

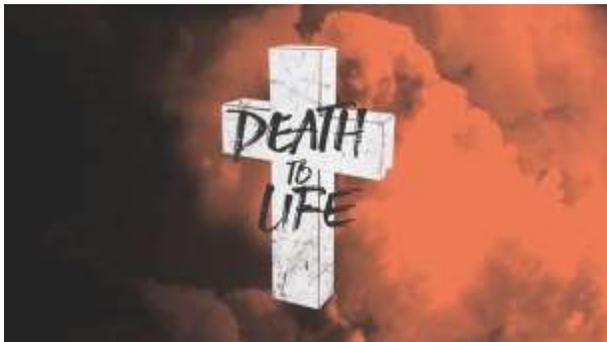
The Valley Evangel

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

April 2018

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From the Pastor's Desk



Christ is risen!

Easter is once again upon us. In the festival of our Lord's resurrection, we celebrate God's reversal of the direction of things – of ultimate things. Before and apart from the resurrection of Jesus, life always leads to death. But now, in Christ's victory over the grave for all of us, death leads to life. Death need not be the end, but can be the portal to a new beginning. This is not just a theory or a wish. Jesus came back from the other side of death and showed himself to be alive. And

in the words "Peace be with you" that the risen Savior speaks to his disciples – and to us – we are all invited to receive from him the eternal life that he now promises and gives.

This understanding of Easter as a new beginning for Jesus, and for the human race in Jesus, finds expression in the custom of the Eastern or Byzantine churches, in their beginning of their church year on Easter. We, in the tradition of the Western or Latin church, mark the beginning of our church year with the start of the Advent season. But in the way in which the East structures their ecclesiastical calendar, they are thinking less about chronology, and more about theology.

The resurrection of God's Son changed everything. It is a new beginning. And it can be a new beginning for you. In whatever way "death" or the fear of death has become a part of your life – the spiritual death of sin; the shadow of death that comes with failing health; or the death of dreams and

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aspirations that are not going to come true or be fulfilled – Easter can be and will be the beginning of new life for you. The risen Christ forgives your sin. He declares that those who live and believe in him will never die. And he promises that for you, and for all his people, he makes all things new.

Join us in our encounter with the risen Christ on Easter Sunday, April 1. The Divine Service for this highest festival of the year – this first festival – begins at 9 a.m. And then stay for the special Easter brunch that we will enjoy together after that service!

“We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 6:9-11, ESV)

He is risen indeed!

– Pastor Webber

New Members Interview: Bill and Ann Wolken Conducted by Jennifer Price



Jennifer: Hi Bill and Ann, it is my pleasure to interview you for you the church newsletter since we joined on the same Sunday! We ended 2017 and began 2018 with the joy of confirming our membership in this special outpost of the body of Christ. How many months had you been attending Redeemer Lutheran prior to joining?

Bill & Ann: We attended about two months before joining.

Jennifer: When and where were you both confirmed in the Lutheran Church?

Bill & Ann: Bill was confirmed at the age of 14 in Valley Stream, Long Island, New York, at the Lutheran Church of Our Savior. Ann was also confirmed at the age of 14 in Baldwin, Long Island, New York, at St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Jennifer: How long have you been in Arizona?

Bill & Ann: We moved to Arizona in January 2016.

Jennifer: Where did you live before moving to Arizona, and what brought you here?

Bill & Ann: We lived in Baldwin, Long Island, New York, for 42 years. We shared a duplex with Ann’s parents. We came to Arizona because one of our best friends has been in Arizona for 30+ years. He had encouraged us to move here due to the cost of living as a retiree.

Jennifer: What do you miss most about New York?

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Bill & Ann: [Bill] I miss everything about Long Island – the food, the environment and even the humidity! [Ann] I miss family and friends.

Jennifer: What was your favorite restaurant in Long Island?

Bill & Ann: Our favorite restaurant was Bigelow's Sea Food Restaurant. It was about 5 minutes from our home. We enjoyed their deep-fried seafood and salmon plate.

Jennifer: What do you like most about Arizona?

Bill & Ann: The people have been friendly.

