

**REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
LCMS**

INHERITANCE



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Redeemer **Reflection** *Newsletter*

Loving People To Christ

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REDEEMER REFLECTION

“I GOT PLENTY OF NOTHIN”

by Pastor Michael Geml

The day I sit to write this article is June 14th. Tomorrow, June 15th, I will be heading north, way north. Through Michigan's U.P. and into Ontario. I, along with several others, will be making the trek to picturesque Lake Cameron for six days of R&R and maybe even catching a few fish. I say, “maybe,” because this will be my second fishing trip to Ontario. The first time I went I was filled with excitement at fulfilling one of my life dreams; a fishing trip to Ontario, Canada. Anyone who has ever wet a line knows that fishing is never a guarantee. My first trip, from the fishing angle, was less than productive. Very few fish were caught during the six days. But that does not mean it was a wasted or disappointing trip.

Some would disagree with me on this point. Some may argue, “You spent 6 days fishing in Northern Ontario and you caught practically nothing? That’s what you got; plenty of nothing!” This is where I would strongly disagree. From my perspective, I was in an absolutely beautiful place spent with some brothers



in the Lord. The fish may have not cooperated, but I had a great time. If this trip coming up tomorrow has everything I had last time and this time it includes fish, it will be all the more enjoyable. But even if the fish aren't biting, I will enjoy the blessings we are

sure to have. It's all in how one looks at it.

Life can be much like a fishing trip. We can focus so much on unmet expectations and disappointments that we miss the blessings that are continually there for us. Jesus told us that He has gone to prepare a place for us (John 14). He has also promised to be with us always even to the end of the age (Matthew 28). Jesus' two-fold promise is a comfort and a joy. We know that a place, a heavenly mansion, has been prepared for us in the joys of heaven, and we have the promise that until that day when we are taken home, our Savior is with us continually.

We may occasionally waver in our trust and we may question the promises Jesus made, but for those of us who are in Christ, our nets are always full. The blessings we enjoy in this life are a

foreshadowing of the eternal inheritance we have waiting for us. May we live in and revel in the present blessings even as we await the greatest blessing yet to be realized. The promised inheritance of eternal life. To God be the glory!

Pastor Geml

FAMILY FAITH LIFE

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

Worth It?

The hit show “Downton Abbey” was all about the heir. The stakes were high and who the heir would be was significant to the storyline throughout each season. Is this person eligible? Did that person usurp the role of first heir? Who has the rights to this fortune? And the continual question that loomed was whether or not each prospective heir was even worthy. As time pressed on, each heir apparent was found to be unworthy in some way or another—usually a shocking way. Sometimes the unworthiness urged disqualification of the inheritance, but often the obligation of the “way things ought to be” maintained their status and eventual reward.

Inheritance always brings with it the question of worthiness. Recall the meaning to the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed in *Luther’s Small Catechism*, “I believe that God made [all things] and still takes care of them....He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine

goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me.”

God doesn’t play by the same rule book as we humans do. He doesn’t inherit us because of our worthiness, nor a sense of obligation to do so. And He doesn’t disinherit us because of our unworthiness. Amazingly, He gifts us freely through His Son with the title “heir” and gives us the same inheritance as the Son of God, Himself: everlasting life with Him. Without any worthiness or merit in us He grants us the greatest fortune anyone could ever receive. Even the Crowleys of “Downton Abbey” would be jealous of our eternal fortune.



Summer travel can come in various forms—going to see relatives and friends or going somewhere new; flying or taking road trips; just for the day or for a couple of weeks. Whether your summer travel plans include going internationally or going only as far as the market, travel is yet another opportunity to talk about faith. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says, “*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.*” Talking about faith is the “how” God lays out for us in learning to love Him with our whole heart, soul and

strength. So, we should probably get talking...

