

The Valley Evangel

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

December 2016

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From the Pastor's Desk

We have now entered the season of Advent. The word "advent" means "arrival." This season teaches us about the various arrivals of Christ: his arrival in the world and in human flesh through the incarnation; his arrival in society as a public figure and preacher through his baptism; his arrival in Jerusalem for his passion through his Palm Sunday procession; and his future arrival to judge the living and the dead which will happen through his visible return to the earth on the last day. All of these arrivals are important components of the sacred story of Christ. They were, or will be, necessary actions for the accomplishing of everything that was required by God's plan for humanity's redemption. Advent serves as a time of catechesis, when we are taught about these various arrivals of Jesus, and what they mean for us.

But Advent is not just a time to learn about arrivals that happened, or will happen, outside of our current personal experience. Advent is also a time in which Jesus arrives among us, here and now, in his Word and Sacraments. We expect to be witnessing a baptism during this season in our church, when Jesus will arrive in a special saving way in the life of a small baby. He will be arriving in our consciences, to cleanse us and restore us, through his Holy Absolution. He will be arriving in our mouths, and in our lives as a whole, through the blessed bread and wine of his Holy Supper, to draw us ever closer to himself in faith and hope. And every time God's law and gospel are proclaimed from our lectern and pulpit, Jesus arrives - through our hearing - in our minds and hearts, to warn and admonish, and to uplift and forgive.

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Advent, and the services of Advent, do not just remind us of these arrivals. They are the *occasion* for these arrivals here and now. Jesus comes to us *here and now*. And he has designated the place and point of contact for his coming. Just as the shepherds and wise men needed to know that he was coming into the world in Bethlehem, and not in some other town; and just as the crowds in Jerusalem needed to know that he was coming into the city at what was called the "Golden Gate," and not at some other gate; so also we need to know that Jesus comes to us for the strengthening and renewal of our faith in the means of grace that he has ordained, and not through some other humanly-devised means. And this is why, during Advent – and during the rest of the year as well – the place to receive Christ as he arrives among us, is in the worship and fellowship of his church. As we are gathered in the name of Christ around the gospel of Christ, we are properly prepared for the arrival of Christ. And we receive him as he comes.

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord. The Lord is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us." (Psalm 118:24-27, ESV)

– Pastor Webber

Church Roof

Our church roof is showing signs of wear and is in need of resurfacing to extend its life and preserve the investment the congregation made in 2008, when the roof was last resurfaced. The current warranty on the roof will soon expire. This project will consist of the application of two coats of an elastomeric sealer to all roof areas at a cost of between \$9,000 and \$10,000. This work will provide ten years of additional warranty. The project is "off-budget," and is being funded by special designated offerings. A Dedicated Fund for "Roof Resurfacing" has been established for this purpose.

And speaking of that special fund, a matching challenge of \$4,000, to pay for the roof resurfacing, has been offered by an anonymous donor. Any offerings designated for "Roof Resurfacing" that are made between now and the end of the year, up to \$4,000, will be matched by this donor. Let this be an encouragement to us to do what we can, as the Lord has blessed us, to help bring this important project to fruition. "Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good" (3 John 11a, ESV).

Advent and Christmas Worship Schedule

During the season of Advent there will be one midweek service, on Wednesday, December 14, at 7 p.m. It will be the Divine Service, with special Advent features, and will be preceded by a soup supper serving from 6 to 6:30 p.m.

The Christmas Eve Candlelight Vespers Service will be Saturday, December 24, at 7 p.m. The Christmas Day Divine Service this year will be the regular Sunday service, at 9 a.m. on December 25. There will be no Sunday School or Adult Class on Christmas, however.

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Christmas is a great time to invite friends and relatives who have slipped away from church, to come and worship with you, and in so doing to “come home” to the Lord’s house. It is also a great time to introduce your non-Christian friends to the gospel for the first time. “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10b-11, ESV).



Pastor Webber to Speak at Worldview Conference

The theme for the 2017 San Antonio Biblical Worldview Conference is “Contending for the Faith.” This annual conference, scheduled this year for February 10 and 11, is sponsored by, and will be held at, Faith Lutheran Church (ELS) in San Antonio, Texas. Pastor Webber’s topic will be “Contrasting the Faith Once Delivered to the Saints with Popular Alternatives.” Other speakers and topics are: Attorney Craig Parton, “Defending the Defense of the Faith”; Rev. Jonathan Fisk, “How Christianity Equips You to Face Any Future”; and Dr. Ryan McPherson, “Anti-Christian Worldviews Infiltrating Classrooms.”

