

The Valley Evangel

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

October 2011

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Worship and Study Times

Sunday Divine Service:

9 a.m., Refreshments after the Service

Sunday School/Adult Bible Class: 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday Internet Study

Group: 6:30 p.m. (See Pastor Webber for log-on info for this group, or attend in person at his residence)

Friday Morning Bible Study:

10 a.m. at the Anderson residence (See Pastor Webber for details)

Newsletter Staff

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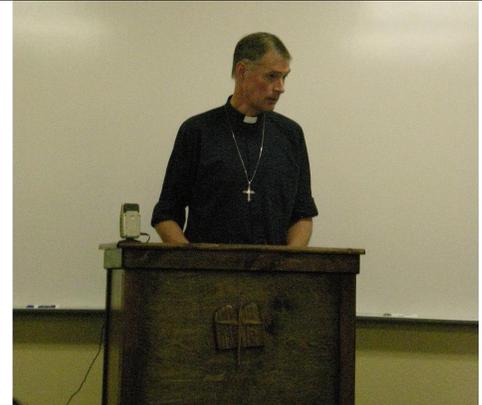
From the Pastor's Desk

On September 19 we were privileged to host a special presentation from Pastor Jan Bygstad, of Bergen, Norway, on the topic: "The State of Lutheranism in Scandinavia." (For those who were not able to attend, a digital recording of this presentation is available for download or listening on the church home page: redeemer.vze.com.) He recounted

many sad facts about the decline of institutional Lutheranism in that part of the world, through a combination of government interference in church affairs, and the embracing of foreign theologies and ethical systems by church leaders and clergy. The regrettable result of all this, is that the established churches in Scandinavia are now "Lutheran" in name only.

At the same time, the existence of people like Pastor Bygstad, and of the remnants of Confessional Lutheranism that are scattered here and there in northern Europe, demonstrate that God's Word has not been silenced everywhere in those motherlands of our church. God's love for the people of Scandinavia, and his invitation to them to repent of their sins and to believe in the Lord Jesus for forgiveness and salvation, are still made known through the ministry of Word and Sacrament that is carried out by faithful heralds of the Gospel – even if those heralds are relatively few in number today.

We can be thankful to the Lord that the situation is much different here in the United States. For one thing, in our history, the government has never presumed to be the sponsor, patron, or



governing authority of the church, and therefore we are free from much of the harm that would come when the government then becomes hostile to the principles of the Christian revelation. This freedom from state interference in spiritual matters is a great blessing.

But even in America, we are not free from the threat of the encroaching influence of secularism, or of the threat of the new theologies and moralities that do exist in our society, and in many of the religious institutions of our land. We must be ever *vigilant* against these destructive ideologies, which would rob us of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; even as we must be ever *diligent* in bringing that Gospel to the people of our nation and community.

The Lord has given us our religious freedom, not only so that we can enjoy it for ourselves, but also so that we can *use* that freedom, to spread the Word of Life to our neighbors. The Lord has allowed us to live in a land where the church is able to govern its own affairs. We must use that churchly authority for

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Web site of the Month: "Ask the Pastor"

xrysostom.blogspot.com

Ask the Pastor**† Theological musings and answers to selected questions by a confessional Lutheran pastor.**

"Ask the Pastor" has been on the Internet for many years. It is maintained by Lutheran Pastor Walter P. Snyder – who often goes by the Internet moniker "Xrysostom." Pastor Snyder answers questions that are put to him – regarding various aspects of Lutheran belief and practice – in ways that are informative and yet also brief and to the point. As a Confessionally-oriented pastor (in the LCMS), he does not steer clear of "politically incorrect" topics, but addresses the subjects that people are asking about – even controversial subjects – from a traditional Lutheran perspective. Pastor Snyder does, of course, speak for himself, and since I have not read everything he has ever written, I cannot say that I would always agree with his viewpoint. But I cannot recall reading anything by him with which I have ever had any substantial disagreements. The topics that he addresses range from the very practical to the very deep. For example, as I write this, the most recent "Ask the Pastor" answer addresses the question of whether a man should hug a former girlfriend; while the one just before it addresses a question concerning the incarnation of the Son of God, and God's taking of a human nature to himself from the Virgin Mary in the conception of Jesus.

