

The Valley Evangel

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

June-July 2015 (Double Issue)

From the Pastor's desk

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends” (1 Corinthians 13:4-8, ESV).

The famous “love chapter” from the Bible – namely chapter 13 of St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians – is often read at weddings. While it is certainly true that a man and a woman in marriage should love each other in the ways that are described in this chapter, St. Paul’s target audience is not married couples. It is the church. He is writing to a relatively young and immature congregation, and is describing for them how the love which the Holy Spirit works in the hearts and minds of Christians can and will work itself out, in the sometimes trying and challenging relationships in which Christians find themselves in a congregation. The one baptism that we each receive from God unites us to a larger body and fellowship of forgiven sinners. All of these forgiven sinners – ourselves included – bring with them into the church a whole range of emotional scars, human weaknesses, and haunting memories, against which they now struggle with the help of Christ, and from which they now seek healing through the mercy of Christ.

Elsewhere in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul describes the kind of spiritually lost people to whom the church is sent with the gospel, to offer to them God’s deliverance from the evil that otherwise blinds and enslaves them. He writes: “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God” (6:9-10, ESV). But then Paul writes these startling yet comforting words: “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (v. 11).

A listing of people with such backgrounds sounds more like a description of a prison population, than the membership of a Christian congregation. But if a congregation is faithfully reaching out to a fallen and hostile world with the powerful message of Christ crucified for sinners, that congregation will draw these and many more kinds of people into its fellowship. Jesus Christ, who speaks and works through his people, said this: “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32, ESV). Add to this mix those impacted by God’s Word who are dealing with emotional and mental health problems, who are burdened by shame and regret, who are lonely and socially awkward, who are afflicted with a variety of handicaps and disabilities, or who are just trying to figure out the meaning of life, and you will have quite an interesting mix of people.

And such a mix of people will inevitably have a difficult time understanding one another, and knowing how best to be sensitive and encouraging to one another. It is also not difficult to imagine the kind of conflicts and misunderstandings that can arise in a gathering of people like this. How can the members of such a congregation – which is really a typical and normal Christian congregation – succeed in getting along, and even more so in establishing positive and uplifting relationships with one another? Through love.

God had shown us his love by sending his Son into the world to be our Savior, and by applying the salvation of Christ to us personally in forgiving our sins, and in adopting us as his children. Through his Son, God is reconciled to each one of us. And now, through the love that he places into our hearts, we learn from him how to be reconciled to each other, and how to experience that reconciliation here and now. In love we learn how to care about each other; and how to accept each other in Christ, as God, in Christ, has accepted each of us.

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We should all remember these lines, the next time we think that we know enough about a struggling Christian’s life to criticize him, or to judge him. We probably do not. We should all remember these lines, the next time we feel initially repelled or frightened by the “strangeness” of a fellow-believer who is in need of our friendship. That fellow-believer actually has the right to expect our friendship, in spite of his “strangeness.”

We never have enough love for each other. But we have ongoing access to the divine source of the love that we need, for the replenishing and fortifying of that love within us. In Word and Sacrament, we have ongoing access to Christ. “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19, ESV). And this is not a one-time infusion of love. Jesus loves us first continually, so that we can love one another – and be sympathetic, humble, and understanding toward one another – continually.

We close with these words, also from St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians: “Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love” (16:13-14, ESV).

– Pastor Webber



Adult Confirmation

Vera Heminger was received as a communicant member of Redeemer through the Rite of Confirmation on the Feast of Pentecost, May 24. Welcome!



Summer Sunday School – Other Bible Stories

During the summer months, our Sunday School children will have an opportunity to study some of the lesser-known events of the Old and New Testaments. In our Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters, Redeemer uses the *Growing in Christ* curriculum from Concordia Publishing House, which presents a selection of the most important Bible stories children should know, over a several-year repeating cycle. However, some very interesting, but perhaps more obscure, Bible stories, were not able to be included in the *Growing in Christ* lesson sequence. These stories will be the focus of our Summer 2015 Sunday School term.