- Suitcases—Packing is a necessary part of any travel. Some welcome the challenge to fit everything in a small space, and others dread getting organized before they go. As you pack, talk about the things we take on trips and the things we take with us every day (even if we don't carry them in suitcases or duffle bags). What is important to carry with us wherever we go? Why? Talk about how God promises to go with us wherever we go and why that's important.
- Quality Time—A big part of vacation and travel with your family is quality time together. Whatever that looks like for your family, it's important to make sure this is built in to your travels. A great way to have quality time is to ask each family member to share their high and low of the day before bed at night. It gives you a glimpse into what excites, frustrates, saddens, and gives joy to your family members. It also gives you a great jumping off point for prayers of praise for the highs and asking God to intervene in the challenges of the lows. (And this is one that easily transfers back home when you're not traveling!)
- Rest—God created a whole day every week for us to rest. He actually designed it so that 1/7 of our time is spent resting. We are so bad at this. But we have the opportunity to rest when we're

traveling. Build in some downtime to your traveling and be sure to talk to your kids about the gift of rest that God gave us. When we rest each night, our bodies grow, and the same is true when we rest our minds as we travel.

- Travel Games—Ever played Travel Bingo? Keep your eyes open for certain things to cross off in hopes of getting a whole row of items. No bingo board would be complete without a “free” space. Even if you don't play Travel Bingo, it is common to take note of things and people and places you see as you travel. Use this time to point out things you want your children to watch for. Point out examples of the Fruit of the Spirit that you see as you go—love, joy, peace, patience (a travel time challenge), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. How can we show this fruit while we travel?



Just because you're on vacation from your daily life, doesn't mean you need to take a vacation from talking about faith. God is still at work when

you're on vacation and He still wants your hearts.



Builders is our new monthly family life education time—covering various topics that will build up your family and build up the body of Christ.

The normally scheduled time will be the first Sunday of each month. Due to the holiday travels, we will reschedule the July time to the 8th, 3:30-6:00 pm. July's topic will continue the "Visionary Parenting" series. If you're a parent with kids of any age still at home, please join us to learn biblical tools you can use with your family. RSVP on the sign-up sheet in the narthex so plans can be made for childcare and dinner.

Grandparenting

Mondays, July 9-August 27, 2-3:30 pm in Redeemer's Library, grandparents of all stages are invited to gather as we look



at what the Bible has to say about grandparenting and practical tips for grandparenting in a variety of

circumstances including: divorce of your children, grandchildren living with you, step-grandchildren, spoiling in a positive way, navigating the fine line between interfering and intervening, challenges with your children, grandparenting from a distance, changes as your grandchildren grow up, praying for your grandchildren, and leaving a legacy. We'll learn from experts in the field and from each other as we share our hearts for our grandchildren (and there will probably be opportunities to brag a little too!) Questions? Please contact Kimber Walsh, Family Life Educator, at kimberwalsh@comcast.net or 517-750-3100.



BABYLON VBS

Redeemer's VBS for 2018 centered on the Babylonian captivity and Daniel's unswerving faith in every situation. This year we tried an evening VBS, a new experience from recent years, and included a meal before the Daniel adventure began.

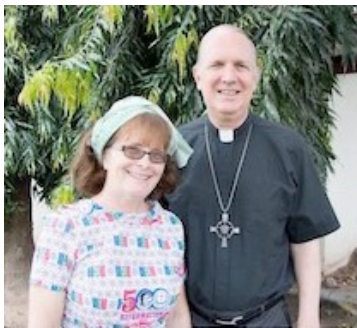
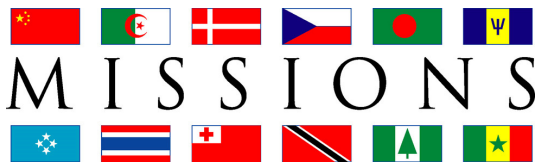
This new time format was well received and we had so much great help;

it was amazing! We averaged 40+ children each night, with the “mission projects” by the “children for other children” being a wonderful chance for



the kids to actually “do something with their own hands” to help others. A great “hands-on” experience for everyone.

The stories of Daniel’s actions and faith during captivity, and how God always provides and protects, was a great foundation for a week of faith walking and Bible talking for all who attended.



Dear Partners in Mission,

Joyce and I worship at St. Paul Lutheran Church in downtown Accra. I serve as one of the assisting pastors.

On Mother’s Day, the congregation has the custom of honoring all of the women of the congregation.

After the benediction, the pastor speaks about the church’s great appreciation for women, offers words of thanks to the women of the congregation, and leads the congregation in prayer in thanksgiving to God.

Then each woman receives a chocolate bar. Ghana is one of the world’s leading producers of cocoa and Ghana has developed its own chocolate industry. We understand that Ghanaian chocolate is famous in both Japan and Korea. In Japan, chocolate is simply called “Ghana.”

