


The Valley Evangel

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

October 2016

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From the Pastor's Desk

As we prepare to observe the festival of the Reformation on October 30 (transferred from October 31) – which marks the beginning of Martin Luther’s public protest against papal abuses in the penitential system of the church, and against other theological and ethical problems – I would like to share with you an excerpt from an essay that I delivered at two pastoral conferences – in October of last year and in April of this year – about the enduring authority and importance of the Augsburg Confession in the orthodox Lutheran Church. The Augsburg Confession is the chief creedal statement of Lutheran beliefs that emerged from the Reformation movement that was triggered by Luther’s posting of the 95 Theses (on October 31, 1517). This confession remains as an official, Biblically-based standard of our own congregation’s doctrine and practice.

The writing of the Augsburg Confession was occasioned by the Lutheran Reformation movement in general; and in particular by the request of Emperor Charles V that those within the Holy Roman Empire who had introduced various ecclesiastical reforms should, at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, be prepared to explain and defend those reforms. The Lutheran Reformation in general had arisen in the context of the pastoral crisis that was brought on in 1517 by the sale of indulgences in regions close to Wittenberg, Electoral Saxony, where Luther was serving as preacher and professor. The Dominican monk Johann Tetzel’s hawking of these indulgences was

carried out with the use of dangerously extravagant claims regarding their benefits, even by medieval standards. This fired up Luther's pastoral heart, and set in motion his theologian's pen.

It was soon evident that Luther's criticism of indulgences was also a criticism of the medieval penitential system as a whole, since that system obscured and distorted the gospel of God's free and full forgiveness in Christ, to be received by faith alone. And it was soon evident as well that Luther's criticism of indulgences was also a criticism of the pope, and of papal authority, since it was on the basis of the authority that the pope claimed for himself that such indulgences were promulgated in the first place.

By 1523 Luther had been excommunicated by the pope. But in the larger church, his biting criticisms of papal abuses, and his clear proclamation and application of the gospel – which were made known far beyond the environs of Wittenberg by the printing presses of Germany – were like a match in a tinder box. The Reformation movement that Luther had inaugurated spread like wildfire, far beyond the reach and impact of his own personality, because the pastoral concerns that led him to say what he said were shared by other churchmen throughout the Western Church. By 1530, within the Empire, Lutheran-type religious reforms had been formally instituted in seven territories, and in two free cities.

The modest original intention of the Elector of Saxony was to describe and defend the various corrections of abuses that he had undertaken in his territory, and the reasons for these corrections, and a document had been prepared for that purpose. But when he and his party arrived in Augsburg for the Diet, they were there confronted with a published tract, written by the Romanist theologian Johann Eck, which accused the Lutherans of holding to, and advocating, a total of 404 historic heresies. As a response to this slander, the Saxons resolved to draft a series of doctrinal articles also for presentation at the Diet – which would reject the claim that the Lutherans were advancing any heresies at all; and which would set forth instead, systematically, their Scriptural and genuinely catholic teachings. These doctrinal articles, when combined with the previously-prepared articles on corrected abuses, became the Augsburg Confession. The primary author and editor was Luther's Wittenberg colleague Philip Melancthon. And when the representatives of the other Lutheran territories and cities who were on hand in Augsburg reviewed Melancthon's work, they were pleased by what they saw, and all decided likewise to become signatories to this one unifying document.

When the Augsburg Confession was formally presented and read, on June 25, 1530, the Lutheran reform movement became, in that moment, the *Evangelical Lutheran Church*: testifying to the divinely-given marks of the church, and confessing, with thoroughness and clarity, its Christ-centered evangelical faith. The Lutheran confessors at Augsburg declared to their Emperor: "Wherefore, in most humble obedience to Your Imperial Majesty, we offer and present a confession of our pastors' and preachers' teachings as well as of our faith, setting forth on the basis of the divine Holy Scripture what and in what manner they preach, teach, believe, and give instruction in our lands, principalities, dominions, cities, and territories."

