

The Valley Evangel

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

February 2014

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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. (ask 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

Editor: Pastor David Jay Webber

Editorial Assistant/Layout and

Design: Erica Olson

Production Assistant/

Printing and Distribution:

Sarah Kissinger

From the Pastor's Desk

With my son's call to serve as a pastor in the Salt Lake City area, I have been prompted to do some reading once again in the history and teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – known more informally as the Mormon Church – which is based in Salt Lake City. Our Mormon neighbors here in the Valley of the Sun have also been in the news of late, in view of the upcoming March dedication of a new temple for their church in the City of Gilbert.

Most of us know the basic story of Mormonism. Joseph Smith claimed to have been visited by God the Father and Jesus Christ in 1820 (when he was 14 years old), and to have been told by them that all the churches on earth were “corrupt” and that the creeds of these churches were an “abomination” to God. Also according to the Mormon story, Smith was later visited several times also by the angel Moroni, on one occasion by John the Baptist, and on another occasion by the apostles Peter, James, and John. Smith understood it to be his divine mission to restore to the earth the true and alone-saving church of Jesus Christ, with all of the offices and ordinances that the true church needs to have. According to Smith, the church on earth had lost these offices and ordinances soon after the time of the original apostles, thereby causing the church itself to cease to exist on earth. The eventual organization of the Mormon Church by Smith and his early followers also included the introduction of additional Scriptures (the Book of Mormon, etc.), and the building of special temples for certain rituals that could be performed only in such a temple (such as celestial marriage “for time and eternity,” and proxy baptism for the dead). Smith also promulgated unorthodox teachings regarding the nature and character of God (whom he understood actually to be one of many gods, and formerly to have been a man), and regarding the nature and character of human existence and human salvation. All of this is called the “restoration” of the church by those who believe that these ideas and actions were legitimate and valid.

As Christians, and as Lutherans, we are not among them. With a sober mind, we would recall the admonition and warning of St. Paul: “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the race of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-8). The unbiblical teachings of Joseph Smith mark him, to us, as having been a false prophet, and not the restorer of the true church.

Lutherans do sometimes speak of the events of the sixteenth century as

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From the Pastor's Desk (continued)

a “restoration” of sorts. The pure, apostolic gospel of the sinner’s forgiveness and justification before God, by grace through faith in the merits of Christ alone, is sometimes said to have been “restored” to the church through the teaching and reforming activity of Martin Luther and his colleagues. But Lutherans do not believe that this gospel had even been completely lost to the church or the world. In many places it had become obscured, and when it was proclaimed, it was not proclaimed as clearly as it should have been. But Luther does remind us that the essence of the gospel had not disappeared from the earth during the Middle Ages, and therefore that the church of Jesus Christ likewise had never disappeared. In a 1527 response to certain extremists who *did* think that there was no salvation available to people under the papacy, he wrote:

“It is our confession that in the papacy there are the right Holy Scriptures, the right Baptism, the right Sacrament of the Altar, the right keys for forgiveness of sins, the right preaching office, the right catechism, such as the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed. ... Now if Christianity exists under the pope, it must be Christ’s true body and members. If it is His body, then it has the right Spirit, Gospel, Creed, Baptism, Sacrament, keys, preaching office, prayer, Holy Scriptures, and everything that Christianity should have. Therefore we do not rave like the ‘enthusiasts’ that we reject everything in the papacy.”

So, there was no need to *restore* the church. The church, even during times of theological weakness, had been preserved on earth by its Savior and Lord through the means of grace. This preserved and enduring church truly is the one living temple of God, and the special dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. “For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, ‘I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people’” (2 Corinthians 6:16, ESV).

But in view of the many corruptions and errors that had indeed “crept into” the church institutionally during the Middle Ages, the church in the sixteenth century *was* in need of a *reformation* – so that the gospel would once again shine forth in brilliance, and once again have its proper place at the *center* of the church’s life. In fact, the church on earth is in need of reformation in *every* generation. In every generation, the words of St. Paul are to be heeded: “...test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22, ESV). In every generation, the authority of God’s Word needs to be reaffirmed, and God’s Word needs to be applied as a corrective to the challenges and misdirections of the age, so that the faith of God’s people in each generation can be renewed in the certain hope of Christ, and be refocused on the gospel of Christ crucified.

