—the Bible, and in our Baptisms and as we receive the Lord’s Supper. In challenging and difficult times, He especially points us ahead to the promise of eternal life in Heaven that He has waiting for us!

Sadly, many people struggle with an “empty way of life.” Such a struggle even leads some to harm themselves. When we face such struggles in our lives, find comfort and refuge in knowing that through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection our lives are not empty or worthless. They are valuable and precious, filled with God’s Love—and will be, forever.

## Pastor Webber's 30th Anniversary of Ordination

After the service on June 3, a surprise reception – hosted by the Ladies Guild – was held to mark the 30th anniversary of Pastor Webber's ordination to the Holy Ministry. He was ordained on June 5, 1988, in his first congregation, in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. He served there for two years, until 1990. He then served as a pastor in Brewster, Massachusetts, from 1990 to 1997; and after that, from 1997 to 2005, as rector and professor of theology at the Ukrainian Lutheran Theological Seminary in Ternopil', Ukraine. Since 2005 he has been at Redeemer.



## Ladies Guild News

### Cross-Stitch Challenge for Our Church

Just two years ago Cross-Stitch, the Network of ELS Women's Mission Societies, challenged its branches to raise funds for the purchase of 6,000 hymnals and Bibles for the Lutheran Mission of Salvation–India (LMSI). This challenge was fulfilled, and as a result the Lord has blessed our sister church in India, which now has a membership of over 22,000 souls!

However, only 12 ordained ministers and 200 lay Gospel workers are serving in this expanding field. Now Cross-Stitch has issued a new challenge for each ELS congregation: Raise \$1,500 for the purchase of a motor scooter for a pastor or church worker, to provide transportation to various ministry sites. Here at Redeemer we have an added challenge and encouragement, since an anonymous donor has pledged to match what we raise toward this special project, up to \$1,000.

Another blessing brought about by the faithfulness and compassion of our brothers and sisters in India is the increase in the number of orphans who are under the care of the LMSI, and whose needs are being met in



part through the Indian Orphan Cross-Stitch fund. Last year's request for donations to this fund was \$10,000. But this year Cross-Stitch is doubling its effort, to raise \$20,000 for the orphans in India. The Indian mission now supports 16 orphan homes, which house, feed, clothe and teach the Gospel to some 300 children.

If you would like to donate toward this double fund-raising effort, please make your check payable to "Redeemer Lutheran Church," and in the memo line write "Ladies Guild - Scooter." The first \$1,500 we raise will pay for a scooter. Any additional funds received will go to the Indian Orphan Cross-Stitch fund. If we raise \$1,000, and combine that with the \$1,000 match, this would result in enough money coming in to pay for a scooter, and to make \$500 available for the care of the orphans. If you have any questions about this special project, please email Carole Clingan at [cfc85213@gmail.com](mailto:cfc85213@gmail.com)

– Carole Clingan

## Foothills Caring Corps

Our Lord tells us: “The one who remains in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit” (John 15:5). The fruit of the Spirit of Christ will naturally flow from the life of those who know him by faith, so that Christians are always open to opportunities to serve their Lord by serving their neighbors in need.

In an increasingly uncaring world of broken families, and a general mindset of “that’s not my problem,” the elderly in particular are becoming more and more marginalized, spending their “golden” years alone at home, cut off from the rest of the world. And why don’t they go out, and participate in attend social activities? First, a great number of seniors have some form of disability that prevents them from driving. And second, seniors generally live on a fixed income, which won’t allow them to hire people to drive them. Taxi fares are equally exorbitant, if taxi service is even available in their area. Additionally, costly medical bills can consume assets and resources within a few short years, thereby impoverishing a person who has ongoing health issues. The average cost for assisted living is typically around \$3,400 per month in Arizona, well below the national average. However, few seniors and pensioners can afford assisted living. So, they continue to live in their homes, happy to have a roof over their heads, but very often in isolation.