The general purpose of the annual San Antonio Biblical Worldview Conferences is to assist Christians, and Confessional Lutherans in particular, to understand popular worldviews and trends from the Biblical perspective; and to help students, parents, teachers, pastors, and laymen contend for the Christian faith. All presenters are “grounded in the authority of Scripture and the conservative Lutheran Reformation.” Pastor Webber also spoke at the conferences that were held in 2016 and 2015. For more information about the 2017 conference, visit the conference webpage: flc-sa.org/2017_biblical_worldview_conference

From Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, Faith Lutheran Church in San Antonio is only a 13-hour drive! Consider a visit to historic San Antonio in February, not only for the conference, but also for the other interesting sights and attractions that this city offers.

Open House and Brunch at the Webbers

On Sunday, January 1, there will be no Sunday School or Adult Class. Instead, after the 9 a.m. Divine Service, the members and friends of the church are invited to an open house and brunch at the home of Pastor and Carol Webber in North Phoenix. Please join us as we together celebrate the beginning of the New Year, and our fellowship as a Christian congregation! Directions will be provided in church that day for all who want to come, and who need them.

Devotion: "Jesus, Name Above All Names"

For
Unto
us
a
CHILD
is born
Unto
us
a
Son
is given, and the
Government shall be
Upon His shoulder,
and His Name shall be called,
Wonderful, Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace!

What makes a Christmas tree a Christmas tree? Is it the bright-shining lights? The beautiful garland and strings of colorful beads? Maybe it is your favorite ornaments. Many would argue that a Christmas tree just isn't a Christmas tree until the star is put on the top. Without the star, something is missing. The Christmas season is adorned with many attractive decorations. Christmas music fills the air. Christmas greetings arrive from distant friends. Families gather joyfully around the Christmas dinner. Children try unsuccessfully to contain their excitement as Christmas draws near. Among all the gleam and glitter you may feel something is missing. Does it all seem pointless? Every year it starts earlier and becomes less satisfying. Is all the activity swirling around nothing? What is missing?

If Christ is left out of the Christmas celebration, then there is something missing. Actually there is nothing to celebrate. Christmas is about Christ – God's Son born as child of man! It is about God coming to humans in human flesh so humans can go to God. It is about the One name that is above all other names!

“For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given... And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

We need a Counselor. We need fatherly love. We need the peace that only He can provide. We need to know, without a doubt, that our sins are forgiven. We need God. That is why Jesus came that first Christmas – to be our Counselor, our source of love, and our Peace. He came to die on the cross for the forgiveness of all our sins. Jesus came to be our God. We celebrate Christmas. Our celebration has meaning because we celebrate Christ. Our Star is in place! Please come and join us this Christmas season to welcome and worship our Savior, Jesus Christ.

From the ELS Board of Home Outreach

Our Synod's New Evangelism and Missions Counselor Introduces Himself: Rev. Lawrence ("Larry") Wentzlauff



Having spent most of my childhood in Henderson, Minnesota, I claim it as my hometown. After high school, in April 1974, I joined the U. S. Army. I went through basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and was assigned to the 9th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Washington. It was at Fort Lewis that I met my bride to be, Private Stephanie Shively. We were joined together as husband and wife on December 20, 1975, in Long Beach, California. Twenty-one days later I left for a new duty assignment in Germany. Stephanie followed a few months later and we spent four year living in the area of Schwäbisch Hall, Germany. We were blessed with the birth of our first son, Eric, while living there. December of 1979 found us living in Delta Junction, Alaska. I was assigned to the Cold Regions Test Center, Fort Greely.

