

The Valley Evangel

Serving the Members and Friends of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale and Sun of Righteousness Lutheran Mission in Queen Creek

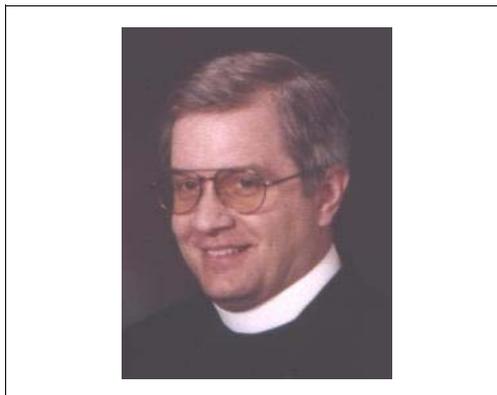


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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas? Yes, Merry Christmas! According to the historic church year which we follow, the Christmas season continues until January 5. That's why the well-known English holiday carol speaks of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Christmas is a season, not just a day.



Pastor David Jay Webber

The reason why it might seem strange for someone to wish you a Merry Christmas after December 25th, is because of the way in which the forces of commercial advertising have largely hijacked and redefined the concept of a Christmas season in our society. The season of Advent – which is supposed to be a time of reflective preparation – has been effectively eliminated from our cultural consciousness, and has been replaced by a new kind of Christmas season: a season

for hyped-up selling and buying. In the past, this commercialized version of a Christmas season tended to kick in after Thanksgiving. I noticed this year, though, that the Christmas "stuff" in various stores was brought out already on the day after Halloween. So, Thanksgiving is now also being gobbled up by this marketing frenzy.

(Continued on page 3)

WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY TIMES

Scottsdale:

Sunday Divine Service: 9:00 a.m.
Refreshments after the Service
Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday "Bible & Theology" Study Group: 7:00 p.m.
Loughran home in Scottsdale

Queen Creek:

Sunday Divine Service: 4:00 p.m.
Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 5:15 p.m.

Thursday Bible Study: 10:00 a.m.
Calvin home in Scottsdale

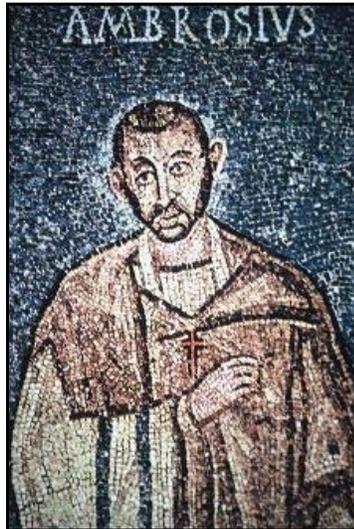
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St. Ambrose on the Incarnation

“**A**nd it came to pass, that, when they were there, her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” [Saint Luke 2:6-7]. Saint Luke briefly sets forth how, at what time, and in what place Christ was born according to the flesh. But, indeed, if you ask about His Heavenly Origin, read the Gospel of Saint John, who begins from the Heavenly and descends to the earthly. There, you will find when He was, and how He was, and what He was; what He had made, what He did; where He was, and whither He came; how He came, when He came, and why He came. It says, “In the beginning was the Word” [Saint John 1:1]; you have when He was; “And the Word was with God” [Saint John 1:1]; you have how He was. You have also what He was: “And,” it says, “the Word was God” [Saint John 1:1]; what He had made: “All things were made by Him” [Saint John 1:3]; what He did: “That was the True Light, which enlightens every man who comes into this world” [Saint John 1:9]; and where He was: “He was in this world” [Saint John 1:10]; whither He came: “He came unto His Own” [Saint John 1:11]; how He came: “The Word was made flesh” [Saint John 1:14]. John bears witness of Him when He came, saying, “This is He of Whom I said,

‘He Who comes after me became before me: because He was before me’” [Saint John 1:30]. John himself testifies why He came: “Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who takes away the sin of the world” [Saint John 1:29].



If, then, we...perceive the cause wherefore He came, so that assuming the sins of the dying world He took the ruin of sin and the death of all upon Himself [cf II Saint Timothy 1:10], Who could not be overcome, it is consequent that now, also, Saint Luke the Evangelist teaches us and shows us the ways of the Lord growing according to the flesh. ... He was a Baby, He was a Child, so that you may be a perfect man; He was wrapped in swaddling clothes, that you may be loosed from the snares of death [cf Psalm 17:5]; He was in a manger, so that you may be in the Altar; He was on earth, that you may be in the stars. He had no other place in the inn, so that you may have many mansions in the Heavens [cf Saint John 14:2; Ephesians 2:6]. “He,” it says, “being rich, became poor for your sakes, that through His poverty you might be rich” [II Corinthians 8:9]. Therefore, His poverty is my inheritance, and the Lord’s weakness is my virtue. He chose to lack for Himself, that He may abound for all. The sobs of that squalling Infancy cleanse me, those tears wash away my sins. (St. Ambrose of Milan, *Exposition of the Holy Gospel According to Saint Luke*, translated by Theodosia Tomkinson [Etna, Calif.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2003], pp. 59-61)

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

(Continued from page 1)

Can we do anything about it? No, we cannot – except to ignore it as much as we can. But one way to respond to the secular society's distorted understanding of Christmas could be deliberately to celebrate Christmas – and the Christmas season – according to the Christian church year, and not according to the secular marketing year. Worldlings think that Christmas is over on December 25. But we've got a secret that we're not going to let them in on: The real Christmas is actually just beginning on that day! So, as Christians, we can continue our celebration of the Savior's birth – without the distractions of commercialism – for eleven more unencumbered days of spiritual and religious rejoicing.