Interestingly, our observation is that people in West Africa have not developed a taste for chocolate. However, the women always seem to like receiving the gift—even if it is just chocolate! (Last year, on Father’s Day, the men all got chocolate too. Ghana makes great chocolate!)

After this last Mother’s Day, a couple of women stepped forward and asked for the microphone. We were expecting a short word of thanks on behalf of the women. However, these women announced that they also had a presentation they wanted to make. The women made a surprise presentation of gifts to the pastors.

On Mother’s Day, I received the beautiful gifts of a shirt and new stoles. The stoles match the



new altar, pulpit and lectern cloths the women also just made for the church.

What a great surprise and what very special gifts from God's dear people!

A Note About The July 1st Transition Of Church Leadership In Ghana

These are important days for us in Ghana. We are doing our best to work with our retiring church president and the newly elected officials and others to facilitate a smooth transition of church leadership. Since this is the first transition in 40 or 50 years, this is not a simple or easy change. Last week our retiring President, Dr. Paul Fynn, presented his final report and gave all of the files containing bank accounts, bank statements, and other important documents to the newly elected President, Reverend John Donkoh. We constantly remind ourselves and others that Jesus remains Lord of the church. We are simply serving Him.

Your prayers are greatly appreciated!

David and Joyce
Erber



FROM THE GARDEN

by Judith Speed

A healthy relationship with God requires effort.

July Newsletter

1. Find encouragement – being around other believers and worshipping with them challenges us to strive to do what is good.
2. Pray for a larger comfort zone – our light can only “shine before others” if we interact, on a significant level, with people who are different from us.
3. Warm up your faith muscles – to be on fire for God requires stoking our spirit with the fuel of daily prayer, intense knowledge of scripture and generous giving.
4. Get moving – do not merely listen to the Word; do what it says.
5. Turn setbacks into renewed determination – our job is to pick ourselves up after we fall and to ask for renewed vigor to follow Christ.

So too, perennial gardens require regular care to look their best and stay healthy.

1. Remove spent flowers – snip off flower stems just above a leaf or bud when they finish blooming to prevent them from forming seeds. Pick off damaged leaves also.
2. Inspect for pests and problems (minimum weekly) – local garden centers with experienced staff are more than happy to assist with issues you may discover during inspections. Don't forget the Internet.
3. Water – dig into the top 2-3 inches of soil. If dry, water until soil is moist to a depth of 6-8 inches.

4. Pull weeds – remove weeds as you see them on your weekly inspections.



5. Edge the beds – keep the edges between your garden and lawn well defined with the use of a garden spade or shovel.
6. Fertilize and mulch – in early spring fertilize with a granular, slow-release fertilizer formulated for perennial gardens. Replace or renew mulch.
7. Seasonal clean-up – protect plants after ground freeze with a 4-6 inch layer of chopped leaves. Cut back plants only to 8-10 inch height. In early spring, cut back all dead stems to the ground and rake out debris.

During your walk through life with Christ this month, have fun and stop to smell the roses!



REDEEMER BACKPACK RESULTS

by David Althouse



Another school year has come and gone! On May 24, the Redeemer Backpack Team completed its eleventh year of providing food-filled

backpacks for the children-in-need at Frost Elementary School. In each backpack sent home, we provide enough food for each enrolled child for an entire weekend. Generally, eight different food items are included, such as fruit, vegetable, cereal, main dish (i.e. spaghetti, mac 'n' cheese, etc.) and a treat. This year we filled 1202 backpacks, an average of 45 per week, at a cost of \$4,719. In addition, a local P/S



FoodMart donated 750 pounds of PopTarts, which were used as a treat. By comparison, last year we filled 1,392 backpacks, an average of 52 per week, at a cost of \$6,222. During that year, the same P/S FoodMart donated \$1,624 to our account instead of food. We are grateful for their continued support.

As part of our stewardship responsibility, we purchase all the food from the Food Bank in Battle Creek. By doing so, we only pay about 1/3 the wholesale cost of the food. This allows us to *stretch* the dollars to help keep this program going.

In recent years, we have noticed a decline in the number of backpacks we fill each year. Perhaps this might be a sign that the local economy is improving. Ultimately, it would be great if there were no need to fill any backpacks at all.