Because summer attendance tends to fluctuate (due to family travel and other factors), we will not purchase curriculum, but will develop our own lesson plans and activities. Resources will be drawn from the internet, the public library system, and Arch Books owned by the Webbers. Stories to be featured include the Tower of Babel, Balaam's Donkey, Ezekiel and the Dry Bones, and Belshazzar seeing Handwriting on the Wall. We will also sing hymns and other songs, and review portions of Luther's Small Catechism which reinforce the themes of our lessons.

Please encourage our young people in their study of God's Word this summer. When they return to the fellowship hall after class, ask them to show you their activity papers, or tell you what story they learned that day. We invite you to stop by our Sunday School classroom to view our materials and bulletin board displays. Parents, watch for special slips of paper which may be sent home with your children, providing the URLs for online Bible story videos viewed in class, so that you can watch these together as a family on your home computers.

Finally, let us gratefully acknowledge those who in recent months have served as regular or occasional Sunday School teachers, or in other ways helped with the program: Carole Clingan, Amanda Colville, Shaylene Jessup, Daniel Morehouse, David Morehouse, Sue Muth, Julie Nelson, Carrie Ratzlaff, Sean Scheele, Lori Wendt, Matthew Wendt, and Carol Webber.



“Snowbird” Interview: Bob and Lynn Doneff

Erica: I'm so happy to be able to interview you, because we don't usually get a chance to talk. How long have you been doing the "snowbird thing", and where do you live the rest of the year?

Lynn: We actually followed my parents as they used to “winter” in Chandler. We started in about 1997, but only for a few weeks at a time at first, as we were still working full time. During the rest of the year, we live in Egg Harbor, Wisconsin. This beautiful village is located in Door County. If you check a map, you will see that Door

County is a peninsula about 70 miles long that projects into Lake Michigan in a north/south orientation. It is a very popular tourist destination in the summer.

Erica: What made you decide to make Redeemer your home church away from home, and when did you start attending?

Bob: We started attending in about 1998 or '99. We searched out WELS churches and did find Redeemer on the WELS locator, and decided to add it to our list. After attending several different churches, we decided on Redeemer partly due to proximity to Fountain Hills, and we certainly fell in love with the lovely setting and sanctuary. Since the beliefs are certainly "in line" with ours, we decided to make this our church home away from home. We most appreciated the welcoming warmth from quite a number of the members. Some are still pillars of the church!

Erica: Do you have family in this area? Where do your family members live?

Lynn: My parents no longer "winter" in Chandler, but I have two sisters who now do spend part of the winter in Fountain Hills near to us.

Erica: Do you live in Fountain Hills when you're here, then?

Bob: We enjoy Fountain Hills as it is a very lovely community and still retains a smaller town atmosphere. An added benefit is the closeness of the open desert with the McDowell Mountain Regional Park and Indian Community surrounding the town.

Erica: That is a gorgeous area. About how long do you typically stay here during the winter months?

Bob: Typically we stay January through April, but I am lobbying to add a month or two in the fall. It is in the family discussion stage. We will see if I prevail in this discussion!

Erica: Tell me about your family.

Lynn: We have a son and daughter-in-law who live in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. This is about 1 3/4 [miles] from our home. They have three children: two 11-year-old twins and an 8-year-old. Our daughter and son-in-law live very near to us and have a son (almost 2) and daughter (almost 3 months).

Erica: Do either of you still work, or have you retired? What kind of work do or did you do? For how long?

Bob: I work about half time. Both of our children are in our family business with me so my workload is much less than it used to be. We build and manage apartments. We have also built homes in addition to condos for the second home market.

Erica: That's great!

Lynn: My education was in nursing. However, my nursing career was rather short as we started a family and then I joined the family business as a property manager. I still do assist the business in this capacity on a limited basis.

Erica: How nice! What do you like to do for fun? Do you have any hobbies?

Bob: I have a passion for cooking and of course fine dining goes with that. In the summers, I really enjoy fishing. Now that I have two grandsons, I have a new generation to train. Together, we really enjoy boating on the Great Lakes. We have a live-aboard boat and have spent as much as five continuous weeks on the boat. Our favorite journey has been a trip to Montreal and back, 1,700 miles. This journey was spaced over two years, and our boat spent the winter at Brewerton, New York, on the Erie Canal, while we spent [the winter] in Arizona. We recently purchased a used pop-up camper here in Arizona, and [ran] out of time to actually use it. Maybe next winter.

