

The Valley Evangel

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

June/July 2018

<p><i>Inside this issue...</i></p> <p><i>Journey with JenniferPage 3</i></p> <p><i>Alpha Update/Devotion..Page 4</i></p> <p><i>ELS Convention..... Page 5</i></p> <p><i>Calendars.....Pages 6-7</i></p> <p><i>About our Church..... Page 8</i></p>	<p><i>Worship and Study</i></p> <p>Sunday Divine Service 9 am; Refreshments after the service</p> <p>Sunday School/Adult Bible Class: 10:30 am</p> <p>Thursday Internet Study Group: 7 pm (Ask Pr. Webber for login information)</p> <p>Friday Bible Study: On hiatus until September 7</p>	<p><i>Newsletter Staff</i></p> <p>Editor: Pastor David Jay Webber</p> <p>Editorial Assistant/ Layout and Design: Erica Olson</p> <p>Contributor: Jennifer Price</p> 
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From the Pastor's Desk

We have now made the transition from the first half of the church year to the second half of the church year. The first half of the church year, which goes from the beginning of the Advent season through the end of the Easter season, focuses on the coming of Christ to this world, on the important events of Jesus' earthly ministry, and on the things our Savior did to win our salvation through his death and resurrection. The second half of the church year corresponds to the Pentecost or Trinity season, and focuses on the mission and ministry of the church, and on the instruction that Jesus and the apostles give to the church so as to give full shape to its faith and life.

One change that you may notice, now that we have entered the second half of the church year, is that the post-communion collect has changed. During the first half of the church year we used this collect, which speaks of the incarnation of Christ:

O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving-kindness sent your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank you that for His sake you have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask you not to forsake your children, but always to rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled to serve you constantly...

Starting on the Day of Pentecost, we began to use this collect instead:

We give thanks to you, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore you that of your mercy you would strengthen us through the same, in faith toward you, and in fervent love toward one another...

These prayers certainly do not contradict each other. But they do emphasize different things. The collect that we used during the first half of the church year focuses on Jesus, on our connection to him in the sacrament, and on our ongoing personal relationship with God through his Son as we go forth from the Lord's Supper. This is the vertical dimension of the Sacrament of the Altar, according to which we look up to God, and God comes down to us individually through the body and blood of his Son in the blessed bread and wine.

The collect that we are using now, in the second half of the church year, shifts the focus somewhat, so that we are now also thinking and praying specifically about each other. As we commune together and receive the forgiveness of sins together, we now want to live out that forgiveness "in fervent love toward one another." This is the horizontal dimension of the Sacrament of the Altar, according to which we take note of our fellow Christians with a recognition of our mutual obligation to confess with them the revealed faith of the church; with a recognition of our shared privilege of loving and serving them in compassion and patience; and with the joy that comes from our joint sharing in the gifts of God's grace. For "we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Romans 12:5, ESV).

During the Pentecost season, as we learn from God's Word together, and as we commune together, God will bring us closer to each other in a mutual appreciation of the various ways in which we enrich each other's lives. As the Holy Spirit builds up our faith in God and in his love, so that we ask God to help us love one another as a fruit of that faith, God does indeed instruct us and guide us to be like Christ in these ways:

"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, 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. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful" (Colossians 3:12-15, ESV).

And so we acknowledge that this is what God's Spirit is doing in us and for us, as members of the body of Christ and the family of God. And we recall our Savior's encouragement to us:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35, ESV).

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds Is like to that above.
Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our alms, are one, our comforts and our cares.
We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.
When here our pathways part, we suffer bitter pain;
Yet, one in Christ and one in heart, we hope to meet again.

