

The Valley Evangel

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

February 2018

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From the Pastor's Desk

The season of Lent will soon be upon us once again. And our usual customs for this season will be followed once again. On the first day of Lent – Ash Wednesday – many of us will receive ashes on our foreheads as an emblem of humility and repentance. During the season of Lent many of us will dedicate an extra hour each week to public worship, as we attend Wednesday Vespers. Many of us may follow the more private practice of giving up some small otherwise innocent pleasure during Lent, to remind ourselves of how Jesus was deprived of all comforts, and of life itself, in his suffering and death on the cross. In the Liturgy, on Sundays in Lent, the joyous canticle “Glory be to God on High” will be omitted. The joyous refrain after the announcement of the Gospel, “Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah,” will likewise be silenced during this sober season.

The special ceremonies of Lent, and the deliberate and noticeable omission of certain ceremonies on account of Lent, are all useful tools for teaching and learning. But what is most important of all is the content of what is taught and learned through these symbols – and more directly through the Lenten Scripture readings, the Lenten hymns, the Lenten sermons, and the Lenten prayers that the symbols accompany and underscore, and to which they draw attention. On the Third Sunday in Lent, the Old Testament lesson will be the Lord’s delivery of the Ten Commandments to Moses. Through these divine commandments all human sin – including ours – is exposed and condemned. On the Fourth Sunday in Lent, the Gospel reading will be the account of our Savior’s conversation with Nicodemus, in which he tells him that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have

eternal life.” Whenever Holy Communion is celebrated during Lent, we will pray to God in the Preface: “You bid your people cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast. Renew our zeal in faith and life, and bring us to the fullness of grace that belongs to the children of God.”

These texts – these condemning, comforting, and faith-building texts – mark and define Lent for us more than the presence of ashes or the absence of certain parts of the Liturgy. Through these texts we will be retaught how to acknowledge, and repent of, our flaws and failures. We will relearn how to trust in the love and mercy of God in his Son, and in nothing else, for our salvation. And we will be drawn to ask our Father in heaven to help us prepare for Easter through the inner renewal that only his Spirit can work in us.

Jesus, I will ponder now On Thy holy Passion;
With Thy Spirit me endow For such meditation.
Grant that I in love and faith May the image cherish
Of Thy suffering, pain, and death That I may not perish.

– Pastor Webber

Alpha Center Report for 2017

At the Alpha Pregnancy Resource Center, the 2017 calendar year has been the busiest year ever. 723 clients were counseled, resulting in 796 bags of diapers distributed (so please continue donating those diapers!). The Center is open only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., but there is also a 24-hour hotline that received 302 calls. Volunteers also answer the hotline, so it is of utmost importance that enough counselors are available to take these calls, even if they can only volunteer for one hour per day.

The age of clients interviewed displayed another positive trend. Only 21 clients were teenagers. The vast majority of clients (686) were within the adult bracket of 20 - 39 years. This information is encouraging because of the drop in the number of teenage pregnancies. Maybe the Christian virtue of chastity, as witnessed by the Alpha counselors to 35 clients, is finally reaching the younger generation.

The cultural and ethnic background of the clients was very diverse. Many were Asian. Also included were Syrian, Burmese, Hispanic, African-American, Caucasian, and Native American. The religious diversity was also evident. 305 were Protestant, 166 were Catholic, 101 were Muslim, 33 declared another religion, and 72 had no religion. The Alpha volunteers witnessed to the non-Christian clients by distributing 47 Bibles, talking about Baptism to 258 clients, and bringing the good news of God’s love to 192 clients.

Although the Alpha staff cannot monitor the results of their work with all the clients, the known results from 2017 included the following: 13 full-term births, 4 baptisms, 1 marriage, and NO ABORTIONS! The Alpha volunteers feel 2017 was a year in which that the Lord has given them wonderful opportunities to share his Word. Besides the need for diapers, formula, and boy’s clothing size 12 months to size 4, the Center is always looking for more volunteers. By volunteering only 1 hour, answering the Alpha hotline, you may be instrumental in bringing about a life-changing event in a troubled mother’s life. For any questions you may have, or if

you are interested in volunteering, call 602-285-0050. If you are interested in visiting the Center, please call to arrange time for a tour.

