

The Valley Evangel

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

January 2018

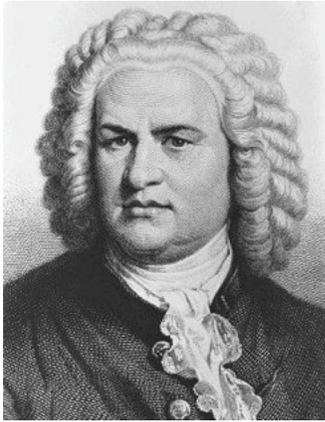
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From the Pastor's Desk

The Festival of the Epiphany of Our Lord will be observed on Saturday, January 6. A departure from our usual practice is that the time of service will be 9 a.m., rather than in the evening. January 6 falling on a Saturday this year makes this scheduling change possible. It is hoped that more people will be able to attend because of the daylight hour of this year's Epiphany service.

The word "Epiphany" means "manifestation." The Festival of the Epiphany marks the first manifestation of Christ to the gentile world, with the star of Bethlehem drawing magi (or "wise men") from the east to seek out and worship their Savior-King in the city of David. We don't know exactly how this worked, but there was something about that star that made a deep impression on these highly educated men from a pagan nation, and that caused them to ponder, and then act on, the reality of the God of Israel's redemptive plan for the whole world.

Today we live in a largely re-paganized society. There are many people today whose parents or grandparents went to church, but who do not themselves either go to church or even understand what church is really all about. But yet there are things which emanate from the Christian church, as it still exists in our society, that have the potential to draw people to the Savior we worship, and to the faith we confess. The church's tradition of sacred music, which has embedded itself deeply in western civilization, is one such emanation from the church that is still capable of getting the attention of people who have wandered away from the church itself. What the Lutheran Church in particular has produced over the centuries, through its composers and hymnists, is often especially helpful in touching the darkened hearts of unbelievers, and of reminding them that there is indeed something more in this universe than what they can touch and see with their physical senses.

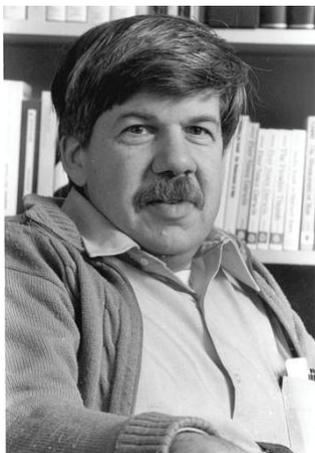


Johann Sebastian Bach is probably the best-known Lutheran musician in history. A while back, I heard a fascinating story in an interview that was conducted by Krista Tippett with the great church historian Jaroslav Pelikan in 2003, three years before he passed away (in 2006). In a discussion of the importance of the historic catholic creeds for Christian faith and thought, Dr. Pelikan told this anecdote:

"My late friend, Steven Jay Gould, who insisted with dogmatic fervor that he wasn't a believer, in addition to being a distinguished paleontologist and a terrific communicator, was a member of the Handel and Haydn Society in



Boston. And so he sang all this ancient music. And in an interview several years ago that we were both involved in, he was asked about communication with other planets and other worlds, and how should we try to reach people who don't know our language or anything else. And he said, "We should play the Bach B Minor Mass and say, in as many languages as we can, "This is the best we have ever done, and we would like you to hear it, and we'd like to hear the best you have ever done." And so he would want broadcast systems blaring across our solar system and beyond it with the B Minor Mass, including 'Credo in unum Deum.'"



It is truly remarkable that someone like Gould would consider the music of the B Minor Mass to be the greatest, most beautiful, and most impressive thing any human being has ever created. In spite of Gould's ideological commitment to materialism and empiricism, there was something in Bach's music – and especially in this composition – that touched the heart of this famous scientist. Only God knows what was ultimately going through Dr. Gould's mind and soul as he lay on his death bed, preparing to meet the maker of the world and of all life within the world, which he had spent a lifetime studying – yet with blinders on! But in any case, Bach's B Minor Mass was like a star that had indeed mystically shone upon Gould's heart, and drawn Gould in the direction of Christ, even though he probably didn't realize that this is what was happening. Whether it ultimately drew him all the way to the manger – to the cross and to the empty tomb – we will not

know on this side of eternity. But there was hope for him.