Jennifer: What brought you to Redeemer Lutheran?

Bill & Ann: We attended another Lutheran Church closer to our home but it had no structure or liturgy and no hymn books. It had very progressive theology and the worship was more like entertainment. So we looked for other Lutheran churches in the area.

Jennifer: What do you enjoy the most about Redeemer?

Bill & Ann: We were looking for a church that was more like what we left in New York – with liturgy, organ music and a Biblical message. We found all this at Redeemer Lutheran. We really enjoy Pastor Webber's teaching; we think it's marvelous! We also appreciate that everyone is so genuine and makes you feel like you've been attending the church for years.

Jennifer: What are your favorite hymns?

Bill & Ann: The Redeemer hymnbook...is the same one we grew up learning, and enjoy it very much. Bill's favorite him is "Abide with Me," #552. It was also Bill's mother's favorite song. She was a woman of great faith in the Lord.

Jennifer: Do you have any children/grandchildren?

Bill & Ann: One son and two grandchildren. They live on Long Island, New York.

Jennifer: How long have you been married?

Bill & Ann: It will be 43 years in October 2018

Jennifer: How did you meet?

Bill & Ann: Bill's Aunt and Ann's next-door neighbor encouraged Bill to call Ann and the rest is history!

Jennifer: From what kind of work did you both retire?

Bill & Ann: Bill spent 46 years in the printing industry when it was still ink on paper. Ann retired from the telephone company where she had worked her way up from an operator to a supervisor. After retiring she worked at Bloomingdale's before moving to Arizona.

Jennifer: Do you both have any hobbies?

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Bill & Ann: Bill used to really enjoy having a tropical fish tank. He had a 30-gallon tank in NY. His favorite fish is the Black Molly. Ann enjoys reading, cooking and listening to a variety of music. She enjoys reading about dogs. One of her favorite books is “A Dog’s Purpose.”

Jennifer: Do you have any favorite family memories?

Bill & Ann: The annual Christmas Eve dinner at Bill’s mother’s home. She would make a huge dinner and had stockings for everyone with little gifts.

Jennifer: Thank you for taking time to be a part of this month’s newsletter so others can get to know you both better!

Is it plausible to believe that the disciples of Jesus conspired to fake his resurrection, and knowingly lied about it for the rest of their lives?

Answered by former atheist J. Warner Wallace

When I was an atheist, one of the reasons I rejected the claims of the Gospels was a similar distrust in the testimony of the authors. I rejected anything supernatural, so when I simply concluded the disciples were lying about the Resurrection. But then I began to investigate conspiracies for a living as a detective. I understand, now, what is required for a successful conspiracy, and typically, there are five things that I find missing in the lives of the disciples.

The first thing you need to successfully conspire about a claim is the lowest number of co-conspirators. It’s a lot easier for two people to tell a lie and keep a secret than it is for twenty-two, or two hundred and twenty-two. Similarly, successful conspiracies are usually held for the shortest possible time. It’s a lot easier to tell a lie and keep a secret for a day than for a week, a month, or a year. Thirdly, successful conspiracies require the best possible communication between co-conspirators. If I separate two conspirators, and ask one for great detail related to the claim, the other conspirators need to know exactly what the first one said, in all its intricate detail, if they want to be consistent. That requires excellent communication between conspirators to make sure everyone knows what the others are saying. In addition, close relationships are critical. If a mother and son are involved in a conspiracy, for example, there’s a good chance no one’s going to want to talk to you at all. Finally, low pressure, very low pressure on a conspiracy is crucial. If no one’s asking any questions, there’s a much better chance for the conspiracy to succeed.

