

The Valley Evangel

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

February 2011

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Worship and Study Times

Sunday Divine Service:

9 a.m., Refreshments after the Service

Sunday School/Adult Bible Class:

10:30 a.m.

Thursday Internet Study Group:

7 p.m. (See Pastor Webber for log-on info for this group, or attend in person at his residence)

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

Newsletter Staff

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From the Pastor's Desk

As a congregation, we are thankful for the blessings that have been poured out on us from above in the past year. The first and greatest blessing is the Gospel, which has been administered among us in Word and Sacrament for our forgiveness, life, and salvation. If we didn't have this blessing, no other true blessing from God would be possible. But we do have this blessing. Our sins have been washed away by our heavenly Father for the sake of Christ. We have been strengthened in our weakness by the sustaining grace of our Lord in his Holy Supper. We have grown in our life of faith by the working of God's Spirit through the means of grace. We are thankful for the Gospel!

But this is not the only blessing we have experienced as a congregation. We have also been blessed by each other, in the supportive and loving relationships that we have with one another, and that have come to mean so much to us. During the past year I have witnessed wonderful acts of kindness and generosity in our congregation, toward individuals in need. I have seen the building up and strengthening of wholesome and rewarding friendships. Therefore, we are thankful for each other too!

But even this does not exhaust the blessings we have experienced in the past year. Our congregation entered 2010 without the financial assistance that our church body had been making available to us for the preceding four years. There was perhaps some fear and trepidation – especially in view of the economic

downturn that had affected so many in our society – as we wondered if we would be able to meet our financial obligations, and pay our bills. But here too, the Lord took care of us. The final tally from our church treasurer is that our total financial income for 2010 exceeded our total expenses by \$290. Practically speaking, this is breaking even. But in a year when many well-established congregations did *not* break even – again, because of the economic troubles of our country – this is, for us, a marvelous blessing, for which we are thankful!

During the past year, by the power of God's Word, we have grown in our faith toward Christ, and in our love toward each other. We have grown numerically, with new people being welcomed among us either in permanent membership or in regular seasonal attendance. And we have grown in our commitment to making sure, in a practical way and with God's help, that our congregation will continue to exist in our community, to fulfill its God-given mission. And I will add, from a personal angle, how much of a pleasure it has been to serve you as your pastor in the past year.

We read in the Book of Revelation: “And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new’” (Rev. 21:5, ESV). Our loving, gracious, and healing Lord is indeed making all things new among us! I am very optimistic about the coming year. This optimism is not attached to anything *in us*.

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From the Pastor's Desk (continued from Page 1)

It is an optimism that is focused on God and his goodness, and on the confident expectation that the Lord, who has begun a good work among us, will continue to bring that work to fulfillment.

And I'd like to share a final thought, if I may. As we continue to grow in our faith, and in our commitment to our congregation, I would encourage all of us, in the coming year, also to think of our obligations toward our church body, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. As was already mentioned, the synod helped us get through a financially difficult time in the history of our church through four years of subsidy loans. Several years ago the synod also helped us pay for the fellowship room and classroom addition to our building, and a large percentage of that mortgage remains to be paid off as well. And so, to speak frankly, we now owe the synod quite a bit of money. Our brethren in the ELS have been patient with us, in view of our special circumstances, and have not demanded immediate repayment of our loans. But now, as we have been re-stabilized as a congregation, I believe the time has come for us to begin the process of meeting these obligations.

Without cutting back on your share of the support that is needed for our local expenses, I would

encourage those of you are able to do so, to designate some of the funds you give to the church in the coming year for mortgage and debt reduction, so that those designated funds can be sent on to the ELS to help in paying down what we owe them. As you consider this, remember, too, that the extent to which we pay off our debt to the synod, is the same extent to which we will be contributing toward the mission work of the synod. Whatever we pay back can and will be used for the extension of God's kingdom elsewhere. That is one thing that is different about paying a debt to the synod, as compared to paying a debt to a secular bank. We are contributing toward Christian mission work by the very act of repaying our loan! Mortgage and debt reduction is not an item in the regular congregational budget for this year. That means that if you want any of your contributions to go for this purpose, you would specifically need to designate the amount you wish to be used in this way.

"Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind" (1 Peter 3:8, ESV).

– Pastor Webber

A Welcome to New (or Not-So-New) Members

Roger and Helen Macholl were received into communicant membership by transfer at the quarterly Voters' meeting on January 10. They were more formally welcomed in a reception after the service on January 23. But Roger and Helen are not strangers to us, since they were formerly members of our congregation. And so, welcome home!

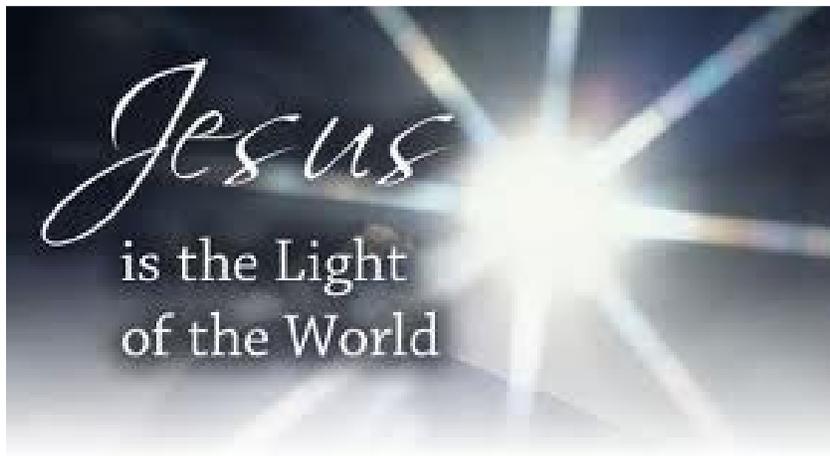


House Blessing

Members and friends of the congregation are invited to a House Blessing and party at Bill and Sue Muth's new home in North Scottsdale on Friday, February 4, at 7:30 p.m. For details on the location, or for directions, contact Pastor Webber or the Muths.



