

# 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

### LUTHER'S LEGACY TO CHRISTIANITY

*This month we celebrate Reformation Day. In honor of Dr. Martin Luther, we read in this month's "From the Pastor's Desk" column an article written about Dr. Luther by Dr. Hermann Sasse, one of the great Lutheran theologians.*

In the early morning hours of the 18th of February, 1546, on a cold winter's night in Eisleben, Martin Luther closed his eyes for ever. "I won't live to see Easter" he had said on his sixty-third birthday. Concerned for his life, his friends and relatives saw him undertake, toward the end of January, the last journey of his life. Accompanied by his sons and Justus Jonas, he traveled to the city of his birth where he was to mediate a quarrel between the brothers who were the Counts of Mansfeld. The letters which he wrote to his "gracious dear lady of the house" during this journey, are the most stirringly human testimony to his mature, and yet childlike faith. "I fear that were you to cease your concern, the earth might finally swallow us up and destroy every-

thing. Are you also studying the Catechism and the Creed? Pray and let God worry. For you and I are not commanded to worry for me or you. It says: 'Cast your anxiety upon Him, for He cares for you', Ps. 55 and many other texts." He wrote this on the 10th of February. Four days later he preached his last sermon. On the 16th and 17th the agreement between the counts was signed and his task of peace-making was finished. Luther no longer took part in the negotiations on the last day and remained in his room. Toward evening he complained of chest pains, which then passed and returned and worsened. Toward 10:00 in the evening, after he had rested, he went to his bedroom. He took leave of his company with the words, "Pray for our Lord God and His Gospel, that things go well with Him. For the Council at Trent and the miserable Pope have a terrible grudge against Him." Toward 1:00 am he awoke short of breath and raised his voice: "Oh, Lord God, I'm in so much pain! Oh, dear Doctor Jonas, it

*(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.

**Queen Creek:**

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

**Wednesday "Bible & Theology"**

**Study Group: 7:00 p.m.**  
Loughran home in Scottsdale

**Thursday Bible Study: 10:00 a.m.**

Calvin home in Scottsdale

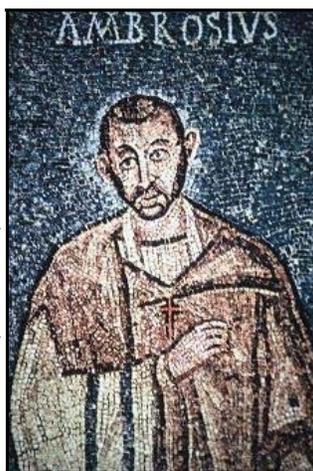
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## St. Ambrose of Milan

Excerpt from Letter 73 to Irenaeus

Now, that there is a natural Law written in our hearts the Apostle [Paul]...teaches us, when he writes that, for the most part, “the Gentiles, which do not have the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, and, though they have not read the Law, still have the works of the Law written in their hearts” [Romans 2:14-15]. ... Adam broke this Law. ... Thus by his disobedience he incurred guilt, and through arrogance fell into transgression. ... Had he not thus violated his allegiance, but been obedient to the commands of heaven, he would have preserved to his posterity the prerogative of nature and the innocence which he possessed at his birth. Therefore, as by [Adam’s] disobedience the authority of the Law of Nature was corrupted and blotted out, the written law was found necessary. ...



The [written] Law, then, was published, first, to take away all excuse, lest man should say, “I did not know sin, because I received no rule what to avoid.” And next, that “all the world might become guilty before God” by the recognition of sin [Romans 3:19]. For it made all subject. ... Hence, too, the Lord [Jesus] came in obedience that He might loose the knot of disobedience and of man’s transgression. ... This is why the Apostle also says, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” [Romans 5:19]. ... Now the world becomes guilty before God by the Law,

in that all are made liable to its prescripts, but no man is justified by its works. ... By the Law comes the knowledge of sin, but not the remission of guilt. ...

But when the Lord Jesus came, He forgave all men that sin which none could escape, and “blotted out the handwriting against us” by the shedding of His own Blood [Colossians 2:14]. This, then, is the Apostle’s meaning: sin abounded by the Law, but grace abounded by Jesus; for after the whole world became guilty, He took away the sin of the whole world, as John bore witness, saying: “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” [John 1:29]. Therefore let no one glory in works, for by his works no man shall be justified, for he who is just has a free gift, for he is justified by the Bath [of Baptism]. It is faith, then, which delivers by the blood of Christ, for “Blessed is the man to whom sin is remitted, and, pardon granted” [Psalm 32:1].