New books in the Church Library

The Reason I Believe: The Basics of Christian Apologetics by Allen Quist

In *The Reason I Believe*, Allen Quist returns to a basic fact-based defense of Christianity. In doing so, he offers a wealth of compelling evidence for the truthfulness of Christianity, including the existence of God, the reliability of Scripture, and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Quist also presents a biblical response to the problem of evil and the scientific issues with Darwinism, equipping Christians to confidently respond to these common objections to their faith. (Concordia)

Allen Quist is a researcher, author, and writer whose passion is Christian apologetics. He is an adjunct professor of apologetics at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota, and a member of the Committee on Doctrine for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Katie Luther, Mother of the Reformation: The Graphic Novel by Susan K. Leigh, Illustrated by Dave Hill

If Martin Luther was the father of the Reformation, then his wife, Katie, was its mother. Intelligent, strong-willed, and curious, she is perhaps the only woman who could have been Martin's match.

Katie blazed her own trail at a time when there were very few options for women. She risked her life to escape the nunnery and stood her ground in the face of opposition to her role as Mrs. Luther. Hardworking, fiercely dedicated to her family, and unwavering in her faith, Katie Luther is an enduring Christian role model. This is the dramatic story of an extraordinary woman whose life amid religious, political, and cultural upheaval still inspires. (Concordia) (Donated by Pastor and Carol Webber)

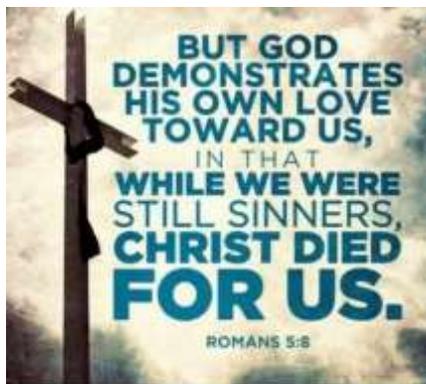
Band Concert

The Bethany Lutheran College Concert Band will perform at Redeemer Lutheran Church on Sunday, March 4, at 10:45 a.m. This concert will be held in lieu of Sunday School and the Adult Bible Class that day. Following the performance there will be a fellowship lunch, both for the members and friends of the congregation, and for the band members. Details on the meal, which is being organized by the Redeemer Ladies Guild, will be announced closer to the event. Please think of friends, neighbors, relatives, or coworkers you might invite to join you at church on March 4, for worship at 9 a.m., and for some fine band music at 10:45 a.m. This could also give you an opportunity to introduce a young person you know to Bethany Lutheran College in general, and to the music program of the college in particular.

Because Redeemer is hosting this concert, the members and friends of our congregation will provide lodging to the band members for the preceding night. The band members will arrive at the church by bus at approximately 9 p.m. on Saturday, March 3. Those who are providing lodging for band members that night will rendezvous with them there at that time, will take them

home, and the following morning (Sunday) will bring them back to the church, whence they will depart for California after lunch. Twelve male students and 23 female students will need a place to stay. A sign-up sheet will soon be made available at the church, on which you can indicate how many students, and of which gender, you are able to take in.

Devotion: True Love!



February is often referred to as the “Month of Love” – a month filled with roses, boxed-chocolates, special Valentines dinners and don’t forget Cupid, and his quiver of arrows. And while all of these are associated with the love, do they really express true love? They might... but again, they might not.

There is a story that comes from the time of Oliver Cromwell in England. A young soldier had been tried in military court and sentenced to death. He was to be shot at the “*ringing of the curfew bell.*”

Unbeknownst to anyone, his fiancée climbed up into the bell tower several hours before curfew and tied herself to the bell’s huge clapper. At curfew time, when only muted sounds came out of the bell tower, Cromwell demanded to know why the bell was not ringing. His soldiers went to investigate and found the young woman cut and bleeding from being knocked back and forth against the great bell. They brought her down, so the story goes, and Cromwell was so impressed with her willingness to suffer in this way on behalf of someone she loved that he dismissed the condemned soldier saying, “*Curfew shall not ring tonight.*”

I don’t know if the soldier was truly guilty or not? But I do know that we are...every one of us! “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” (Romans 3:23).

