

The Valley Evangel

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



Inside This Issue

<i>Announcements</i>	2
<i>Devotion: Where Are You?</i>	4
<i>Calendar</i>	5
<i>About Our Church</i>	6

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

In this month's "From the Pastor's Desk" column, we will share with our readers the text of the homily that was preached at the Ascension Day Choral Vespers on May 21, based on Mark 16:14-20.



Where is Jesus? That question has been asked and answered more than once. At the time of the Lord's birth, the shepherds wanted to know where Jesus was, so they could go and worship him. They were told by the angel that he was in a stable, lying in a manger. At the time of the Lord's resurrection, the women at the tomb wanted to know where Jesus was. The angel told them on that occasion that he was not in the tomb - where they expected him to be - but that he would be going before them to Galilee.

Today, on the occasion of our Lord's ascension, we once again ask the question, "Where is Jesus?" When our minds are troubled by the uncertainties of the volatile world in which we live, and when we might begin to wonder if the Lord knows or cares about these dangers, we are prompted to ask, "Where is he?"

The answer of Ascension Day is that Jesus is at the right hand of his Father in heaven. This does not mean that he is now far away from us, and unaware of

(Continued on page 3)

CLASS SCHEDULE CHANGES FOR THE SUMMER!

- Sunday, June 14, will be the last Sunday School and Bible Study classes in both Scottsdale and Queen Creek and then it will be on summer hiatus until September.
- Friday, June 19, will be the last Friday Bible study, and then it will be on summer hiatus until September.

WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY TIMES

Editor:

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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.

Note: See sidebar for schedule changes!

Thursday Internet Study Group:

6:30 p.m. (see Pastor Webber for log-on information for this group, or attend in person at his residence) **This class will continue throughout the summer!**

Friday Bible Study:

10:00 a.m. at the Calvin residence

Note: See sidebar for schedule changes!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor to be a Guest on “Issues, Etc.”



Pastor Webber will be a guest for three consecutive days on the “Issues, Etc.” radio program – June 1, 2, and 3 – to speak on various aspects of the beliefs and practices of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The programs can be heard live, beginning at 1 pm Arizona time, by means of an audio feed through the Issues, Etc. web site: www.issuesetc.org. After the broadcast, digital recordings of the programs can also be downloaded “on demand” from the web site’s archive.

ELS 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 22-25. Special services – for Synod Sunday and the Bethany Seminary graduation – will also be held on the Bethany campus on Sunday, June 21. These services, and the proceedings of the convention, will be broadcast live via the Internet, through the synod web site: www.els.name

Summer Schedule Changes

Sunday, June 14, will be the last day of Sunday School and the Sunday Adult Bible Class, at both Scottsdale and Queen Creek, until September. Friday, June 19, will be the last day of the Friday morning Bible class (held at the Calvin residence) until September. **The Thursday evening Internet Study Group will, however, continue through the summer.**



Vacancy Filled!

A long vacancy on the Church Council has now been filled. For several years we have had no congregational vice-president. But recently, Kim Carter was elected to this position. We thank him, and all the members of the Church Council and Board of Elders, for their service to the Lord and his church. There will be a formal recognition and installation of these officers and elders during the service at Redeemer in Scottsdale on Trinity Sunday, June 7.

Congratulations and Best Wishes!



Congratulations and best wishes to Paul Webber, a member of our congregation, who has been accepted as a student at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in Mankato, Minnesota. He will begin his studies in the fall. Bethany Seminary is our synod’s institution of higher education for the training of pastors. Paul recently graduated from Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, with a bachelor’s degree in history.

“Valley Evangel” Newsletter Online

Since its inception, our parish newsletter – the “Valley Evangel” – has been posted online, on the church web site, in PDF. This online version has always been a full-color edition, whereas the version that is printed and mailed is black and white only. If you would rather not receive this newsletter in paper form, but instead would prefer to be informed by email when a new issue is available online – with a link to the location from which it can be downloaded – please inform the Pastor. His email address is: jaywebber@cox.net

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

(Continued from page 1)

our trials and fears. As God and man he is aware of everything, and will never be surprised or "caught off guard" by anything that may happen. And in his governance of the universe, from the right hand of his Father, he always knows what he is doing.

To be sure, you will not always know what he is doing, or why he is doing it. In fact, you will usually not know these things. The hidden works of God are and remain hidden from your probing and curious mind. But Christ's ascent to the right hand of the divine majesty means that, as God and man, he is now making full use of his divine power, for the sake of his church. He protects his church from the devil's attacks. He creates opportunities, in the affairs of men and nations, for his church to carry out its ongoing mission.

But there are other reasons why we might today ask the question, "Where is Jesus?" It is comforting for people who are a part of God's church to know that Jesus is taking care of them, and is watching over them from his position of heavenly power. But what if you're not sure that you are in fact a member of his church? God's law tells you that you have sinned against him, and that your sins have earned God's displeasure. And when you look at yourself, and consider what you've done and not done, your conscience forces you to admit that what God's law says about your failures and missteps is true.

In the four Gospels, you've read the accounts of people with a similar sense of guilt and foreboding, who were able to have their guilt lifted through a direct encounter with Jesus. They were able to find out where Jesus was, and in their need they were drawn to him: to be touched by his hand, and comforted by his voice. Those people - who lived during the years of the Lord's earthly ministry - were assured, through that encounter with their Savior, that their sins were forgiven. They were also able to know, in a very personal way, that they were included in the Lord's promise of protection.

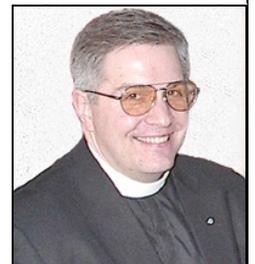
But how can you know? Where is Jesus now, when you need him? Jesus is now exalted far above the earth, and all the affairs and concerns of the earth, isn't he? He is, after all, seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. People like us, who still dwell here below, don't have access to his human touch and his comforting voice any more, do we?