Lynn: I usually say that keeping up with Bob allows me no spare time. Actually, I love to read and have recently tried to continue some genealogical research begun long ago. Another thing that we have enjoyed in the past

is independent travel. We have done extensive driving trips in Central/South America, Italy and South Africa.

Erica: Have you ever traveled to other places during the winters?

Bob: Most of our winter time has been spent in Arizona in the last 20 years.

Erica: What is your favorite thing to do when you're here?

Bob: We enjoy seeing friends from home who come to visit as well as visiting with friends from here. A favorite pastime with friends here is playing cards and dining. We also enjoy visiting the many beautiful sites around Arizona (maybe camping in the future).

Erica: How long have you been married?

Lynn: We celebrated 44 years in March.

Erica: Congratulations! That's wonderful.

Erica: What do you miss most about home when you're here?

Lynn: Our grandchildren!

Erica: Well, I'm sure that's certainly true! ... Thank you so much for doing this interview with me! I've enjoyed getting to know you better. We'll look forward to seeing you the next time you come to escape the winter!



Synod Convention

The annual convention of our church body, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, will be held June 22-24 on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. Pastor Webber and Sean Scheele (our congregation's elected lay delegate) will attend. The sessions of the convention will be webcast live. Check out the synod website for details: els.org



Church Sign-Ups

Please note that all of the sign-up sheets for various church tasks will now be located on the bulletin board immediately to the left of the coffee urns, in the fellowship room. As you get your coffee after church, please take a moment to check the lists, and note where your help might be needed for altar duty, hosting refreshments, teaching Sunday School, etc. Thank you, in advance, for considering these opportunities for service.

Summer Parish Education Schedule

After the May 29 session, the Friday morning Bible Study will go on hiatus until September 4. The Thursday evening Internet Study Group – which is a joint venture of Redeemer Lutheran Church and Hope Lutheran Church in West Jordan, Utah – will continue through the summer (except for June 25, which is the Thursday of synod convention week).



Ladies Guild News

Although with summer, the Ladies Guild's activities seem to slow down some, we are still keeping busy with making sure there are snacks and coffee available, as well as plates, napkins and utensils, for the fellowship after each service; planning the next Women's Mission Rally, which will be held at Redeemer on February 20, 2016; and supporting the Alpha Pregnancy Center in Phoenix with donations.

We are in need of volunteers to help with set-up for, and clean-up following, the after-service fellowship. If you are able to help with setting up, just arrive early on Sunday mornings and those who are there will let you know where your help is needed most. If you have any time at all after Bible class ends to help clean, even ten minutes would be beneficial.

In regard to the rally next year, plans are being made and speakers secured. All women (and men, too, if you would like to join us) are welcome to attend. Look for more information in the months ahead about how to sign up, and where hotel reservations might be made if those from out of town need a room. The rally is chiefly for women in our circuit of the ELS, which covers Arizona (including the congregations in Fort Mojave and Lake Havasu) and California. We rotate from one church to another every year, and 2016 is our turn to host. We expect everyone will have a wonderful time.

The Alpha Pregnancy Center, which gives life-affirming help to women in crisis pregnancies, is also still a mission for us. They are in need of donations of money, clothing for mothers and babies, diapers, wipes, formula, baby food, and most especially prayer. Material donations can be left in the Sunday school room closest to the Fellowship Hall where the ladies have our monthly meetings, and Lori Wendt will take them to the Center. All donations are tax-deductible.

We would also like to extend a warm welcome to all the ladies of the congregation to join us for our monthly meetings. There is always something to be gained by participating, which you won't know unless you come to the meetings! We can always find something for new people to do that they are comfortable, and capable of, doing. And often just the participation in our discussions is fun.

