

The Valley Evangel

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

January 2012

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Worship and Study Times	
<p>Sunday Divine Service: 9 a.m., Refreshments after the Service</p> <p>Sunday School/Adult Bible Class: 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Thursday Internet Study Group: 7 p.m. (See Pastor Webber for log-on info for this group, or attend in person at his residence)</p> <p>Friday Morning Bible Study: 10 a.m. at the Muth residence (See Bill or Sue Muth for directions/gate access code.)</p>	<p>The kind of resolutions we make should not be motivated by pride or greed, but by faith. And for a Christian, our faith would motivate us to resolve, with the Lord's help, to follow the Lord's teaching and example in ways that accord with the Ten Commandments and our individual vocations. And so, a husband might resolve to be more loving toward his wife in the coming year. A parent might resolve to be more involved in raising his child in the fear and knowledge of the Lord. A young person might resolve to be more diligent in his studies. And any Christian might resolve to be more regular in prayer, and more attentive in public worship. And yes, a Christian can also resolve, with God's help, to exercise more, to eat less, to quit a bad habit, or to take up a good habit!</p>
Newsletter Staff	
<p>Editor: Pastor David Jay Webber Editorial Assistant/Layout and Design: Erica Olson Production Assistant/Printing and Distribution: Sarah Kissinger</p>	<p>As we consider the various resolves to which we may commit ourselves in the new year, we are reminded of our Savior's commitment – his <i>unswerving</i> resolve – to do all</p>
	<p>that needed to be done, during his earthly ministry, for our redemption. We often falter in our New Year's pledges, so that we need to make the same resolutions over and over again, year after year. But Jesus did not falter in fulfilling the will of his Father in heaven. In the same way as it is necessary for a man to eat food in order to survive, so too did Jesus know that it was necessary for him to persevere in doing all that God the Father had sent him to do: in the way that he lived, and in the way that he died. "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work," he said (John 4:34, ESV).</p> <p>As we consider the ways in which the Lord would now want us to serve him in the coming year, and the ways in which his Spirit would guide us toward greater devotion to Christ, and greater maturity as his disciples, we are encouraged by the words of St. Paul. He assured the Thessalonians of his prayers on their behalf, as they, in their time, made their own godly resolutions in the Lord's name, and for the Lord's glory: "we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:11b-12, ESV).</p> <p>– Pastor Webber</p>

Web site of the Month: "Mormonism Research Ministry"

www.mrm.org

We live in a region of the country that has a large Mormon presence. The city of Mesa was founded in the nineteenth century by Mormon settlers, and one of the oldest Mormon temples is located there. The Mormon Church – or more formally, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints – was founded by Joseph Smith in 1830. He taught that all currently-existing Christian churches were false and apostate, and he identified himself as a prophet who had been chosen by God to restore the true church to the earth.

Mormonism has also been in the news lately, because two of the candidates for the Republican presidential nomination are Mormons. More than once even the secular media have discussed the question of what Mormons believe, and whether Mormonism is a genuine Christian religion or a non-Christian cult.

As we would have opportunities to discuss these matters with Mormon and non-Mormon friends, or to invite Mormons or former Mormons to visit our church, accurate information can be very useful to us. The website of the Mormon Research Ministry provides such accurate information. The articles there are written objectively and fairly, without vitriol, and with thorough documentation. There are also quite a few videos on the web site.

The material is very informative. For example, in view of our celebration of Jesus' miraculous conception and birth of the Virgin Mary in the season of Christmas, we may be surprised to learn that Mormonism historically has taught that Jesus was not conceived in a supernatural manner, but rather through a physical union of Mary and "Heavenly Father." The site also points out differences among Mormons. In regard to this particular issue, for example, it includes references to the fact that many modern Mormons – perhaps through the external influence of classic Christian doctrine – no longer agree with the traditional Mormon teaching on the conception of Jesus.

The teachings of Mormonism are evaluated on this web site in the light of the basic tenets of Christian theology. The authors are not Lutheran, and so occasionally we will disagree with some of the positions that are put forth. But in general, as

Mormonism is contrasted with the teachings of the Christian Scriptures, we can develop a keener appreciation for the comfort that our own faith brings us. "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2, ESV).

Note: There is also a distinctly Lutheran outreach ministry to Mormons, called "Truth in Love Ministry." Its director is a WELS pastor. However, this organization's web site – tilm.org – does not contain as much information as the web site of the Mormonism Research Ministry.

