

The Valley Evangel

Serving the Members and Friends of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale and Sun of Righteousness Lutheran Mission in Queen Creek



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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

On June 22, my wife and I were privileged to serve as Godparents for Isabelle Anna Wendt, daughter of Matthew and Lori Wendt, when she was baptized at Redeemer Lutheran Church during the Sunday service. As Pastor, I also served as officiant for the baptism. It was a bit strange to address certain questions to the sponsors during the part of the baptismal rite in which the Godmother and Godfather are addressed, and then to answer my own questions! But I was wearing two hats that day. The Pastor who was administering the sacrament “interrogated” the confirmed Christian who was serving as Godfather for the sacrament. It just happened to be the same person in each case this time.

My wife and I pledged to help the parents in the Christian upbringing of



Pastor David Jay Webber

the child, to pray for the child, and, if she might lose her parents, to take the lead in seeing to it that she would still be raised in the faith. This is a weighty responsibility, and one that I do not take lightly.

But this kind of responsibility for the young members of the church does not reside only in official Godparents. All of us have a responsibility for the spiritual welfare of these precious ones. St. Paul says: “Bear one another’s burdens, and

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WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY TIMES

Scottsdale:

Sunday Divine Service: 9:00 a.m.
Refreshments after the Service
Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 10:30 a.m.

Queen Creek:

Sunday Divine Service: 4:00 p.m.
Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 5:15 p.m.

Wednesday “Bible & Theology” Study Group: 7:00 p.m.

Friday Bible Study: 10:00 a.m.

Notice: Adult Bible Class and Sunday School, the Friday Bible Study, and the Wednesday study will not be held during the summer months. All classes will resume again in September.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE BOOK OF CONCORD

Second of a three-part series

Who wrote the *Book of Concord*? The ancient creeds in the *Book of Concord* were prepared by early church pastors and theologians. Philip Melancthon, a layman, was a professor of Greek and theology at the University of Wittenberg. He was chiefly responsible for writing the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Martin Luther wrote the Small and Large Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles. A group of Lutheran theologians prepared the Formula of Concord. They were Jacob Andreae, Martin Chemnitz, Nicholas Selnecker, David Chytraeus, Andrew Musculus, and Christopher Koerner.

Since we have the Bible, why do we have the Book of Concord? The Lutheran Confessions are a summary and explanation of the Bible. They are not placed over the Bible. They do not take the place of the Bible. The *Book of Concord* is how Lutherans are able to say, together, as a church, "This is what we believe. This is what we teach. This is what we confess." The reason we have the *Book of Concord* is because of how highly we value correct teaching and preaching of God's Word.

A friend of mine says it is wrong to use creeds or confessions. How do I respond? The Bible itself not only contains numerous confessions and statements of faith by believers, but it also urges us to confess the faith. If a confession is completely in accord with Scripture, we can hardly claim that the content of the confession is merely "man-made" (1 Corinthians 12:1-3).

Are the Lutheran Confessions just for pastors and theologians? No. They are for all people: pastors, theologians, and laypersons alike. They are important statements of faith. They are not necessarily easy to understand, but they are so important that everyone who is a Lutheran should be aware of what the *Book of Concord* is and should have a copy of the Lutheran Confessions. There is an edition of the *Book of Concord* prepared specifically for laypeople to read, filled with notes, annotations, illustrations, and many other useful materials to aid reading and understanding. It is titled *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* and is avail-

able from Concordia Publishing House. You may order a copy on the Internet, or by calling 800-325-3040.

What documents should a layperson read first in the Book of Concord? The Small Catechism is called "The Layman's Bible" by the Formula of Concord because it does such a good job of summarizing the most important teachings of the Bible. The Large Catechism would be the next document to read carefully. The Augsburg Confession is the primary Lutheran Confession and should be read by every layperson. The Smalcald Articles are lively, bold, and powerful and capture readers' interest. The time and attention needed to read the longer documents in the *Book of Concord* are well worth the effort since they are filled with such powerfully comforting and instructive biblical truth.