The Backpack Team is most thankful to have the privilege to serve the less fortunate children at this school. It is

only due to God's boundless love, mercy, and provisions that this outreach program has been so successful and sustainable year after year. To God be the glory!

The Backpack Team

EKKLESIA

by Pastor Michael Geml

The word is pronounced, *ek-lay-see-ya*. It is the Greek word that we often translate as "church." At its root it means "to call forth" or "called out." The people of Israel were "called out" by God. They were called to be His precious possession. They were called in order that God would bring to this world His Son, our Savior. The promises of God were fulfilled and Jesus came and lived among us where He suffered, died, rose, and ascended. Through Holy Baptism, we are connected to all that Christ Jesus did. He left us with the promise that He would return to take His



Church to be with Him in the place of eternal joy and peace in heaven. Until that time, the Church remains a beacon of Jesus' light and love for the world.

It is a great privilege, and also a great responsibility, for the Church to be what we are "called out" to be. In the midst of constant change taking place all around

us, the church is to remain steadfast in her charge from Jesus to be "salt and light." We must be faithful to that charge whether we have two Sunday services or only one. For two months during the summer, we here at Redeemer will come together as those who have been *called out* and we will worship in one unified service.

Worship is first and foremost an invitation from our Lord to receive His good gifts of Word and Sacrament in which we

have forgiveness, life, and salvation. Who, in their right spiritual mind, would knowingly turn down an invitation

from God to receive something from Him that can be found nowhere else in this world?

The service format may be a bit different from what you have known, but the gifts of God *for you* remain the same. Come and be part of what you already are, one who has been called out, set apart, and given a special place in the Ekklesia, the Church of Jesus Christ.

"And let us consider how to stir one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another..."

Hebrews 10:24-25





2018 SUMMER WORSHIP

On Sundays, from July 1, 2018 – September 2, 2018, one worship service will be held at 9:30 a.m. at Redeemer Lutheran Church. The service format will be a blended liturgical setting using [*Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish*](#) by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri. Music will be led by the organist and Praise Team.

Communion will be served on 1st and 3rd Sundays.

During this time, Sunday school, youth, and adult Bible classes will be suspended and will resume on Sunday, September 9, 2018.

We are the Family of God, and He comes to us through worship in this place called Redeemer. Honor and reverence for Him unite us as we share His Word and Sacrament. “They will know we are Christians by our love.” Join your church family each Sunday through the summer months at 9:30 a.m., as we leave behind personal wants and



wishes, and focus on the Only One who deserves our attention on any given Sunday morning, and in our daily lives.

Please join us as we unite in worship!

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REDEEMER MEMBERS

by Nyla Arvy

We are further defining our care/hospitality/compassion resources at Redeemer by forming a new Ministry Board to work together to better serve our membership and community, and to make a difference in ourselves and in the lives of others as well.

Some of the current serving areas that would fall under this ministry board are funeral luncheons, kitchen use and upkeep, 5th Sunday potlucks, annual summer church picnic, holiday and seasonal meals,

the Christmas “giving tree” and holiday food baskets for families in need, and meals and/or transportation assistance for

shut-in members or members recovering from health setbacks.



Our desire is to establish a more organized system of providing assistance to those dealing with temporary debilitation, as well as organizing fellowship meals

for our Redeemer families. Members who currently have taken responsibility in some of these areas are encouraged to continue these acts of kindness. The experience of influential seniors who have done some of these services is vital

to mentoring our younger generation of members, as well as those who have simply not been able to participate in the past.

Please pray about your role in the church and your service to our Lord through any one of these channels listed above. Our hope is to have commitments from many people who can join others in each different area of responsibility. Please contact Nyla Arvy at 810-923-8723 or Nyla.arvy@gmail.com for more information and to make your commitment. There will be an organizational meeting sometime in August or September.

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

by Craig Britton

In Him we have obtained an inheritance...

Ephesians 1:11 (ESV)

Sad, isn't it? Some folks wait around all their lives for gifts that come to them only upon the death of another. Some big. Some not so big. And some even wait in vain for an empty hope. One thing the Holy Scripture brings to those who comprise the family of God is this: we have an inheritance. It is a well-



chosen and oft written word in the New Testament, about a dozen times in our English Bibles. The letter to the Ephesians uses the word several times and I hope in just a few lines to whet your desire for not just the Word, but for that to which it points.

