

The Valley Evangel

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

June/July 2017

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From the Pastor's Desk

On May 4, U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order addressing issues of religious freedom in America, and directing agencies of the federal government to make sure that they respect the religious liberty of Americans, and of churches and religious organizations in America. We certainly welcome any effort like this that will protect and reinforce for us the Constitutionally-guaranteed right to the free exercise of religion that we enjoy in this country. But further comment may be in order in regard to one particular feature of this executive order.

Among other things, President Trump directed the Internal Revenue Service to “alleviate the burden of the Johnson Amendment.” This refers to a 1954 tax code regulation that had been sponsored by Lyndon Johnson, then a U.S. Senator, which prohibits organizations with tax-free status from participating in a political campaign or endorsing specific political candidates for public office. Many churches and religious organizations in America have wanted to be more actively and directly involved in politics, and found this regulation to be an unwelcome restraint. But our congregation, as a Confessional Lutheran church, did not feel unduly constrained by this restriction. And so, even if there will be a relaxing of this requirement in the wake of the President’s executive order, our congregation, and our church body, will not become more politically active than they have been.

We believe that the authority of civil government does have its origin in God and in God’s will for the *temporal* welfare of the human race. Therefore we “should honor the State as an institution of God for the regulation of the outward affairs of men, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives here upon earth. God has given us this institution ‘for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of them that do well’ [1 Peter 2:14]. And for the execution of this

purpose God has bestowed upon it the sword. The State has authority from God to employ force where this is necessary for the accomplishment of its ends” (C. H. Little, *Disputed Doctrines*, p. 88). And of course, the authority of spiritual government also has its origin in God – specifically in God’s will for the *eternal* welfare of the human race. This means that “The Church also is a Divine institution, but its realm is quite different from that of the State. It is limited to spiritual affairs. It touches matters which the State cannot reach – religion, conscience, the thoughts and intents of the heart. God has entrusted it with the means of grace and has laid upon it the obligation to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. The Church’s work is, in a word, evangelization. The Church has no sword but the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. She employs no force, but uses only the persuasive power of the Word. Church and State observing their appropriate spheres should dwell together in harmony” (pp. 88-89).

As followers of Christ, we believe that “The relation of Church and State is to be determined on the basis of Christ’s command to render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things which are God’s (Matt. 22:21). The sphere of the Church and that of the State are different. Neither must interfere with the affairs of the other. Since the Church possesses an external organization, it is in temporal matters subject to the laws of the State; but in spiritual matters, in those which concern the sphere of the Church as such, the State has nothing to say. On the other hand the Church has no right to interfere in the affairs of the State. She has no right as an organization to take any part in politics. In all her activities she must aim at spiritual results and use spiritual means. Her one fundamental duty is that of administering the Means of Grace. She has no call officially as a Church, therefore, to enter into any purely humanitarian enterprises, to organize plans for social uplift, to take sides in industrial disputes, to line up with a particular political party, or to push political measures of any kind through legislatures or congress. Her members as individual Christian citizens may and often should do many of these things. They have political rights and duties which they are to assert and fulfill in a Christian and conscientious manner. But the Church as a Church should confine herself to that work which belongs to her; namely, the work of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and of enunciating the principles of love and righteousness which should guide men in their social and political relations” (Joseph Stump, *The Christian Faith*, pp. 245-46).

To be sure, the church and its pastors do not forfeit their right to instruct Christians regarding matters of morality and ethics – including public morality and public ethics. They do not forfeit their right to instruct Christians regarding the Biblical teaching on the nature and purpose of civil government – and this may very well include commentary on the extent to which a particular government or government agency is fulfilling its proper duty, or is not fulfilling it. But the pastors of the church, in their pastoral office, should not enmesh themselves or their churches in the rough and tumble world of partisan politics and political campaigns. Insofar as pastors are citizens, they may and even should be involved in these things – just as the laity of the church, as citizens, should be involved in these things. We should all cast our votes thoughtfully and with a view to what the divinely-given purpose of civil government is. But it is also the case, that while Bible-believing Christians can be expected to agree in their beliefs on morality and ethics, they may not always agree on specific political strategies or governmental policies for addressing the public issues that face our country. These differences – these *political* differences – must not be allowed to be divisive in the church. Christian citizens should be expected to agree on the fundamental *principles* that are in play in matters of civil law and governance. But in regard to the practical *applications* of these principles, where each Christian citizen follows his own

prayerful and sanctified judgment, they need not agree. And the church, *as church*, does not take sides in regard to those strictly political differences.