Ladies' Guild News

At its December 11 meeting the Redeemer Ladies Guild held annual elections. The officers for 2102 are as follows. President: Angie Kohlgraf; Vice-President: Lori Wendt; Secretary: Erica Olson; and Treasurer: Marilyn Bonnell. Committee Leaders are, Altar Guild: Erica Olson; Hospitality Committee: Mary Colville; and Fellowship Committee: Erika Schmeissing. The Ladies Guild is looking forward to another productive year, and to hosting the ELS Arizona-California Circuit Women's Mission Rally at Redeemer on April 28, 2012.

– Ladies Guild President Angie Kohlgraf

Ex-Lutherans

It was recently pointed out on an Internet site that there are three ex-Lutherans running for the presidential nomination of the Republican Party. Newt Gingrich, Ron Paul, and Michele Bachmann all formerly belonged to the Lutheran Church, but no longer do. In conjunction with this report, it was noted more generally that one out of a hundred Americans are ex-Lutherans. If you personally know any of these ex-Lutherans, consider inviting them to "come home" with you to Redeemer!

Interview with New Member: Marcia (Marcy) Brekken
(conducted by Erica Olson, Valley Evangel editorial assistant)

Erica: So, you're Marcia Brekken...

Marcy: Actually, I go by Marcy.

Erica: Well, I don't know if I ever really got much of a chance to introduce myself or if my husband really got a chance to introduce himself.

Marcy: You're the one who took our pictures [for the new church directory], right?

Erica: Yes, I took the pictures. I haven't seen you very much lately.

Marcy: I have a son that goes to Emmaus with his family, so I spend some of my time going there with him. So, I'll be coming over to you maybe around the beginning of January again.

Erica: So, how long have you been coming to Redeemer?

Marcy: Oh, about a year now. I came like in May, a year ago... It's been about a year and a half. It was May or June last year when I joined.

Erica: Where did you come from? Before you started coming to Redeemer...

Marcy: I was one of the original members who helped start it when it was a mission church and became Christ the Cornerstone, so I've just come back. I was at Christ [Church – Lutheran] for a while, and then I went to Paradise Valley Lutheran Church for a while. ...

Erica: Well, it's good to have you back at Redeemer!

Marcy: Yeah! It's good to be back at Redeemer! My husband was president at one point and helped call people... It's too much trouble to recall everything... The church has an interesting history. So, we've been there off and on, but we were part of the original group. That was quite a few years ago. I'm past remembering dates, but we were there before the addition of the Sunday school rooms and the room where you have the adult class, where the entrance is from the parking lot and the kitchen...

Erica: That was a long time ago. How long were you gone?

Marcy: I don't know. I don't remember things like that. It's been busy. We moved to Arizona in 1983, and I don't remember when we started going to the mission effort with Pastor [William] Kessel, but we were in attendance at Pastor Kessel's home when he was just south of Thunderbird and between Tatum and 40th Street. We attended some of the services there at his home. It's been a few years ago.

Erica: Yeah, just a few!

Marcy: Yes.

Erica: Sounds like a pretty interesting history! I'm sure as time goes on, we'll hear more about it, too.

Marcy: The main thing is that it's going now and seems to be growing, so that's great!

Erica: Yes, it's growing a lot! There are a lot of new people!

Marcy: Well, basically, I'm not that new! (*laughs*) I look at everyone else and think that *they're* new! [In the beginning of the church], we met at Kessel's, we met at a grade school, we met at a place up at Pinnacle Peak, there was a place off of Pima, we met for a while, and then the church was built... So anyway, it took a while to get to where it is now, but it's progressed gradually. A lot of people put in a lot of effort. We used to bring chairs and an altar, and everything was brought in every Sunday and set up. And then we'd dismantle and load it all up in a trailer and one of the members stored it at his place, and they'd bring it again. When we were at the school, it was a lot of work, but it was worth it. When we were up at Pinnacle Peak, I believe we were able to set things up and leave them set up. We rented different places.

Erica: Was that always part of the ELS?

Marcy: Yes.

(continued on Page 4)

Interview with New Member
(continued from Page 3)

Erica: Have you always been part of the ELS?
 Marcy: I attended Bethany Lutheran College, and before that we were WELS, and before that, we were Missouri Synod when it was conservative. When I was at Bethany Lutheran College, I took a call to teach at one of the Christian day schools up at Princeton, Minnesota, and I taught there for a year.

Erica: What did you teach?

Marcy: I had kindergarten through sixth grade – I had eight students – in a one-room country school! With outdoor plumbing! And then they closed that school. That would have been in 1969-70. That I remember. Then I accepted a call to teach at Western Koshkonong, Minnesota, for about a year and a half.

Erica: When did you graduate from Bethany?

Marcy: In 1969. I was the organist for Redeemer, too. [That duty] was shared with Mrs. Kessel. I really enjoy the organists at Redeemer now. I appreciate how much time and effort it takes to go into it. I don't have time for it now. I just like to sit back and absorb and enjoy the music.