(St. Ambrose of Milan, Letter 73 [to Irenaeus], *The Letters of S. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan* [Oxford: James Parker and Co., 1881], pp. 433-36 [slightly revised]. This is a volume in the series: *A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of East and West.*)

## Announcements

Plan to attend the Reformation Lecture at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Kingman, AZ (WELS) on October 27, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. This Lecture is co-sponsored by the ELS congregations in Lake Havasu City, and Fort Mohave, AZ.

Pastor Webber will speak on “Worship and Liturgical Reform at the Time of the Lutheran Reformation.” All are invited to this informative lecture. It is guaranteed to be worth the drive! Call Pastor Webber for carpool information or driving directions.

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

*(Continued from page 1)*

appears as though I shall remain here." He still had been able to proceed to his room, and there began his last brief hour. In the presence of his son, his friends and a doctor who had been hastily summoned, at a moment of pause in his struggle with death, he spoke his last prayers, recited to himself Bible passages such as John 3:16, and Psalm 68:21, and answered the question put by Justus Jonas: "Reverend father, will you remain steadfast in Christ and the doctrine which you have preached?" He responded with an audible "Yes!"



Dr. Hermann Sasse

Then his soul passed into the peace of God. But in Eisleben, in the villages and cities through which his remains were carried, and especially in Wittenberg, at this burial in the Castle Church, and the funeral celebration of the University, there was a mourning which was more than the mourning of a people over the loss of one of its great men. Indeed, the man who died while the pope convened in Trent the council for the "eradication of heresy", that is, for the elimination of the Lutheran Reformation, and while the Emperor mobilized the forces of a world power for war against the Evangelical estates, was more than a great German. He was more than a faithful guardian of the souls of his people, a man of whom one gets the impression that through his powerful prayers had averted the catastrophe which for many years had been sweeping toward Germany. As the rediscoverer of the Gospel of the grace of God, he was the Reformer of the Church, and not only the church of one land, rather the entire, the one church of God on earth.

Only he has understood Luther, who understands him as the Reformer of the Church. The legacy which Luther left behind can be properly grasped only by one who realizes that this legacy applies to all of Christendom on earth. For if Luther - as he himself thought and the Evangelical church believes - with his discovery of the saving truth of the justification of the sinner through faith alone, did nothing other than bring the holy gospel to light again, then his discovery has a significance as universal as the Gospel itself. He had expressed this his message one last time in the last lines which we have by his hand, written on a piece of paper on the 16th of February, and found after his death. This last note, written in Latin, speaks of the unfathomable depth of the Bible:

"No one can understand Vergil in his *Bucolics* or *Georgics* unless he has been a shepherd or farmer for five years. No one can understand Cicero in his letters unless he has served in a significant position in government for 20 years. No one can apprehend the Holy Scriptures unless he has governed a congregation for a 100 years with the Prophets." The note concludes with the sentence: "We are beggars: This is true." The words "We are beggars" are written in German for emphasis.

It is as though Luther wanted to say what he had to say one last time; for all, for his contemporaries, those who came after him, for Christianity of all times. "We are beggars! This is true!" This is the fundamental melody which rang out throughout his entire life, doctrine and work. They ring powerfully already in the first words of his lectures on Romans of 1513, where he notes that it is the intent of this letter "to destroy, root-out, and bring to naught all wisdom and righteousness of the flesh, and this to fortify and make sin great." It rings through the hymns of the Reformation: "Even in the best of lives, our deeds are naught", "With our might nothing is done." It resounds in all the work of the Reformer, to the last great controversial writings in which he defends the gospel against its falsification by pope and council. There is only one of the great teachers of the church who possessed the knowledge of human misery, the impotence of man in all spiritual matters, who can be compared to Luther. That is Augustin, the greatest of the church fathers of the old Latin church. He so emphasized the *sola gratia*, "by grace alone" in a time of the migration of nations to the Christianity of the west, that it could never completely forget it. Still today his mighty praise of the redeeming divine grace rings in the Roman Catholic liturgy when in one of the prayers, which is read by the priest in every mass, God is called upon as the "One who does not regard merit, but sends forgiveness." Or when in the burial office is sung in the *dies irae*, "King of fearful majesty, you who deliver freely [umsonst] those who shall be delivered" and implores the Lord Christ:

"You who once absolved Mary  
and pardoned the thief,  
have granted hope also to me."

