

The Valley Evangel

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

August 2016

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From the Pastor's Desk

On Sunday, July 17, in Belview, Minnesota, I had the privilege of preaching at the service of ordination for my new son-in-law, Andrew Soule. A video of the service is online here: vimeo.com/175304076 For my column this month I will share with you some excerpts from the sermon that I preached on that occasion (which in the recording begins at the 25-minute mark). When it was delivered, it was, of course, addressed to one particular new pastor. But the Biblical theology of the sermon should apply to the ministry of any pastor. And in my ministry here, I have tried, with the Lord's help, to apply it to myself and my service among you. So, here goes...

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Timothy 4:1-5, ESV). ...

The first thing we notice [here] is how serious Paul is about what he is saying. Before he gives his solemn commission to Timothy, he reminds Timothy that someday, everyone will have to give an account of himself before the judge of all men. Everything that Timothy will do or refrain from doing, in his personal life and in his professional life, he must do or refrain from doing in the fear of God, with a consciousness of his accountability to the Lord Jesus Christ.

St. James writes in his Epistle: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness." St. Paul, in his own way, is reiterating this point. And in the Lord's name, I will reiterate that point today with respect to you, Andrew, and with

respect to the ministry to which almighty God has called you. James says that not many should become teachers, but today you are becoming a teacher. You will now be judged with greater strictness. What we are participating in today is serious business, because it is God's business. He is in charge, and he has the right to demand from us an unhesitating submission to his revealed will, and an unwavering obedience to the dictates that he has placed upon us. ...

[St. Paul] writes: "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching." The Greek term translated here as "preach"...means proclaim or announce. According to the meaning of the word, the content of what is proclaimed or announced could be bad news or good news. The point is that the message in question is to be communicated. Christian pastors are called to preach. They are not called to remain silent. And what they are called to preach...is "the word." ... [This is] a term that Paul had already used in this epistle, a couple chapters earlier, when he had told Timothy: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." So, the word that is to be preached, is the word of God's truth: the truth of God's condemnation of sin and rebellion, leading to remorse and conviction on the part of those who admit their fault; and the truth of God's reconciliation with those who in faith cling to the promises of Christ, their Redeemer from sin and death. This is the preaching of law and gospel, which the risen Savior entrusted to his apostles, and through them to all ministers of his church. ...

When Paul tells Timothy rightly to handle the word of truth, this means - at least in part - that Timothy is always to be considering carefully when and how to preach the law, and to call sinners to repentance; and when and how to preach the gospel, and to deliver Christ and his saving gifts to the penitent. And this, Andrew, is the duty that is being placed upon you today. Do not preach to entertain, or to win human favor for yourself. Preach against the inner defiances and testings of God that are common to fallen humanity, and that will therefore be found here as well - in your parishioners, and in yourself. And then declare God's full and complete acceptance and justification of the penitent believer, in Christ and for the sake of Christ. As St. Paul told Timothy, so I tell you today, that it is - and will continue to be - your duty to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."

Be firm with the stubborn. But also, be gentle with the weak. Be compassionate with the suffering. Be welcoming and inviting with the lost. Teach the word of God in such a way that sinful pride is pushed back, to make way for the planting and growth of faith in those who hear you - all by the working of God's Spirit. This is an especially important thing to pay attention to in our day, because it is quite evident that the era that St. Paul said would be coming, has now definitely come to twenty-first century America. The apostle warned Timothy: "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."