But we also know of an amazing love where another innocent one was willing to die for the guilty.

Jesus once said, “*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends...*” (John 15:12-14).

That’s exactly what Jesus did! He gave up His innocent life for the guilty; for you and me. He, who was without sin, was nailed to the cross, and there, weighted down with the incredible load of everyone else’s sins, He became sin for us! He, then, paid the debt of those sins, in full, through His own death. And when He rose from the grave, His victory song declared, “*Because I live, you also will live!*” --Now we know what true love is! The very love that Jesus has shown to us!

But it doesn’t stop there. With faith in our forgiven hearts, we are called to let that faith shine brightly onto others! We have the love of Jesus living in our hearts; a true love that is to be reflected in our daily lives. Remember, it was our Savior, who said: “*Love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you are to love one another. By this everyone will know you are My disciples...*” (John 13:34-35).

As forgiven sinners, and ambassadors for Christ, we know true love beyond compare . . .and its a love, we WANT to share!

From the ELS Board for Home Outreach

A Note from the Organizers of the Worldview Conference at which Pastor Webber will Speak

We will be set up for live-streaming the San Antonio Biblical Worldview Conference on February 3. If you would like to participate, please send an email to pastor@flc-sa.org with “Live Stream WV” in the subject. We are asking for a donation of \$50 (for an individual) or \$100 (for two or more). (You can send a check to Faith Lutheran Church, 14819 Jones Maltsberger, San Antonio, TX 78247; or you can use PayPal and type in info@flc-sa.org and then use the “Send a gift” button.) THIS DONATION AMOUNT FOR LIVESTREAMING IS A SUGGESTED AMOUNT. Anyone who wants to livestream the conference may do so, no matter what you can afford. Send us \$15 or \$20 or whatever, and we’re good. We want as many as possible participating (even if your bodily presence is not possible). After we have received your email, we will send you the YouTube link within a few days of the conference.

New Member Interview: Jennifer Price Conducted by Erica Olson, Assistant to the Editor



Erica: Hi, Jennifer! I know you’ve been attending Redeemer for some time now, but I wanted to say welcome to our church as a member! Where did you attend previously?

Jennifer: In the spring of 2016 I officially joined the Lutheran Church at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church (LCMS) in Dallas, TX. I had attended since the late fall of 2015. Prior to that I attended non-denominational Bible Churches for the bulk of my life. But having studied German, read Bainton’s Luther biography in my youth and visited Wittenberg in 2005, joining the Lutheran Church in many ways felt like coming home. I most appreciate that the liturgy and catechism are all Christ-centered while the rest of Christendom is becoming ever more man-centric.

My erstwhile church pedigree is rather mottled: I was baptized as an infant in the Roman Catholic Church in Cincinnati, Ohio; my family attended Plymouth Brethren churches until I was 9; then we transitioned to Willow Creek Community Church outside Chicago; I attended an Assembly of God junior high group during middle school; upon moving to Washington, D.C., in 2000, I attended National Community Church; then I moved to Dallas to attend Dallas Theological Seminary between 2004-2007 (Masters of Biblical Studies).

Erica: What made you decide to visit, and subsequently join, our church?

Jennifer: In the Spring of 2017, Pastor Chris Rosebrough broadcast Pastor Webber’s Easter service on his *Fighting for the Faith* internet radio series as an example of a good sermon (www.piratechristian.com). Upon hearing it I knew I wanted to visit.

Erica: Well, that’s a great reason to want to visit! It sure has been nice to see you every Sunday. What do you like the most?