Albrecht Durer
The Adoration of the Magi

Practically speaking, here's what you can do: Keep your Christmas tree up until January 5, keep your Christmas decorations out, and keep your Christmas lights lit. Play Christmas music at home and in your car throughout the twelve days of the season. And wish a Merry Christmas to the people you see. If they give you a puzzled look, then

that would be a great opportunity to share with them the fact that Christmas is a season, not a day, and that it is a season following the festival, not preceding it.

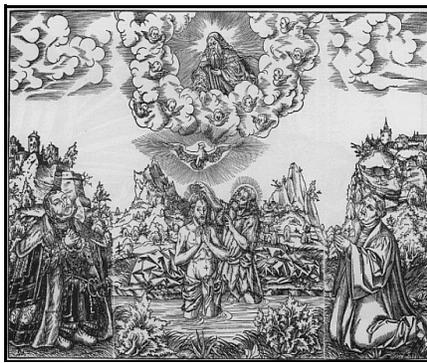
And it would be a great opportunity to remind them of the true meaning of Christmas: God's gift of his Son for the salvation of the world. This is a gift that is actually to be celebrated all year round – indeed for a lifetime and into eternity – and not just for a day or a season. But at the very least, we can explicitly celebrate this wonderful gift in a uniquely Christian way, during a uniquely Christian period of time.

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5, ESV). Merry Christmas!

Pastor Webber

The Baptism of Christ

He (John the Baptist) traveled up and down the banks of the Jordan, faithfully pursuing his office and preaching from place to place that the people should pay heed to the presence of the Savior, of whom the Scriptures and the dear prophets had prophesied. The time was now at hand, he declared, as he exhorted them to open eyes and ears. This was the burden of his message to the people: to make ready to receive Him. However, he was not acquainted with the person of Christ until He who had ordained him into the ministry informed him: “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He” (John 1:33); later these words were confirmed with deeds...



The Baptism of Christ

...At that time John supposed that Christ would necessarily be extraordinary and remarkable in His outward appearance; he surmised that one day Christ would come to him for Baptism. But when John beheld the heaven opening over the Baptism of

Christ, heard the voice of the Father, and saw the Holy Spirit descend in the form of a dove—when he witnessed this magnificent spectacle, then John was convinced that this was the Messiah. And John was seized with a sense of deep humility, awe, and reverence, thinking: “Lo, did I baptize Him over whom the heavens open?” This prompted him to exclaim: “Indeed, I should be baptized by You, whereas You ask me to baptize You.” Therefore the Lord replied: “Let it be so now” (Matt. 3:15); then He stepped out of the water and went about His mission....

...Behold, the Lamb of God! This is an excellent and splendid testimony of John regarding the introduction of the new rule and kingdom of Christ. It is a powerful statement. The words are clear and lucid; they tell us what one should think of Christ.

Martin Luther—Luther's Works, Volume 22, Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, © 1957 Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
JANUARY 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 No Study Group Today	3 No Bible Study Today	4	5
6 Divine Service 9:00am Service (S) 10:20 am Brief Congregational Forum (S) 10:45am Dedicatory Piano Recital (S) 5:15pm)Sunday School/Adult Bible Class (Q) 4:00pm Service (Q)	7	8 7:00pm Voter's Meeting	9 7:00 pm Bible and Theology Study Group at Loughran residence	10 Bible Study 10am at the Calvin residence	11	12
13 Service of the Word 9:00am Service (S) -Ladies Guild after the morning service 10:30 am (S)/5:15pm (Q) Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 4:00pm Service (Q)	14	15 7:00pm "Illuminated Manuscripts" Exhibition at Phoenix Art Museum. See footnote 1	16 7:00 pm Bible and Theology Study Group at Loughran residence	17 Bible Study 10am at the Calvin residence	18	19
20 Divine Service 9:00am Service (S) 10:30 am (S)/5:15pm (Q) Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 4:00pm Service (Q)	21	22	23 7:00 pm Bible and Theology Study Group at Loughran residence	24 No Bible Study Today	25	26
27 Service of the Word 9:00am Service (S) 10:30 am (S) /5:15pm (Q) Sunday School/Adult Bible Class Elders Meeting following Adult Bible Class (S) 4:00pm Service (Q)	28	29	30 7:00 pm Bible and Theology Study Group at Loughran residence	31 Bible Study 10am at the Calvin residence	<i>Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29</i>	

(S) = Scottsdale (Refreshments in Scottsdale immediately follow the morning Service) (Q) = Queen Creek

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

Footnote 1—Outing at Phoenix Art Museum (1625 N. Central Ave, Phoenix) to view the "Illuminated Manuscripts" exhibition and to hear an historical presentation by Dr. Paul Wegner. This will be followed by a gathering at the Pastor's residence (7701E. Osborn Rd, #4W, Scottsdale) for refreshments and dessert.