– Pastor Webber

Journey with Jennifer

First of a Series Exploring the Holy Land

In the early 1980s my father was studying at Emmaus Bible College. As a child I remember being transfixed by the photos of ancient ruins in the Bible lands of Israel, Jordan and Iraq. My mother spent the summer of 1976 in Israel and recalls pieces of ancient pottery and marble washing up onto the beach from the Mediterranean. And yet, as I prepared to go to Israel and Jordan for a month in the spring of 2007, as part of my Master of Biblical Studies program at Dallas Theological Seminary, I was ambivalent. Why? Doesn't everyone, from Abraham and Moses to your Aunt Betty and Uncle Fred, long to visit the Promised Land? Indeed. But I knew, having taken a course in Aegean Bronze Age Art and Archaeology in college, that the ancient world lies under 12 feet or more of modern civilization or is buried in massive tells (a *tell* is an artificial mound formed from the accumulated refuse of people living on the same site for hundreds or thousands of years). It would require lots of imagination to envision the world of Abraham, David and Jesus. So, I went with low expectations, knowing that God's Word is true whether I can see the stable (or cave) in Bethlehem where Jesus was born (which you can't), or the foundations (that you can see) of the Herodian Temple in Jerusalem, where Jesus overturned the tables of money-changers. While low expectations and imagination are required in places like Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and Amman, it was the land that stole the show. It recalls Luke 19:40, in which Jesus says if his disciples were silent that the stones would cry out! God's creation testifies to the veracity of His Word.

Professor Todd Bolen's* objective for the program was that at the end of the month all the students would have 3D maps of Israel in their heads. I love maps and have an excellent sense of direction, so this was right up my alley! But there was a catch. In the ancient world, everything was Eastern-oriented, so we had work on maps in which "up" was not north but east. In order to achieve the mental map, Professor Bolen had us walk, hike, swim and climb through every region of the Holy Land (Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Galilee and Jordan). We visited 3-5 sites per day and at each location we examined its geography, geology, archaeology, and Biblical theology. We drove on modern roads that mirror ancient trade routes, and began to understand that the names of cities in the Bible aren't random. They are all connected to their equivalent of SR-51 or the I-10. Evangelism is not unique to Acts 1:8. God always desired for His Word and people to spread. Finally, we learned it's just as important to see where people lived then as where they live now. In ancient Israel, the majority of people lived in the Hill country and in Galilee. Today, the majority of Israelis live on the coastline, which wasn't habitable until after World War II when engineers drained the coastal marshes. The divine consequence of this transition is that many of the ancient inland sites and landscapes are preserved! In future issues of the *Valley Evangel* I'll highlight various locations and how they attest to the faithfulness of God's inspired, inerrant and sufficient Word.

To end this introduction, I'll leave you with the attached photo of me on the top of the ancient fortress of Azekah looking out over the valley of Elah (name of the oak/terebinth trees that grow here). Behind me is the plain upon which David met Goliath around 1000 B.C. You'll notice how it's still farmland, very much as it probably was 3,000 years ago. The creek from which David drew 5 stones is still there. Though, like the Jordan River, irrigation means the water is less than it was at the time, but the creek remains. To read more about this location online, see www.bibleplaces.com/elahvalley

*Professor Todd Bolen, now an instructor at The Master's College in California, is a professional photographer, and has a Doctorate in Old Testament studies. He spent 10 years living and studying in Israel. His online blog, blog.bibleplaces.com, covers the latest news in ancient Middle East and Aegean archeology and related subjects of interest. His photographic skills can be found at www.bibleplaces.com/details. If you click on the geographical regions on the left of this web page and then scroll to the bottom, you will see information and photos about various sites to complement your Bible reading.

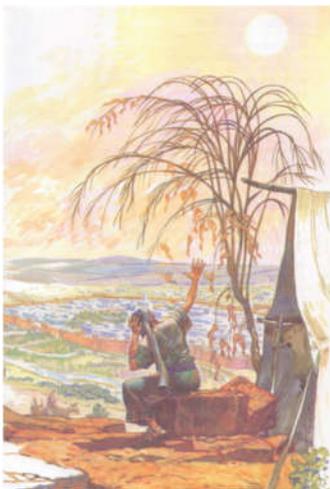
– Jennifer Price



Alpha Center Update

Thank you, Redeemer Lutheran, for your continual donations to support the Alpha Ministry! The Alpha Director, Kay Retberg, sent a letter of appreciation to the church for our March Diaper Drive. She shared that only a short time after I made a delivery that included two slightly-used strollers, one of them was gifted to a woman expecting in May who had nothing for her baby. Kay wants us to know that while the earthly goods are an important part of their ministry, they take great care to address the spiritual needs of their clients. The women and their families receive prayer, church and baptism information, and the assurance they are loved by a caring God. Thank you again for your support!

– Jennifer Price, Alpha Center Ambassador/Liaison



Devotion: Who Deserves God's Forgiveness?

We are whiners, aren't we? Nothing can be perfect, especially the weather. It's always too rainy, or too dry, or too cloudy, or too sunny! As the heat of summer really begins to beat down, I've found myself whining about it more and more.