Luther, as an excommunicated "heretic" under the imperial ban, was not there. And it is probably a good thing that he was not there, exercising a direct influence, because the faithfulness of Melancthon and of those who stood with him, without Luther's personal presence, demonstrated that none of this was really about Luther, or the mesmerizing power of his personality. It was about God, God's Word, and God's church. Luther was a servant of all this, as were many others. People other than Luther can indeed confess the faith of Luther, because the faith of Luther is *not* a faith that *comes from* Luther. And in this spirit, Luther himself became an enthusiastic subscriber to, and a devoted promoter of, the Augsburg

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Confession – and of its Apology, which was prepared by Melancthon (with the assistance of others) in the following year. Luther solemnly affirmed:

“We must confess that the doctrine which was declared and submitted at Augsburg is the true and pure Word of God, and that all who believe and keep it are children of God and will be saved, whether they already believe it or will be illuminated later. For this Confession will endure to the end of the world on Judgment Day. It is indeed written that whosoever believeth on Him and shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Rom. 10:11,13). And we must take note not only of those who will be added in the future, but also of the Christian church, which preaches the Word, and of our own people, according to the word: ‘As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God’ (Gal. 6:16), which passage excludes none; therefore all who believe and live according to the teaching of the [Augsburg] Confession and its Apology are our brethren, and their peril concerns us as much as does our own. As members of the true church we dare not forsake them, regardless of when they join us, whether they do so secretly or openly, whether they live among us or in the diaspora. This we say and confess.”

The ancient Creeds, the Augustana, and the Apology were combined with the Lutheran Symbolical Books that came later – to bring added clarity to Reformation teachings – in the Book of Concord of 1580. They all, collectively, are a true and faithful statement and exposition of the Word of God, and are accordingly able to serve as a normed norm for doctrine and practice in the church.

The full essay is titled “The American Recension of the Augsburg Confession and its Lessons for Our Pastors Today.” It is available as a PDF document through the church website, downloadable from the “Our Pastor’s Essays” page: redeemerscottsdale.org/essays.html

– Pastor Webber

Regional Reformation Service

The joint Reformation Service for WELS/ELS churches in the eastern Phoenix metropolitan region will be held on Sunday, October 30, at 4 p.m., at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 715 W. Southern Ave., Tempe, Arizona 85282. There will be a special joint choir. Please speak with Carol Webber if you would like to sing in it.

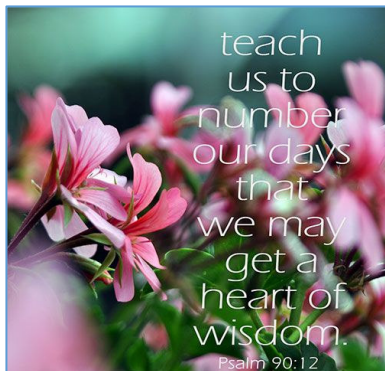


Special Celebration at our Sister Church in Fort Mohave



The members and friends of Redeemer Lutheran Church are cordially invited to the joint observance of the 25th anniversary of the founding of Family of God Lutheran Church in Fort Mohave, Arizona, and the 25th anniversary of Pastor Richard Fyffe's ordination to the Holy Ministry. This dual celebration will be held at the church, at 1863 Panadero Road, Fort Mohave, AZ 86426, on November 6, 2016, with a special service at 4 p.m. (with guest preacher Dr. Michael Smith, the first pastor and now a professor at Bethany Seminary), followed by a family style dinner at 5 p.m. R.S.V.P. by October 23 to Candace Tweeton (928-768-3602; irsa@citilink.net), or Pastor Fyffe (928-763-5303; rfyffe62@frontiernet.net).

Devotion: Are You Ready?



A mother asked her daughter what she had learned in Sunday school that morning. The little girl replied, "The teacher told us that one of the reasons God put us in this world is so we can get ready for heaven."

"I think your teacher is correct dear," the mother said. "Then why aren't more people getting ready?" said the girl.

