

The Valley Evangel

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

October 2018

Worship and Study

Sunday Divine Service: 9 am (refreshments after the service)

Sunday School/Adult Bible Class: 10:30 am

Thursday Internet Study Group: 7 pm (ask Pastor Webber for login information)

Friday Bible Study: 10 am at the Muth residence

Newsletter Staff

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From the Pastor's Desk

On Sunday, October 14, the congregations of our church body will be marking the 100th anniversary of the reorganization of the Norwegian Synod, into what is now known as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, at Lime Creek Lutheran Church in Lake Mills, Iowa. The synod that was in this way brought into existence in 1918 was not as a new entity, but was a conscious continuation of the former Norwegian Synod, which had existed since 1853, and which historically had been known for its adherence to orthodox Lutheran teaching and sound liturgical and pastoral practice. When, however, a majority of the pastors and congregations of that former synod voted to participate in a merger that was based on theological compromise rather than on the convictions for which the synod had previously stood, a minority declined to enter that merger, and reorganized on the former basis. The merger church into which the original Norwegian Synod dissolved itself, after two succeeding mergers, is now a part of the very lax and liberal Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Our church body was founded by pastors and congregations who wisely chose not to go down that pathway.



Originally the reorganized group also called itself the Norwegian Synod, but that name was changed in 1958, in recognition of the fact that the synod had by then grown beyond its Norwegian cultural and ethnic origins and had become a fully “American” church body. Indeed, I am not aware of anyone in our congregation who is of Norwegian ancestry. But we are all at home in the ELS, because the Biblical and Confessional faith to which the Norwegian Synod (in both of its incarnations) was historically committed, is a faith that is for all people, of all nations and cultures.

At Redeemer this occasion will be marked by the inclusion of some special elements, pertaining to this anniversary and heritage, in our Service on October 14; and by the showing of a recently-produced movie about these events of 100 years ago during the Bible Class hour after the service. (See the interview with Pastor Jeffrey Hendrix, elsewhere in this newsletter, for more about that movie.) Rumor has it that some special Scandinavian-style treats will be served with our refreshments on that day as well.

On October 28, Reformation Sunday will be observed as usual, followed by a special Reformation luncheon hosted by the Ladies Guild, as is also our regular custom. Reformation Sunday will commemorate the 501st anniversary of the posting of the 95 Theses by Martin Luther, which triggered the Reformation movement

of the 16th century. So, there will be two special occasions at Redeemer in October, focusing on two important historical events in the history of our church. And these events, in turn, each in its own way, remind us of the Lord's faithfulness to his church, as the church with his help and guidance is faithful to the commission that he entrusted to his disciples for all generations:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.* And behold, *I am with you always, to the end of the age.*" (Matt. 28:18b-20, ESV)

– Pastor Webber

Journey with Jennifer

Fourth of a Series Exploring the Holy Land



This month we are going to visit the far north and far south of the land of Israel. Considering that Israel is only 270 miles long and can be covered by car in 10 hours, that is entirely feasible! The two sites are Dan and Beersheba.

The former was named for the tribe of Dan, who was the 5th son of Jacob (Israel) but his first son born to a woman who was not his first (and true) wife Leah. Dan was the firstborn to Rachel's servant Bilhah (Gen. 29-30). The ancestors of the City of Dan's tribal residents, though not allotted this corner of the northern region after Joshua's conquest, took the ancient city of Laish and renamed it Dan (Judg. 18:29).

The latter site, Beersheba, means "The Well of the Oath." It is where Abraham and Abimelech entered into a covenant of peace that also recognized that Abraham had dug a well there and had the right of access to that well (Gen. 21). The area later became part of Simeon's tribal allotment after the post-Exodus conquest.

How are two sites that are approximately 200 miles apart and given to two different Israelite tribes connected to each other? Both contain similar archaeological findings that testify to the apostasy and idolatry of Israel. In Exodus 27 and 30, God provided instructions for Israel to build the Bronze and Incense altars as square-shaped objects, with horns on each corner onto which would be smeared the blood sacrifices for atonement. According to Mosaic Law, the Tabernacle and the subsequent Temple in Jerusalem were the only acceptable locations for these altars and for these sacrifices to occur. Faithful followers of Yahweh were expected to travel to the altar's location to offer sacrifices in accordance with the law.