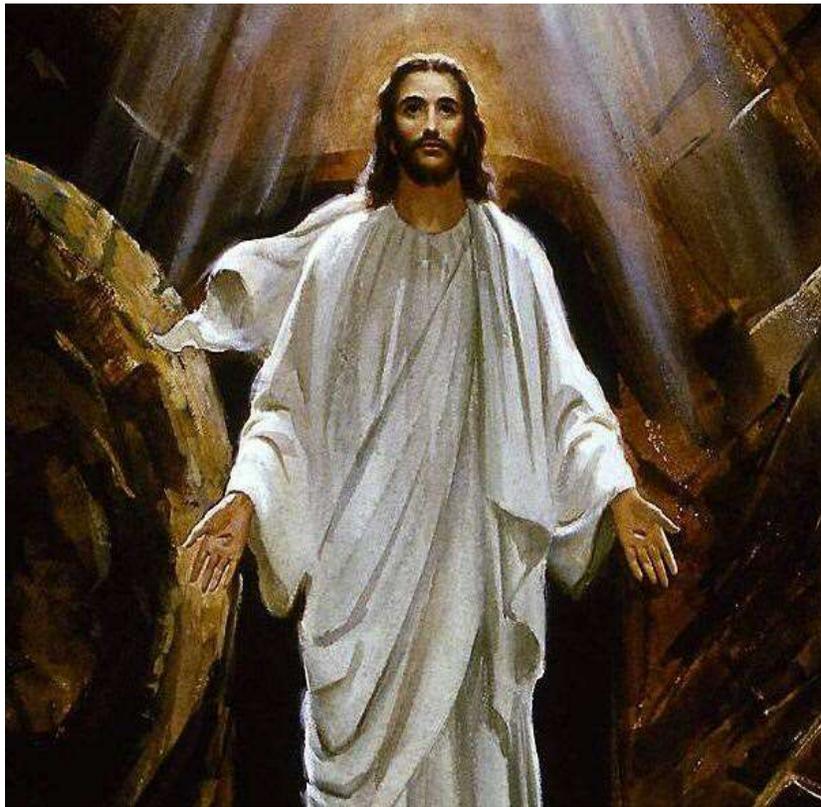
As you look at these five attributes of conspiracies, you quickly recognize that none of them are present in the alleged ‘Christian conspiracy’. According to Paul (in his letter to the Corinthian church), hundreds of people saw Jesus after the Resurrection, all on the same day. There were over one hundred eligible eyewitnesses in the upper room, for example, in Acts chapter one. There are way too many conspirators, holding the lie together for nearly six decades, separated by thousands of miles, without any way to communicate back and forth to one another, under incredible high pressure. Don’t get me wrong, it’s possible to pull off a conspiracy, but only if the attributes I’ve described are present. If, for example, you know of a conspiracy, even an historic conspiracy, it wasn’t successful, by definition. Successful conspiracies are unrevealed, and the claim of a successful ‘Christian conspiracy’ is unsupported. None of the co-conspirators ever changed their story about Jesus.

It really comes down to motivation. Let me explain that. When investigating a potential lie, we have to ask: ‘Why would this person (or persons) lie?’ Lies are always driven by the same three motivations; it

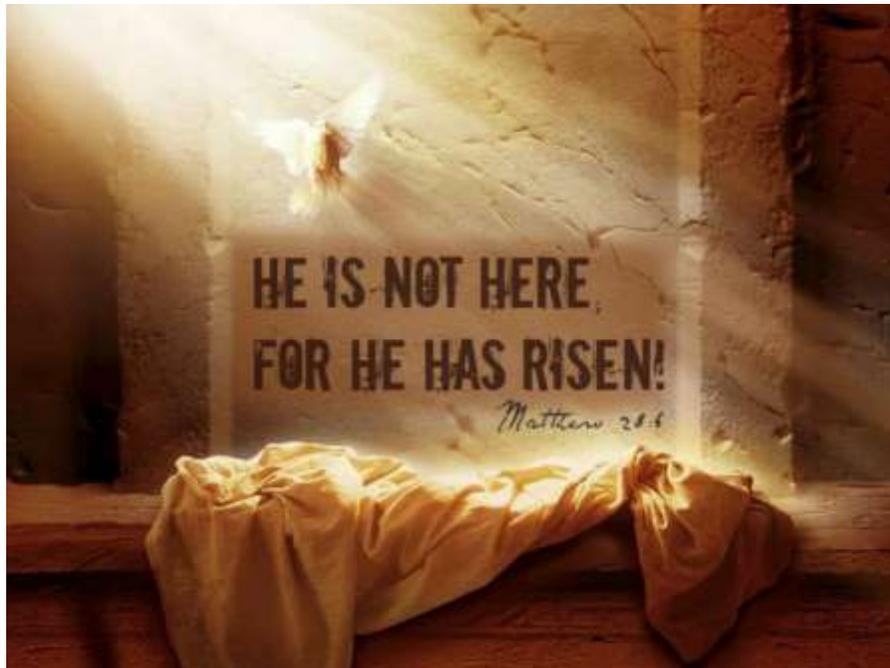
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always comes down to money, sex, or power. If I'm trying to gain something in one of those three areas, I may be motivated to do something I should not do or say something I shouldn't say. So, if the disciples are lying, what is motivating them to do so? Did they gain something in any of these three areas? We have no other ancient record related to the 12 apostles, for example, describing them as gaining some advantage in these three areas. Instead, every ancient record we have describes them being martyred for what they said they saw. I think those two things: a lack of motive and a lack of the essential attributes of a successful conspiracy, led me, as a skeptic to conclude the claims of the apostles were not part of an elaborate conspiracy. It's just not reasonable.