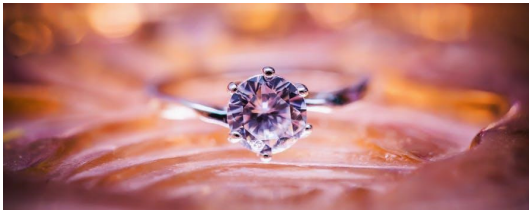
If you haven't read Paul's Ephesian letter in a while, I highly encourage the exercise. A good prayer to precede the reading of this epistle might be, "Lord, open my weak and wandering eyes to gaze upon the treasure You have given and give to all Your children. Amen."

I'm going to point our attention to three uses in the very first chapter of the word translated as "inheritance." The first use is in verse eleven which is referenced above. And to be very honest, if this were the only use of the word in the letter, what we behold here would be enough. At least, it would be for me. Paul writes about the Lord Jesus saying, "*In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be to the praise of His glory.*" Whew! Paul. The king of the run-on sentence. But oh, so meaningful, isn't it?

This first use of the word inheritance in the letter points to Christ. Surprise, right? So fitting. So right. Paul lets us know straightaway that we have a promised Savior. Now our response to that news? Do we long for Him? Long to see Him and bow before Him? I can't answer that for any but myself. And believe me I ponder this treasure far too infrequently. Perhaps the long days of summer are the perfect time to increase the pondering.

Paul speaks, just a few verses down the line, of the Holy Spirit Who is in on

this whole inheritance idea, and it is a beautiful picture painted. The Holy Spirit, inspiring the author, moves him to write that the Holy Spirit is a Guarantee of sorts. Well, let me quote, “(you) were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory” (vv.13-14). Now a little more dazzling light to shine: the word for “guarantee” is from a word that is often translated as “engagement ring.”



So, the Holy Spirit is the ring on our collective fingers that says to us all, “Yes, a wedding is coming and the Groom to whom you look is your inheritance. Guaranteed He is.” The plans are in. The invitations are out. Now we look to the characteristic “I do” from the bride. By the way, this Groom already said, “I did.”

Paul prays toward the end of Ephesians 1, one of those stunning prayers that set us back with their power, and prompt us to do a bit more learning in the prayer department. At least that’s what his prayers do for me. Here he writes (prays) that God would open our minds and hearts “*that you may know the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints ...*” (v.18). Now wait! Did you see it! Now we, the church, are the inheritance. Why? Because God has invested so much in calling and winning us, that the consequent transformation has grown characteristics in us that reflect Him in marvelous ways. I say, if you aren’t overwhelmed, if you aren’t thrilled by

that prospect ... well? We receive that we may become. In terms related to the Holy Supper, “We are what (Whom) we eat.”

Inheritance. One more thing. It does require a death. The lamentable element. Someone must die. Someone did. What awaits? Some cheap and perishable coin? Some earthly goods? No. You and I await, with rings on our fingers, THE INHERITANCE who has begun His good work, will bring it to completion and will proclaim us “inheritance” as His church, His bride.

So. What are you waiting for?



☺ **Summer Sundays, July 1 through September 2**

Worship Service at 9:30 a.m.

Celebrating Holy Communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays

☺ **Sunday, July 8: BUILDERS**

Family building time begins; reserve the dates for the future. The first Sunday of each month, **3:30—6:00 p.m.**, with a meal included. This is for all who desire more “tools” for “doing family” the way God intends.

☺ **Redeemer Canoe Trip: July 20—22**

More information to come. Ron and Debbie Rockwell are the contact

persons for this annual family event.

😊 **Church Picnic: Sunday, July 29,**
9:30 a.m. —One service with the picnic following in the church pavilion.

😊 **Relay for Life: August 3—4.**

😊 **Cedar Point and Pointfest: September 15.** All middle and high school students and their families are welcome to sign up. Overnight accommodations available. See Dave and/or Kim McFarland for more information.

😊 **Community Event: November 10.**

INHERITANCE

by Peggy Bennitt

Psalm 33:12

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.



“Our parents left their house to all of us”: Inheritance.

“My uncle willed all his property to me: I am his heir.”

