

**REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
LCMS**

PROMISE



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Redeemer **Reflection** Newsletter

Loving People To Christ

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REDEEMER REFLECTION

TOO EARLY OR JUST ON TIME?

by Pastor Michael Geml

So far this year it snowed on Halloween. A week later, it snowed on my birthday (November 7). If we thought those dustings were something, we were sorely mistaken. Monday the 11th we got dumped on. My backyard measured a full nine inches of snow. That just seemed way too early for the white stuff.

When we couple that with several radio stations playing all Christmas music for two solid months and the stores already gearing up for the holiday shopping season, there certainly is the danger of getting tired or burned out on Christmas.

Every year there seems to be the common complaint that the rush toward Christmas starts too early. The point is debatable. However, when we are able to live in the midst of the ever growing holiday chaos and still know what it is all about, Christmas is never too early; it is always just on time. By the working of the Holy Spirit, we can keep in our hearts and in our minds and in our actions toward others the blessings of Christmas all year round. Any time is the right time to celebrate the birth of the Savior. Let us remember and rejoice in the Gift of God, the sending of His Son



at just the right time. “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son...(Galatians 4:4).

A most blessed and Merry Christmas to all.

Pastor and Ruth

FAMILY FAITH LIFE

by Kimber Walsh, Director of Family Life Education, CFLE, Redeemer Lutheran Church

Unbreakable

What a promise means to us changes throughout our lives. When we were in elementary school the greatest promise pledge we could think of was “cross my heart, hope to die, stick a needle in my eye.” We’d think, woah, that kid must be serious about this. With maturity, comes a higher promise standard (thankfully). We start to see promises as unbreakable words. We also, obviously, know better than to think any sinful human can actually perfectly uphold every promise they make every time they make it. We begin to understand that the “unbreakable words” of a promise actually mean “I’ll try my best not to break it, if circumstances allow.”

Sometimes, we misunderstand that God’s promises don’t work that way,

though. We try to apply the life lessons we've learned from the broken world around us to help us understand God instead of using God's lessons to understand the world around us. God's promises are true and 100% certain of not being broken. God has never broken a single promise. And as sinful, broken humans ourselves, we can't even comprehend how that works. We want to believe it, but it seems too good to be true. We spend our time hoping it's true, but in the back of our minds we wonder when the other shoe will drop.

"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God." -2 Corinthians 1:20

We have a sure and certain hope in the God who is real and who keeps His promises. No heart crossing or needles in the eye necessary.



Christmastime is a time when almost everyone tends to get in the gifting mood. We get gifts for people for a myriad of reasons including wanting them to feel loved and thought about and to show our appreciation for them. Sometimes we get obligatory gifts for people because they gave one to us and we'd hate to look like we didn't care too. We even give gifts to our package carriers because we feel guilty about the

amount of work they have to do around the holidays (and often in crummy weather). But did you ever consider that regardless of the reasons for our gifts, we can still point our families and others to God as we go? We can use gifting to talk about God and shape faith as we are charged to do in Deuteronomy 6:6-7:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the way, when you lie down and when you get up."

Here are some ideas for how we can talk about faith and point our families to God as you gift this season:



Giving Gifts—How do you pick out which gift you will give someone? Do you fly by the seat of your pants? Plan for months? Seek out anything they've said they wanted? Look at gift idea lists online? Resign yourself to gift cards for everyone? Think and talk about how your gifts can point others to Jesus as you choose what to give. There are lots of ways that gifts can teach and shape and point, but we have to take time to consider and be intentional to be a light to others.



Getting Gifts—Receiving gifts can be awesome when someone gets you exactly what you were wanting, but it can also be awkward when someone gets you a dud of a gift. Talk about how we can respond with genuine gratitude and reflect Christ to our

gift givers, regardless of the gift received.



Why Gifts?—Gift giving in conjunction with Christmas began as a reminder of the gold, frankincense and myrrh that the magi brought to Jesus. The three gifts had a spiritual meaning: gold as a symbol of kingship on earth, frankincense as a symbol of deity, and myrrh (an embalming oil) as a symbol of death. Talk as a family about why you give gifts to each other. Maybe you've never stopped to consider this before but it would be a great time to start. What do the gifts we give each other have to do with Jesus?