What is a confessional Lutheran? A confessional Lutheran is a person who uses the documents contained in the *Book of Concord* to declare his faith to the world. The contents of the *Book of Concord* are cherished by such a person precisely because they are powerful means by which the correct teachings of Holy Scripture can be taught and shared with other people. The spirit of confessional Lutheranism is reflected well in the last words written in the *Book of Concord*: "In the sight of God and of all Christendom, we want to testify to those now living and those who will come after us. This declaration presented here about all the controverted articles mentioned and explained above – and no other – is our faith, doctrine, and confession. By God's grace, with intrepid hearts, we are willing to appear before the judgment seat of Christ with this Confession and give an account of it (1 Peter 4:5). We will not speak or write anything contrary to this Confession, either publicly or privately. By the strength of God's grace we intend to abide by it." (FC SD XII 40).

To be continued

by Rev. Paul T. McCain
May 3, 2008

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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

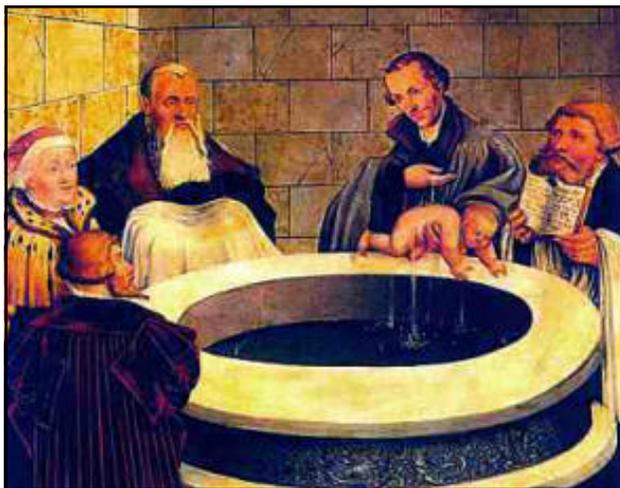
(Continued from page 1)

so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2, ESV). When the parents of a small child are struggling to care for their cranky or rambunctious son or daughter in church, they have a burden. We can help them to bear that burden, perhaps by offering our assistance in holding the child for a while, or in taking it out for a short break.

We can also help them to bear that burden by graciously overlooking the small amount of noise their child may be making, and by avoiding the temptation to give disapproving glances in the direction of the family, which could have the affect of discouraging or embarrassing them. Our attitude toward these young baptized brothers and sisters in the faith is to be that of Jesus, who "took a child and put him by his side and said to them, 'Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great'" (Luke 9:47-48, ESV). And besides, a church with small children who occasionally make their presence known is far to be preferred to a church where no small children are to be seen or heard at all. That would be the saddest of all circumstances.

Another responsibility we all share is in setting a good example for the young. They look to us, and they take cues from us. Certainly parents and grandparents are likely to make the biggest impact on young people. And it is the parents who are chiefly responsible, un-

der God, for the religious instruction of their children. But when children are a part of a larger congregation, they also notice everyone else, and they learn from everyone else. Jesus gives a severe warning to those who, by word or deed, would mislead a child in its faith: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea" (Mark 9:42, ESV).



Remember, though, that it's not perfection that the children need to see in us. We will teach them much when we teach them, in our words and deeds, the virtues of humility and love: when we demonstrate a willingness to apologize to those whom we have hurt or offended, and when we demonstrate a willingness to forgive those who have hurt or offended us. As St. Paul says: "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (Colossians 3:12-13, ESV).

Let's also always remember the wonderful and comforting words that St. Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children..." (Acts 2:38-39, ESV)

— Pastor Webber

Note of Appreciation

On Sunday, June 8, the Redeemer Ladies Guild hosted a reception after the worship service in honor of the twentieth anniversary of Pastor Webber's ordination to the Holy Ministry. The Amazon.com gift certificate that was presented to him is much appreciated, and will not be wasted! Pastor Webber was ordained by Synod President George M. Orvick in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, on June 5, 1988.