So, browse the web site for a post on a topic you have been wondering about. Or just browse until something interesting catches your eye. In honor of the festival of the Reformation, which we will observe this month, a pertinent posting from "Ask the Pastor," on *Confessional Lutheranism*, is included in this issue of the *Valley Evangel*.

– Pastor Webber

From the Pastor's Desk (continued from page 1)

the sake of keeping our congregation (and our church body) faithful to its Biblically-based confession and to its God-given mission, and not for the sake of changing or compromising our doctrine or our moral teaching from within.

God is faithful, and God is good. Let us always trust in him; let us always believe that what he says is true; and let us always find our eternal hope in his unchanging promises!

"So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free'" (John 8:31-32, ESV).

"Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God" (1 Peter 2:16, ESV).

– Pastor Webber

A House Blessing

A house blessing was held at the new home of Dan and Lexie Morehouse on the afternoon of Sunday, September 18. Several members of the congregation joined Dan and Lexie for this special occasion. Their hospitality was also greatly appreciated by all who attended. The house blessing ceremony – featuring readings from Scripture and suitable prayers for the various rooms in a home – is often used when a family moves into a new residence. But it can be used at any time when there is a desire or a sensed need to invoke the Lord's grace and supernatural protection over a home and a family. Please speak with the Pastor if you would like to have a house blessing at your home.



Interview with New(ish) Members: Roger and Helen Macholl
(conducted by Erica Olson, Valley Evangel editorial assistant)

Erica: Now, I know you had been members once before. ...

Helen: We were at [Redeemer]... We left in 2003, and went to Deer Valley... And then we returned to Redeemer in January.

Erica: Were you members of a Missouri Synod church at one time?

Roger: Yes, Shepherd of the Desert at 96th and Shea. That was back in 1984-'85.

Erica: Since you were members of the Missouri Synod before, what made you decide to join the ELS?

Roger: The Missouri Synod church had, in our mind, become too "contemporary," and coming to Redeemer was just like coming home. Just walking in the door. The convincer was the service of [pages] 5 and 15 [in *The Lutheran Hymnal*]. That's what I grew up on. We were delighted that they had retained it. It was refreshing to "come home" to that. ... Other churches were using projection units and changing the words in the service... They had Saturday contemporary services. What we like about Redeemer is the traditional service.

Erica: So what have you enjoyed the most about being at Redeemer – besides having the TLH to use, and no projection screens?

Roger: Well, certainly the service and how warm the congregation has become. It was truly like "welcome home" when [we joined again].

Helen: And it feels like church to go there.

Roger: ... We don't have any family down here anymore, but what I'm encouraged to see is the young families that have been taken in and the children who continue to come.

Helen: We don't have [very many] teenagers here, but that's not the church's fault ... but it's more than we had when we originally started.

Roger: The ones who remained [when we were here before] have all grown up. It's also nice to see how Carol provides so much leadership for the young people... It's so nice to see [the wife of the pastor] being so active. It's a real plus for the growing of the congregation to have both the pastor and his wife [active].

Helen: And that's the way it usually is at most churches, with some exceptions. But for the most part, we have found that to be true.

Roger: Coming back to Redeemer, the entire congregation has accepted us.

Helen: It feels like family there. And the church people are our family, because we don't have any family here.

Erica: If there was one thing that you would like the members and friends of Redeemer to know about you that maybe they didn't know before, what would that be?

Roger: Well, I don't know that there is a lot they don't know about us.

Erica: Well, there are a lot of new people now who weren't there before.

Roger: Oh, that's true. Well, they probably don't know that we came from Chicago, and that's where most of our family is, or was.

Erica: How long ago did you move here from Chicago?

Roger: Oh, about 32 years and four months.

Erica: So you've been here most of the time you've been married, then.

Helen: Yes. We were married about eight years before we moved down here. We came down here in 1979 and married in 1971. ... We moved here for a job that Roger had taken [and have been here ever since].

Confessional Lutheranism

Q: I've read that you call yourself a "confessional" Lutheran. What does this mean?