(coldcasechristianity.com/2016/rapid-response-i-think-the-disciples-lied-about-the-resurrection)



*Easter Sunday, April 1:
Divine Service at 9 a.m.
Easter Brunch at 10:30 a.m.*



This year, Easter falls on April First. On Easter Day, Christians all over the world gather to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. But April Fool's Day, by common usage, is a day for pranks.

Nobody likes to play the fool. But for a moment, coming up on an April First Easter, let's embrace the question: Who's the fool? Is it the Jews that conspired against Jesus to kill Him? Is it the Romans who were used by them to put Him to death? Is it Jesus Himself? Is it those who have believed in Him? Who's the fool?

The Apostle Paul, for one, isn't afraid of the question. He says openly: If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Cor 15:19 ESV) Yet, along with all the disciples and eyewitnesses of the resurrection, Paul never changed his tune. In fact, they all live and die as martyrs for their testimony about Jesus, His death at the cross, and His resurrection from the dead.

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. (1 Cor 1:21 ESV)

The world through its wisdom improves, and yet heaven on earth never gets any closer. The world through inclusiveness becomes more intolerant and rejects decency and charity. He catches the wise in their craftiness. (1 Cor. 3:19 ESV) The world by wisdom refuses to know God, the Creator. So He made Himself small. He made Himself least and worst of all. He placed Himself under the condemnation of all.

He took up our folly and shame. He made Himself an easy prey for an unseen enemy who couldn't resist falling on Him in such a state of foolishness and weakness. And you, who were dead in your trespasses... God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses... (He cancelled) the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities (the devil and all his rebellious spirits) and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (Colossians 2:13-15 ESV)

In light of His vacant tomb—for He is Risen!—how blessed we are to be called to share in His divine foolishness! For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor 1.18 ESV)

Wishing you a blessed celebration of the Feast of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!

From the ELS Board for Home Outreach

Redeemer Lutheran Church of Scottsdale, April 2018 Calendar

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Sat.</i>
1 Easter 8:30am Choir 9am DS 10:30am Brunch (SS/AC canceled)	2	3	4	5 7pm Internet Study Group	6 10 am Bible Study at the Muth residence	7
8 Easter 2 9am SW w/Spoken Communion 10:30am SS/Congregational Forum	9 7pm Quarterly Voters Meeting at church	10 Pr. Webber in Tacoma, WA, for West Coast Pastors Conference & Emmaus Conference	11 Pr. Webber in Tacoma, WA	12 Pr. Webber in Tacoma, WA Internet Study Group canceled	13 Pr. Webber in Tacoma, WA Bible Study canceled	14
15 Easter 3 9am DS Ladies Guild after the service 10:30am SS/AC	16	17	18	19 7 pm Internet Study Group	20 10 am Bible Study at the Muth residence	21
22 Easter 4 9am SW w/Spoken Communion 10:30am SS/AC	23	24	25	26 Internet Study Group canceled	27 10 am Bible Study at the Muth residence	28
29 Easter 5 9am DS 10:30am SS/AC	30					

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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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.