A Rest Only Jesus Can Give

Does a “day off” sound good to you? How about a three day weekend? After the work week, a day off or a long weekend can be refreshing. Here’s the question: what happens if we can’t stop thinking about the unfinished projects waiting for us when we get back? The day off or the long weekend may do us no good at all. We may find ourselves thinking: “I wish I could take the whole week.” Even then it may not be enough.

Did you know that this is a consequence of Adam and Eve’s original sin against God? Because they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God had forbidden, the paradise God created became a hard place. God pronounced the unhappy news to now sinful Adam, **“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground” (Genesis 3:17-19).** Since Adam’s sin has been passed down to us today from parent to child, this unhappy reality troubles our lives too.

Yet, hard work and the fatigue it brings to our minds and bodies are the least of our problems. Our conscience testifies to us that *we do not do what is right before holy God* (no matter how hard we think we work). We sinners do not deserve to go to our eternal rest in heaven. This fact puts us in a constant state of unrest in the heart. Do you need some real refreshment? After Adam and



Eve sinned, God came to them and promised them a Savior. This Savior would come into the world to bring the fallen human race rest *with God*, both in the world and forever. This Savior is Jesus, God’s almighty Son in the flesh, who speaks these comforting words for sinners, **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).**

What sort of rest is Jesus talking about? If Jesus were talking about mere rest for our bodies, we have weekends and vacations for that. Instead He is talking about a rest only he can give. It is a *spiritual* rest for the conscience and *eternal* rest in heaven.

When the troubles of the world burden you, the rest Jesus gives lightens the load. When your personal failures wear you out, the rest Jesus gives restores. He gives it through the wonderful Gospel promise: **“Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven” (Matthew 9:2).** Jesus has the authority to forgive us because He went to

the cross to bear the penalty for our sins once for all. His forgiveness puts our conscience at rest with God. This forgiveness also brings us the promise of eternal rest in heaven. Where there is forgiveness of sins there is also life and salvation! His rest will never fail to refresh us.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Jesus, Matthew 11:28)

Produced by the ELS Board for Evangelism

Announcements

The annual convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod was held in Mankato, Minnesota, June 16-19. Professor Erling Teigen delivered an excellent essay, which emphasized the inherent power of God’s Word to save and forgive. He noted that the church’s task, therefore, is to proclaim the Word of God faithfully, and not to try to devise various human techniques to be added to the Word of God, supposedly to make it effective. Convention actions included the re-election of Pastor Thomas Rank to the Doctrine Committee (on

which Pastor Webber also serves), and the election of our own circuit visitor, Pastor Timothy Hartwig of Lake Havasu City, to a vacant seat on the Committee on Worship. The convention also decided to move forward with the incorporation of the “Thoughts of Faith” mission society into the Foreign Mission Board of the synod. At present Thoughts of Faith is a church-related organization of the ELS, but is not directly a part of the ELS.

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
JULY 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6 Divine Service 9:00am DS (S) 4:00pm DS (Q)	7 Pastor Webber on vacation July 7 - 11	8 7:00pm Voter's Meeting (S) Pastor Webber on vacation July 7 - 11	9 Pastor Webber on vacation July 7 - 11	10 Pastor Webber on vacation July 7 - 11	11 Pastor Webber on vacation July 7 - 11	12
13 Service of the Word 9:00am SW (S) Ladies Guild after Service (S) 4:00pm SW (Q)	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Divine Service 9:00am DS (S) 4:00pm DS (Q)	21	22	23	24-27 ELS Lutheran Youth Association Convention - San Antonio, Texas		
27 Service of the Word 9:00am SW (S) 4:00pm SW (Q)	28-31 WELS Worship Conference, St. Peter, MN, at which Pastor Webber will be a speaker					

Abbreviations:

DS—Divine Service (SW) Service of the Word SS/AC = Sunday School / Adult Bible Class

(S) = Scottsdale (Refreshments in Scottsdale immediately follow the morning Service) (Q) = Queen Creek

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

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

Audio recordings of
Pastor Webber's sermons
are posted on the Internet
weekly and are available
through both church
websites above, and
published courtesy of
lutheransource.net



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ABOUT REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our mission is to preach the Word of God, both Law and Gospel, faithfully 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.