Flagrant unbelievers, who make no pretense of being Christians, will, of course, dismiss what we teach about humanity's sin problem, and about God's solution to this problem in his Son. But what we have today, is a situation where many individuals - and even whole church bodies - while professing to be Christian, actually reject Christian doctrine and morality; and seek to totally redefine the nature and purpose of the Christian religion. For the spiritual protection of those who are entrusted to your pastoral care, teach the truth of God on all points - and especially on those points of Biblical doctrine and morality that are now under attack. And, teach the truth of God on all points also for the sake of others in your community, who may have lost their faith, or who never had it; but who might be touched by your teaching and example, and be drawn, or drawn back, to the embrace of their Savior. Teach the truth patiently, but teach it thoroughly. And be ready to teach it at all times. What Paul writes to Timothy applies also to you: "Be ready in season and out of season." Your sermons - preached "in season" every week - should be well-prepared, well-structured, and well-thought-through: Biblically-based, Christ-centered, properly dividing law and gospel, and contributing over the long term to your parishioners' ever-increasing understanding of the whole counsel of God. One of my own seminary professors used to say: "Preaching is the most important thing you do as a pastor, because when you preach, you are wrestling for men's souls." So, treat that specific task with the importance it deserves. But be ready also on other occasions - "out of season," as it were - to share the message of Christ with the people you meet,

and with the people who approach you, at unexpected times, and in unexpected ways. Keep yourself so familiar with your Bible, your catechism, and your hymnal, that you can answer their questions, and take advantage of the opportunities they give you to offer comfort and clarity, hope and healing.

The responsibilities and duties that St. Paul loaded onto Timothy, and that I have now loaded onto you, can be a very heavy burden. You - and all of the Lord's ministers - have indeed been called to more than any of us can do, in our own strength. ... You will sometimes succeed in your ministry, but you will often fail. You will sometimes become discouraged, and will be acutely aware of your weaknesses and mistakes. Your own sins will need forgiving. And so heed also these words of St. Paul, addressed originally to Timothy, but addressed also to you...: "As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

We noted a while ago, that when St. Paul said, "preach the word," he used a term in Greek that means any kind of public proclamation. But now, when he talks about the doing work of an evangelist, he is speaking of a very specific kind of public proclamation. An evangelist...is one who preaches glad tidings. A faithful preacher will criticize and correct error, and he will condemn sin and evil. And, as he studies the Scriptures, and applies the Scriptures also to himself, he will likewise be self-critical, self-correcting, and self-condemning. But God's final word - to a pastor, and to all God's people - is not God's judging word. It is God's forgiving, restoring, and life-giving word.

The ~good news~ of the gospel of our redemption lifts us up, after the demands of God have torn us down. The glad tidings of Christ - who saved us by his life, death, and resurrection - exalt us into heavenly joy, after the law of God has humbled us. ... And Andrew, when you [absolve, and] preach this gospel to, your members, you are preaching it also to yourself. ...God works through means. And the means that he will often use to restore and uplift you, are the very words that you proclaim to others. Those words - which are God's words - reverberate back into your own conscience, and bring the Lord's peace in Christ also to your own conscience. Doing the work of an evangelist is the ultimate definition of your ministry. It is the defining feature of a true Christian pastor, as compared to any other kind of lecturer or public speaker. The preaching of the law, while necessary, does not stand alone. In the context of the church, it serves, and prepares people for, the preaching of the good news of Christ, which must follow.

And, the justification and acquittal that are delivered here and now with the absolution of Christ, carry over to the justification and acquittal that God's people will hear again on judgment day. Sins that have been buried with Christ now, will not be dredged up then. Sins that have been removed from you as far as the east is from the west now, will not be reattached to you then. Instead, these words will be spoken to you on that day, by your Redeemer-King: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Within the task of proclaiming the whole counsel of God, God himself prioritizes the work of an evangelist. And the work of an evangelist that you carry out, according to your office, will benefit your own soul, according to your person. Certainly there is a great benefit to be had, when pastors receive spiritual care from brother pastors. But by means of the evangelistic message that you speak - which comes from God, and not from you - God will also forgive your mistakes and shortcomings, and will wipe you slate clean through the blood of Christ. And then he will energize you to move forward, in loving and eager service to his people once again. And with a reinvigorated faith, you will confidently call upon him, for guidance and help, once again.