Emphasis—Sometimes it's easy for us and our children to get caught up in gifting at Christmas that it becomes our emphasis. Talk about what the most important part of Christmas is as a family. (Hint: it's not gifts, philanthropy or even family.) How can your family make sure to emphasize what's important this Christmas season?

Continue to share the joy of Christ through giving and receiving Christmas gifts and as you gift, consider how through the gifts, we can share Jesus with one another.



VOLUNTEER TO SERVE

by Phyllis Tschabrun

Dear Friends in Christ,

For the past eight years or so, I've volunteered at Together We Can Make a Difference Gift and Toy Store. I've wrapped puzzles, stuffed gift baskets, done data entry, baked cookies, and various other service projects. Here is a list of items the Toy Store can use for gift baskets and stocking stuffers:

- ★ Full size shampoo
- ★ Deodorants
- ★ Bar soap
- ★ Shavers
- ★ Toothbrushes
- ★ Toothpaste
- ★ Washcloths
- ★ Toilet paper
- ★ Other personal use toiletries

Also needed are small travel toiletries for stocking stuffers.

Volunteers are valuable and appreciated help in the preparation of the Toy Store and gifts, as well as necessary workers at the store when it opens. May God bless everyone who can volunteer to help make *The Priceless Gift and Toy Store* a success again this year.



DECEMBER

Sharon Rumohr	12/01
Brennen Schnebelt	12/01
Evelyne Jones	12/02
Bill Bartlett	12/03
Matthew Mogle	12/06
Robin Ellison	12/07
Debra Moyer	12/07
Russ Jean	12/08
Dorothy Thomas	12/09
Bill Mantek	12/11
Marvel Jones	12/12
Nyla Arvy	12/14
Carol Faris	12/14
Debbie Rockwell	12/14
Loren Kielhorn	12/16
Janie Boyle	12/17
LynnEtte Mueller	12/17
Tom Polzien	12/17
John Smith	12/17
Art Knueppel	12/23
Jim Seidzik	12/24
Jesus	12/25
Carol Rose	12/25
Miriam Kleimola	12/29

CHANCEL MEMBERS NEEDED

There is a real need for more Chancel members to serve in the care of the altar

area here at Redeemer. Duties are minimal, yet spiritually rewarding. If you are looking for a way to help serve in caring for God's House, please prayerfully consider joining the Chancel.

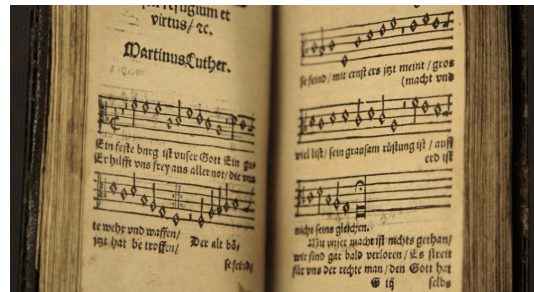


The regular monthly meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 10:00 a.m.; the next meeting will be on December 5. If you would like more information on this opportunity to serve here at Redeemer, please contact Judy Speed.

“ALL YOU NEED I WILL SURELY GIVE YOU”

by Craig Britton

I came to the Lutheran expression of the Christian (catholic) faith after nearly twenty years following Jesus in other contexts. All brought their own color and weight to the gospel proclamation. In 1999, when I began investigating what made Lutherans Lutheran, I quickly found that one of the great joys of the church of the Augsburg Confession was the music. For a couple reasons: the music itself, and what the



music was “employed” to do. Doctor Luther himself said that music was second only to theology in the ranking of learning. And so, he purposed early on, perhaps even before the Ninety-Five Theses were hammered on the University Church doors at Wittenberg, that music would be the servant of Holy Scripture in bringing the heart-exalting, mind-enriching truths of the Reformation to those who loved the Lamb.

A few years ago, I happened on a wonderful collection of hymns from the entire history of the Lutheran Church and began to listen to and learn the joys of what I had “missed”. One hymn, from the pen of my favorite Lutheran hymn writer, the 18th century pastor Paul Gerhardt, finds rest in the “Christmas” section of the Lutheran Service Book.