But 1 Kings 12:25-33 records King Jeroboam's motive and actions in disobeying God's law after he was anointed the king of the northern ten tribes of Israel:



Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. And he went out from there and built Peniel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of

David. If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.” So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. He went up to the altar that he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month that he had devised from his own heart. And he instituted a feast for the people of Israel and went up to the altar to make offerings.



Excavations at Tel-Dan have revealed the foundations of an altar that scholars agree date to the 900s B.C., during the reign of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Scholarly studies and reconstructions reveal a similarity to the description in the Book of Exodus of the sanctioned altars. This corresponds with the Biblical record that Jeroboam built two cultic sites at Dan and Bethel in order to cement political loyalty at the expense of spiritual loyalty to Yahweh. Jeroboam did not trust God to preserve his political kingdom despite it being handed to him (1 Kings 11:26-40). Throughout the First and Second Books of Kings, the repeated refrain of judgment against the Northern kings of Israel is that they “walked in the ways of Jeroboam, son of Nebat.” 2 Kings 17 records that God allowed Assyria to destroy the northern kingdom of Israel (700s B.C.) specifically for their idolatry and apostasy.

The archaeological record also condemns the southern Kingdom of Judah. A reconstructed mini-altar also matching the description in Exodus was found in Beersheba, and dates to the divided kingdom period (approx. 900-700 B.C.). While we cannot connect this Beersheba altar to Jeroboam’s creation of cultic sites at Dan and Bethel, it indicates that the practice of creating illegal altars was not confined to the northern kingdom. As mentioned in a prior column, Jeremiah warned Judah that they would

be punished for their idolatry and apostasy (Jer. 7) and they were subsequently conquered and taken into exile by Babylon (500s B.C., 2 Kings 25).

Before closing this month’s column, one other major archaeological find must be mentioned. It is known as the Tel Dan Stele. In 1993-94, several fragments of stone tablets celebrating an Aramean king’s victory over Israel and Judah were found at Tel Dan near the Iron Age gate (800s B.C.). The stele is now one of several ancient finds that mention the “House of David.” The enormity of this cannot be over-stated! It is dated approx. 841 B.C. and names several Israelite and Judahite kings in addition to the “House of



David.” Compare that to the Dead Sea Scrolls, which contain the oldest extant Old Testament manuscripts and date to approx. 250 B.C. – 68 A.D. The stela predates the Dead Sea Scrolls by almost 500 years! This demonstrates the historicity of the Israelite Kingdoms and King David specifically.



There have been efforts by some to argue that King David was a myth and the Israelite kingdoms did not exist as described in the Biblical accounts. But God in his mercy demonstrates the veracity of His Word when these artifacts are revealed. Even if these archaeological finds were not known to us today – as they were not known to people who died before 1993, for example – we are nevertheless called to hold to the inerrancy, sufficiency, and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Artifacts in themselves are not enough to create faith, as sadly, many who know about these findings still do not believe in the God of the Bible – much less that only Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. I am reminded of Jesus’ encounter with Thomas in John 20. Thomas refused to believe that Jesus had been resurrected unless he put his fingers in the marks of the nails of Jesus’ flesh. God condescends to Thomas’ demands and records it for our benefit. Jesus declares to Thomas that “blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed.” We may not see Jesus in the flesh like Thomas or know all the archaeological finds in the land of Israel, but by God’s grace we believe in His atoning death and resurrection and encounter the Living Christ

in His Word and the Lord’s Supper to the edification of our faith.

For reference and more reading you may visit the following web links:

www.bibleplaces.com/dan/

www.bibleplaces.com/beersheba/

www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2011/05/04/The-Tel-Dan-Stela-and-the-Kings-of-Aram-and-Israel.aspx

– Jennifer Price

Sunday School Update

Our special summer Sunday School unit concluded on September 2. Between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend, both the children’s and adult classes studied Bible lessons and portions of Luther’s Small Catechism focusing on the “Means of Grace,” the Word and Sacraments. For the children, some additional elements added extra interest. The title of the curriculum, “Delivered! God’s Gifts of Grace,” was intended to impart the understanding that God himself provides the ways in which he creates and sustains our faith. To reinforce this thought, images of gift bags and bows featured prominently in the pupil worksheets and leaflet “hidden picture” puzzles.