A child-like question, but one that is valid. If one of the reasons we're here is to prepare for eternity, then why aren't more people getting ready?

In the hustle and bustle of the world, people have become so occupied with the affairs of the day, the oppressing problems of the world, etc., that many have forgotten to get ready for the next world. There is a bumper sticker that reads, "You are not a physical being on a spiritual journey. You are a spiritual being on a physical journey."

Psalm 90:12: Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Praise the Lord that in His wisdom He sent His one and only Son to suffer, die and rise again for the sins of the whole world. You are no exception to His love. He wants you to know and to grow in His love for you. He wants you to know that through faith in Christ heaven is your eternal home.

It is time to get ready. Lord, teach us to regard this life as a period of preparation for a greater and much more wonderful life which is still to come. Teach us to use our time in glory to You. Are you doing that? Are you getting ready to meet the Lord? Do you confess your sins to your Father in heaven? Do you give all your worries, cares, and dreams to the One who is all powerful and all knowing? Are you clinging to the Savior Jesus Christ? If so, you are prepared.

Ladies Guild News:

Alpha Pregnancy Resource Center

Redeemer has, along with other ELS and WELS churches in Arizona, a relationship with Alpha Pregnancy Resource Center in Phoenix. We do what we can to support their ministry to women with a crisis pregnancy, and to their children. These women would otherwise either not have the support they need, or would be tempted to turn to abortion rather than carrying their babies to term. This support takes a few different forms, including donations of goods and volunteering.

Donations given to the center are tax deductible. Among the most needed items are diapers and unscented baby wipes; clothing for babies, children and women; bottles and Similac formula; blankets; and money. These items can be left on the table in the fellowship hall where the Ladies Guild has a display, and Lori Wendt or Carole Clingan will take these items to the center.

Volunteers are also needed, though, and you don't necessarily have to go to the center to volunteer, although that is an option, too. (Just don't take an expensive vehicle, and make sure you go with someone else instead of by yourself, due to the area the center is in.) You may also volunteer to answer calls for the center. In this case, Alpha will set their phones to ring yours, during whatever timeframe you have previously worked out with them. You must have a landline to do this. Training manuals are provided on the table in the fellowship hall so you can know how to handle the various questions and situations you may be confronted by when you volunteer. Alpha's website is: alphaaz.org