Actually, we do! The "right hand" of God is not a reference to a specific place. God is everywhere. And therefore the "right hand" of God - the right hand of his power and majesty - is everywhere. This means that Jesus, at the right hand of the Father, is likewise everywhere. In his ascension Jesus "fills all things," as St. Paul tells us. He can do anything he wants to do, anywhere he wants to do it, at any time he wants to do it. And what it is that he wants to do - for you and for all people - he makes very plain when he says to his disciples: "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." We also read: "then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them."

Jesus is not less accessible to us now, in his state of exaltation, as compared to when he literally walked the earth. He is, in a sense, even more accessible now than he was then, and to more people. Today, Jesus very actively works with - and through - those whom he sends forth to preach the Gospel to every creature. Christ proclaims his words of pardon and reconciliation simultaneously from a million pulpits, all over the world. You may not be able to see him, but he sees you. And it is his comforting voice that you hear when his forgiveness is announced to you. Christ distributes his body and blood simultaneously from a million altars, all over the world. You may not be able to see him, but he sees you. And it is his human touch that you experience when his body and blood are placed on your lips. This is the same body that was born of Mary, and that was nailed to the cross in your place. This is the same blood that was shed on the cross for your salvation, and that washes away your sin.

And so, "Where is Jesus?" He is at the right hand of the majesty and power of God. And that means he is here, where you are, to guard you from all spiritual danger. He is here, where his Gospel is preached, to forgive you of all sin, and to assure you of his unending love.

We thank Thee, Jesus, dearest Friend,
That Thou didst into heaven ascend.
O blessed Savior, bid us live,
And strength to soul and body give.
Amen.



-- Pastor Webber

WHERE ARE YOU?

But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Genesis 3:9

Against God's clear command, our first parents had just brought sin into the world. They had disobeyed Him, and now they were trying to hide themselves from the inevitable: giving account of their actions to God.

Facing up to the consequences of our misdeeds is never easy. Sometimes we might tell the truth and confess what we have done. But sometimes we may lie, or try to run away. Sometimes we're successful – at least it seems that way because we don't get caught in our lie. But there is One from whom we can never hide. And one day – Judgment Day – we all will have to account to God for what we have done.

The beautiful thing about this question from God is this: God wasn't having trouble finding Adam and Eve. He was giving them a chance to admit their wrong to Him and confess their sin. In fact, God gave them a second chance to admit their guilt just a little



later in the story. But both times Adam and Eve avoided a simple, sincere confession. Both times they tried to divert God's attention away from finding out the truth about what they had done. Instead, they actually blamed God for their disobedience!

Thankfully, God's love for Adam and Eve and His forgiveness for what they had done were not based on the honesty or the sincerity of their confession. God already had in mind a plan that would rescue them, and all who would follow them in disobedience, from the consequences of their lies and their excuses and their disobedience. God told Satan, ***"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel,"*** (Genesis 3:15). God would send His own dear Son to be their Sin-bearer – the Sacrifice that would provide full salvation for them and all who would trust in Him as their Savior, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

In His Word, God lovingly calls to you and me. There He confronts us with our sins, and assures us that ***"the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin,"*** (1 John 1:7). God's love cannot be earned, and it doesn't depend on us in any way. It is there for us through the finished work of Jesus our Savior, to be received by Spirit-worked faith in Him.

May God's Word of truth be our dearest Treasure! And may we be moved by His love for us to worship this God of amazing, faithful love for all, and then share the Good News of His love in Jesus with others!

Produced by the ELS Board for Evangelism

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

JUNE 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4 6:30 pm Internet Study Group	5 10:00am Bible Study at the Calvin residence (S)	6
7 Holy Trinity - Pentecost 1 Divine Service 9:00am DS (S) 10:30am SS/AC (S) 4:00pm DS (Q) 5:15pm SS/AC (Q)	8	9 7 pm Church Council (S)	10	11 6:30 pm Internet Study Group	12 10:00am Bible Study at the Calvin residence (S)	13
14 Pentecost 2 Service of the Word 9:00am SW with spoken Communion (S) 10:30am SS/AC (S) Ladies Guild after the Service (S) 4:00pm SW with spoken Communion (Q) 5:15pm SS/AC (Q)	15	16	17	18 6:30 pm Internet Study Group	19 10:00am Bible Study at the Calvin residence (S)	20
21 Pentecost 3 Divine Service 9:00am DS (S) 4:00pm DS (Q) SS/AC on summer hiatus until September (S/Q)	22 ELS Convention in Mankato, MN (attended by Pastor and delegate Norman Hartigan)	23 ELS Convention in Mankato, MN	24 ELS Convention in Mankato, MN	25 ELS Convention in Mankato, MN No Internet Study Group tonight. Study will resume in July!	26 Bible study class on hiatus for the summer	27
28 Pentecost 4 Service of the Word 9:00am SW with spoken Communion (S) 4:00pm SW with spoken Communion (Q) Elders Meeting after the service (S)	29	30	<i>It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.</i> Joel 2:28 NASB			

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

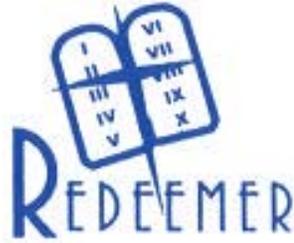
Redeemer Lutheran Church

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Sun of Righteousness Church

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22076 E. Village Loop Road
South



First Class Mail

Return Service Requested

We're on the Internet!

redeemer.vze.com
sunofrighteousness.vze.com

Notice!

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



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.