A New Year in the Lord

The New Year is a great time for a fresh start, isn't it. So we make a resolution – maybe a whole list of them. One of the reasons for making New Year's resolutions may be to deal with last year's mistakes. But, as we know all too well, New Year's resolutions are so hard to keep because old habits are so hard to break!

The reason old habits are so hard to break is because so often we deal with the symptoms rather than the root problem. And the root problem is sin in our lives – it is disobedience toward the God who created us and gave us life to honor Him. Until we deal with our relationship with God, our lives will not have the richness God intended for us to experience.

The even harsher reality, though, is this: while many people have come to this same conclusion, they all have experienced only frustration and uncertainty trying to fix this problem on their own.



2,000 years ago a Jew named John – called “the Baptist” – pointed people to One who claimed He could deal with this harshest of human realities by Himself becoming our Substitute before God. This was Jesus that John pointed the people to; and he called Him “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” What John meant was that Jesus, the Son of God, would be everything we could never be, and do everything we could never do. So that you and I might have forgiveness and peace with God, and the power to deal with sin and its affect on our lives.

One suggestion for a New Year's resolution: Get to know Jesus better through His Word, the Bible, and His people. And may you have a Happy New Year in Jesus!

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29

Produced by the ELS Board for Evangelism

Announcements

Golf Outing March 1, 2008

A golf outing is being planned for those that are interested. We have reserved a Tee Time at Bellair Golf Club in Glendale with a starting time of 10:30am. The club is located at 17233 N. 45th Ave. in Glendale.

Cost will be \$33.00 per person. Golf cart is included. The range is 18 holes with a par of 59. There is also a practice range available with a bucket of range balls costing \$5.00 (large) or \$3.50 (small). Two putting greens are also available.

For more information contact John Colville by email, with the subject line “Golf”. He needs to have your confirmation by January 15 to let Bellair Golf Club know how many will be playing.

jmcolville@qwest.net

Dedicatory Piano Recital, January 6

Redeemer Lutheran Church is grateful for the donation of a piano by Ronald & Joyce Brown of Scottsdale. This instrument will enhance the accompaniment and performance components of our congregation's worship. We did already begin using the piano in the Christmas Eve service, but it will be formally dedicated in a recital on Sunday, January 6, beginning at approximately 10:45 a.m.

The featured pianist will be Miss Ruth Gullixson of Madison, Wisconsin, a Bethany Lutheran College music student who will be visiting at that time. Our church's own musicians – Carol Webber and Cheryl Hartigan – will also contribute musical offerings to this program. Please worship with us that day – which happens to be the festival of the Epiphany of our Lord – and then remain after the service for this special event!

Redeemer Lutheran Church

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Sun of Righteousness Mission
Meeting in the "Multi-Purpose"
Room at Frances Brandon-Pickett
Elementary School
22076 E. Village Loop Road South
Queen Creek, AZ



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

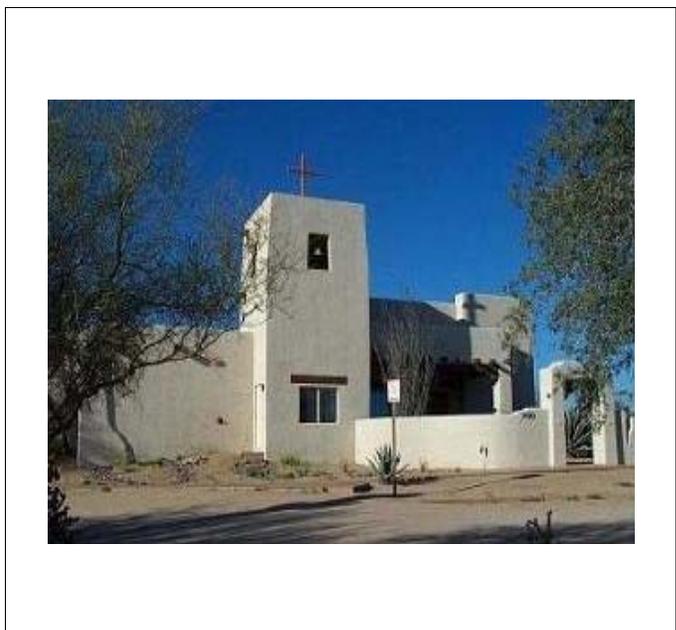
Notice!

Audio recordings of
Pastor Webber's sermons
are posted on the Internet
weekly and are available
through both church
websites above, and
published courtesy of
lutheransource.net



ABOUT REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Our mission is to
preach the Word of
God, both Law and
Gospel, faithfully in
accordance with the
Holy Scriptures and
the Confessions of
the Evangelical Lu-
theran Church; cor-
rectly 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.*



Redeemer Lutheran Church