And there is hope for all the materialists and empiricists with whom we live, who have likewise become re-paganized, but who with us are also exposed to the "stars" of divine, saving truth that are in our sky – that is, the remnants and echoes of the Christian church's song, art, and culture, that still touch people, and draw them in. So, when you have a chance, listen to a recording of the B Minor Mass. (YouTube is full of them! Check also for recordings from Germany, where this composition would be referred to as "h Moll Messe.") Invite your friends to listen. And pray that they will be touched by, and drawn to, the God and Savior whose praises are therein sung, and whose gospel is therein proclaimed. Remember, too, that the texts of the B Minor Mass – that is, the five Chief Parts of the Mass of the western Christian church – are the texts that we chant in every Divine Service (in English translation). You can tell your friends about that too, as you invite them to come to church – or to come back to church – with you.

– Pastor Webber

Circuit Women's Mission Rally

The Ladies Guild invites all members and friends of Redeemer Lutheran Church to attend the 2018 Circuit 11 ELS Women's Mission Rally on Saturday, January 27, at Our Saviour Lutheran Church, 3163 Maricopa Ave, Lake Havasu City, Arizona. This invitation is extended to all the men of the congregation as well. We look forward to seeing you all at this important event which gives us another opportunity to support our mission of spreading God's Word, in cooperation with others in our church body.

You can also make a weekend getaway out of your trip to Lake Havasu City. The city is known chiefly for the London Bridge which was brought there many years ago from London, England. Originally built across the River Thames in the 1830s, the bridge was disassembled in 1967, shipped to Arizona, and reassembled in its current location. Besides water activities, the Rotary Community Park adjacent to the lake is a nice place for picnicking. There are 2.5 miles of walking paths on an island near the Bridge, plus golf courses and extended hiking trails. Lake Havasu also has a great selection of restaurants: Shungrues, Black Bear Diner, Red Onion, and Chicos, just to name a few. For a complete list of activities and accommodations view the website golakehasu.com

Registration forms for this event are located on the cracker snack table in the Fellowship Hall, attached to a clipboard. Deadline to preregister is January 20. The Rally opens for registration at 8:30 am on January 27 and ends at approximately 3:15 pm the same day. Babysitting is provided, but please inform Leslie Mansfield at ismans49@yahoo.com of how many children you are bringing.

The speakers will be our own Carol Webber, who will talk about raising a family in a foreign mission field; and a representative of the ELS Board for World Outreach. There will be an offering for Cross-Stitch, so the Ladies Guild plans to collect donations for this offering. If you want to contribute something toward this, please give your gift to Carole Clingan or Marilyn Bonnell, and designate "Cross-Stitch" on the memo line of your check. Anyone attending the Rally may also write his or her own check, payable to "Cross-Stitch." Please speak with Carole Clingan if you have any questions about transportation, accommodations, and registration expenses. The Ladies Guild can arrange for carpooling, sharing hotel rooms, and subsidizing registration fees.



Other Ladies Guild News

The following members will serve as Ladies Guild Officers for 2018: Carole Clingan—President. Vera Heminger—Vice President. Marilyn Bonnell—Treasurer. Sandy Carlson—Assistant Treasurer. Erica Olson—Secretary. Angie Kolhgraf—Altar Guild. Cheryl Hartigan—Hospitality. Sue Muth—Fellowship.

The Ladies Guild hosted a special Christmas Season Reception for 3 new members of the congregation on Sunday, December 31. Besides a cake they served Christmas Stollen, Fruit Cake, Rum Balls, Tamales, and Egg Nog and Rum.

The congregation is invited to help the Ladies Guild take down and store the Christmas Season decorations after the Epiphany Day service on Saturday, January 6. A brief church clean-up will follow.

– Carol Clingan

Internet Study Group

A new topic was inaugurated in the Thursday evening Internet Study Group on December 28: the Book of Job. If you have wondered about the cause and meaning of suffering and injustice in this world and in the lives of God's people, and want to explore these and related questions on the basis of one of the most ancient texts of Holy Scripture, please join us. The group meets virtually, online, most Thursdays at 7 p.m., with the use of the Skype online conferencing program. Ask the pastor for log-on information. People from other parts of the country participate, so feel free to invite friends, from anywhere, to join you in logging on for these discussions.

Conference on "God & Evolution" to be Held in Scottsdale January 18-19

The debate about biological origins continues to be hotly contested within the Christian church. Prominent organizations such as Biologos (USA) and the Faraday Institute (UK) insist that Christians must yield to an unassailable scientific consensus in favor of contemporary evolutionary theory and modify traditional biblical ideas about the creation of life accordingly. They promote a view known as "theistic evolution" or "evolutionary creation." They argue that God used—albeit in an undetectable way—evolutionary mechanisms to produce all forms of life.