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Two year later the family moved to Kempner, Texas, as I was stationed at Fort Hood, where I was assigned to the III Corp Central Ammunition Management Office. We were blessed with the adoption of our second son, Jared, while living in Texas. November of 1985 saw an end to my military career. In the following years we found ourselves living in Hawaii, California, and Minnesota. Along with many college courses taken in the military, I attended California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, for two years. In 1995 we met our third son, James, through adoption in Minnesota. In the fall of 1994 I began classes at Bethany Lutheran College in preparation for admittance to Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. After three years of study in the seminary and an eleven-month vicarage – serving the dual parish of First Evanger Lutheran Church, Fertile, Minnesota, and Grace Lutheran Church, Crookston, Minnesota – I was assigned as a candidate of theology to do mission revitalization at Family of God Lutheran Church, Fort Mohave, Arizona. I was ordained and installed in June of 2001. In 2002 I was asked to be an advisory member of the Synod’s Board for Evangelism. I was later elected to the Board for Evangelism and served for ten years. In November of 2010 I accepted a call to serve as parish pastor for Faith Lutheran Church, Clara City, Minnesota. This brings us to my current call as “Evangelism and Missions Counselor (EMC)” for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. I was installed as EMC during the General Pastoral Conference at Heritage Lutheran Church, Apple Valley, Minnesota, in October of 2014. In December of 2014 Stephanie and I were blessed to become grandparents with the birth of Lexi Wentzlaff, daughter of Jared and Emily. As this December approaches we await the arrival of Jared and Emily’s second child.

I have been blessed to be a visitor at Redeemer Lutheran Church many times; most visits were to attend circuit Winkels with the local pastors and Ladies Mission Rallies. My family has also worshiped with the Redeemer congregation during our travels. Although I have never served on a synod board with Pastor Webber he was the circuit visitor in Circuit 11 for a time while I was serving as pastor at Fort Mohave. To this day I reserve the right to consult with Pastor Webber.

The call I currently serve as EMC for the synod involves a number of varying tasks. One of which is to serve as mission counselor to our ELS home missions. The EMC is the first point of contact between the missionaries and the synod, in particular the Board for Home Outreach. Other aspects of the call entail new missionary orientation, mission and outreach methods, and general advisor for all matters dealing with the mission. Secondly, I serve as evangelism counselor to all of the established congregations. To date I have been blessed to have visited and/or assisted 80 of the 130 congregations of the ELS. My interaction with the established congregations is initiated by invitation only. The third aspect of the position is to serve as the eyes and ears for, and as advisor to, the Board for Home Outreach.

The future of the Christian Church here on earth is a topic we toil with on a regular basis. We see Christianity, in our day age, shrinking at a very rapid rate. There are large areas in our nation that are 70% un-churched, and that number is growing. How are we, as a church body, supposed to respond to this sad news? We can throw our hands up in despair and say there is nothing we can do (not the preferred choice of a Christian), or we can follow the precepts of our Lord and Savior. We can pray! Jesus said, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38). We can do as Jesus instructed us, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:19-20a). Be of good cheer! Regardless of the present state of Christianity in the United States, the church of Christ marches on, and this is

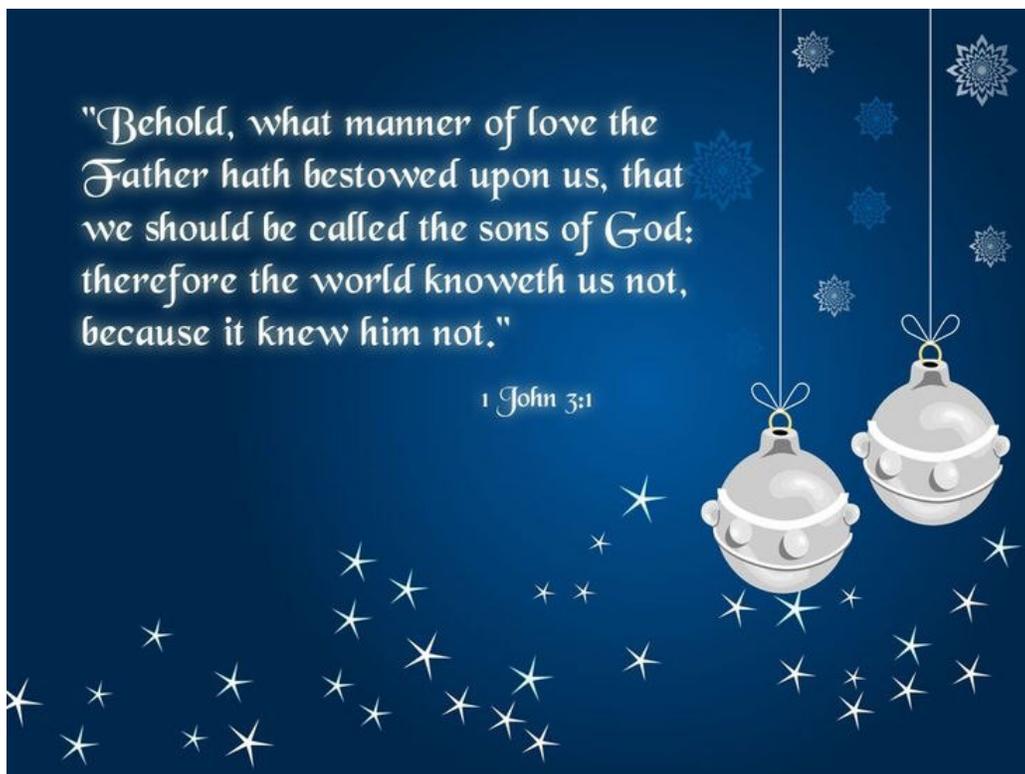
the time and the place that God has called us to toil in the field of harvest. We share the Gospel; God gives the increase. To Him be the glory.