This *sola gratia*, as it rings yet even in the Roman Church - if only as one note among others - must not be undervalued. As Evangelical [Lutheran] Christians we can only re-

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joyce. This is for us today what it once was for the Reformer, Martin Luther: A promising sign that the church of God is also still present in Roman Christianity. Otherwise how could the Reformation have commenced from a cell in a monastery?

But Luther's understanding goes deeper. He knew that the *sola gratia* must be enlarged by the *sola fide*, that to the "by grace alone" must be added "through faith alone." For the depth of divine grace is understood only when one knows "Even in the best of lives, our deeds are naught." Also in a life led in the peace of the forgiveness of God and in the power of His Holy Spirit, we are never righteous by what we are and do, rather always only through that which Christ is and what He has done for us. When the Apostle, with the deep experience of the effect of the Holy Spirit, describes a life of sanctification in Galatians 2:20, with the words: "I live, and yet not I, rather Christ lives in me," he then continues with, "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Our righteousness before God is never a righteousness which we possess, rather it is, in the proper sense of the word, the righteousness of Christ. What the old Reformation hymn says, which the young Zinzendorf revitalized in his own way, is literally true:

Jesus Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress  
With it before God shall I stand,  
When I heaven shall enter in.

Here the *sola fide* is so clearly and simply expressed that a child can understand it. If a Francis of Assisi, a Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, or whoever else one might name as an example of a sanctified life, were saved, then it was not because of their life or work, rather only for this reason: Because the Lord Christ also died for these poor sinners. "By faith alone", that is "I am nothing, I have nothing, I am capable of nothing; but I have a Savior who is all, has all, and can do all." God has made Him for us "Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption" (I Cor. 1:31). And what Luther wrote in 1516 to his brother in the order, Goerg Spenlein, cries out through his words, "We are beggars: This is true", his last written note, to all of Christianity, as his legacy to every Christian: "Father, my dear brother, learn of Christ, even Christ the Crucified! Learn to sing His praise and despairing of yourself, say to Him: You Lord Jesus, are my righteousness, but I am your sin. You have taken what was in me, and have given to me what I was not." And then comes this bold assertion: "Be careful never to endeavor to obtain such purity, that you

no longer find yourself a sinner, much less desire to be one. Christ dwells only among sinners. This is why he descended from heaven, when He dwelt among the righteous, so also to make His dwelling among sinners. Take note of this His love time and again and you will experience the sweetest consolation... And so only in Him, through having despaired of yourself and your works, will you find peace. Here you will learn from Christ Himself, that He, as He has received you unto Himself, has made your sins His own, and His righteousness your righteousness."

Here we see Luther's understanding of man in its profound correspondence with his understanding of Christ. Luther completely understood the pitiful condition of man, the sin which is "such a profound evil corruption of human nature," "that reason cannot understand it, but it must be believed on the basis of holy Scripture." That we are sinners "Even in the best of lives", and that the "best" Christ is perceived in the daily and rich forgiveness of sins, this human reason cannot grasp, and it will not accept it for true when it hears it spoken. Original sin can be compared to one of those mental illnesses, a sign of which is that the sick person can no longer recognize his illness, and believes he is entirely healthy. Luther understood the profundity of sin because he allowed himself to be instructed on the nature of man, not from the philosophical books, as the medieval man learned from the works of Aristotle, but from the Word of God alone. And for this reason he was also able to understand the office and work of Jesus Christ as no teacher of the church before him. "Christ can not enter into living communion with a sinner." Thus the German edition of St. Thomas Aquinas (vol. 30, p. 528) interprets the statement of Thomas Aquinas, that the man in the condition of mortal sin can not be united with Christ and thus must not receive the Sacrament of the Altar (Summa Theol. III, 79.3). Luther asserted the very opposite: "Christ dwells only with sinners." For the sinner and for the sinner alone is His table set. There we receive His true body and His true blood "for the forgiveness of sins" and this holds true even if forgiveness has already been received in Absolution. That here Scripture is completely on the side of Luther needs no further demonstration. Every page of the New Testament is indeed testimony of the Christ whose proper office it is "to save sinners", "to seek and to save the lost". And the entire saving work of Jesus, from the days when He was in Galilee and, to the amazement and alarm of the Pharisees, ate with tax collectors and sinners; to the moment when he, in contradiction with the principles of every rational morality, promised paradise to the thief on the cross, yes, His entire life on earth, from the cradle to the cross, is one, unique grand demonstration of

