

The Valley Evangel

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

December 2015

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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: (Ask Pr. Webber for login information)

Friday Bible Study: 10 a.m. at the Muth residence

Newsletter Staff

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From the Pastor's Desk

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1, ESV).

What are you giving up for Advent? That might seem like an odd question. Christians often give up something for Lent, but not for Advent, do they? It is interesting to note, though, that in some Christian traditions, the season of Advent is referred to as “Little Lent,” or as “Christmas Lent.” The season of Advent serves purposes similar to the season of Lent.

As Lent prepares us, in a spirit of humility and sobriety, for the high festival of Easter, so too does Advent prepare us, in a spirit of expectancy and patience, for the high festival of Christmas. Lent is not Easter, and it teaches us things about our faith that are different from what Easter teaches us. Likewise, Advent is not Christmas, and it teaches us things about our faith that are different from what Christmas teaches us.

So, I ask again, What are you giving up for Advent? Let me suggest that we should all give up *Christmas* for Advent! During Advent, let us think Adventy thoughts, not Christmasy thoughts. Let us do Adventy things, not Christmasy things. Let us speak Adventy words, sing Adventy hymns, and offer Adventy prayers – not Christmasy words, Christmasy hymns, and Christmasy prayers.

The Lutheran commentator Mollie Ziegler Hemingway has coined an interesting phrase, in her description of the “War on Advent.” Some people perceive that secularists in America are waging a “War on Christmas,” which is manifested in things like store clerks not wishing shoppers a Merry Christmas, or coffee shops serving coffee in cups that are not decorated with a Christmas theme. But Mollie points out that the “War on Advent” is more demonstrable than the supposed “War on Christmas,” and has been more successful. And she points out that it is *Christians*, and not just unbelievers, who are waging the “War on Advent.”

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In our imagination and activities, we go from Thanksgiving to Christmas. Advent is not just ignored, but it is suppressed and supplanted by an expanded Christmas observance. We thereby lose an opportunity for an edifying reflection on the Old Testament promises concerning the Messiah. We lose a sense of humanity's yearning for the coming of a divine Redeemer from sin and death. We lose an appreciation for the ministry of John the Baptist, and for his call to all of us to repent of our sins, and to prepare for the coming of the world's judge. To lose Advent, in our hearts and minds, is to lose all these things.

Let us not lose them! Let us not jump immediately from Thanksgiving to Christmas. Let us *give up Christmas* for Advent. Instead, let us observe *Advent* during Advent. And then let us celebrate Christmas *at Christmas* – and during the twelve-day-long Season of Christmas which follows that festival.

I wish you a Merry Chris... I mean a Blessed Advent!

– Pastor Webber

Ladies' Guild News

If you would like to contribute toward the purchase of poinsettias, for decorating the church for Christmas, Please indicate this on the sign-up sheet that will be displayed in the Fellowship Hall starting on November 29. A donation of \$10 will cover the cost of one plant.

Decorating and cleaning for Christmas will take place on Sunday, December 6, following the Adult Class. For those who stay to help, pizza will be provided by the Ladies Guild.

Advent and Christmas

Midweek Vespers service will not be held on each of the Wednesdays during the season of Advent this year. Instead, one special Advent-themed Divine Service will be held on Wednesday, December 16, at 7 p.m. It will be preceded by a soup supper, hosted by the Ladies Guild, serving from 6 to 6:30 p.m.

The birth of Jesus will be celebrated in the Christmas Eve Candlelight Vespers service at 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 24; and in the Christmas Day Divine Service at 9 a.m. on Friday, December 25. The festival of our Lord's incarnation is a great occasion to invite your friends and neighbors to come to church with you. So, think of people you know who are not practicing Christians, whom you can in this way introduce to their Savior at Christmas!

Wedding Bells

Shaylene Jessup and Sean Scheele, members of Redeemer who met at church, were united in marriage at the church on November 7. We wish them a lifetime of blessings and happiness!



Christmas Concert

On Friday, December 18, the annual Christmas Concert at Arizona Lutheran Academy will be held, starting at 7 p.m. The concert is free. ALA is located at 6036 South 27th Avenue in Phoenix.