As you in this way abide in the Word and promises of God in Christ, you will be comforted in the assurance that “our Lord Jesus Christ...will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:7-9, ESV).

– Pastor Webber



The new LDS temple in Gilbert, Arizona

New Member Interview: Shaylene Jessup ***(Conducted by Erica Olson, Editor Assistant)***



Erica: First of all, welcome to Redeemer! We're really glad to have you and your girls! Although I know the answer, I know others are wondering what brought you to the Phoenix area.

Shaylene: My job is what brought me to Phoenix. I work for State Farm, in their bank. (Need a loan?)

Erica: When was that?

Shaylene: I moved from Bloomington, Illinois, on August 12 [2013]. [I first visited Redeemer] on August 18. It was the first Sunday after I moved.

Erica: How did you hear about Redeemer Lutheran Church and Pastor Webber in particular?

Shaylene: I heard about Redeemer through my very dear friend, Julaine, also, a close family friend of Pastor Webber. I do believe her father and Pastor [Webber] did some kind of work together in Ukraine. ... When Julaine found out that I accepted the job in Phoenix, she was so excited and said *I have to go to Redeemer!* Funny thing, Julaine had mentioned Pastor Webber's son, Paul and [his late wife] Ruth in our small group when Ruth was sick. They were part of our prayer requests, and I remembered being so touched by her story and the faith she had during everything. It brings goose bumps when I think about the fact that I'm now attending Pastor Webber's church. The way that I was drawn to Redeemer is so incredible, and I'm so thankful for how God has guided me here!

Erica: That's wonderful. You said that when you came here for your house hunting trip, you met with Pastor Webber. What did you think about that encounter?

Shaylene: Yes, when I came here in July, I do believe, I [and a friend] met with Pastor Webber. We had breakfast at a small diner. He gave me some information about Redeemer and [told me] what the church believed. I remember thinking he was a very sweet man. I do believe he paid for my breakfast. ...

Erica: Did that meeting make you decide that you wanted to visit?

Shaylene: I don't think I had a choice of whether or not I was going to visit Redeemer. If Julaine found out that I was living in the area and didn't come here, she'd be on the first plane she could get on and drag me! She's a pretty big fan of Pastor Webber! After meeting him though, I could see why, and I was very interested in visiting.

Erica: You told me that one of your coworkers who was moving to Phoenix at the same time actually went with you when you met Pastor Webber. How many people that you worked with in Illinois came to Phoenix around the same time?

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Member Interview (continued from Page 3)

Shaylene: Yes, my friend Sam was with me that morning. She moved at the same time as me. State Farm hired three waves in the new hub here in Phoenix. Sam and I were on the second wave. [The] first wave moved here in July, we came in August and the third and final wave came in late October. Some of the people from the waves were from Illinois, [but] not all [worked for] the bank, [they were from] everywhere within State Farm. However, a good chunk of Bloomington people that I knew are out here. It's very nice to have familiar faces. We don't have family and not many friends [here], so we stick together!

Erica: What do the girls think about Phoenix? Do they like it here?

Shaylene: The girls *love* Phoenix. We love that it's January and the average high is 70! How fun! The girls have adjusted to school very well and are meeting new friends. They don't have a lot of friends around our apartment complex, but thankfully they have each other, until they start arguing. Then they ask me why they have to be sisters. They miss their dads and family back home, so that can be tough some days. Thankfully, technology gives us Skype and Facebook, and we can all keep in touch.

Erica: Tell me a little bit about the girls.

Shaylene: The girls are 5 and 9. Taylor is in third grade. Her favorite subject is math! ... She is very mature for her age and is so bright and caring. Kaitlyn is in kindergarten. I have no clue what her favorite subject is because it changes everyday. She actually just asked me the other day if she could stop going to school. She feels she doesn't need it anymore. I obviously said no. She didn't like that answer! She, too, is a smart little girl. She cracks me up daily. She has amazing personality! God gave me her to make sure I laughed daily. I just know it!

