

The Valley Evangel

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

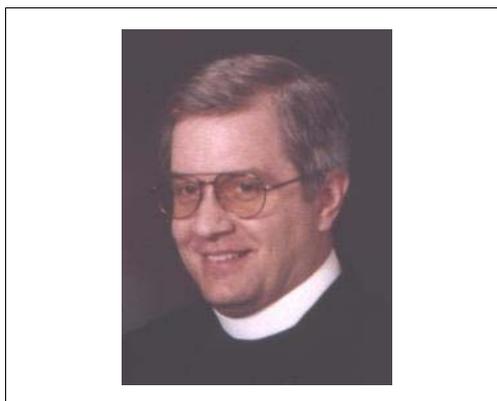


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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in Jerusalem with power and visible manifestations. We read in the Book of Acts: "And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:2-4, ESV). We might think that if such extraordinary things were happening among us, it would draw people to our church in large numbers. Christians often do wish for this sort of thing to happen today as evidence of the Lord's presence among them, and they may doubt that his saving power is available to them in a particular



Pastor David Jay Webber

church if these "Pentecostal" phenomena are not at work there.

But what was the actual result of these extraordinary events among the people who witnessed them in Jerusalem? Did they, as a result of the tongues and the flames of fire, immediately turn to the Lord and believe in him? Actually, the Book of Acts tells us that the direct

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WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY TIMES

Scottsdale:

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

Queen Creek:

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

Wednesday "Bible & Theology" Study Group: 7:00 p.m.

(Call or e-mail for directions)

Thursday Bible Study: 10:00 a.m.

Calvin home in Scottsdale
(Call or e-mail for directions)

Some weekday classes are canceled this month. See calendar for exact dates.

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Out of the Mouths of Babes

From Martin Luther's "Selected Psalms I"

In order to ordain this strength, He (Christ) degrades Himself so profoundly and becomes a man, yes, even degrades Himself below all men, as it is written in Psalm 22:6: "I am a worm and no man; scorned by men, and despised by the people." Therefore He goes about in poverty, as He Himself says, Matthew 8:20: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." In such physical weakness and poverty He attacks the enemy, lets Himself be put on the cross and killed, and by His cross and death He destroys the enemy and the avenger, as St. Paul says, Colossians 2:15: "He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in Him."



MARTIN LUTHER

Afterwards, when He has risen again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and wants to ordain strength through the mouths of men, He sends His Apostles and disciples, simple and ordinary people. He Himself calls them sheep, Matthew 10:16: "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves." And the Gospel testifies throughout that the Lord's disciples always acted like mere children—when the Lord said "Over here," they understood "Over there." Therefore they were really sheep. Now, it is a very silly and foolish beginning—and all reason will judge this way—to send such simple, unintelligent men against such smart, highly intelligent spirits and to pit the weakest on earth against the powerful lords of the world and the mightiest spirits under heaven. Why not use the mightiest angels in heaven, for example, the angel Gabriel with his angels? He is the field marshal and carries the sword, from which he has the name "Gabriel," that is, God's might or power. Yet He does not do this, but takes poor, simple fishermen and commands them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). "Open up your mouths wide," He says, "and preach boldly, so that it resounds before all creatures." He arms them also with comfort and joy. "The devil," He says, "will press you hard with his retinue

and will kill you. But do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell," Matthew 10:28. So He begins His strength and His kingdom; He could not do it more foolishly before the world. For all reason must say it is a foolish thing to battle against the devil and all the gates of hell with something so tiny and weak.

So this is what David says here: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength." "Thou hast established a kingdom," he says, "which is full of might and strength against sin, death, and devil. Such a kingdom hast Thou established—not out of the world's wisdom, cleverness, cunning, power, or might; but out of the mouths of simple, plain, weak people, who are regarded as the least, as given over to death, 1 Corinthians 4:10 if." But is it not a wondrous thing that the mouths of such people should ordain such great and outstanding strength? On Pentecost Peter stands up in Jerusalem, fears neither Annas nor Caiaphas nor the whole Sanhedrin, opens his mouth, strikes at the devil's kingdom, and with one sermon converts three thousand souls from the devil's kingdom to Christ. The other Apostles likewise turn on such power with their mouth and word that by it the synagog and the Jewish kingdom are run into the ground. Then they come to Rome, attack the highest power on earth, rebuke its paganism and idolatry, and with their mouths erect a power that no one can resist. They disperse further into the world, with the Word they storm the devil's kingdom, they plant and build Christ's church. Thus there comes the power which neither emperor nor king, neither princes nor potentates can resist. They oppose and fearfully abuse the Apostles and Christians, but to no avail. The power from the mouths of babes and sucklings slashes through and obtains the victory. Emperors, kings, and the potentates of the earth must hang their heads and confess that they cannot defend themselves against it.