The title of this meditation comes from #360 in the Lutheran Service Book. Gerhardt’s lovely “*All My Heart Again Rejoices*” is set to the melody of Johann Cruger, Gerhardt’s contemporary. Our gifted editor has prompted us with the word “promise” for December. And although when this Newsletter finds you, we will still be in the throes of Advent, I give you permission to cheat and jump into the Christmas section of the LSB. And there I would call you to #360, verse 5.

*“Softly from His lowly manger
 Jesus calls
 One and all,
 ‘You are safe from danger.
 Children from the sins that grieve you
 You are freed;
 All you need
 I will surely give you.’”*

Just one of many verses, but the one that best expresses to me that my Savior



promises and delivers what only He can give. In the maddening rush of all that the world claims is the “true meaning of Christmas,” remember this my brothers and sisters in Christ: He, the Mighty Savior, says to each one, “All You Need I Will Surely Give You.”

Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE

by Pastor Michael Geml

A pledge is a promise. Over the past few years more and more United States citizens are refusing to publically pledge, or promise their allegiance to the flag and to the republic for which it stands. Why? For any number of reasons. Some have said it was because they do not believe that we are “one nation under



God...” One nation? Yes! Under God? No! People will always have their convictions for which they are willing to take their stand.

Where should the Church of Jesus Christ take its stand? Christians are citizens in two distinct kingdoms. Martin Luther wrote about there being two kingdoms. The Kingdom of the Left and the Kingdom of the Right. The Kingdom of the Left is concerned with earthly governments and their use of power to preserve order and to protect its citizens. The Kingdom of the Right is the realm of salvation, forgiveness, and living out our faith in ways that honor God and serve for the common good. Both realms, Left and Right, are God’s gift to human-kind. (See Romans 13 and John 3:16)

We can, without fear of violating conscience, live in both kingdoms. However, what does the Christian do when the Kingdom of the Left decrees something that stands in opposition to the clear Word of God? Acts 5:29 states it most clearly, “We must obey God rather than man.”

We pledge our allegiance to the One who first made a pledge to us. The promise of God came to us in a Bethlehem Manger. Wrapped in swaddling cloth, the infant, incarnate Son of God was here to carry out God’s pledge to us. That meant suffering and dying and giving up His sinless life for our sin-filled lives. This He did for us and for our salvation being nailed to the Cross.

Many students in Christian Schools, after reciting the Pledge of Allegiance will also recite this pledge, *I pledge allegiance to the cross of my Lord, Jesus Christ. And to the faith for which it stands, one Savior, eternal, with mercy and grace for all.*

Our ultimate and eternal allegiance is pledged to Him who is the Savior of all. God’s peace be with us.



☺ **Thursdays, Ongoing: Bethel Bible Study.** This series will meet every Thursday evening from **6:30-9:00 p.m.**, throughout the normal school year.

☺ **Wednesdays, December 4, 11, and 18: Advent Services at 6:30 p.m. The 18th will be the Christmas Program.**

☺ **Thursday, December 5: Chancel Guild.** Chancel meets the first Thursday of each month at 10:00 a.m. We welcome new members at any time!

☺ **Sunday, December 8: Coffee Sunday.** The Youth Group will be selling delicious coffee and hot chocolate after each service. Beautiful Poinsettia plants will also be sold to decorate the altar area for the Christmas season. All proceeds from these fundraisers will go to support upcoming youth events and activities. Each young person in Youth Group has an account that is credited each time they participate in one of the fundraisers. If they don’t help out, their account will not grow to provide their personal funding for trips

and activities. This is a fun and easy way to put money in your account.

😊 **Sunday, December 8: *Annual Voters' Meeting.*** Immediately following the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service.

😊 **Sunday Evening, December 8: *Youth Night*** from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Youth Night will be on the second Sunday of each month throughout the school year. Come join us for Bible study with discussion topics, food, fun, and fellowship.

😊 **Thursday, December 12: *LWML Women of Redeemer, Christmas Tea.*** From 10:00 a.m.—Noon. Please bring a dozen cookies to exchange.

😊 **Sunday, December 15 & 22: *Poinsettia Sale.*** The Youth Group will be selling beautiful Poinsettia plants to decorate the altar area for the Christmas season. All proceeds from this fundraiser will go to support upcoming youth events and activities.

😊 **Wednesday, December 18 at 6:30 p.m., *Christmas Program.*** Come celebrate and prepare for the birth of our Savior!