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**REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**OCTOBER 2007**

<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Pastor at ELS Pastor's Conference	<b>3</b> Pastor at ELS Pastor's Conference  Study Group Canceled	<b>4</b> Pastor at ELS Pastor's Conference  Study Group Canceled	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7 Divine Service</b> 9:00am Service (S) 10:30 am Congregational Forum (S) 10:45 am (S)/5:15pm (Q) Sunday School/Adult Bible Class (Mormonism) 4:00pm Service (Q)	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 7:00 pm Voter's Meeting (S)	<b>10</b> "Bible & Theology" Study Group 7pm at the Loughran residence (S)	<b>11</b> Bible Study 10am at the Calvin residence (S)	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 5:00pm <b>Service of Renewal of Wedding Vows</b> —Don and Erika Schmeissing followed by reception in parish fellowship hall
<b>14 Service of the Word</b> 9:00am Service (S) Ladies Guild after service 10:30 am (S)/5:15pm (Q) Sunday School/Adult Bible Class (Jehovah's Witness) 4:00pm Service (Q)	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> "Bible & Theology" Study Group 7pm at the Loughran residence (S)	<b>18</b> Bible Study 10am at the Calvin residence (S)	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21 Divine Service</b> 9:00am Service (S) 10:30am(S)/5:15pm (Q)Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 4:00pm Service (Q)	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> "Bible & Theology" Study Group 7pm at the Loughran residence (S)	<b>25</b> Bible Study 10am at the Calvin residence (S)	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 10:00 am—12:00 noon <b>Reformation Lecture</b> at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Kingman, AZ (WELS) see notes below
<b>28 Service of the Word</b> 9:00am Service (S) 10:30am(S)/5:15pm (Q)Sunday School/Adult Bible Class Elders meeting after Bible Class (S) 4:00pm Service (Q)	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> "Bible & Theology" Study Group 7pm at the Loughran residence (S)	<i><b>This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.</b></i> —Jeremiah 31:33		

(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

October 27, 10:00 am to 12:00 noon: Reformation Lecture at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Kingman, AZ (WELS) co-sponsored by the ELS congregations in Lake Havasu City, and Fort Mohave, AZ. Pastor Webber will speak on "Worship and Liturgical Reform at the Time of the Lutheran Reformation." All are invited. Call Pastor Webber for carpool information or driving directions.

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a wonder beyond all reason: The miracle of divine forgiveness, of the justification of the sinner. "Christ dwells only in sinners."

"We are beggars: This is true." In these words, the last which Martin Luther's tireless pen wrote for us, lies his legacy to Christianity. The most profound understanding of man as sinner and the profound understanding of Christ as the Savior of sinners is bound up in this statement. "That man is nothing and that he learn to forsake himself and to hope in Christ" to this the Reformer yet today calls Christendom, and indeed, all Christendom. For the saving message of the justification of the sinner alone by grace belongs - precisely because it is nothing other than the proper understanding of the gospel - to all of God's church. Yes, the one church of God, which on earth exists in, with and under the various confessional churches of Christendom, lives from the gospel so understood. For the pure maintenance of the message of the Reformation is not a work of confessional narrowness, rather a service for the unity of the church, as Luther once expressed it, when he said of the article of justification by faith, "Where this article remains pure, Christendom also remains pure and united, without separation. But where it does not remain, there it is not possible to avoid any error or sectarian spirit." It is for this service that the Evangelical Lutheran Church today is called to fulfill in the world in a special way. It is still nothing other than that portion of Christendom to which the cry of the

Reformation belonged and to which the Lord of the church had given the task to raise this cry again. Can we do this? Is the gospel of the justification of the sinner by grace alone still the bread from which we live? Is it still the heart and soul of our preaching? Do we still know - or once again realize! - what sin is, how serious the judgment of God is, and what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God? Do we still know the full consolation of faith in the Savior of sinners, in the way Luther's explanation of the second article shows Him to us? Do we know what it means that this Christ is actually present in the Word of His Gospel and in His Sacrament, as near to as he was when He walked the earth, yes nearer than when He ate with tax collectors and sinners? If we still know all of this, if we still believe it, is it a living possession or has it become a mere tradition? Have they become words without content? These are the questions which the Reformer poses for us who confess the faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, both in Germany and in the entire world. "We are beggars: This is true!" So must we answer with shame and remorse. But immeasurably rich in grace is He who is the Savior of all sinners and whom the New Testament once called "The Savior of His body" (Ephesians 5:23), the Redeemer of His church. And inexhaustible are the riches of His means of grace, the Gospel in Sermon and Absolution, Holy Baptism and the Holy Supper... inexhaustible for all beggars.

by Hermann Sasse

Translated by Pastor Matthew Harrison, S.T.M.