Adult Class Series

From December 6 through January 10 (skipping December 13), a five-part DVD series called "Yeshua" will be shown during the Sunday morning Adult Class. Each segment is about 45 minutes long, which will allow for approximately 15 minutes of discussion after each episode. This video series covers many interesting aspects of the history and archaeology of the Holy Land, and of the events of the life of Christ. It was produced several years ago by the Lutheran Laymen's League, and is hosted by Dr. Oswald Hoffmann. The five episodes are: 1. "The Land of Promise"; 2. "The Promise Takes Root"; 3. "The Voice and the Light"; 4. "The Bread of Sacrifice"; and 5. "Ripple of Darkness, Wave of Light." Please join us!

Devotion: What does it mean to have a "Merry Christmas"?

"Merry Christmas!" What is a Merry Christmas? Sadly, for many people it can mean, and does mean, many different things. To some a Merry Christmas is simply a happy time of year when they get together with family and friends. To some a Merry Christmas is a break from school and work. For many charities a Merry Christmas is the increase of funds received from the public. And for many children it is a happy time when they receive many toys and other gifts. Sadly, these ideas and concepts of a Merry Christmas are short-lived. Once the Christmas season is over the joy is over as well. It is back to work and school, the gifts and toys are broken and set aside, the troubles that plagued families before Christmas pickup where they left off after Christmas. And the charities start planning how to collect more funds next year. People such as these do not know or believe in, or have lost focus on, the true meaning of a Merry Christmas.

Many people in our nation contend that the words “Merry Christmas” are politically incorrect. They come out with statements claiming that the words “Merry Christmas” are offensive to some in our nation. The truth of the matter is that such claims are made by those being used by the sinful world and the devil to take the true focus off of the real meaning of “Merry Christmas.”

Thanks be to God that the true meaning of Christmas is still found and celebrated in Christian Churches and homes across our nation. The words of the angels recorded in Luke chapter 2:9-14 are still just as true and meaningful as when they were first spoken, “And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’”

The true joy in a Merry Christmas is Christ, the babe born in Bethlehem, the world’s Savior from sin and eternal death. It is a joy that will not fade with the passing of the Christmas season but will remain glowing in the hearts of all who believe.

Please join us this Christmas season as we celebrate the true meaning of a “Merry Christmas.” Please bring your friends and family.

From the ELS Board for Home Outreach

New Member Interview: Karl Heine

Conducted by Erica Olson, Editor Assistant



Erica: It's great to have you amongst our newest members, Karl! Welcome! What brought you to the Valley?

Karl: It was actually the Army that brought me here. I had a choice of a couple different assignments leaving Fort Rucker, Alabama, and this was my top request. Fortunately, my interests and the Army’s interests happened to align this time.

Erica: Do you think you're going to be living here for a while?

Karl: I will be here at least until the summer of 2017, perhaps longer though.

Erica: Awesome! What kind of work do you do?

Karl: I’m the Company Commander for the Tempe Army Recruiting Company. That means I oversee six different Army recruiting centers throughout the East Valley and beyond, all the way out to Show Low. This is considered a “broadening assignment” for me because I was originally

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trained as an Army helicopter pilot. My previous Army job was flying the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior, a small reconnaissance helicopter, up in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Erica: Well, it's a lot warmer here than in Alaska, that's for sure! Now, I've got to tell you, your secret is out; I and several others know that you play the viola, since you played in the wedding of Sean and Shaylene Scheele. How long have you been playing?

Karl: It's true, I was extremely honored to be able to play during their wedding! I've been playing since fifth grade, but took about a seven year hiatus during college and the beginning of my military career. When I was up in Alaska, I started to get a bit of cabin fever during those long, cold winters and picked up my instrument again to stay sane. I was able to participate in the North Star Strings, the Northern Lights Orchestra, and a "viola choir" between 2012 and 2014.

Erica: Are you a part of any ensemble groups here?

Karl: Since moving to Arizona, I have spent most of my time learning the new job and haven't yet committed to any orchestral ensembles. Mrs. Webber kindly invited me to join the ASU Choral Union, which I joined for this fall semester. There are so many musical opportunities here in the Valley, I'm looking forward to increasing my involvement in 2016.

Erica: So you sing, too! That's fantastic! You'll make a nice addition to our choir, too. Do you have any family in the area?

Karl: Unfortunately, no one close. One of my sisters and her husband are currently at Ft. Huachuca, but they will be leaving for Ft. Bragg, North Carolina soon.

Erica: Where are you from?

