

THE VALLEY EVANGEL

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



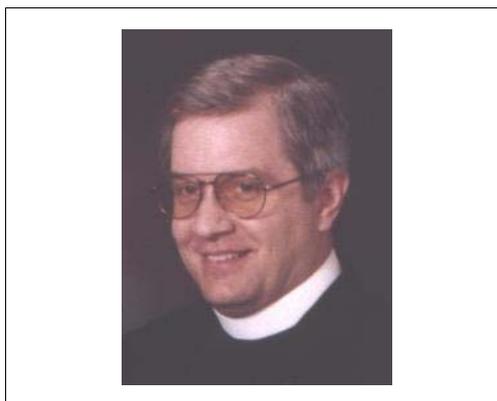
INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Commentary on Hebrews 12:1-2</i>	2
<i>Ladies Guild News</i>	2
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	4
<i>Devotion: Climbing a Ladder to Heaven?</i>	5
<i>About Our Church</i>	6

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

According to the Church Year, November 1 is "All Saints Day." We will transfer this festival to the Sunday following, and observe it on November 5.

The word "saint," in its primary meaning as used in Scripture, refers to those who have been "set apart" and declared to be holy by the forgiveness of Jesus Christ. In this sense, therefore, all Christians, including those who are weak in their faith, are saints before God through the merits of their Savior. But in the tradition of the church a secondary meaning of the word "saint" has also become common. In this secondary sense, the word "saint" is often used as a prefix or title of honor for those Christians who during their lifetime set an especially good example of faith and life



Pastor David Jay Webber

for other believers. According to this secondary use of the word, some of the churches in our synod bear names like "St. Paul," "St. Matthew," "St. Timothy," "St. Mark," "St. John," "St. Martin," and "St. Katharine." And it is chiefly in this sense of the word that we speak of honoring the memory of the "saints" of God on "All Saints Day."

(Continued on page 3)

WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY TIMES

Scottsdale:

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

Queen Creek:

Sunday Divine Service: 4:00pm
Sunday School & Bible Class: 5:15pm

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

Loughran home in Scottsdale
(call or e-mail for directions)

Thursday Bible Study: 10:00 a.m.

Calvin home in Scottsdale
(Call or e-mail for directions)

Editor:
Pastor David Jay Webber

Editorial Assistant - Layout and Design:
Julie Martinez

Hebrews 12:1-2

Commentary by R.C.H. Lenski

God's believers here on earth are but a "little flock," but the believers of past ages are a great host indeed. Their number has greatly increased since this epistle was written. It is very dramatic to make these *μαρτύρες* spectators who are lining the ramparts of heaven, leaning over to watch us in the running of the race like the crowds in a great stadium who are watching the athletic events. The unsatisfactory feature about this idea is its spiritualistic touch: the spirits of the dead are still hovering over and around us. The souls of the saints are at rest, they are no longer concerned about the trials that occur on earth. The Scriptures teach that they behold the heavenly glories and say nothing about their beholding and watching earthly events. These saints are not "witnesses" that see our faith and testify about us; God does not ask them to testify about us. They are witnesses whose life, works, sufferings, death attest their own faith, testify to us through the pages of Holy Writ and in other history that they were true men of faith indeed (the faith defined in Hebrews 11:1)

"The faith" (article) is not "our faith" (the article used as the possessive

pronoun) but the faith defined in 11:1; hence it is specific (confidence and conviction in regard to things hoped for, things not seen) but as any and every believer has this faith and not only the writer and the reader. "Author and completer"...apply equally to "the faith"; the completing takes place when Christ gives to faith and to the believer "the things hoped for," "the things not seen." ... (A)ll the Old Testament believers together with all the New Testament believers "shall be brought to completion" at Christ's Parousia (see 10:40); and as Christ is the beginner, so he is also the completer.

Rationalism and modernism rob Christ of his deity, reduce him to a mere man, and thus depict him as being no more than a perfect example for us to follow. But what good does a perfect example do us who cannot possibly achieve perfection? We need vastly more than a perfect example, which by its very perfection may well cause us to cry in despair: "We cannot hope even to approach such an example!" From start to finish we need the divine Christ as the One who can fill us with faith, keep us in faith, and finally crown our faith.

Lenski, R.C.H., "The Interpretation of The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James", The Warburg Press, copyright 1937, pages 423-428

Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV)

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Ladies Guild News

Redeemer has a Ladies Guild!! Because we are a very small congregation, several of us were looking for a way the ladies in our congregation could contribute to the growth and fellowship of the church. Most of us have previously been members of churches with active ladies groups, so it made sense to find out if there was interest in building a group at Redeemer. The response

was very encouraging! We had our first meeting in July. Using another church's Ladies Guild constitution as a reference, we crafted ours to meet the needs of Redeemer.