Martin Luther: *Luther's Works Vol. 12: Selected Psalms I*, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, ©1955

So this is what David says here: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength."

Psalm 8:2

On Pentecost Peter stands up in Jerusalem, fears neither Annas nor Caiaphas nor the whole Sanhedrin, opens his mouth, strikes at the devil's kingdom, and with one sermon converts three thousand souls from the devil's kingdom to Christ.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

(Continued from page 1)

result of these experiences was confusion on the part of some, and derision on the part of others! "And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished... And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others mocking said, 'They are filled with new wine'" (Acts 2:6-7, 12-13).

The extraordinary experiences of tongues and flames of fire did indeed get everyone's attention, but they did not leave the people with an enduring spiritual blessing. These phenomena did not, in themselves, result in repentance and faith.

But thousands of people did turn away from their sins and put their trust in Jesus that day. This was the true miracle of Pentecost. And this happened when St. Peter preached a Scripturally-based, Christ-centered, law-Gospel sermon. The crowd responded to the sermon in the following way: "Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.' ... So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:37-39, 41).

In repentance they received the divine message that Peter had preached to them, and in repentance they received the sacrament of Holy Baptism as Christ had instituted it. And in receiving the Word and Sacrament of Christ, they received Christ himself, and all the blessings of Christ. The Holy Spirit created faith in their hearts, and forgave their sins. That, my friends, was a true miracle! And this miracle is still taking place, in churches where God's Word is faithfully proclaimed and where his Sacraments are correctly administered.

The extraordinary events that took place on Pentecost – the tongues and the flames of fire – have never been common occurrences in the church, not even in the generation of the apostles. And there is really no reason to wish that they would be, or to seek out a church that claims that these things are happening in its midst. But there is a reason to be thankful for the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, and to seek out a church where this is taking place in a way that is in harmony with the Lord's will. The blessings that really mattered on the day of Pentecost were distributed to the people through these means. And these truly miraculous blessings – the creation and strengthening of faith, the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit – are distributed to us today also through these means. The power of Pentecost is real, and it is available to us. That power is the power that is at work in us through the Gospel and Sacraments of Christ!

– Pastor Webber

The extraordinary experiences of tongues and flames of fire did indeed get everyone's attention, but they did not leave the people with an enduring spiritual blessing. These phenomena did not, in themselves, result in repentance and faith.

WHY I AM A MEMBER OF REDEEMER

BY JULIE MARTINEZ

If you have read my articles in the February and March newsletters, you may be wondering by now, “Who is this person, and why don’t I ever see her in church?”

As I outlined in my previous articles, I am a convert from Judaism, who became a Christian in 2001, and, by my baptism, became a member of Our Savior Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), in my home town of Pagosa Springs, Colorado. While I still live in Colorado, I am now a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, Arizona. How this came about is a long story, which I will try to summarize as best I can in this short article.

December 16, 2001 was a day I will always remember. First, it was the day I was baptized. Immediately following that blessed experience, Our Savior held a voter’s meeting, in which it voted to file formal charges against Rev. David Benke, a pastor and President of the LCMS Atlantic District. The charges were to be filed for his willing participation in the “Prayer for America” worship service held at Yankee Stadium in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States. Rev. Benke sat on the dais with all the other representative clergy, and heard prayers offered by Muslims, Jews, Hindus and those representing many other religions. He then

stood up, asked everyone present to hold hands, and then stated that all present were stronger now than they had been two hours previously, presumably due to all the prayers to false gods that had occurred in the previous two hours. He then proceeded to pray, naming Jesus as “a son”. His prayer was essentially no different than the prayers of all those who had gone before him, and as those other prayers did, led one to draw the conclusion that Christ is just one of many paths to God.

Confessional people in the LCMS were stunned! What Rev. Benke did was participate in syncretistic worship, in which he tacitly acknowledged that the gods of other faiths as equally valid as the One True and Triune God, and thereby was in violation of the first commandment, which reads, “You shall have no other gods before my face”. (Ex. 2:3) This kind of activity is strictly forbidden Scriptures, and also by the LCMS, as well it should be.

The charges filed by our church, as well as several others, was to bring Rev. Benke to repentance for this public sin. Yet, this did not happen, and the President of the LCMS, Rev. Gerald Kieschnick, not only failed to pursue charges, but condoned Rev. Benke’s actions.