😊 **Sundays, December 15th and 22nd. -*Poinsettia Sale*—After both Services.**

😊 **Sunday, December 29: *One service at 10:00 a.m.*** There will be no Bible Classes or potluck on this 5th Sunday. May God bless your Christmas holiday with family and friends!

😊 **Ongoing Fund Raising—All Youth**—we need your help and you need the funds for all of the activities we have in store this year! If you don't help with the fundraising events, you can't

earn the money you'll need to attend events and participate in trips, concerts, and other activities.

2020 Fundraisers

Sub Sandwich Sale: Taking orders for Subs on January 19th and 26th, Sub making on February 1st, with delivery of the sandwiches on February 2nd.

Coffee Sundays: March 8 and May 10.

Easter Lily Sale: April 5th

FROST BACKPACK PROGRAM

by David Althouse

Well, another school year has come around, and after receiving the names of 70 qualifying students from the school's social worker, we began filling backpacks on October 17th; the 13th



year that volunteers from Redeemer have been performing this much appreciated community service. Every Thursday the backpack team gathers to fill each

bag with eight different food items; enough to last through the entire weekend. Through November 14th, an average of 62 bags have been filled each week.

A couple of “thank yous” are in order. First, the team would like to thank the anonymous couple who has once again purchased all the new backpacks for the student's use; this is a significant

expenditure. Secondly, the team wishes to thank the P-S FoodMart/Citco gas station at 500 Longfellow for donating 709 boxes of Pop-Tarts.

All of the food handed out is purchased from the Food Bank in Battle Creek at a cost of about 33% of wholesale prices. This allows us to greatly extend our purchasing abilities.

As always, the Backpack Team continues to thank and praise our Lord for all His grace, mercy and generosity in sustaining this program year after year. To Him be all glory and honor.

The Backpack Team

WE ARE BLESSED!

As I sat in church a few Sundays ago, I was overwhelmed with joy at seeing all the little ones and youth around me. “God is blessing and growing us here at Redeemer” was my thought. Cries and sniffles were heard, as was a sweet young voice’s “yay” after a beautiful song led by the Praise Band. What an awesome place to be, where old and young alike feel welcome and accepted. Where young parents guide their children through the service and small voices are heard saying the Lord’s Prayer and singing. Where “serving the Lord” is not just for the adults, but encouraged in the young.

Bibles in the pew so that weak old hands have easy access to the Word and tiny hands can be helped with turning pages. Where rustling and fidgeting children are prayed for by those nearby rather than frowned upon. You may even see a small smile on old lips at a little one’s “is this the last song?”

In a recent devotion, I read this wonderful reaction to a true church

family: “Thank God for a church so welcoming of children. May all our churches be places where surly teens and cranky toddlers are welcomed with the waters of baptism and the outstretched arms of a congregation ready to nurture. Welcoming children... [is a] welcome to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith.” Our church feels like this to me.

It’s a gift to be aging in a church where there are still committed adults who dedicate time and energy to teaching our next generation’s church members about Jesus. And though I use the term “next generation church,” I think of these children as “our growing church.” Redeemer would be so much less without our little ones, our youth. They make our church alive. Do you see what I see?

Redeemer is thriving and growing. No, we’re not perfect. And we can always improve. But, yes indeed! With all of its ages and stages, what a blessing our Redeemer Family is!

WOMEN OF REDEEMER *Christmas Tea*

Calling all Women of Redeemer! Join your friends and faith-family at the Christmas Tea to be held on Thursday, December 12th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., noon. Bring a dozen cookies to exchange, enjoy making a Chrismon craft, and do some caroling. It’s a time for great fellowship with cookies and tea provided for one and all.



Join us in the new All-Purpose Room in the lower level of the church. See you there!

BABY SHOWER FOR JESUS



On Saturday, November 16, Redeemer gave a *Baby Shower for Jesus*. This was a fun way for us to celebrate new life and provide baby items for *Birthline to help them continue to serve new mothers and mothers-to-be in need in our community. It was also a great reminder that Jesus' mother Mary was a young mom far from home when she had her baby. This was our way of helping that young mom of yesteryear and the little One who would grow up to be our Savior. What a great opportunity this was (and is) for us!

All "shower gifts" were donated to *Birthline. Thrivent Financial donated



funds to make this event possible and to encourage God's people to **#LiveGenerously**. We serve Jesus when we serve others.