The goals of the Ladies Guild are to support and further mission efforts; to further and promote the Christian spirit of fellowship in our congregation; and to serve and carry out

(Continued on page 5)

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

(Continued from page 1)

It is important to point out that honoring the memory of the exemplary Christians of the past is not in any way dishonoring Christ or His Gospel. The New Testament itself tells us to “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings...” (Hebrews 13:7-9, NASB). And as the Lutheran Reformers declare in the Augsburg Confession: “It is also taught among us that saints should be kept in remembrance so that our faith may be strengthened when we see that grace [which] they received and how they were sustained in their faith. Moreover, their good works are to be an example for us, each of us in his own calling” (AC XXI:1, Tappert edition).

When we seek to honor and learn from the saints of the past, therefore, we are really seeking to honor and learn from our Lord Jesus Christ, who worked through them and who used their lives and ministries as instruments for his purposes in the world. In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the sixteenth-century Reformers reflect on the events of the previous centuries of church history, and they are encouraged in their own faith when they recognize that, “in order to keep the Gospel among men, [Christ] visibly pits the witness of the saints against the rule of the devil; in our weakness he displays his strength. The dangers, labors, and sermons of the apostle Paul, Athanasius, Augustine,

and other teachers of the church are holy works, true sacrifices acceptable to God, battles by which Christ restrained the devil and drove him away from the believers” (Ap IV:189-190).

We, too, can be similarly encouraged when we learn about, and recall, the faithful witness of those who have gone before us in the faith. As the Apology further states, “The great things that the saints have done serve as examples to men in their public or private life, as a means of confirming their faith and as an incentive to imitate them in public affairs. ... The saints administered public affairs, underwent troubles and dangers, helped kings in times of great danger, taught the Gospel, battled against heretics. It is truly worthwhile to hear of these things and to see some examples of mercy. Peter was forgiven for denying Christ; Cyprian was forgiven for having been a sorcerer; Augustine experienced the power of faith in sickness and constantly reaffirmed that God hears the prayers of believers. It would be useful to recall such examples as these which talk about faith or fear or the administration of public affairs” (Ap XXL36).

Indeed, let us recall such examples. And let us follow the examples of those saints of the past who put their trust in Christ alone for salvation, and who sought with the Lord's strength and guidance to do his will.

- Pastor Webber

When we seek to honor and learn from the saints of the past, therefore, we are really seeking to honor and learn from our Lord Jesus Christ, who worked through them and who used their lives and ministries as instruments for his purposes in the world.

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
NOVEMBER 2006

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><i>Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2</i></p>						
<p>5 Divine Service 9:00am Service (S) 10:30am Sunday School/Adult Bible Class (S) 4:00pm Service (Q) 5:15pm Bible Class (Q)</p>	6	7	<p>8 7pm “Bible and Theology” Study Group Loughran Home (call or email for directions)</p>	<p>9 10:00am Bible Study Calvin Home (call or email for directions)</p>	<p>10 4:30pm Confirmation Class at Pastor’s Residence</p>	11
<p>12 Service of the Word 9:00am Service (S) 10:00am Ladies Guild 10:30am Sunday School/Adult Bible Class(S) 4:00pm Service (Q) 5:15pm Bible Class (Q)</p>	13	<p>14 7pm Church Council (S)</p>	<p>15 7pm “Bible and Theology” Study Group Loughran Home (call or email for directions)</p>	<p>16 10:00am Bible Study Calvin Home (call or email for directions)</p>	<p>17 4:30pm Confirmation Class at Pastor’s Residence</p>	<p>18 7pm Wine Tasting Party Calvin Residence (call or email for directions)</p>
<p>19 Divine Service 9:00am Service (S) 10:30am Sunday School/Adult Bible Class (S) 4:00pm Service (Q) 5:15pm Bible Class (Q)</p>	20	21	<p>22 7pm Thanksgiving Eve Vespers Service (S)</p>	23	24	25
<p>26 Service of the Word 9:00am Service (S) 10:30am Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 4:00pm Service (Q) 5:15pm Bible Class (Q)</p>	27	28	<p>29 7pm “Bible and Theology” Study Group Loughran Home (call or email for directions)</p>	<p>30 10:00am Bible Study Calvin Home (call or email for directions)</p>		

(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

Climbing a Ladder to Heaven?