“My Father left his Bible to me.”

“I inherited my grandma’s smile.”

Without a will, sometimes it’s hard to determine who gets what in a family. Our God understands people, and He also works hard through His Word to clarify things for us, especially the specifics of what our heritage entails: what we will inherit from Him as His faithful children.

Numbers 18:20 (KJV)

And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

Numbers 27:8 (KJV)

And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, if a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.

Psalm 28:9

Save Your people and bless Your inheritance; be their Shepherd also, and carry them forever.

Romans 8:17

... if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Have you ever thought about the fact that we are brothers and sisters of Jesus? What an incredible lineage we have! Our Heavenly Father adopted us, chose us to be His sons and daughters. By so doing, we became His heirs, along with His only Begotten Son, Jesus. Amazing! He has a perfect Son, but chose to adopt us—sinful, mean, stubborn, wayward, contrary, hateful—you get the picture. We are a choice our God made. He chose to welcome us into His Family. He created us for this very purpose.

Galatians 4:7

Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

In Romans 8:15, Paul explains, “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’”

We have an inheritance with Jesus!
And, He plans to share this inheritance



with us, even His Father’s House. There is no quibbling among the kids with this inheritance. Jesus, the rightful heir, accepts us as children of His

Father, thereby withholding nothing that is His Father’s from His siblings. He even “took the heat” of sin for us at His Father’s request. How many siblings would give up everything they were entitled to, including life itself—to save a brother or sister from death? Amazing love: both that of the Father, and that of the only begotten Son.

1 Peter 1:3-4 (KJV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you...

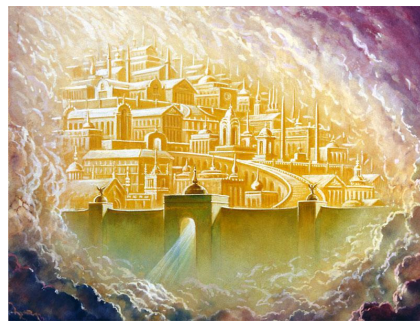
We have a vast and wonderful inheritance that will last forever. Jesus promised us this: *In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a*

place for you. (John 14:2) We get to inherit heaven and be with our Lord and God throughout eternity! No earthly Will could ever bring such joy and rapture as this great news from God Himself of our non-revocable inheritance from Him.

Colossians 3:24

...knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; it is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Let’s always remember to celebrate



our adoption into God’s Family, and our everlasting inheritance from Him. We inherit eternity in heaven. Amazing Father God!

PRAYER THOUGHTS



by Reverend William Gatz

In each one of these articles in this Prayer Series we will continue to set this principle before us – The Power of Prayer is The Word of God (Bible). I have found in my own personal prayer

life, the more familiar I become with the Bible, the more I am not afraid to be daring in my prayer life. When I entered the Coast Guard during the Korean War, I was given a Gideon Pocket Bible. Because I was an electrician on the ship, I was privileged to use the light bulb locker on the ship for a prayer chapel. I had received permission from our Chief Electrician to use it when I was off duty.

The Gideon Bible had the whole New Testament along with the Psalms. I read the New Testament through several times, but I kept reading the Psalms over and over. I learned from the Psalms how brave David, that great man of God, was as he prayed to the Heavenly Father. Reading through this Bible showed me the Power of Prayer is in the Bible.

I also learned from reading God's Word in Acts 2:38, that at our Baptism we receive the Holy Spirit. In Luther's Small Catechism the question is asked, "Who helps us in our Prayer?" The



answer is "God, the Holy Spirit prays with us and for us." In Romans 8:26-27, the Apostle Paul says, "*In the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.*" Paul says two things in

these verses: First, that if we want to pray according to God's will we have to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us. Second, if we have asked the Holy Spirit to lead us, we know that when we have finished our prayer we have prayed according to God's will.

There are other places in the Bible that encourage us to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us in praying. Ephesians 6:18 and Jude 20 are examples. You may ask, "How do we pray letting the Holy Spirit lead us?" We are talking about serious praying. Get in a place where you are alone, take your Bible, and ask the Lord to get your thinking right. A Psalm which has become one of my favorites is Psalm 143. The whole Psalm has meaning for me. I have memorized verses 7 to 12 and run these through my mind. Then I start my prayer, remembering my Heavenly Father and how much He loves me. Next, I remember James 4:2 where the Lord says "*You don't have because you have not asked.*"

I then keep in mind the privilege it is to talk to the Heavenly Father. As I'm praying, I ask the Father if there is anything He wants to teach me that day. (We always have so much to talk to the Lord about, but there are so few times that we give the Lord a chance to speak to us.)