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Confessional Lutherans believe that the Bible is inspired by God (both Old and New Testaments), and that there is an “absolute truth” and a consequent rejection of the pluralism rampant in our Post-Modern culture.

Redeemer News

The Easter Brunch at Redeemer was a big success. Many people stayed for the meal, and enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship. We thank the Ladies’ Guild for sponsoring this.

The Wendt family became official members at Redeemer on April 22. A hearty welcome to Matt, Lori, Joshua, and Johanna!

Bethany Lutheran Church in Princeton, Minnesota, has sent a generous donation for the support of Sun of Righteousness Lutheran Mission in Queen Creek. We greatly appreciate their gift, and their interest in our work in that community.

WHY I AM A MEMBER OF REDEEMER

(Continued from page 4)

This defining event, although it happened before I was even baptized, greatly influenced my entire experience in the LCMS. While there remain many solidly confessional men and women in the LCMS, that Synod also is seriously split over the direction in which the currently leadership is tragically taking it, away from the Scriptural and Confessional understandings of what it should be. We see this in the Church Growth models (based more on marketing a product than on the Scriptures), which many churches now practice, bringing with it a non-liturgical worship where the law and gospel is not clearly proclaimed, and other unscriptural practices.

As I wrote in my second article, Confessional Lutherans believe that the Bible is inspired by God (both Old and New Testaments), and that there is an “absolute truth” and a consequent rejection of the pluralism rampant in our Post-Modern culture. Post-Modern thought essentially tells us that there is no such thing as objective truth, and that truth is dependent upon the subjective perceptions of each individual. Therefore, no truth is more valid than any other truth, and indeed, there is really no such thing as “absolute truth” at all! In fact, then, all paths to God are equally valid in the eyes of our culture today. “Diversity” is celebrated, while those who have the audacity to state that there is one, absolute truth, and that that truth can be found in the Word of God, the Scriptures, are vilified.

One of the most frustrating experiences for me after I was brought to faith in Jesus Christ was when I would try to discuss it with some of my Jewish friends. For the most part, instead of remonstrations, I received an attitude exemplified in this statement, “Well, whatever works for you is OK with me. I’m happy that you found something that gives you peace and brings you closer to God.” Those who responded this way, of course,

missed the entire point, that Jesus is the only way to God, as we are told in John 14:5, and in fact, IS God.

Pagosa Springs is growing, but it is still a small town. Without a local hospital, it is not easy for a nurse such as myself to make a living. Yet I love the town, the people, and the mountains, and I desire and intend to continue living here. The tradeoff is that I often have to work for a time in nearby towns or even nearby states in order to make a living. Therefore, in 2005, I decided to accept a 13-week contract nursing position in Prescott, Arizona. During that time, I searched for a confessional Lutheran Church to attend. I was looking for a church that was liturgical, that understood and practiced closed communion, and one where the law and gospel were preached. That search was somewhat unsuccessful at first, but it eventually led me to Redeemer Lutheran in Scottsdale, where I found a solidly confessional congregation that not only welcomed me, but practiced all the things that are important to the faith as I mentioned above, and where the Scriptures and Confessions take precedence over Post-Modernism and its ills.

After a few discussions with Pastor Madson, other members of the congregation, and several conversations with Pastor Webber when he arrived, I knew I was “home” in this congregation. I became a member by profession of faith in 2006. I still live in Pagosa Springs, which means that I have a 500 mile one-way commute to church. While I cannot possibly come every week, my membership at Redeemer is treasured. I am able to listen to Pastor Webber’s sermons on the internet every week, and he is always available by telephone should I need pastoral care. When I am here in person, I am overwhelmed with the unity we share in our common faith, and through the shared forgiveness and love we find here in our Confessional Word and Sacrament ministry.