Each week, as a corollary to the Bible lesson, we also used the church office computer to take a brief video “tour” of a different National Park Service site or landmark (this explains



the National Park entry gate you passed in the corridor). We also located these weekly “Connection Destinations” on a large U.S. map on the classroom bulletin board. Library books about each park were made available to look through before or after class. And craft projects usually blended park features with the day’s Bible memory verse. In addition to learning important Bible truths, it is hoped that our children grew in their appreciation of such national landmarks as the Statue of Liberty, the St. Louis Arch, and Yellowstone and Yosemite parks.



The summer theme provided an excellent opportunity to teach our children the four stanza version of “Jesus Loves Me,” from *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*. Those of you who attended the Bethany Lutheran College band concert last March may recall Professor Benjamin Faugstad reciting this text, the final verse of which says:

Jesus loves me! He is near.
He is with His Church so dear.
And the Spirit He has sent
By his Word and Sacrament.

Because half our current Sunday School populations is preschool age (pre-readers), some props were provided to keep the little ones engaged while we sang. Youngest pupils were given signs (the word “Yes”, face of Jesus, red heart, Bible) to hang onto and hold up each time we reached the refrain.

The autumn Sunday School quarter is now underway, and is titled, “God Protects His People in Egypt and the Exodus.” September lessons featured the life of Joseph – the injustices suffered at the hands of his brothers and during the ensuing years of slavery, his meteoric rise to leadership during the famine, and the joyous reunification with Jacob’s family. In October and November we turn our attention to Moses and God’s mighty acts to deliver Israel out of Egypt.

Parents, please take time at home to look through the Sunday School papers with your children. Note the “Family Connections” paragraphs. Encourage your older children to use the daily devotion readings suggested in each leaflet. Continue to talk about topics from the prior Sunday’s lesson in your family conversations during the week.

During the Fall, Winter and Spring quarters, the Sunday School returns to our usual format of division into younger and older classes. This means two teachers are needed each week. A sign-up sheet is located in the fellowship hall near the coffee. Teacher Preparation Packets (consisting of the lesson plan plus a sample of each student item) can be retrieved from the trays on the table near the window in Classroom #1. Additional classroom volunteers are always welcome. Feel free to sit in any Sunday if you would like to help, or are just interested in learning more about our program for the children. Thank you for your prayers and support of our Sunday School.



– Carol Webber, Sunday School Coordinator

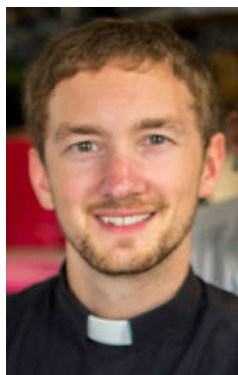
Interview with Pastor Jeffrey Hendrix

Conducted by Jennifer Price

1. *Are you a life-long member of the ELS? If not, when and how did you become a member?*

I grew up in the Wisconsin Synod. I became an ELS member officially once I started attending Bethany Seminary in 2012. However, I fell in love with the ELS way of doing things (which has a lot to do with its history) soon after I started attending Bethany College in 2006. I went to Bethany by the way, not to be a pastor, but to study communication and video production. The theology that was taken so seriously at Bethany made me consider becoming a pastor, and it was professors there that finally encouraged me to go.

2. *Was the film **Proclaim the Wonders God has Done: The Journey of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod** developed simultaneously with the “Proclaiming God’s Truth” Bible study, also published to commemorate the ELS centennial?*



The documentary was completely separate, although some of the "chapters" in the film line up thematically and theologically with the Bible Study.

3. *What led you to be involved in the production of this film?*

I've long wanted to put my video production skills for use in the church. The anniversary committee asked me to take over the project after the passing of Mark Harstad, who had begun the process.

4. *Did you learn anything new about ELS doctrine while producing this film?*

I knew most of what was finally in the documentary already. During my grad school years (before Seminary), I actually read numerous volumes of the Synod's History (it was my fun reading during grad school...). And then at Seminary, I went through it again. The history of the Synod is really fascinating, so I attempted to put the most interesting bits in. I also wanted to make the film a doctrinal film. We really struggled with some important issues. These issues are no less important today.