Martin Luther has written many books which Concordia Publishing House has called *Luther's Works*. In Volume 42, Luther says that when he gives the Heavenly Father a chance like this, he has learned more important things than he learned at the Seminary.

After I have thought about the Heavenly Father, I think about Jesus, what He has done for me on the cross,

and how He is the reason that we are privileged to come to the Father. After this, I remember how the Holy Spirit has been given to us at our Baptism to bring us to faith, to keep us in the faith, and to lead and guide us in all areas including our prayers.

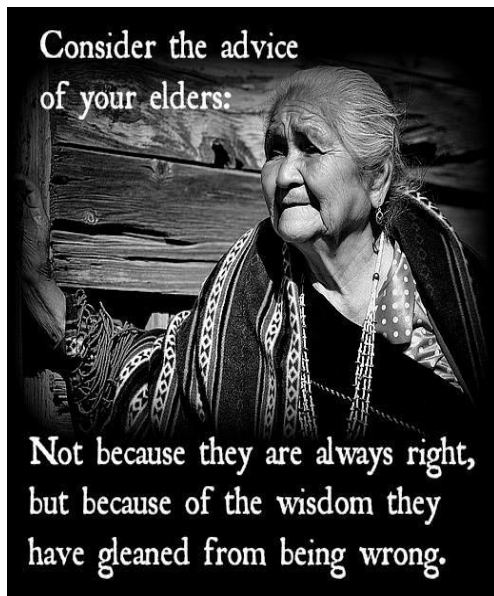
I simply say, "Heavenly Father, lead me as I pray." Let the Holy Spirit lead you, and listen as He guides you. It might seem awkward at first, but the Holy Spirit does want to guide you in all areas in your life. I've reached a point in my life that with just about everything I do, I either say to the Lord "What do you



want to tell me?" or "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

How do I know it's the Lord leading me? I simply ask myself, does it bring

glory to the Lord, or does it bring glory to me? If it brings glory to the Lord, then I know it's the Holy Spirit leading me.



Consider the advice of your elders:

Not because they are always right, but because of the wisdom they have gleaned from being wrong.



JULY

Rev. William Gatz	07/02
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"FOLLOW ME INTO THESE WOODS"

by Cathie Miller

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me..."

John 10:27

In springtime, the world awakens at dawn. The dew moistens the earth in preparation for the warmth of the sun to



come. The air fills with the sweet scents of new greenery. And, all living creatures arise from the darkness of slumber, to greet the brightness of a new day.

On just such a morning, I recently spied a doe and her fawn standing together, just off our deck, about 20 yards from the edge of the woods. The baby could have been anywhere from one hour, to one day old. Spotted and wobbly, he clung to his mother, nestling himself beneath her to nurse, and to bathe in the security of her closeness. But, mother seemed to sense my presence, even though the glass windowpane separated us. With a flick of her white tail, she twitched her ears and quickly headed toward the thick trees and underbrush. It was as if she spoke to her



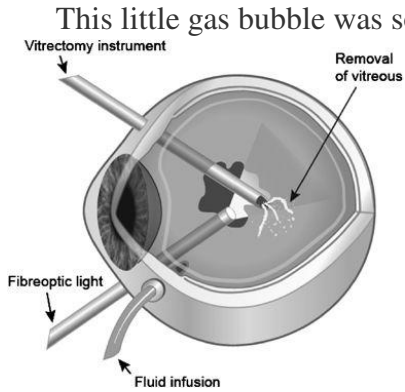
child saying, “Follow me into these woods.”

For a brief moment the fawn hesitated. Instinctively, he understood that in those dark woods lay the potential threats of picker bushes, biting flies, and a stray coyote or two. Not to mention the tall grass which threatened to overtake him. Stopping dead in his tracks, he “bleated” to his mother. But, when she failed to answer, he valiantly plunged into the foliage after her, and both were soon gone from sight.