Seniors become dependent on the type of support traditionally provided by family members. If they are fortunate enough to have caring grown children who live in the area, the job demands of the children may nevertheless prevent them from taking care of their parents. If the children of seniors in need do not live in the area, or if the seniors in need have no children, they have nobody looking after them.

We who live in the northern part of the Valley of the Sun have a unique opportunity to put our faith into practice and bear fruit as our Lord wills, by serving our elderly neighbors with compassion through the Foothills Caring Corps (FCC). FCC was organized in Cave Creek in 2000, as a non-profit, non-sectarian organization dedicated to providing the kind of human care that is so often needed by seniors in our region. The service area of FCC is comprised of the following zip code neighborhoods: 85085, 85086, 85255, 85262, 85266, 85327, 85331, and 85377.



Through FCC, volunteers of all ages help to enhance the quality of life and independence of their senior neighbors with rides to medical appointments, grocery shopping, computer help, minor home repair, friendly visits, and weekly phoning. Volunteers deliver mobile meals to shut-ins, and the organization’s medical equipment loan closet lends sanitized used equipment such as wheelchairs, knee scooters, and walkers, at no charge, to those in need. As each senior and each volunteer is unique, FCC makes every effort to match the volunteers to the neighbors, so that needs can be most effectively met. For instance, some of the volunteers only want to do friendly calling. Others feel more comfortable giving rides to doctors’ offices. Still others help with grocery shopping, or just volunteer at the office answering the phone.

There is a niche for everyone, in which a positive difference can be made in someone’s life. How much time per week or per month you invest in such activity is entirely up to you. Other than a caring heart, no specialized skills are required. Volunteering for FCC also presents great opportunities to make new friends, reconnect the unchurched to a worshiping community, find fellow Lutherans who have been cut off from their churches by life circumstances, and evangelize those who seek meaning in their suffering.

If you are interested in learning more about being an FCC volunteer, or if you live within the FCC service area and may benefit from some of the services that FCC provides, please visit the FCC website at [foothillscaringcorps.com](http://foothillscaringcorps.com). You can also pick up an FCC brochure from the Redeemer Lutheran Church fellowship room, or speak with me.

– Vera Heminger, Redeemer Lutheran Church FCC liaison

## REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST 2018

**2 (Thursday):** Internet Study Group at 7 p.m. (ask the Pastor for log-on information)

**5 (Sunday) (Pentecost 11):** Divine Service at 9 a.m.; Sunday School & Adult Class at 10:30 a.m.

**7-9 (Tuesday-Thursday):** Pastor Webber in Mankato, MN, for ELS Doctrine Committee meeting

**9 (Thursday):** Internet Study group canceled

**12 (Sunday) (Pentecost 12):** Service of the Word at 9 a.m., followed by spoken Communion; Sunday School & Adult Class at 10:30 a.m.

**13 (Monday):** Elders meeting at 7 p.m.

**16 (Thursday):** Internet Study Group at 7 p.m. (ask the Pastor for log-on information)

**19 (Sunday) (Pentecost 13):** Divine Service at 9 a.m.; Ladies Guild meeting after the service; Sunday School & Adult Class at 10:30 a.m.

**23 (Thursday):** Internet Study Group at 7 p.m. (ask the Pastor for log-on information)

**26 (Sunday) (Pentecost 14):** Service of the Word at 9 a.m., followed by spoken Communion; Sunday School & Adult Class at 10:30 a.m.

**30 (Thursday):** Internet Study Group at 7 p.m. (ask the Pastor for log-on information)

*“Divine Service”—Full Word and Sacrament Service with Communion, usually on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays of the month, and on major festivals*

*“Service of the Word”—A brief spoken order of Holy Communion follows the public Service of the Word, usually on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month*

*Refreshments are served after the Sunday morning services.*



## **The Valley Evangel**

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## **First Class Mail**

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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](http://redeemerscottsdale.org)

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