One biblically bad whiner was the prophet Jonah. He whined about preaching to the Ninevites and then went so far as to try to run away from God to avoid doing it. And then when he does preach to them and they repent, what does Jonah do? He sits down to whine some more! Jonah 4:8 says, "**When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah**

so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

As Jonah was pouting, sitting on a hill that overlooked the city, the Lord caused a plant to grow which gave Jonah shade. Then the Lord sent a worm which ate the plant and the next day it had withered. God points out to Jonah that he’s upset that the plant died, even though he did nothing to make it grow and put no effort into keeping it alive.

The Lord had put effort into the people of Nineveh, just as He has with everyone. He cares for them and provides for the faithful and faithless alike. **“He desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”** (1 Tim. 2:4). He cared deeply for the 120,000 non-believers in that city and went to great lengths to bring them the Word, despite their wickedness and despite an unwilling servant.

Are there people that we desire God’s grace not reach? Do we see some people as less deserving of God’s forgiveness? When Christ lived His perfect life, He didn’t do so with only believers in mind. What motivated Him was His great love for all people of all time. He thought about the fact that through His work, God’s grace would be offered to all.

When Jesus’ blood flowed out onto the cross, it was innocent blood, valuable enough to pay for every sin ever committed. Jonah’s three days in the belly of the whale pointed ahead to Christ’s three days in the tomb, and His victorious resurrection. Through faith in Him as our Savior, we inherit eternal life. What a message! What a wonderful gift to bring to those around us! We have the opportunity to share this incredible account with others- God can use His Word that we share to create the faith in someone’s heart that enables them to enjoy heaven forever! This isn’t a burden we feel compelled to accomplish but a joy! It is a way that we can respond to God’s grace and mercy that He has shown to us! Praise God that He did not neglect us, but sent His Son as our Savior, and made us His children through the waters of baptism! May He bless us all as we look for opportunities to share His love.

From the ELS Board for Home Outreach

ELS Convention



The annual convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and the events surrounding it, will be held at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota, from Sunday, June 17, through Thursday, June 21. The convention proper will take place Monday through Wednesday. On the preceding day a special Synod Sunday service, marking the 100th anniversary of the reorganization of our church body, will be held at the BLC chapel. On the day following (June 21), a special apologetics seminar will be held on the BLC campus. These events, the sessions of the convention, and several other events of that week, will be webcast live via the synod website at this URL: els.org/streaming A detailed schedule of events can be found here: els.org/convention

Redeemer Lutheran Church of Scottsdale June 2018 Calendar

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
					1 Bible Study on hiatus until Sept. 7	2
3 Pentecost 2 9am DS 10:30am SS/AC	4	5	6	7 7 pm Internet Study Group	8	9
10 Pentecost 3 9am SW w/ spoken Communion 10:30am SS/AC	11 7 pm Church Council at the Muth residence	12	13	14 7 pm Internet Study Group	15	16
17 Pentecost 4 9am DS Ladies Guild after the service 10:30am SS/AC	18 Pr. Webber in Mankato, MN, for ELS Convention	19 Pr. Webber in Mankato	20 Pr. Webber in Mankato	21 Pr. Webber in Mankato Internet Study Group canceled	22 Pr. Webber in Mankato	23 Pr. Webber in Mankato
24 Nativity of St. John the Baptist 9am SW w/ spoken Communion 10:30am SS/AC	25	26	27	28 7 pm Internet Study Group	29	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 of Scottsdale
July 2018 Calendar*

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
1 Pentecost 6 9 am DS 10:30 am SS/AC	2	3	4	5 7 pm Internet Study Group	6	7
8 Pentecost 7 9am SW w/ spoken Communion 10:30am SS/Congregational Forum	9 7 pm Quarterly Voters Meeting at the Church	10	11	12 Pr. Webber in Utah Internet Study Group canceled	13 Pr. Webber in Utah	14 Pr. Webber in Utah
15 Pentecost 8 9am SW w/ spoken Communion 10:30am SS/AC (Guest Pastor: Rev. Allen Schroeder)	16 Pr. Webber in Utah	17 Pr. Webber in Utah	18 Pr. Webber in Utah	19 Pr. Webber in Utah Internet Study Group canceled	20	21
22 St. Mary Magdalene 9am SW w/ spoken communion Ladies Guild after the service 10:30am SS/AC	23 Elders Meeting	24	25	26	27	28
29 Pentecost 10 9am DS 10:30am SS/AC	30	31				

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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.