– Pastor Webber



Sunday School News Update

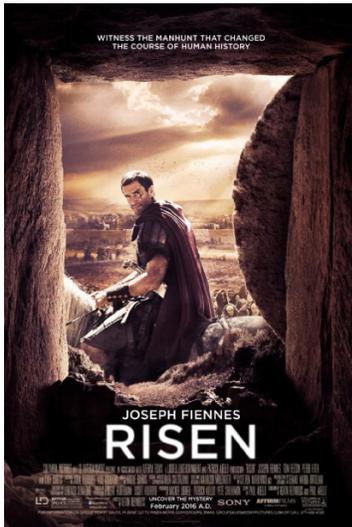
The new Sunday School quarter will begin on September 4. The autumn series, “God Provides Judges and a King,” will cover thirteen Old Testament Bible lessons as follows:

The Twelve Spies in Canaan, Entering the Promised Land, The Fall of Jericho, Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Ruth, God’s Servant Samuel, Saul Becomes King, David and Goliath, David and Jonathan, David Becomes King, God Forgives David.

Individuals may sign up to teach on specific Sundays using the chart posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Teachers volunteer on a week-by-week basis, and no long term commitment is required. Two teachers will be needed each week. Teachers may pick up lesson packets from the curriculum trays in Classroom #1. The “Early Childhood” (Pre-K / Kindergarten) class will meet in Classroom #3, and “Upper Elementary” class will generally meet in Classroom #1. On Sundays when the Ladies Guild meets, the Upper Elementary class will relocate to Classroom #4 (Youth Room). We welcome parents, and anybody else wishing to explore what is involved with teaching, to sit in on either class any Sunday.

In order to minimize the risk of classroom messes, parents are encouraged to have children their finish snacks and beverages in the fellowship hall. Families are also reminded to pick up lesson packets whenever their children miss Sunday School. If your family schedule does not allow you to remain after worship for Sunday School, please see the teacher before leaving and ask for your child’s papers. Teachers are likewise asked to note any pupils missing from Sunday School, and to assemble a lesson packet to be given to the pupil upon his or her return.

Redeemer Library News



Thanks to Vera and David Heminger, the library has several new children’s books: The Action Bible: God’s Redemptive Story, by David Cook & Sergio Cariello; The Bible App For Kids Storybook Bible; Illustrated Family Bible Stories; O Holy Night: A Meditative Christmas Coloring Book; and Visual Scriptures: A Meditative Coloring Book. The Hemingers also donated a new Blu-ray movie: Risen. (This 2016 film – starring Joseph Fiennes, Tom Felton, Peter Firth, and Cliff Curtis – details a Roman soldier’s search for Jesus’ body following his resurrection.) Take one of these items home today! And browse the rest of our parish library collection, for other interesting and useful materials. A sign out sheet is available. An online catalogue of all our holdings is also accessible through a link on the congregation’s homepage.



New Member Interview: Stanzie Heine

Conducted by Erica Olson, Editor Assistant

Erica: Hello! Thanks for taking the time to let me interview you. And if I didn’t say it before, welcome to our church!

Stanzie: Thanks!

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Erica: When did you officially join?

Stanzie: Sunday, June 19.

Erica: Very good! Now, [your husband] Karl has been a member for a short time, too. Where and how did you meet him?

Stanzie: We met online, and in person, in Texas.

Erica: Online, like a dating site?

Stanzie: Yep!

Erica: I'm always intrigued by those. I met my husband the old fashioned way, I guess. It's good to know those things work so well! How long ago was that?

Stanzie: We met in person in December 2014.

Erica: Now, were you Lutheran before you met, too?

Stanzie: Yep. LCMS.

Erica: Was the transition to the ELS a pretty easy one for you? What have you noticed that's different?

Stanzie: Very easy. I haven't noticed many real differences.

Erica: That's good. Now, did you get married at Redeemer or at your former home church?

Stanzie: We got married at Messiah Lutheran Church, in Keller, Texas ... where I was a member at the time.

Erica: Okay. And when did you and Karl tie the knot?

Stanzie: March 12, 2016.

Erica: And you've just recently announced that you're expecting your first child! Congratulations! When are you due?

Stanzie: Thanks! The due date is December 5.

Erica: That's wonderful. Almost exactly two years after you and your husband met. I'm so happy and excited for you!