So, at Redeemer Lutheran Church, you will still receive instruction from God's Word regarding the sanctity of human life, the sanctity of marriage and family, and the importance of praying and working so that the church will always have "space" in our society to fulfill its unique soul-saving mission. But specific candidates, and specific legislative strategies, will not be endorsed from our pulpit. We will all be encouraged to fulfill our calling as citizens, to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's – which in our country includes responsible and engaged participation in the political process, as God's Word shapes our consciences and guides our actions. But in the church, and *as the church*, we will actively fulfill our unique *spiritual* calling to render to God the things that are God's. We will preach his law for conviction and instruction in righteousness; and we will preach his gospel for our forgiveness, for eternal life, and for salvation from sin and death, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

– Pastor Webber



Molly Null

Molly Null, a member of Redeemer, passed into the arms of her Savior on April 5 at the Phoenix Mountain Nursing Center, where she resided with her husband John. A memorial service was held on April 8, at Phoenix Mountain.

Thanks, Sarah

Sarah Kissinger has served for many years as a Valley Evangel volunteer, in the area of printing and distributing the newsletter. She will no longer be able to serve us in this way. We wish to thank her for all that she has done in support of our efforts in sharing news and inspiration with the members and friends of Redeemer!

E.L.S. Convention

The annual convention of our church body, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, will be held on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota, June 19-21. Redeemer will be represented by Pastor Webber and by lay delegate Norman Hartigan. The convention sessions will be webcast live through the synod website: www.els.org/2017convention

Dr. Morehouse

We congratulate church member Daniel Morehouse on his completion of the degree of Doctor of Education at Concordia University, Irvine, Calif. He received his diploma and hood on May 6.



June Adult Class

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation. In this anniversary year, during the month of June, the Sunday morning Adult Class will view and discuss two pertinent video courses produced by Lutheran Hour Ministries. On June 4 we will view the film “A Man Named Martin Luther, Part 1: The Man,” and on June 11 we will discuss that film. On June 18 we will view the film “A Man Named Martin Luther, Part 2: The Moment,” and on June 25 we will discuss that film. Please join us for these educational experiences, as we seek to increase our knowledge both of the history and of the theology of the Reformation. If you miss one of the video presentations, or if you want to view the videos also at home, they are both online through the “videos” page of the church website: redeemerscottsdale.angelfire.com/videos.html

Devotion : Almost Swept Away



When you’re a kid, and you go to the beach, lifeguards are the mean people who enforce the rules and ruin your fun. Maybe later in life, before you have kids of your own, you think lifeguards are necessary because so many parents are careless and negligent.

When you’re the parent, things look different. You say thanks to the lifeguards. You’re grateful for them, and don’t even give a thought to what they might think of you.

Now you’re glad they’re there, because the waters can be so swift, the children can move so fast, and with one step, a child can be in over his head. Even in a little, family-friendly pool, with a little current to provide a lazy river.

A dad stands in water to his waist, and before you know it, a little boy is being pulled away. Dad doesn't even realize what's happening. Thank God for lifeguards, and for others who keep an eye out: people watching out for each other.

That's when the lifeguard jumps in. Dad rushes to him. The child is safely back in the arms of his parents. With a very large lump in his throat, Dad thanks the lifeguard, and does all he can to reassure the boy. Meanwhile, kicking himself - "*And we were only trying to have fun.*"

As we look forward to summer, as we get busy with life, and recreation, and so on . . . what carries you along? God speaks to you, giving you safety. He forgives sins and comforts and gives everlasting life and salvation to all who believe. But before you know it, the swift currents of the world can carry us away, as we try to get ahead, or just try to have fun. Maybe we're vaguely aware that something's missing . . . maybe it no longer seems to matter.