A: Most of us are familiar with conservatism. In the case of our church (and many others), it means those unwilling or unlikely to make hasty change, who are connected to their past, and who interpret the Bible assuming that it is God's revealed, true Word. We officially reject those who call the Bible a human invention, or a mixture of the divine and the human. The word "confessional" is not so commonly used. Normally, we think of a confession as an admission of guilt. "Confess" has a root meaning of "acknowledge together." In matters of error, we state that we have, indeed, done what's wrong – we "fess up." But confession also has positive application: It can be used to declare faith. Thus, "Jesus Christ is Lord," is a confession.

Christians have always made such confessions. Lutherans emphasize the place of formalized confession of Scriptural teaching. We officially accept three of the early Creeds (statements of belief) of the Christian Church. These are the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds. Each of these is a summary of Christian, Biblical teaching (doctrine). During the time of the Reformation, in the mid-1500s, various interpretations of the Bible were being used by the parties involved. The reformers went to Scripture to assemble statements of faith which were topically arranged. For example, how many places in the Bible speak of Jesus' return in judgment on the Last Day? A formal confession pulls all these references together into a unified article with which all can agree.

Many confessions were produced. Six were drawn together with the Creeds into *The Book of Concord* (Agreement). All who claimed the title *Lutheran* (or "Evangelical") were asked to subscribe to, or agree with, the Holy Scriptures as the source and norm of all Christian teaching, and these confessions as being correct expositions of Scripture. Pastors, other church workers, and congregations of confessional Lutheran church bodies are asked to do the same if they wish to join themselves to that body.

Confession is finally and ultimately done in the lives of individual Christians. Our confession of faith involves all we say, think, or do. It includes our

confession of sins, since this acknowledges our guilt before God. It involves doing everything in life under the cross of Christ, directed ourselves toward a heavenly end. Confession's goal is to give all praise, honor, and glory to God.

The heart of our confession of faith is that we are justified (declared righteous) by grace through faith in Christ. This is clearly expressed in Article IV of the Augsburg Confession: "Our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight (Romans 3 and 4 [3:21–26; 4:5])."

– Walter P. Snyder

Text slightly adapted. The Augsburg Confession quotation is from *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, edited by Paul Timothy McCain [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005], 33.) Ask the Pastor © 1996–2008 by Walter P. Snyder. It may be reproduced in totality, including this disclaimer, by anyone, provided that no profit is generated by said republication and redistribution.

Oktoberfest

On Sunday, October 30 – which is also Reformation Sunday – Redeemer will be hosting an Oktoberfest luncheon after the Adult Class, in the fellowship room. A preliminary menu includes bratwurst, hotdogs and sauerkraut, potatoes and potato salad, bean salad, leaf lettuce salad, spaetzel, pierogies, bierocks, chips and sweets. A sign-up list will be provided for these and other items.

– Erica Olson
Redeemer Ladies' Guild



*Redeemer Lutheran Church
October 2011*

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
						1
2 Pentecost 16 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	3	4	5 Pastor Webber in Minneapolis Internet Study Group Cancelled	6 Pastor Webber at ELS General Pastoral Conference in Minneapolis	7 Pastor Webber in Minneapolis Bible Study Cancelled	8
9 Pentecost 17 9 a.m. SW with spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. Congregational Forum	10 7 p.m Voter's Quarterly Meeting at church	11	12 6:30 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from the Pastor's residence	13	14 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Anderson residence	15
16 Pentecost 18 9 a.m. DS Ladies' Guild meeting after the service 10:30 a.m. AC/SS	17	18	19 10 a.m. Bible Study at ALRC; 6:30 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from Pastor's residence	20	21 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Anderson residence	22
23 Pentecost 19 9 a.m. SW with spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. AC/SS Elder's Meeting after the Adult Class	24	25	26 6:30 p.m. Internet Study Group at/from the Pastor's residence	27	28 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Anderson residence	29
30 Reformation Sunday 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. AC/SS 11:30 a.m. Oktoberfest Luncheon 4 p.m. Regional Joint Reformation Service at Arizona Lutheran Academy in Phoenix	31					

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

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

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First Class Mail

We're on the Internet!
redeemer.vze.com

Notice!

Audio recordings of Pastor Webber's sermons are posted on the Internet weekly and are linked through the church website.

They are published courtesy of
lutheransource.net



**Evangelical
Lutheran Synod**

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.