Stanzie: Thanks! We're pretty excited!

Erica: I'll bet! Do you have any family in this area?

Stanzie: [They don't live] very close.

Erica: Tell me about your family.

Stanzie: Most of my family is in Texas. My mom teaches at a junior college in Borger, Texas (where I'm originally from), my brother is going back to school to get his degree, and my sister works at an art museum in Fort Worth.

Erica: That sounds nice. What was their reaction to the news that you and Karl are expecting?

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Stanzie: They are all very excited for us! This will be my mom's first grandchild, so that is extra fun for her!

Erica: Oh, how wonderful! Are you the oldest of the kids in your family?

Stanzie: My brother is the oldest, but we are all very close in age (27, 26, and 24).

Erica: You are really close in age! Do you think they'll come out to Arizona for the baptism?

Stanzie: I know my mom really wants to, and it depends on school/work for my siblings.

Erica: That's understandable. I know that Karl is in the military and has moved around some. Do you think you'll be in Arizona for a while, or is there a move on the horizon?

Stanzie: I know we are scheduled to be here until at least next summer.

Erica: That's fantastic! I'm glad you're sticking around for a while. It'll be so nice to have another little baby in the church, too. What kind of work do you do?

Stanzie: I used to be a medical technologist in a hospital laboratory, but now the plan is to be a stay-at-home mom.

Erica: What a great decision! There are several of us moms at Redeemer who stay at home with our kids, too. You'll have great support. Was that a hard decision?

Stanzie: That is fantastic! It was a pretty easy decision for us. We both knew before we even got married that if we ever had kids, we didn't want to send them to daycare, and when we found out about the baby before I found a job out here, it seemed pretty clear what my job was supposed to be.

Erica: Absolutely. And a lot of us feel like that's what we were meant to do, too. It's hard for some, both emotionally and financially, but the children are always worth it. I'm so glad that you made that decision. We'll have to make plans to get together. In what part of the Valley do you live?

Stanzie: Sounds great! We live in Chandler.

Erica: Oh, you're not far from us and the Morehouses! We live in Mesa.

Stanzie: Cool! That's not far at all (relatively speaking)!

Erica: Right? Very good! What kinds of hobbies do you enjoy, or hope to continue to enjoy even after the baby is born?

Stanzie: Outdoor stuff is great (when it isn't a zillion degrees outside). Camping, kayaking, hiking, etc. We hope to continue a lot of that kind of stuff as a family after the baby gets here.

Erica: That will be fun! Well, maybe you might have to keep the baby out of the kayak for a while, but I'm sure he will grow up enjoying all of that with you. That will be good for you all.

Stanzie: Yeah, we had to put rock-climbing on pause for a while, too.

Erica: Yeah, for a little while. ... Have you gotten all the baby stuff picked out? Chosen a name?

Stanzie: We are still deciding on a name, and haven't done much in the way of picking out baby stuff, but I expect that we will start to accumulate things now, and I look forward to decorating the baby's room.

Erica: That's so much fun! ... Speaking of fun, Pastor Webber told me you went bear hunting in Alaska and have a bear skin from it! How exciting!

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Stanzie: I haven't really done much hunting, but I think hunting for food is a good idea, and I really wanted a bear while I was in Alaska.

Erica: Very cool! Were you scared?

Stanzie: Not really.

Erica: Braver than me!

Stanzie: I went with my landlord so I wasn't alone.

Erica: That's good. How long were you in Alaska? Did you track the bear first?

Stanzie: I was there a big over two years, and no, we were on the beach and the bear came to us.

Erica: Lucky!

Stanzie: There are a lot of bears there!

Erica: Interesting! Well, a lot of the members of Redeemer haven't had much of a chance to get to know you yet. What would you like them to know about your that we haven't already talked about?

Stanzie: I'm not sure. I know I am very blessed to be able to be a member of such a nice church, and one that stands behind its doctrine and defends the Bible as the unerring Word of God.

Erica: Very much so. It's something we don't dare take for granted. It's so wonderful to have you in our midst!