5. *The recurring theological issue that caused the church splits (1880, 1918, 1955) concerned the Gospel as it relates to the Doctrine of Election, which teaches that man cannot save himself due to his sin, therefore God must choose to whom to grant the gift of faith in Christ Jesus for salvation. I was surprised there was no mention of Luther’s teachings or the Formula of Concord on the Doctrine of Election since it was this same question of whether God alone saves (Luther) or man cooperates with God for salvation (Pelagianism, Roman Catholicism) that was the underpinning of the Reformation as well. Is there a reason that context wasn’t highlighted?*

The documentary's focus was pretty narrow. Whereas the Bible Study produced by the Doctrine Committee was able to dive into connections with the Reformation since it was meant to cover the "twin anniversaries" of Reformation 500 and ELS 100, the film was specifically on the ELS Centennial. Length also was an issue: The original outline intended the film to be 45 minutes, but we had to cut it down to 17 minutes. The original script was probably a 3rd longer than the final version as well. We simply had to tell over 100 years of history in as simple and short of a way as possible. The Election Controversy is technically before the centennial as well, so we didn't want to focus too heavily on that one period of time.

6. *The film ends with a challenge to each individual ELS church member to hold fast to the Gospel. I’m reminded of O’Sullivan’s Law which states that “any group that is not explicitly right-wing will become left-wing over time.” While the quote was intended for non-ecclesiastical entities, I think it is no less applicable to the church if you replace “right” with biblical and “left” with unbiblical. The film documents the move of the majority toward unbiblical theology while a remnant holds fast to biblical teachings at personal sacrifice. Did you consider producing this film as part of your gifting to help preserve a remnant? My prayer is that this film does inspire ELS members to hold to "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." Time and time again, history has shown what happens to those who compromise the truths of God's Word. That's why it is good for us to study Church history and consider those saints who have gone before us.*

7. *What is it you would like the ELS community to take away from this film?*

The ELS, while coming from a Norwegian background, does not exist today simply to be the Norwegian remnant. We exist because our forefathers, Norwegian or not, held firmly to the truth of grace alone. Our Synod went through struggles, but is stronger because of it. We as a Synod have weathered controversies that other synods even in our fellowship haven't. That gives us a strong and unique perspective in the context of Lutheranism in 2018 and beyond. We are a small Synod, but that is not something to be embarrassed by. God's church flourishes not by using whatever tricks we can to make our congregations bigger. It flourishes as we teach His Word and not forsake His ways. Luther's last verse of "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice" (ELH 378) is how I closed the video. This verse encapsulates what we should therefore do as a remnant:

What I have done and taught, teach thou, My ways forsake thou never;
So shall My kingdom flourish now And God be praised forever.
Take heed lest men with base alloy The heav'nly treasure should destroy;
This counsel I bequeath thee.

Special Presentation on Norway

In May, under the sponsorship of Bethany Lutheran College, several pastors and laymen from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod toured Norway, and visited sites that are significant in the history of the Lutheran Church in Norway and in the Norwegian heritage of our church body. ELS Pastor Andrew Soule and his wife Catharine were among them. On October 21 the Soules will be with us at Redeemer, and during the Bible Class hour they will share with us a PowerPoint presentation on this trip. Please join us!



Alpha Center Update

The Alpha Pregnancy Resource Center's mission is:

1. To give troubled women sound Biblical resources and alternatives to abortion and to provide them with the support necessary to bring their babies to term; 2. To witness to the mercy and forgiveness of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Thanks for your contributions that make meeting those two mission statements possible. Because of your continued generosity two trips, to transport Redeemer's gifts, were necessary in August. During the month, Alpha gave away 2,286 individual diapers! So please keep them coming, along with formula and wipes.

Alpha was also pleased to report that two children were baptized, and they saw 70 clients in August. Eleven of those were new to the center. Their volume is remarkable when you consider the center is open only from 9 a.m. to 1p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Director, Kay Retberg, shared at the Deer Valley Women's Retreat that they would have additional hours if they had more advocates to staff the center. If you, or someone you know, are interested, please let me know.

If being on site is not an option for you, they are also always looking for people to serve as "Hot liners." These are people who commit to receive "distress" calls from clients when the center is not open, day or night. Clients have and call only the Alpha phone number; personal numbers are not shared. A schedule will be determined based on your availability.

A good way to get acquainted with the center and the staff will be on Saturday, November 3. Alpha is hosting an Open House from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The address is 1822 W. Indian School Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85015. Please plan to visit if you have never done so!

Additional exciting news is their plan to begin hosting ESL classes in January 2019. The center receives women from various ethnic backgrounds, many of whom are not knowledgeable or proficient in English. Plans are still under way, but if you have interest in being a part of this effort, please let me know.