Erica Olson, Ladies' Guild Secretary

Questions You've Never Asked

Maybe you never thought to ask. Or maybe you were too busy considering other questions, and searching out their answers. One way or another there are questions that haven't been asked, that are worth asking. There are mysteries full of meaning right before our eyes, and under our noses, that beg the question. For instance:

- Why do we have a seven-day week?
- Why are there such diverse languages in the world?
- Why do people wear clothes, and eat meat?
- Why after all this time is the "Missing Link" still missing?
- Why do people die? (And by the way, then what happens?)

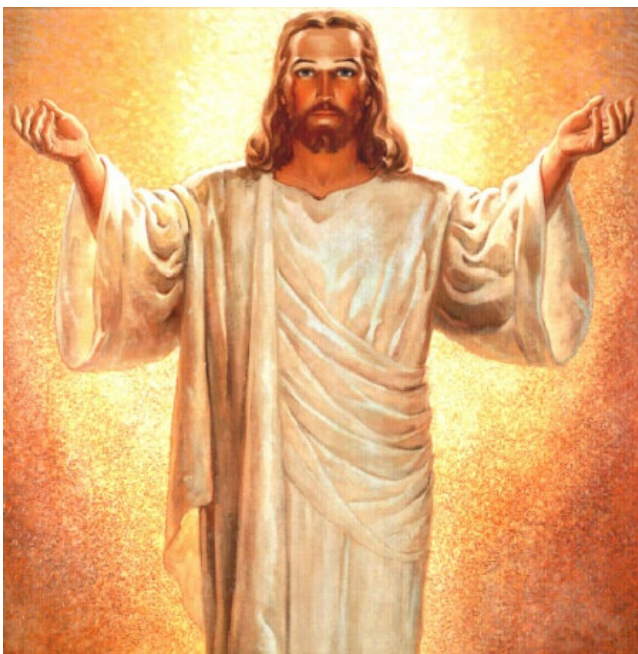


If you peel the onion that far, it then becomes personal, and important for us to find the answers to what comes up next!

- Is there a God?
- Does He care about me?
- If God's loving, why do I have so many problems?
- Why does it seem that bad things happen to good people?
- Other than my own plans -- which often fall short -- is there a plan for my life?

TOO DEEP FOR ME.

But before you drop this newsletter and head out for a latte with your 'to-do' list -- what if you knew? What if you had answers? Would that make a difference? Would it ease your mind, and reassure you when you're afraid, or confronted with life's reversals? What if you found peace and joy in it?



Someone has answers: The One Who made the deaf hear and the lame leap like a deer . . . Who announces good news to the poor . . . Light for those who sit in darkness . . . Life for those living under the shadow of death . . . forgiveness for sins and eternal salvation in a concrete, real-time, truly present peace with God.

While we're at it, why has Jesus, the Jewish Carpenter of 2000 years ago from the small-potatoes town of Nazareth, become the most beloved, most despised, most controversial, most revered, most pivotal and consequential person in all of history? Why not come and see?

(from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Board for Home Outreach)

Redeemer Lutheran Church

June 2015

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
	1	2	3	4 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	5 Morning Bible Study on hiatus until Sept. 4	6
7 Pentecost 2 9 a.m. DS 10:30 AC/SS	8 7 p.m. Church Council meeting at the church	9	10	11 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	12	13
14 Pentecost 3 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	15	16	17	18 Internet Study Group canceled	19	20
21 Pentecost 4 9 a.m. DS Ladies' Guild meeting after the service 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	22 ELS Convention	23 ELS Convention	24 ELS Convention	25 Internet Study Group canceled	26	27
28 Pentecost 5 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. AC/SS		30 7 p.m. Elders' meeting at the Anderson residence (rescheduled from June 23)				

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

July 2015

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
			1	2 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	3 Morning Bible Study on hiatus until Sept. 4	4
5 Pentecost 6 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	6	7	8	9 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	10	11
12 Pentecost 7 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. Congregational Forum / SS	13 7 p.m. Voters' meeting at the church	14	15	16 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	17	18
19 Pentecost 8 9 a.m. DS Ladies' Guild meeting after the service 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	20	21	22	23 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	24	25
26 Pentecost 9 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	27	28 7 p.m. Elders' meeting at the Anderson residence	29	30 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	31	

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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.