This essay first appeared in the *Jahrbuch des Martin=Luther=Bundes*, 1946, pp. 38-42. It was written for the 400th anniversary of the Reformer's death. The essay was republished in *Lutherische Blätter*, vol. 19, no. 90 (August 1967).

## Special Event - October 13

### 50th Wedding Anniversary of Don and Erika Schmeissing

You are invited to a special evening in honor of their 50th wedding anniversary on October 13. Don and Erika were married in Chicago in 1957.

The evening begins with a Renewal of Wedding Vows Service in our sanctuary, followed by hors d'oeuvres on the patio and then by a catered dinner in the parish fellowship room.

All members of Redeemer congregation and friends and family of Don and Erika are cordially invited to attend and share in this special evening.

RSVP to Don and Erika (480) 991-7856



## You Can Know!

If I would take apart my wristwatch, tiny screw by tiny screw and tiny spring by tiny spring, and lay all the pieces before me on a table, I'm sure I could not put them back together again. I would be overwhelmed. I would feel very humbled. It would be best for me to leave my watch alone. Why get started on something that I can't finish?

Is our attitude toward the Bible like that? To study it seems like a project with too many pieces. *"If I start on this project, will I only get more confused? Why get started on something that I can't finish."*

The truth is that we do have trouble understanding the Bible. The Bible's God-inspired message is clear, but we don't easily understand it because of our *sinfulness*. In fact, without God the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't understand it at all. The Bible says,

**"The man without the Spirit does not understand the things that come from the Spirit of God." (1 Corinthians 2:4).** This is humbling. But it is for our good. God leads us to realize that we are dependant on his help to understand. He provides the help!

Long ago, in the Old Testament times, before Jesus came, the Lord said this, **"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."**

God is the one who brings understanding to the mind and heart. He brings people to understand both his law and his new covenant. The law of God shows us our sins. By the law he leads us to confess our sins to him. The new covenant is his promise to save us through his son Jesus Christ. Jesus was born into the world *at just the right time* as a sinless human being and 33 years later died for the world's sins at the cross! When God leads us to confess our sins and to believe in Jesus, we are saved! He becomes our God! We become his people! We are also set on the path of true understanding.

As we study the Bible with faith in the mind and heart, he leads us to an ever greater appreciation for the details of the plan he set in motion, even from eternity, to save us from our sins through his son Jesus

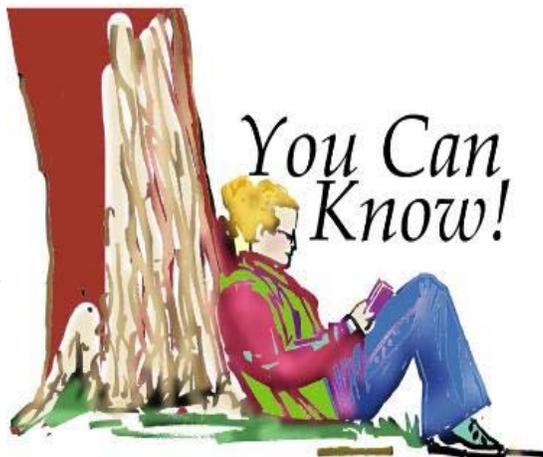
Christ! This is something God's people can never get enough of!

**"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."**

—Jeremiah

31:33

*Produced by the ELS Board for Evangelism*



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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](http://redeemer.vze.com)  
[sunofrighteousness.vze.com](http://sunofrighteousness.vze.com)

**Notice!**

Audio recordings of Pastor Webber's sermons are posted on the Internet weekly. They are available through both church websites above, and published courtesy of [lutheransource.net](http://lutheransource.net)



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## 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 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.*



**Redeemer Lutheran Church**