This little newsletter reaches out to you, so that you won't be swept away and lost. Only in Jesus Christ is there life and light in this world of death and darkness. Only at His Word do we have safety against sin and Satan. You are safe in the arms of your Savior when He gathers you up in the Sunday Service, and when He speaks to you in His Sacred Word. That's where all ends well - *He has come to get you.*

From the ELS Board for Home Outreach

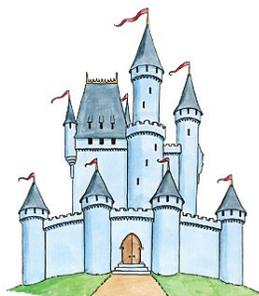
Summer Sunday School

Summer Sunday School begins on June 4. Our theme will be "Fear, Love & Trust: Following God's Commandments." Concordia Publishing House provides this curriculum summary: "Why doesn't God want me to have other gods? As long as I do my best, I'll get into heaven, right? Children discover answers to questions like these in Fear, Love & Trust: Following God's Commandments, a new topical Summer Sunday School. Thirteen Old and New Testament Bible Stories intertwine a castle theme to help children learn about God's rules for holy living and loving in the Ten Commandments."

Parents are encouraged to note of the "Take Home Point" and "Family Faith Talk" sections of each lesson leaflet. Please use these features at home to review stories and main ideas during the rest of the week. Also check out the "Castle Clues" box, with fun fortress trivia and websites to visit online. We welcome helpers in the classroom. Please feel free to sit in and assist with activities. For more general information, visit this webpage:

sites.cph.org/sundayschool/topical-summer.asp#p2

– Carol Webber, Sunday School Coordinator



Redeemer Lutheran Church, June 2017

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
				1 7 pm Internet Study Group	2 Morning Bible Study on hiatus until Sept. 1	3
4 Pentecost 9 am DS 10:30 am SS/AC (“Man Named Martin Luther, Part 1)	5	6	7	8 7 pm Internet Study Group	9	10
11 Holy Trinity 9 am DS 10:30 am SS/AC (“Man Named Martin Luther, Part 1, discussion)	12 7 pm Church Council, at the Muth residence	13	14	15 7 pm Internet Study Group	16	17
18 Pentecost 2 9 am DS Ladies Guild after the service 10:30 am SS/AC (“Man Named Martin Luther, Part 2)	19 Pr. Webber in Mankato, Minnesota, for ELS Convention	20 Pr. Webber in Mankato, Minnesota	21 Pr. Webber in Mankato, Minnesota	22 Pr. Webber in Mankato, Minnesota Internet Study Group canceled	23 Pr. Webber in Mankato, Minnesota	24
25 The Presentation of the Augsburg Confession 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 am SS/AC (“Man Named Martin Luther, Part 2, discussion)	26 7 pm Elders Meeting	27	28	29 7 pm Internet Study Group	30	

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.

Redeemer Lutheran Church, July 2017

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
						1
2 The Visitation 9 am DS 10:30 am SS/AC	3	4	5	6 7 pm Internet Study Group	7 Morning Bible Study on hiatus until Sept. 1	8
9 Pentecost 5 9 am SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 am SS/ Congregational Forum	10 7 pm Quarterly Voters Meeting, at church	11	12	13 7 pm Internet Study Group	14	15
16 Pentecost 6 9 am DS Ladies Guild after the service 10:30 am SS/AC	17	18	19	20 7 pm Internet Study Group	21	22
23 Pentecost 7 9 a.m. SW with Spoken Communion 10:30 am SS/AC	24	25	26	27 7 pm Internet Study Group	28	29
30 Pentecost 8 9 am DS 10:30 am SS/AC	31					

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Redeemer Lutheran Church**
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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.