“You are the Light of the World”



These words of our Lord will be read as a part of the Gospel appointed for the Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, on February 6:

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16, ESV)

The 20th-century Australian Lutheran theologian Henry P. Hamann comments as follows:

The picture of light is a very common one, and is used to describe the influence great men have exerted in the world or which various religions and religious groups (such as Freemasons) claim to be able to bestow. Calling Christians “the light of the world” links up directly with the repeated thought in the New Testament that *Jesus* is the Light of the world. The light he is in himself, and which he brings through the Gospel, is mirrored by those who have followed him. They bear to others the light that came from him. ... How are the Christians light? Obviously, first of all, through the Word of God which they proclaim to men.

But this thought is not the one emphasized in the text. The emphasis here is on the lives they lead. The life of love and good works, corresponding to the Gospel of God’s love in Christ, is the light which men are to see, and which is to be the natural, unforced, spontaneous, and sincere expression of the faith that is in them, light within beaming forth for all to see. There is no suggestion in the phrase, “let your light so shine before men,” that Christians are to draw the attention of people about them to the good lives they lead. ... No, the lives of Christian people, *in and by themselves*, by their very difference from the normality about them, are to attract the attention of those who know them. The ultimate result is described as “giving glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Jesus has in view the many who, seeing the good works of Christians, are led to inquire after the source of those good works – “You are so different; what makes you tick?” – and then may be led to faith through the proclamation of the Gospel. Good works leading to and supporting the proclamation of the Gospel is the New Testament method of evangelization, and one that needs to be seen again as the valuable means it is to win others for Christ.

(The Gospel According to Matthew [Adelaide, South Australia: Lutheran Publishing House, 1984], pp. 49-50)

Devotion: The Great Reveal



An expectant crowd gathers behind the large bus. Anticipation builds; the lucky family stands with bated breath. After what feels like hours, it's finally time. "Bus driver... MOVE THAT BUS!" As one of 11 million in the television audience, your pulse races a little as the large bus creeps forward to reveal someone's new dream home. The fortunate family gasps in amazement and delight as the new abode is revealed. It's beyond their wildest dreams; it's perfect!

We are awed by those custom-built homes, but practicality (or is it jealousy?) tells us that eventually, shingles will blow off, the custom painted walls will bear toddlers' scribbles, and everyday wear and tear will take their toll. One of those Extreme Makeover homes has even gone into foreclosure! So, let's talk about a different Great Reveal that won't fade or rust over time. It happened on a mountaintop while three students gathered with their teacher to pray. While they were praying, their teacher, Jesus, began to shine with the glory of God. The students never forgot what they saw.

This audience of three wasn't made of model citizens. In fact, these men were just as undeserving as those folks who get the free houses on television. But they were the ones God chose to gather in excitement as a bright cloud enveloped their

Teacher. They gasped as the Father proclaimed, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" Their wildest dreams were reality: the Savior had arrived, and He was right among them! Jesus, their teacher, was God's Son and their Savior from sin. He walked among them, personally taught them about His Father's plan, and then suffered for their sins. That ultimate price wasn't paid just so the Disciples' earthly lives could improve. Jesus lived and died to make them perfect in the eyes of God! He provided them with a home in heaven.

Our Savior, Jesus, has been revealed as God's Son. He is no longer hidden. He has shown you where He can be found today! His awesome truths are proclaimed through the Gospel, which is God's good news to every person in the world. Find out how He achieved your perfection by reading His holy word, the Bible. Just as his disciples watched in amazement as He was changed before their very eyes, you will be astonished at His amazing revelations. You've been waiting for that Great Reveal. He's here. He's perfect. He is the Son of God. His name is Jesus.

*Redeemer Lutheran Church
February 2011*

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
		1	2	3 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	4 10 a.m. Bible study at the Muth residence; Muth House Blessing at 7:30 p.m.	5
6 Epiphany 5 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	7	8	9	10 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	11 10 a.m. Bible study at the Muth residence	12
13 Epiphany 6 9 a.m. SW with spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	14 Church Council Meeting at Pastor's residence at 7 p.m.	15	16 Bible Study for residents of the Arizona Lutheran Retirement Center at 10 a.m.	17 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	18 10 a.m. Bible study at the Muth residence	19
20 Epiphany 7 9 a.m. DS Ladies' Guild after the service 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	21	22	23	24 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	25 10 a.m. Bible study at the Muth residence	26
27 Epiphany 8 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 am. AC/SS Elders' meeting after the Adult Class	28					

Abbreviations:

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

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

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

Redeemer Lutheran Church

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First Class Mail

We're on the Internet!
redeemer.vze.com

Notice!

Audio recordings of Pastor Webber's sermons are posted on the Internet weekly and are linked through the church website.

They are published courtesy of
lutheransource.net



**Evangelical
Lutheran Synod**

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.