Karl: I claim Sheridan, Wyoming as home. I lived there from age 11 until I left for college. Since then, all of my family has moved out of the area, so I don't get to visit as much as I would like.

Erica: In what part of the Valley are you living?

Karl: I live right on the Chandler/Gilbert border near the intersection of Warner and McQueen. It seems to be a pleasant area and it's nice that I can drive to work without getting on any freeways.

Erica: That is nice. Yeah, that seems to be a nice area, too. What made you decide to visit and then join our church?

Karl: Well, Redeemer Scottsdale has the reputation of being a confessional Lutheran church. After visiting and talking to Pastor Webber, I decided to become a member here.

Erica: Did you grow up as a Lutheran?

Karl: Yes, I did; I'm actually a "PK" (Pastor's Kid). My father is an LCMS pastor currently serving Memorial Lutheran in Houston, Texas, as the headmaster for their school.

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Erica: Oh, well that's cool! Tell me more about your family.

Karl: My mother, a huge history buff and avid reader, is with [my father] there in Houston. I have three sisters, two of whom are married. Kathie and her husband Dylan, with their four daughters, are currently in Colorado. Sarah and her husband Tom, both army officers, are split between Ft. Huachuca and Ft. Bragg, but they should both be in North Carolina soon. And my little sister, Susie, is enlisted in the Navy, currently serving in Hawaii. For the past decade, since my parents keep moving on us, we've developed into a bit of a diaspora.

Erica: You recently got engaged, right?

Karl: Yes! I'm now engaged to Stanzie Rae Webster, currently in Texas. We got engaged on August 29th in Austin, TX and plan to get married in Ft. Worth on March 12, 2016.

Erica: That's exciting! So, who's going to be playing at your wedding if you're the musician?

Karl: We're still deciding on the basic hymns, let alone special music at this point. The only advice I've heard on the matter is, "Don't try to sing a solo in your own wedding." Which is advice I don't think Stanzie or I will have a problem following.

Erica: Yes, I'm sure you're going to be quite busy for that. Do you have any hobbies besides the viola?

Karl: I like anything outdoors: hiking, rock-climbing, backpacking, and trail running. I've done a little bit of cycling, particularly cyclocross, but I haven't done any of that recently. When I was in Alaska, I did quite a bit of cross country skiing, but I haven't found the desert equivalent for that yet. Most of my free time is spent talking to Stanzie though!

Erica: That's understandable. Have you moved around or travelled a lot?

Karl: I tend to think so. The Army has sent me to such places as New York, Alabama, Alaska, Iraq, Korea, California, Kentucky, Georgia, and now Arizona. Some of those were just short periods, but it's definitely kept me busy moving. On my own, I've also had the chance to visit Iceland and Australia. For now, I'm just looking forward to exploring the South West.

Erica: That's a lot of traveling, I'd say! What else might you like people to know about you that I haven't asked?

Karl: I think you've covered just about everything. Hopefully you get to do one of these interviews with Stanzie next spring!

Erica: I would love that! Thank you so much for doing this interview! I'm sure I speak for us all when I say welcome! We're looking forward to getting to know you better!

Karl: Thank you! I'm so glad to be here!

<i>Redeemer</i>		<i>Lutheran</i>		<i>Church</i>		<i>December</i>		<i>2015</i>	
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.			
		1	2	3 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	4 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	5			
6 Advent 2 8:30 a.m. Choir 9 a.m. Matins (guest worship leader: Mr. Sean Scheele) 10:30 a.m. SS/AC Church decorating and cleaning, with pizza, after class	7	8	9 7 p.m. Scottsdale Community Forum (held at Redeemer)	10 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	11 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	12			
13 Advent 3 8:30 a.m. Choir 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. SS/Alpha Pregnancy Center presentation	14 7 p.m. Church Council meeting at the Muth residence	15	16 6-6:30 p.m. Soup Supper 7 p.m. Special Advent DS	17 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	18 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence 7 p.m. A.L.A. Christmas Concert	19			
20 Advent 4 8:30 a.m. Choir 9 a.m. DS Ladies' Guild 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	21	22 7 p.m. Elders' meeting	23	24 Christmas Eve 7 p.m. Candlelight Vespers Internet Study Group canceled	25 Christmas Day 9 a.m. DS Bible Study canceled	26			
27 Christmas 1 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	28	29	30	31 Internet Study Group canceled					

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

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The Valley Evangel
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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.