Erica: What did you think about Redeemer the first time you visited?

Shaylene: The first time I came to Redeemer, I was so nervous. My home church, Good Shepherd, was the first church I had ever been a part of, and they were so welcoming and loving and didn't judge me for past mistakes or make me feel uncomfortable. I was praying Redeemer would be the same. When I came in, I loved that it was a small congregation but I didn't see any kids or anyone my age! I was like "Oh no! I'm the youngest one!" (I was the youngest one at my old church as well). I didn't see the Morehouses (Dan and Lexie) [before the service] that day, or any of the other families. I sat through the service and thought it was a very beautiful service and I definitely received God's Word and I knew that was the most important thing, even if I was the youngest. Afterwards I had a few people come up and introduce themselves so that was nice. I remember not wanting to stay for Bible hour because I didn't want to sit alone, but then, [you], Erica, came up and started talking to me and asked if I wanted to sit by [you] during Bible hour and I remember thinking "Thank you, God!" [You] had a pretty adorable son that I just couldn't resist!

Erica: What made you decide to come back?

Shaylene: I knew after that first day that Redeemer was where I was meant to be. The way that it all worked out, my knowing Julaine, Julaine knowing Pastor Webber, my moving to Phoenix... That's totally God's hand at his finest. I may be stubborn at times, but I wasn't going to ignore the signs that God clearly had placed in front of me to know that Redeemer was where I needed to be.

Erica: At what point did you decide you wanted to join the church as a member?

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Member Interview (continued from Page 4)

Shaylene: I knew I wanted to be a member when Pastor Webber was explaining to me what the church believed and taught. I came to the faith when I was 21, and since I have definitely been thirsting for God's Word. I don't want to be guided down the wrong path, and I know that it's not possible here at Redeemer. Pastor is so incredibly smart and has lots of experience, and you can see his desire to want to teach God's Word, and that means a lot to me. Also, the people here are so nice and are always saying "Good morning, Shaylene" when I come in on Sundays. I just love that! Plus, there are just the cutest babies. That's not really important but it sure makes it fun!

Erica: It sure does! I'm so glad you made the decision to join. We really love having you and the girls at our church. You teach Sunday School from time to time as well. What grades do you teach when you do? Do you have a favorite age level?

Shaylene: I try to teach Sunday School as much as possible because it's something I truly enjoy. I went to school for elementary education, so teaching is a passion of mine. I prefer to teach the middle age kids just because they can focus on one thing longer than five seconds. That, and I can really connect with them and teach them God's Word. I would really like to work with a youth group sometime in my future, probably when I'm a little bit stronger in my faith. Right now I'm still learning way too much!

Erica: I know you work a lot of hours, but when you have time off, what kinds of things do you like to do for fun?

Shaylene: I do work full time, but on my weekends off I love to go hiking. The girls and I have hiked a few mountains since being here and caught some pretty amazing sunsets and sunrises. It's our favorite part about Arizona. I don't get to go out much because since I don't have family here, I don't have much time away from the girls. Sometimes I'll have friends over after the girls go to sleep and we'll play games or watch movies or sit on my patio and talk about how we actually moved away from home over a glass of wine. I'm also a fan of photography, scrapbooking and having "girly" days! Anyone up for the spa?

Erica: Are you glad you made the decision to move to Phoenix? What about the girls? Have they been optimistic about the move?

Shaylene: I am very glad I moved to Phoenix. It helped my career when I relocated for the company. I love what I do and the opportunities that State Farm has given me and will give me in the future. I do miss home though. I have three brothers and a sister back home that I miss so very much. But I know that God led me here for a reason. If the reason was strictly for work then so be it, but if other things are in the cards then let's just hope I'm ready for it! Phoenix is very beautiful. Some days when it's hard being away I just look at the mountains around me and what I do have, and I become so thankful, so blessed. The girls like it here too. We all have our days, but like I said, having a good church family, good friends and each other, we get through those tough days.