"God & Evolution: A Critique of Theistic Evolution," a two-day conference sponsored by Phoenix Seminary, will contest this proposal. Featuring a highly credentialed scientist, philosopher, and theologian, this conference will offer a comprehensive critique of theistic evolution. It will identify evidential, logical, and theological problems with theistic evolution, and will explore scientific and theological alternatives, thereby providing helpful guidance in understanding this worldview-shaping issue. And, THIS IS A FREE EVENT!

The Speakers: J. P. Moreland (PhD, University of Southern California) is distinguished professor of philosophy at Biola University. He is an author of, contributor to, or editor of over ninety books, including *The Soul: How We Know It's Real and Why It Matters*. Stephen Meyer (PhD, University of Cambridge) is the Director of the Discovery Institute's Center of Science and Culture. He is the author of several books, including the New York Times best-seller *Darwin's Doubt*. Wayne Grudem (PhD, University of Cambridge; DD, Westminster Theological Seminary) is Research Professor of Theology and Biblical Studies at Phoenix Seminary. He is a former president of the Evangelical Theological Society, a member of the Translation Oversight Committee for the English Standard Version of the Bible, the general editor of the ESV Study Bible, and has published over 20 books.

This five-hour event will be held on Thursday, January 18, from 7 to 9 p.m., and on Friday, January 19, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The location will be The Venue @ Scottsdale Bible Church, 7601 East Shea Boulevard, Scottsdale, AZ 85260. Call 602.429.4942 for more information. Those who plan to attend should register through the Phoenix Seminary website: www.ps.edu

Copies of the newly-published book *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical and Theological Critique*, by a team of authors that includes Moreland, Meyer, and Grudem, will be on sale at the conference for the discounted price of \$30.00.

“Strangers in a Strange Land” Conference

Another two-day conference, of a different character, will also take place in our area in the near future. “Strangers in a Strange Land,” sponsored by the Brothers of John the Steadfast, will be held on Friday, February 2, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., and on Saturday, February 3, from 9 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., at Atonement Lutheran Church, 4001 W. Beardsley Rd., Glendale, AZ 85308. The publicity for the conference states:



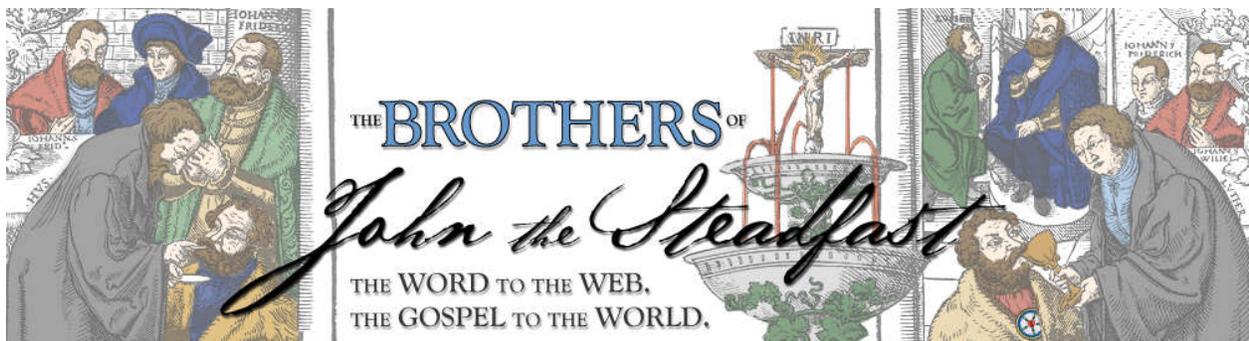
“This Steadfast Lutherans Regional Conference is geared for Confessional Lutherans who will find themselves relatively ‘alone’ in their states and districts. The conference is meant to encourage Confessional Lutherans to stay the course, and to show them that with Scripture and the Confessions in their minds and on their lips they are in fact never alone. They may be strangers in a strange land, but they have a homeland to which their Lord will someday draw them.”