Birthline is located at 1000 E. Porter Street, Suite 1, in Jackson,



Michigan, 49202. And is an ongoing community service. There is an ongoing need of baby items, monetary donations,



and the time and talents of volunteers to do various things from sorting clothes to office work.

*Birthline hours are:

- ♥ Tuesday—10-4
- ♥ Thursday—10-7
- ♥ Phone: 517-784-9187

*Birthline is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit faith-based organization supported entirely by donations of money and goods from the community and staffed solely by volunteers. Donations are tax deductible.

PROMISE

by Peggy Bennitt

"I promise to come right home after school."

"I'll fix that right away; I promise."

“If you let me go to Johnny’s now, I promise I’ll clean my room when I get home.”

“Didn’t you promise to do that yesterday?”

Ever break a promise? Did you then try to justify it with: Oh, I just forgot. I’ll do it later? Can *your* “promise” be trusted? Once we break a promise, will it be a trusted “bond” that people can have faith in and count on?

One of my favorite movies is *Hook*, with Robin Williams as an aging Peter Pan who is now part of corporate America. He has no recollection of Neverland, and no clue how to connect with his family; his children in particular.



“My word is my bond,” is his constant mantra to his children, but he’s never there for them. His “bond” is worthless; a promise not kept speaks more clearly than all the good intentions in the world. That old adage, “Actions speak louder than words” obviously tells a true story. When “My word is my bond” is spoken by our Savior in His Word though, it is a promise that we can trust. He’s always there for us.

“...Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.”

Genesis 9:15b

“I will never leave you or forsake you.”

Hebrews 13:5b

For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

God is faithful to His promises. If He says He will; He will. Since the first sin, God promised a Savior; Someone to take our place in death to free us from the



chains of sin. He promised this in Genesis when He told the serpent that [Jesus] would “crush” his head, but Satan would only “strike” His heel. Throughout the Old Testament we hear about a Savior to come and in the New Testament, we see it come to pass. Our God keeps His promises.

Lord God,

Help us to be like You, faithful in our promises and forgiving in our lives. Let us remember Your Word and Your bond when You promise us life everlasting in Your kingdom with You. Grant us strength and hope as we live in ways that will honor You always. *“Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life,”* You have promised. Guide us to be faithful to You in all we do. We thank and praise you for all Your blessings and the mercy You show us daily. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>Divine Services— C 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Bible Classes 9:20—10:20 a.m.</p> <p>Praise Service—C 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Adult Choir 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Handbells 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Craig's Countryside Bible Study 1:30 p.m.</p>  <p>Advent Service 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study—2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Bible Study—Craig's 2:30 p.m. in S. A.</p> <p>Bethel Bible Study— 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>C—Denotes Communion Services</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Divine Service 8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Bible Classes 9:20—10:20 a.m.</p> <p>Praise Service—C 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>VOTERS' MTG. <i>After Late Service</i></p> <p>Youth Group 5:30—7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Adult Choir 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Handbells 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Quilters 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.</p> <p>Craig's Bible Study Countryside 1:30 p.m.</p>  <p>Advent Service 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.</p> <p>Christmas Tea 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study -2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Bible Study—Craig's 2:30 p.m. in S. A.</p> <p>Bethel Bible Study— 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Divine Service— C 8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Adult & Children's Bible Classes 9:20—10:20 a.m.</p> <p>Praise Service 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Reflection NL Deadline Today</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Adult Choir 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Handbells 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m.</p> <p>Combined Councils 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Craig's Countryside Bible Study 1:30 p.m.</p>  <p>Advent Service & Christmas Program 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Bible Study—Craig's 2:30 p.m. in S. A.</p> <p>Bethel Bible Study— 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Divine Service 8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Adult & Children's Bible Classes 9:20—10:20 a.m.</p> <p>Praise Service— C 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Adult Choir 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Handbells 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve Services 6:30 & 10:00 p.m.</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>Christmas Day</p> 	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Divine Combined Service— C 10:00 a.m.</p> <p><i>No Sunday School or Bible Classes</i></p> <p>No 5th Sunday Potluck After the service</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Adult Choir 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Handbells 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>31</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p>  <p>NEW YEAR'S EVE</p>	<p>2019</p> <p>DECEMBER</p> 			