A year ago, I was diagnosed with Vitreomacular Traction Syndrome (VMT). In layman’s terms, that simply means that the gel-like material inside the eyeball spontaneously begins to pull on the retina. This severe tugging has the potential to, among other things, either detach the retina, or create a hole in the macula of the eye, thereby threatening central vision. The condition only occurs in about 1 in 4,400 people. And, I had it bilaterally...in both of my eyes at the same time. Surgical intervention carries with it the risk of failure to resolve the issue, infection with possible loss of vision, or loss of the eyeball itself. But, surgery was my only option. It seemed I had to risk my vision in order to save it. I was frightened, confused, and full of self-pity all at once. I questioned just why God would lead me, his own child, to such an awful place. It was as if he spoke to me and said, “Follow me into these woods.”

At Kellogg Eye Center in Ann Arbor, Teddy and I met Dr. David Noam Zacks, a quiet and soft-spoken young retinal specialist whose gentle nature belied his fierce and impressive skill in the operating room. Before we knew it, I was under the knife, with my left eye in his capable hands. With unbelievably tiny instruments, my eye was pierced in

three places to allow for the removal of the vitreous center, and the repair of the retinal damage its tugging had brought about. Then a gas bubble was inserted inside the eye to hold the retina in place during the extensive healing process.



become my friend. For ten days after surgery it bounced around inside

my field of vision like a black ping pong ball. But, it gradually got smaller day by day. And on the tenth day, it sadly popped out of sight for the last time.

During this phase of recovery, I learned what “in sickness and in health” truly means in the marriage vows. Teddy helped with the complicated regime of eyedrops, cooked the meals, drove me to the ER when mysterious and frightening light flashes occurred, and sacrificed his masculine sanity watching endless “chick flicks” with me while I had nothing to do but sit and heal.

My eye stayed dilated for one month, making any kind of light uncomfortable. And, the fear of infection remained until about six weeks post-op. But, despite all the ups and downs, a medical miracle played out literally “before my eyes.” Each day brought sharper and clearer sight to my embattled eye, as this once tragic medical condition morphed into a rather fascinating adventure of sorts. And, while my vision will never again be as perfect and precise as it once was, I can see...and with both of my eyes!

Just today, Teddy and I visited Dr. David Noam Zacks for my one-year

anniversary exam. With a shy smile, Dr. Zacks proclaimed that my surgical eye is both healthy and stable. Furthermore, he informed us that, against all odds, my second eye has begun to spontaneously self-correct. No additional surgery is warranted at this time. We left the eye center with a victorious feeling that we had successfully conquered VMT, and won the ocular war!

I will never fully comprehend just why my wonderful eyes had to fail. Or why such an ordeal became such an integral part of my otherwise pleasant life. Maybe I needed a lesson in how to trust God. Maybe God wanted me to “see” him more clearly. For like the fawn, I feared the unknown set before me when faced with great physical danger. Like the fawn, I did not trust my Parent to guide and protect me, and to know what was best for me. To lead me safely through the darkness of the forest, and back into the light of day.



I had to nearly lose my sight, to gain my sight. To gain the wisdom to more certainly trust in the loving and caring hands of my Creator... at all times, and in all ways. I came to “see” that my Father’s ways are perfect. His path is sure. And, that path will one day lead me, and all believers, to Heaven.

I must try to remember this if ever again my Father says, “Follow me into these woods.”



LEADERSHIP AT REDEEMER

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TOPIC FOR AUGUST

The topic for August is *Custom*. A custom can be a habitual practice; the usual way of acting in given circumstances. Or, it also can mean habits or usages collectively. Another meaning can be a practice so long established that it has the force of law. But when used as a verb, it can take you down a different path all together. If you like to write and need a prompt to get you started, enjoy the challenge.

The *Reflection* newsletter is meant to help reflect our Lord in the daily life and actions of His people, including our struggles, our service to those around us, our community activities, and our worship services here at Redeemer. Please consider sharing God-sightings in the community or within our church with others through this newsletter. You, our people at Redeemer, are invited to be part of revealing our Lord actively at work in and around us in our world today.

Send your articles or information to bennitt49@yahoo.com, by the 15th of each month, to be included in the following month's newsletter. Articles on the topics of Family, Prayer, and Outreach are always welcome and accepted for publication each month.