Erica: So, what are you doing for work now?

Marcy: I work out of my home, child care, Monday through Friday, and then I work at JoAnn's [Fabrics] on weekends. That's why I buzz right out of church on Sundays. But I really enjoy my job at JoAnn's because you crochet and quilt. It's a nice change. Although I enjoy working with children during the week, it's nice to get out and get some adult conversation. But it's really great to be back at Redeemer.



January Meetings

The Congregational Forum for January will be held on Sunday, January 8, at 10:30 a.m., and the quarterly Voters Meeting will be held on the following Sunday, January 15, also at 10:30 a.m. This is a different schedule than usual, to allow more participation from the voting members of the congregation. (Voters meetings are usually held on a weekday evening.) The congregational budget for 2012 will be discussed at the forum, and will be voted on at the quarterly meeting.

The procedure for becoming a voting member of the congregation is as follows: a male active communicant member age 18 or older, who agrees to abide by the church constitution and bylaws, applies to the Church Council. If the Church Council recommends that he be accepted into voting membership, that recommendation is passed on to the next Voters meeting, where his request is considered and voted on.

The Church Council and the Voters Meeting are two separate entities. All members of the Church Council (that is, the officers of the congregation) are Voters, but not all Voters are members of the Church Council. The Church Council ordinarily meeting during the months of February, March, May, June, August, September, November, and December. The Voters ordinarily meet during the months of January, April, July, and October.

Christmas at Bethany

A two-part video recording of the 2011 "Christmas at Bethany" concert is now online. Links are provided at the top of the church web site (redeemer.vze.com). Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota, is a Christian liberal arts college owned and operated by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Two Redeemer members, Jessica Hartigan and Catharine Webber, are currently enrolled there.



Devotion: "Bills: How much do you owe?"

According to the American Consumer Credit Council, the average American spends \$935 on Christmas each year. Wow!

Who of us has an extra \$1000 doing nothing? No wonder that the joyful hand wrapping of the presents turns to anxious hand-wringing in the

new year as the bills come due. Does it sometimes seem like our debts own us rather than we own what our debts have purchased? Slavery to unmanageable debts is an overwhelming burden! Oh, to be debt-free! If only we could start over with a clean slate!

The flip of the calendar to a new year can give a sense of being able to make a fresh start, a sense of renewal. But without the LORD that is short-lived. Bills still need to be paid. Life, with all of its stresses, and setbacks, still needs to be lived. To the pressing realities of life add a gnawing burden of guilt over all that was left undone as well as all that was done to and against those closest to us in life in the past!



**O Lord, turn Your ear to me,
come quickly to my rescue; be
rock of refuge... save me...
My times are in Your hands,
deliver me... save me in Your
unfailing love.**

Weighed down we pray, "*O LORD, turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge...save me...My times are in your hands, deliver me...save me in your unfailing love,*" *Psalm 31.*

The LORD hears our prayer and responds. God doesn't

promise to pay off our bills, but He guides us with His Word to proper priorities and planning. His ultimate concern for us has to do with the spiritual debt we incur with our sin. That bill He paid in full. Jesus died to wash away all our sins. On the cross He was shown no mercy, yet He shows us mercy and wipes away our sins. On the third day Jesus rose from the dead, because He lives we'll live into eternity even when our calendars run out. Instead of death, life; instead of sorrow, joy; instead of anxious fears, calm, all these blessings are ours as we look forward to THE ENDLESS YEARS IN HEAVEN!

No debts. Sound good? Join us this Sunday.

From the ELS Board for Evangelism

Epiphany

Please join us on Friday, January 6, for a special Epiphany Day Divine Service. The service will begin at 7 p.m. The festival of the Epiphany of our Lord marks the visit of the wise men from the east, who were guided and drawn by a star to come and worship the Christchild, and to offer him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Sometimes Epiphany is called “Little Christmas,” because like Christmas, it is a time to celebrate the presence of God’s Son among us as our divine-human Savior.



Redeemer Lutheran Church
January 2012

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
1 Circumcision and Name of Jesus 9 a.m. DS 10:30 AC/SS	2	3	4	5 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	6 Epiphany 7 p.m. Divine Service (Bible Study cancelled)	7
8 Baptism of our Lord 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. SS/Congregational Forum	9	10	11	12 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	13 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	14
15 Epiphany 2 9 a.m. DS Ladies' Guild meeting after the service 10:30 a.m. SS/Voter's meeting	16	17	18 10 a.m. Bible Study at ALRC	19 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	20 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	21
22 Epiphany 3 9 a.m. SW with spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. AC/SS Elder's Meeting after the Adult Class	23	24	25	26 7 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	27 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	28
29 Epiphany 4 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	30	31				

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.