– Jennifer Price, Alpha Ambassador

Friday Morning Bible Study

The Friday Bible study will resume on October 12 at 10 a.m., at the Muth residence. We will return to our study of the Psalms, picking up in Psalm 119. Join us!



Ladies Guild News

The Ladies Guild is short just \$165 of our goal of \$1,000 to match an anonymous donation to purchase motor scooters for the Lutheran ministers in India. Besides the scooter purchase we would like to send a generous check to Cross Stitch also for the support of 300 orphans in the Lutheran Mission of Salvation–India. The annual cost to feed these children is almost \$55,000. However, their diet is still severely lacking in protein. Cross Stitch’s 2018 campaign emphasis is “Feed My Lambs,” featuring pictures of the 16 orphan homes in which we will be introduced to the “faces that you feed.” The Ladies Guild plans to display these pictures in the Fellowship Hall on a special poster with a map of India marking the location of each orphanage. Twice each year Cross Stitch also sends a donation to purchase two changes of clothing and school supplies for the orphans. When you view the photographs of these orphanages you will see how very basic the living conditions are for these children.

On Sunday, October 14, the Ladies Guild will offer some special Scandinavian treats during Fellowship coffee time. These simple treats will compliment the “Founders’ Day” celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. We will be enjoying some delicious traditional Scandinavian baked goods while viewing an informative video of our synod’s history. Please plan on attending!

On Sunday, October 28, the Ladies Guild will host the annual Reformation Day lunch following the Sunday School hour. A sign up sheet for this event will be located in the Fellowship Hall starting Sunday, October 7. Please list your name and how many people will be attending. Bringing a side dish is not mandatory; we just need a number for table place settings, and to know how many bratwursts to purchase. Please plan on attending this also!

The Alpha Pregnancy Resource Center, at 1822 West Indian School Road in Phoenix, is having an open house on Saturday, November 3, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information speak with Jennifer Price, our Alpha “Ambassador.”

– Carole Clingan

Halloween Is About You

Halloween. That is a weird word! Where did it come from? What does it mean? No doubt you know what it refers to, but do you know how it came into use?

Halloween is a conjunction, that is two or more words joined together. It shortened “All Hallows Eve,” which is the evening before All Hallows Day or All Saints Day. See, Halloween isn’t about ghosts, goblins, and witches. Halloween is about Saints. Are you one?

Most people would respond, “I’m no Saint!” They reach that conclusion because they look at the way that they have lived, the decisions that they have made and the things that they have done, and rightly see that they are far from perfect. If that was the standard for being a saint, no one would be one. However, that is not the way that the Bible speaks of saints.

This is how Paul addressed the Christians in Corinth: “To the church of God in Corinth—those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, who are called as saints” (1 Cor. 1:2). Christians are saints because they are sanctified in Christ Jesus. That means that you can be a saint, too. All who believe in Jesus have been washed clean of all of their sins. Everyone who believes in Jesus has been credited with Jesus’ perfect life. In Jesus, you are a saint!

This year you will know what Halloween is really about. It is not about ghosts and goblins. It is about saints. It is about you. You have been clothed in Jesus perfect life by faith.

– From the ELS Board for Home Outreach

October 2018

Redeemer Lutheran Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 <u>Pr. Webber in Min-</u>	3 <u>nesota for ELS</u>	4 <u>General Pastoral</u> Internet Study Group canceled	5 <u>Conference</u>	6
7 Pentecost 20 Choir 8:30am Divine Service 9am Sunday School / Adult Class 10:30am	8 Voters meeting 7pm at church	9	10	11 Internet Study Group 7pm	12 Bible Study resumes 10am at Muth residence	13
14 Founders' Day Choir 8:30am Service of the Word w/ spoken Communion 9am Sunday School / ELS History movie 10:30am	15	16	17	18 Internet Study Group 7pm	19 Bible Study 10am at Muth residence	20
21 Pentecost 22 Divine Service 9am Ladies Guild after the service Sunday School / Presentation on Norway 10:30am	22	23	24	25 Internet Study Group 7pm	26 Bible Study 10am at Muth residence	27
28 Reformation Divine Service 9am Sunday School / Adult Class 10:30am Luncheon 11:45am	29	30	31			

"Divine Service": Full Word and Sacrament Service with Communion, usually on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays of the month, and on major festivals.

"Service of the Word": A brief spoken order of Holy Communion follows the public Service of the Word, usually on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

Refreshments are served after the Sunday morning services.

October 2018

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.