Stanzie: Thanks! I am very grateful God has led me here!

Alpha Pregnancy Center Needs Help

Alpha Pregnancy Center in Phoenix is a pro-life resource center for women in crisis pregnancies, and gives these women the support they need in order to encourage them to deliver their babies alive. The center is supported by the WELS and ELS churches in Valley, including ours, which periodically send donated items to be given to the moms and their babies. But more supplies are needed, and the center has reached out to us for help.

Among the items needed are newborn diapers especially, but up to size 4, and baby wipes which can be purchased at the Dollar Store. (Unscented, please.) They could also use baby blankets, clothing, baby food and formula, bottles, and anything else you might be able to spare. Donated items qualify for a tax deduction, for which documentation can be provided if you would like.

Whatever you can gather to donate, please bring it to the church and set it on the table in the fellowship hall that has baby items already on it. If you want to make a monetary donation, talk to Carole Clingan or Lori Wendt about the best way to do that. The center is also in need of volunteers to help out at the center, itself, in Phoenix. It's not open everyday, but on the days it is open, they could use some help. Please consider donating your time to this endeavor, as well.

It is important to support pro-life outreaches like Alpha, with so many women being or feeling pressured into abortion, and with so many so-called pregnancy crisis centers pushing abortion so they can earn more money off of those women who walk through their doors. Alpha encourages life with the help of prayer, and does what it can to help these women see the wonderful value of every human life, and then supports them as best the can with donated items so they know they aren't alone even after the babies are born. And what makes it more desirable to these women, also, is that it is a non-profit, so they aren't

being pressured into doing something that is in the best interest of the center instead of their own. What a wonderful testament to our faith when we support such a good and needed outreach!

Devotion: "Redemption"



"In Jesus, we have redemption through His blood, the Forgiveness of sins." Ephesians 1:7

According to the Scriptures, we call the Lord Jesus our Redeemer. Just what do we mean by that?

A redeemer is someone who buys back. A redeemer is someone who

makes a purchase. Imagine a man gathering merchandise at the Home Improvement store. The cashier rings everything up, and it comes to a thousand dollars.

With \$500, he has not purchased it. With \$750, he has not purchased it. Not even with \$999.99. But if he lays out ten one hundred dollar bills, it's finally bought and paid for.

That means two things. First, there's nothing left to pay, not by anyone. No one owes a dime for it. Second, the man who bought it gets to take it home with him. That's what we mean by calling Jesus our Redeemer.

We belonged to God as His own special creation. But we fell into sin. Sin brought death, and death would have ended in hell. We could never pay the price of our own redemption -- we were impoverished by our sin. We had nothing to give.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being *justified* (declared not guilty of sin) *freely* (not at any price we pay) *by His grace* (not by what we do), through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." -- Romans 3:23-24. Jesus, with His blood and death on the cross, bought us back!

Many people talk about Jesus in terms like this, calling Him Redeemer, or Savior. What do we mean by all that? The words themselves mean that He paid the full price, with nothing more to pay, ever! And, they mean that He wants to take us home to Himself in heaven.

We could refuse to go along. But why? This world and everything in it -- even our own lives passes away. But in Jesus, there is redemption, and power that changes lives. Come hear more about it!

<i>Redeemer Lutheran Church</i>				<i>August</i>	<i>2016</i>	
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
	1	2	3	4 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	5 Bible Study on hiatus until September 2	6
7 Pentecost 12 9 a.m. DS 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	8 7 p.m. Church Council meeting at Muth residence	9	10	11 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	12	13
14 Pentecost 13 9 a.m. SW w/Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. SS/AC	15	16	17	18 7 p.m. Internet Study Group	19	20
21 Pentecost 14 9 a.m. DS Ladies Guild after the service 10:30 a.m. SS/AC Elders after AC (rescheduled from Aug. 23)	22	23	24	25 Internet Study Group canceled	26	27
28 Pentecost 15 9 a.m. SW w/Spoken Communion 10:30 a.m. SS/AC (Guest Pastor: Rev. Allen Schroeder)	29	30	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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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.