- Julie Martinez

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REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
MAY 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Pastor away at West Coast Pastoral Conference	2 Pastor away at West Coast Pastoral Conference	3 Pastor away at West Coast Pastoral Conference	4 Pastor away at West Coast Pastoral Conference	5
6 Divine Service 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Service (S) 10:15am Ladies Guild 10:30am Sunday School/Adult Bible Class ((S) 4:00pm Service (Q) 5:15pm Bible Class (Q)	7	8 7:00pm Church Council	9 7:00 Bible and Theology Study Group at Loughran Home	10 10:00am Bible Study Calvin Home	11	12
13 Service of the Word 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Service (S) 10:30am Sunday School/Adult Bible Class (S) 4:00pm Service (Q) 5:15pm Bible Class (Q)	14	15	16 7:00 Bible and Theology Study Group at Loughran Home	17 10:00am Bible Study Calvin Home	18	19
20 Divine Service 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Service (S) 10:30am Sunday School/Adult Bible Class ((S) 4:00pm Service (Q) 5:15pm Bible Class (Q)	21	22	23 7:00 Bible and Theology Study Group at Loughran Home	24 Pastor and family on vacation	25 Pastor and family on vacation	26 Pastor and family on vacation
27 Service of the Word 9:00am Service (S) 10:30am Sunday School/Adult Bible Class (S) 11:30am Elders Meeting 4:00pm Service (Q) 5:15pm Bible Class (Q)	28 Pastor and family on vacation	29 Pastor and family on vacation	30 Pastor and family on vacation	31 Pastor and family on vacation		

(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

Sunday Services Notes: May 6—Rev. William Herrmann serving in Queen Creek, Pastor Webber in Scottsdale

May 13—Public Examination of Catechumens during service in Scottsdale

May 20—Divine Service with Confirmation in Scottsdale

May 27—Rev. Victor Prange serving in Scottsdale, Rev. William Herrmann serving in Queen Creek

God's Prescription to Make You Well!

Let's say there is a woman who is very sick. She is so sick that she cannot even get herself to her doctor. The doctor comes to her, and, after a careful examination, writes a prescription. Does that make her well? Not yet! Someone must fill the prescription for her—and thankfully—someone does. Does *that* make her well? Not yet! The woman must actually take the medicine to get well!

We sinners are saved like this. We are so sinful—completely infected—that we have no strength to get ourselves to God. God, the Great Physician, came to us—first with a diagnosis, then with a prescription. By his Commandments, such as, **“You shall have no other gods”; “You shall not use my name in vain”; “Honor your father and mother”; “Do not commit adultery”; “Do not steal”;** He gives us a diagnosis, which honestly, is very difficult for us to swallow: we all have sinned and are doomed to hell! But like the doctor who visited the sick woman, God filled a prescription to heal us from sin and save us eternally! He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die in order to forgive our sins, and then rise again to bring us eternal life!

Okay. But like the woman, we too have to *take the medicine* in order to be healed; we need to believe in Jesus as our Savior! How can we bring ourselves to believe? We can't.



That's in God's hand too, God the Holy Spirit! The Apostle Peter once told his countryman, the Jews, **“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”**

What is the gift of the Holy Spirit? Peter is talking about the *most important* gift of Holy Spirit: the Holy Spirit gives us faith to believe in Jesus, and He gives it through baptism! This truth Peter learned from Jesus himself! As Jesus says, **“No one can enter the kingdom of God unless He has been born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5)!** And also, **“He who believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).**

Pentecost comes up later this month, and it is the Christian celebration of the Holy Spirit. Let's use the opportunity to learn more about the Holy Spirit's gift of faith to us through baptism and thank him for it!

“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” — Acts 2:38

Produced by the ELS Board of Evangelism

Looking Ahead

On May 6 and 27 Pastor William Herrmann of Heritage Lutheran Church in Gilbert will serve as the guest preacher, worship leader, and Bible Class teacher at Sun of Righteousness Lutheran Mission. We have always appreciated his unwavering support and encouragement in our work in Queen Creek.

On May 27 Pastor Victor Prange of Tucson will serve as the guest preacher, worship leader, and Bible Class teacher at Redeemer. Before his retirement in 1998, Pastor Prange served for 40 years as the Pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Janesville, Wisconsin. He also served for several years on the WELS Commission on Worship.

On May 20 Daniel Kissinger and Catharine Webber will be received as communicant members of Redeemer through

the Rite of Confirmation. Daniel is the son of John and Sarah Kissinger. Catharine is the daughter of Pastor Jay and Carol Webber. We wish them the Lord's richest blessings as they publicly confess their faith in him, and as they meet him at his altar in their participation in his Holy Supper. (A public examination of Daniel and Catharine will take place during the service on May 13.)

Pastor Webber will be attending the ELS West Coast Pastoral Conference in Medford, Oregon, May 1 through 4, and he and his family will be on vacation in Michigan May 24 through June 1. Anyone in need of pastoral care during the Pastor's absences is invited to call Pastor Arlyn Schmeling (Sun City) at 623-875-6110, or Pastor Andrew Retberg (Scottsdale) at 480-459-0881, or Pastor William Herrmann (Gilbert) at 480-855-3619.

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