Erica: It seems like you've made friends here rather quickly. I know you and I have really made a good connection. I'm really glad that you came and decided to stay. Your girls have really seemed to adjust well here, too. What do they like best about the church?

Shaylene: As embarrassed as I am to admit, I bet if you asked the girls what they liked best about church, it would be the fact that we serve cake for breakfast sometimes, and every Sunday there is candy for them to

(Continued on Page 6)

Redeemer Library News

Recent donations have included:

Kretzmann's *Popular Commentary of the Bible* in 4 volumes.

Hermann Sasse's *Here we stand: nature and character of the Lutheran faith*. "Hermann Sasse, a confessional Lutheran, successfully resisted the Nazis and lived to tell the tale, emigrating to Australia after the second world war. During the Third Reich Sasse refused, on confessional grounds, to sign the Barmen Declaration and unite with the Reformed in their opposition to Hitler. In this little work one receives a fine outline of core Lutheran beliefs as well as a comparison and critique of the Reformed faith, including a critique of Karl Barth's theology in the final chapter" (Amazon). Donated by Wayne Anderson.

The Spirituality of the Cross by Gene Edward Vieth, in which Veith explores and presents a true understanding of justification by faith, the means of grace, vocation, theology of the cross, the two kingdoms, worship, and the church. Donated by Pastor Webber, who also donated a copy of his own recent book: *Spiritual Fathers: A Treatise on the Lutheran Doctrine of the Ministry, with Special Reference to Luther's Large Catechism*. "When it comes to the office of the ministry of the Word, there is often needless confusion that runs to extremes...Pastor Webber cuts through the confusion with a clear exposition of the truth.. .Spiritual Fathers compiles and weaves together harmonious testimonies from orthodox voices throughout church history" (Jon D. Buchholz, from the foreword).

You can access the church library collection by going to the church website and clicking on "Our Parish Library Catalog". Once there click on "Your Books" at the top of the page.

New Member Interview (continued from Page 5)

have. They just love the snacks after service. They have made lots of friends with the families here. Ashlie [Morehouse], Johanna [Wendt], Aiden [Morehouse] and Isabelle [Wendt] are a few they play with a lot.

Erica: Is there anything about you and/or the girls that you would like the friends and members of Redeemer to know about you that I haven't asked yet?

Shaylene: I guess I would just like to tell the congregation thank you. Thank you for opening up to my girls and me. I appreciate it so much. First impressions are very important, and mine on Redeemer was so welcoming and Christ-loving. The girls and I are always up to meeting new people and helping wherever and whenever we can. I love meeting new moms and sharing stories and ideas, because as a mom, we need that. So if you need a friend, or someone to talk to, you can call me. Also, I think it's very important for my fellow church family to know that I'm the biggest Journey fan they'll ever meet, so if you ever see me break out and start singing to a song, don't judge! Haha!

Erica: Haha! I like Journey, too. I'm so glad you're finally going to be joining our church! Thank you so much for taking time to let me interview you. I'm sure I'm not the only one who's looking forward to getting to know you and the girls better.

Shaylene: Thank you, Erica, for taking the time to ask me questions about me and the girls. It means a lot. We are very excited to finally make it official!

*Redeemer Lutheran Church
February 2014*

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
						1
2 Presentation of Our Lord 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	3	4	5	6 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	7 Circuit Pastors' Conference in Lake Havasu City Bible Study canceled	8 Circuit Women's Mission Rally in Lake Havasu City
9 Epiphany 5 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	10 7 p.m. Church Council meeting at the church	11	12	13 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	14 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	15
16 Epiphany 6 9 a.m. DS Ladies' Guild meeting after the service 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	17	18	19	20 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	21 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	22
23 Epiphany 7 9 a.m. SW with spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. AC/SS Elders' meeting after AC	24	25	26	27 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	28 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	

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, 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

Redeemer Lutheran Church

7670 East Jomax Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85266

Pastor David Jay Webber

Phone: 480-585-7002

Or: 480-621-7394

Email: jaywebber@yahoo.com



First Class Mail

We're on the Internet!
redeemerscottsdale.org

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



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.