Todd Wilken, host of the highly-acclaimed Lutheran radio program and webcast “Issues, Etc.,” will make two presentations: “The Book of Concord for the Laity” and “The Book of Concord in the Parish.” Joshua Scheer, Senior Pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Editor-in-chief of Brothers of John the Steadfast, will also make two presentations: “The Evangelical Lutheran Church: Comfort for the Lutheran Diaspora” and “Strange Practices in the Lutheran Parish.”

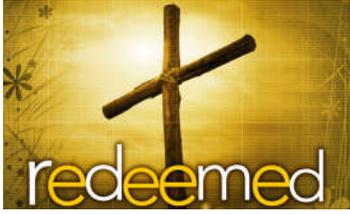


Registration cost is \$35 for an individual and \$60 for a married couple. For more information, or to register for the conference, go to steadfastlutherans.regfox.com/steadfast-lutherans-conference-phoenix-az

The Brothers of John the Steadfast describes itself as “An international fraternity of Confessional Lutheran laymen and pastors, supporting proclamation of Christian doctrine in the new media.” It is not affiliated with any particular Lutheran church body. Its focus is largely on issues affecting the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, but contributors to its website (steadfastlutherans.org) are from both the LCMS and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.



Devotion: REDEEMED!



There is a story of a pastor who, one day, met a young boy standing outside his church, carrying a rusty cage, in which several birds fluttered nervously.

The pastor inquired, “Son, where did you get those birds?” The boy replied, “I trapped them out in the field.” “What are you going to do with them.” “I’m going to play with them for a while, and then I guess I’ll just feed them to an old cat we have at home.”

When the pastor offered to buy them, the boy exclaimed, “Mister, you don’t want them, they’re just little old wild birds that can’t sing a lick.” The pastor replied, “That’s ok. I’ll give you \$5 for the cage and the birds.” “Okay, it’s a deal,” the boy said, “but you’re making a bad bargain.” The exchange took place and the boy went away whistling, delighted with his crisp new \$5 bill.

The pastor then walked around to the back of the church property, open the door of the small wire coop, and let the struggling creatures soar into the blue.

The next Sunday, the pastor took the empty cage into the pulpit and used it to illustrate his sermon about Christ’s coming to seek and to save the lost --paying for their sins with His own precious blood.

“That boy told me the birds were not singers,” said the pastor, “but when I released them, and they winged their way heavenward, it seemed to me they were singing: ‘Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed!’”

To “redeem” simply means to “buy back.” When you hand the cashier a coupon, the store is literally buying back the coupon’s stated discount price.

You and I --along with everybody else-- had been trapped by sin; sinful from the moment of our conception (Ps. 51:5), and condemned for eternity. But God, our heavenly Father, had such a love for you and me, and all mankind, that He sent His one and only Son, “born of a woman, so that He would be born under the law, in order to redeem those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons.” (Gal.4:4,5 EHV). He was born to be our Substitute! With His perfect life, His innocent suffering and death on the Cross, and His victorious rising from the grave, Christ purchased (redeemed) our pardon! We are free and forgiven!

Now our song echoes the song of those liberated birds: “Redeemed! We have been redeemed!”

As we enter all the unknowns of this New Year, we do so with the utmost confidence, because our gracious and almighty God, who does know what the future holds, has purchased us and fashioned us into new creations, in Christ!

Now our lives have purpose, as we serve our gracious Savior-God, and we proclaim the Good News of Jesus; reaching out to others with the same amazing love He has showered upon us!

From the ELS Board for Home Outreach

Redeemer Lutheran Church of Scottsdale, January 2018 Calendar

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Sat.</i>
	1	2	3	4 7pm Internet Study Group	5 10am Bible Study at the Muth residence	6 Epiphany 9am DS 10:15am Church De-decorating
7 Baptism of Our Lord 9am DS 10:30am SS/AC	8	9	10	11 7pm Internet Study Group	12 10am Bible Study at the Muth residence	13
14 Epiphany 2 9am SW w/ Spoken Communion 10:30am SS/Congregational Forum	15 7pm Quarterly Voters Meeting at the church	16	17	18 Internet Study Group canceled	19 Bible Study canceled	20
21 Epiphany 3 9am DS Ladies Guild after the service 10:30am SS/AC	22	23	24	25 7pm Internet Study Group	26 ELS Southwest Circuit Pastors' Conference in Lake Havasu City Bible Study canceled	27 ELS Southwest Circuit Women's Mission Rally in Lake Havasu City
28 Epiphany 4 9am SW w/ Spoken Communion 10:30am SS/AC	29	30	31			

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.

January 2018

The Valley Evangel
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

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.