What is the biggest ladder you have ever seen? The Hong Kong Fire Service has a special fire truck called the Aerial Ladder Platform which carries a telescopic ladder capable of reaching 174 feet! What a task it would be just to climb that ladder!

In a sense, many people imagine that they are climbing a ladder that reaches all the way up to heaven. This imagined ladder is the ladder of doing good deeds.

It seems natural to think that we earn God's favor (and a place in heaven) if we do what is right – obeying his law. Especially if we keep on doing what is right – step after step after step.

But how much is enough to please God? How high do I need to climb? What if I haven't climbed high enough? What about all those times when I've broken God's commandments?

The truth is that we cannot do enough to please God. He demands that we be perfect like he is. The Bible tells us clearly that it is sin (breaking God's law) that condemns us.



So, we cannot climb a ladder to heaven. What are we to do?

Romans 3:28 says, “*We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.*” It is by faith that we are saved and not by our good deeds. What is faith? It is trusting in Jesus Christ and his saving work.

God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to earn heaven for us. Jesus climbed the ladder by living a perfect life on earth. Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry – Jesus did every good deed.

Jesus took the sin that condemns you and me, and he was condemned with it. Through Jesus Christ you and I are forgiven. Heaven is ours!

Now, we want to do good deeds, not to climb some imagined ladder (heaven is already ours through Jesus!) but out of thankfulness to God.

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. NIV

Produced by the ELS Board of Evangelism

Ladies Guild News

(Continued from page 2)

tasks necessary to our church. We are also interested in building fellowship with other ELS and WELS churches through synodical ladies groups such as Cross-stitch.

The Guild is made up of three committees. Currently, officers and committee chairs serving are: Sherry Ecker—President; Erika Schmeissing—Vice President; Sarah Kissinger—Secretary/Treasurer; Altar Guild—Angie Kohlgraf, Hospitality Committee—Lucille Calvin, and Fellowship Committee—Marilyn Bonnell.

Ladies, we sincerely encourage you to participate in any way that your schedule allows. There are several events coming up in the next few months and your help

would be greatly appreciated! We meet on the second Sunday of each month during the coffee hour. Please plan to attend at least one meeting if possible. The Lord will bless our efforts!

Thanks to everyone who supported our first Reformation/Oktoberfest celebration. Our next event is the Winetasting/Mission Social at the Calvin's residence the evening of Saturday, November 18th. Social events are great opportunities to get to know each other, so I hope you're all planning to attend!! Remember to invite friends, family, and neighbors!

Sherry Ecker

Redeemer Lutheran Church

7670 East Jomax Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85262

Phone: 480-585-7002
Or: 602-388-4980
Email: jaywebber@yahoo.com

Sun of Righteousness Mission
Meeting in the "Multi-Purpose"
Room at Frances Brandon-Pickett
Elementary School
22076 E. Village Loop Road South
Queen Creek, AZ



We're on the internet!
redeemer.vze.com
sunofrighteousness.vze.com

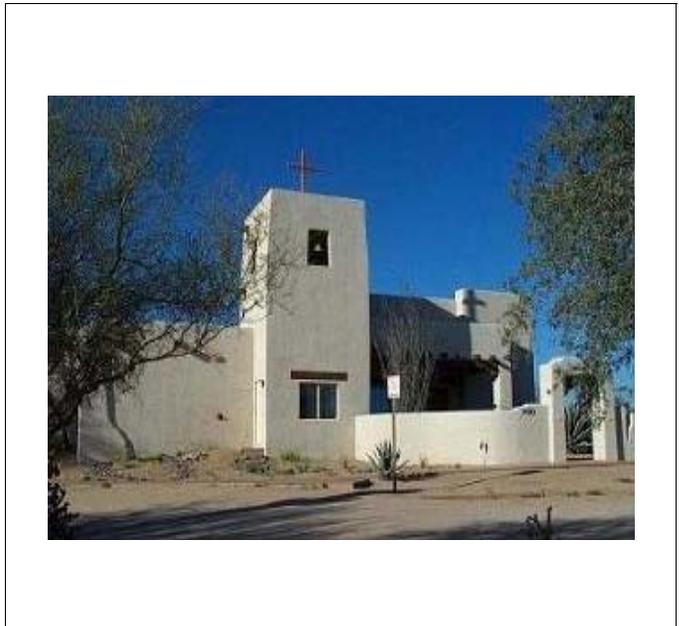
Notice!

Audio recordings of
Pastor Webber's sermons
are posted on the internet
weekly and are available
through both church
websites 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.



Redeemer Lutheran Church