Jennifer: I appreciate most the emphasis on teaching and explaining God’s Word and the constant reminder of the Gospel. I also appreciate the genuineness of the members, support for a pro-life ministry (Alpha Pregnancy Resource Center) and the pride they take in serving others and maintaining the place of

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worship. I also enjoy the Sunday school class and the current study of ELS history and theology. I must also add that I so appreciate the hands who make the coffee and serve the treats! It brings back fond memories of my college days in Germany and the Sunday tradition of “Kaffee und Kuechen” = coffee and cake!

Erica: Haha! Oh, yes. They are quite good! Have you thought about becoming more involved in the operations or activities at Redeemer?

Jennifer: Yes, I desire to do so. Thanks to Carol and Vera’s frequent invites I finally attended my first Ladies Guild meeting [in December]. I hope to determine the best way to serve the body in the coming months.

Erica: Do you have friends or relatives in this area?

Jennifer: I made the 1,000-mile move from Dallas to Phoenix for one reason only - my sister and her family live here. Otherwise I didn’t know many people here - but for work colleagues. However, I’m slowly getting to meet people. I’m already very grateful for the friends I’ve made at Redeemer.

Erica: When you joined in December, I saw some people with you in the pew. Were they your family? Where do they live?

Jennifer: Yes, that was my younger sister and her family. They live in North Phoenix.

Erica: I’m glad they were able to be at Redeemer that day! What kind of work do you do?

Jennifer: I am a project manager for facilities/real estate. I manage everything from expiring leases, renovations and relocations for a federal law enforcement agency. Currently, my area of responsibility (AOR) is Arizona, Nevada and San Diego. One of the benefits of moving to Phoenix is to be in my AOR which makes travel and site visits easier.

Erica: Do you have any hobbies?

Jennifer: In my free time, besides enjoying being near family for the first time in 17 years, I’m trying to make the most of living here and do more day hikes (many thanks to Vera and her amazing knowledge of the area!); work out at Orange Theory, attend Pub Trivia (team quiz questions in a bar - I’m sure Martin Luther would approve!); volunteer on political campaigns (good governance or good people in government is something I’ve cared about as long as I can remember); and lastly, I have a penchant for watching detective series’ on Netflix, especially the British productions.

Erica: Fun! What is something about you that others might find surprising?

Jennifer: Around the age of 10 I took first place in my age group in a Civil War costume contest at the Cantigny Estate in Wheaton, Illinois - cantigny.org. If that name rings a bell to the history buffs its because it was named after a small village in France, where Colonel McCormick commanded an artillery battalion in 1918 as a member of the U.S. Army’s First Division. The Battle of Cantigny was America’s first victory in World War I. As for me, unlike Cantigny, my win in the contest did not portend any more fashion contest wins for me. One was enough for a lifetime. I gave it up after that!

Erica: That is very interesting! Is there anything else you would like the members and friends of Redeemer to know about you that I haven’t already asked?

Jennifer: I am not a morning person...so bear with me as I attempt to arrive by 9am on Sunday mornings from central Phoenix (51 & Camelback)! This should underscore my earlier comments about greatly appreciating the coffee and refreshments!!

Redeemer Lutheran Church of Scottsdale, February 2018 Calendar

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Sat.</i>
				1 7pm Internet Study Group	2 Bible Study canceled	3 Worldview Conference in San Antonio, TX (Pr. Webber a presenter)
4 Epiphany 5 9am SW w/ Spoken Communion 10:30am SS/AC Guest Pastor: Allen Schroeder)	5	6	7	8 7pm Internet Study Group	9 10am Bible Study at the Muth residence	10
11 Transfiguration 9am DS 10:30am SS/AC	12 7pm Church Council at the church	13	14 Ash Wednesday 7 pm DS w/imposition of ashes	15 7 pm Internet Study Group	16 10 am Bible Study at the Muth residence	17
18 Lent 1 9am DS Ladies Guild after the service 10:30am SS/AC	19	20	21 6-6:30 pm Soup Supper 7 pm Vespers followed by Spoken Communion	22 7pm Internet Study Group	23 10 am Bible Study at the Muth residence	24
25 Lent 2 9am SW w/ Spoken Communion 10:30am SS/AC	26	27	28 7 pm Vespers followed by Spoken Communion			

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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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.