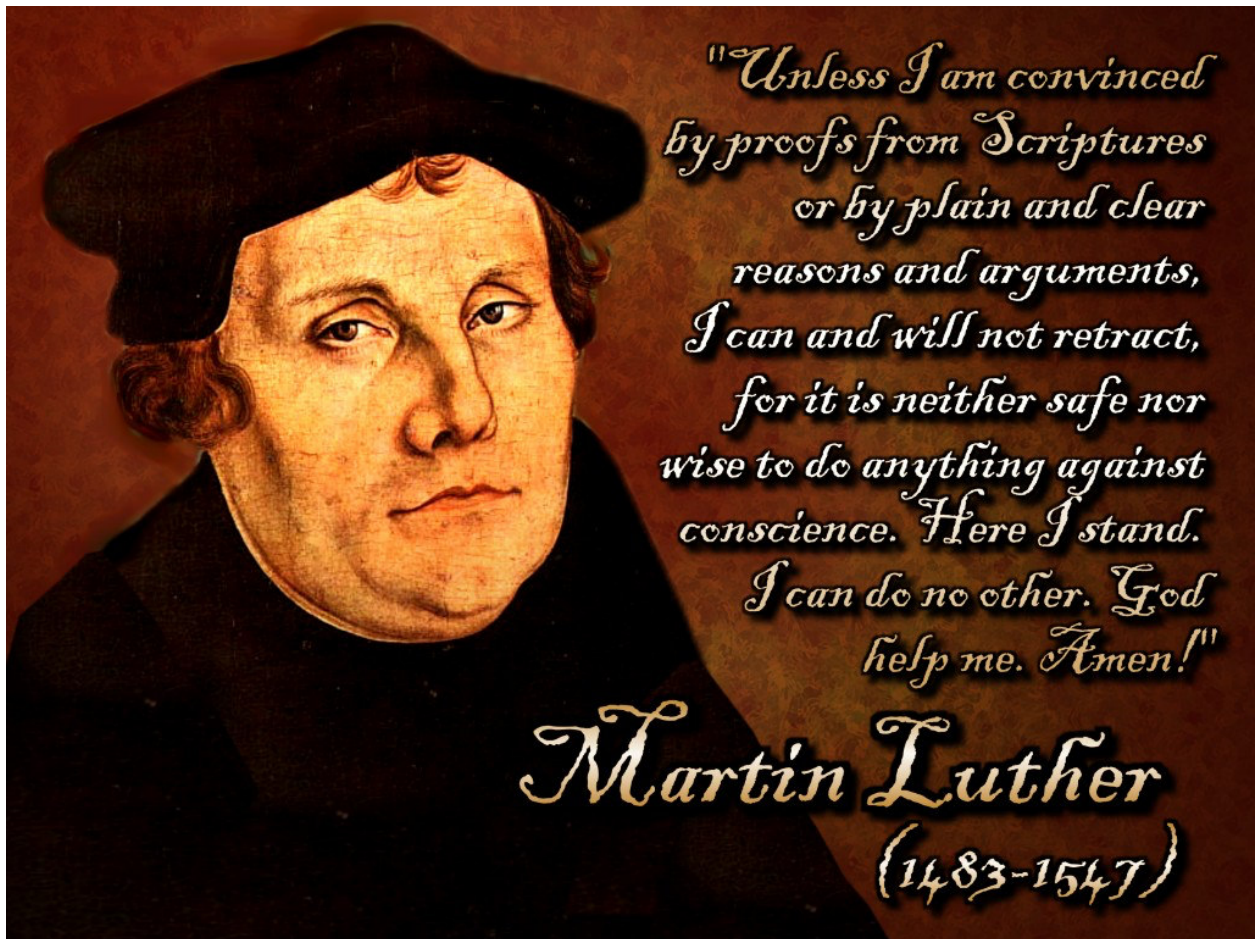
Oktoberfest

Our annual Oktoberfest celebration will be held at the church on Sunday, October 30, with a luncheon after the service. Many of our traditional foods will be offered, including bratwurst and hotdogs, bierocks, and spaetzle. The Ladies Guild will provide the brats and buns, but all side dishes and beverages will be donated. A sign-up sheet for those who wish to contribute to the potluck will be available by October 2. It is not necessary to provide a dish in order to attend.



*Reformation Sunday: October 30, 2016
Please join us for the Divine Service at 9 a.m.
and our Oktoberfest Luncheon at 11:30 a.m.*

*Continue the Celebration at Emmanuel Lutheran
Church in Tempe, Arizona, at 4 p.m.*



<i>Redeemer</i>	<i>Lutheran</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>October</i>		<i>2016</i>	
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
						1
2 Pentecost 20 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	3	4 Pr. Webber in Bloomington, MN for ELS General Pastoral Conference	5 Pr. Webber in Bloomington, MN	6 Internet Study Group canceled Pr. Webber in Bloomington, MN	7 Bible Study canceled Pr. Webber in Bloomington, MN	8
9 Pentecost 21 9 a.m. SW w/Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. SS/Congregational Forum	10 7 p.m. Quarterly Voters Meeting, at church	11	12	13 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	14 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	15
16 Pentecost 22 9 a.m. DS Ladies Guild after the service 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	17	18	19	20 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	21 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	22
23 Pentecost 23 9 a.m. SW w/Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	24	25 7 p.m. Elders meeting	26	27 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	28 10 a.m. Bible Study at the Muth residence	29
30 Reformation Sunday 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. SS/AC 11:30 a.m. Oktoberfest Luncheon 4 p.m. Regional Reformation Service at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Tempe	31					

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

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The Valley Evangel
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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.