Ladies' Guild News

The Ladies Guild has purchased a few silk poinsettias to decorate for Advent and Christmas this year, to make it easier to care for, and clean up around, the chancel. This is a change from our previous use of real plants, and will keep our church looking nice and save us some money in the long run.

Our church cleanup and decorating will be held after the service and Adult Class on Sunday, December 4. All those who choose to stay to help will be treated to a Sloppy Joes lunch with salad and dessert.

Also, please don't forget our continuing relationship with the Alpha Pregnancy Resource Center in Phoenix. If you're looking for an end-of-year tax deduction, donations can be made to the center and given to either Carole Clingan or Lori Wendt, and a receipt can be provided if you would like one. Alpha helps women in crisis pregnancies, and helps with their children after birth, to make sure they have what they need to survive and make good choices. They are affiliated with the WELS and ELS, and are frequently in need of our help. Your donations of money, clothing, diapers, wipes, and other items will be especially appreciated during the Advent and Christmas season.



<i>Redeemer</i>	<i>Lutheran</i>	<i>Church</i>		<i>December 2016</i>		
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
				1 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	2 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	3
4 Advent 2 8:30 a.m. Choir 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. SS/AC Christmas decorating/church cleaning; sloppy joes lunch for volunteers	5 Pastor Webber in Mankato, MN, for ELS Doctrine Committee	6 Pr. Webber in Mankato	7	8 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	9 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	10
11 Advent 3 8:30 a.m. Choir 9 a.m. SW w/Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	12 7 p.m. Church Council at the Muth residence	13	14 6-6:30 p.m. Soup Supper 7 p.m. Special Advent DS	15 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	16 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	17
18 Advent 4 8:30 a.m. Choir 9 a.m. DS Ladies Guild after the service 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	19	20	21	22 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	23 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	24 Christmas Eve 6:30 p.m. Choir 7 p.m. Candlelight Vespers
25 Christmas Day 9 a.m. DS SS/AC canceled	26	27 7 p.m. Elders Meeting	29	30 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	31 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	

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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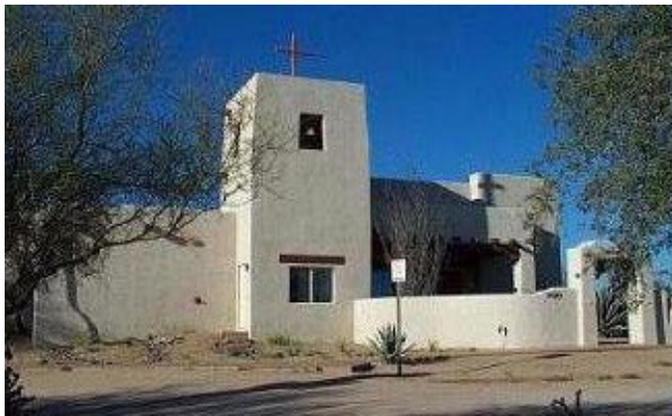
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First Class Mail

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.