

**REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH  
LCMS**

**FAILURE**



**MAY 2018 PUBLICATION  
VOLUME 11 ISSUE 5**

*Redeemer Reflection Newsletter*

*Loving People To Christ*

**Redeemer Lutheran Church 3637 Spring Arbor Road, Jackson, MI 49201  
Phone: 517-750-3100 Fax: 517-750-4590 Email: rlcofc@comcast.net  
Visit our website at: [www.redeemerjackson.org](http://www.redeemerjackson.org)**

---

# REDEEMER REFLECTION

---

## AND THE LOSER IS...?

by Pastor Michael Geml

The topic for the May *Reflection* newsletter is *Failure*. I have always had a soft spot in my heart for the failure; the sad soul who gets knocked down time and again. I am sure that some of you will remember one of my favorite comic strip

characters named Ziggy. Ziggy is a short, bald, barefoot little man with a bulbous nose. One description of Ziggy's life from Wikipedia reads, "One of the great appeals of the comic strip is how Ziggy himself deals with the endless stream of misfortunes which befall him on a daily basis." Ziggy has appeared for decades as one of the most lovable of losers ever to appear in a comic strip. One of the most memorable Ziggy cartoons for me was one with him reading his message from a fortune cookie. Ziggy's fortune read, "You are short, bald, unattractive, and will never amount to anything." Poor Ziggy.

I like to root for the losers. I want Ziggy to be happy. I want Charlie Brown to kick that football. I want the Lions to win a Super Bowl. (I have more hope for the first two than for the third.) The reason I root for the loser is that I have



done my share of losing. I have lost in many areas of life, including sports. Losing hurts regardless of what the context may be. It can cause us to have feelings of inferiority. Over time we may convince ourselves that we are doomed to failure. We see others winning and

wonder, why can't I?

Why not take a different look at failure. What if we were to embrace it for what it is? We certainly have Scriptural basis for such an approach. Ecclesiastes 7:20: "*Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins.*" Romans 3:12: "*All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.*" See, there we have it. We are all failures. And thank God for that. For unless and until we embrace the Biblical truth of our own failures and shortcomings, there can be no hope for a truly God-pleasing life.

With the admission of failure comes the gift of victory. In theological terms, we call this Law and Gospel. The Law convicts us of our sins. It shows us just how far we have fallen short of the perfect glory of God. Then the Gospel

sets before our eyes the cross of Jesus and the perfect forgiveness He won for a world of lost and hopeless failures. Rejoice fellow losers, for the loser and the winner are one in the same... it's you! Thanks be to God!!!

Your servant in Christ,  
Pastor Geml



## **2018 RUMMAGE SALE May 3-5, 2018**

We're running out of time! The annual Redeemer Rummage Sale is this month, May 3-5, 2018. Thursday and Friday, the hours for the Sale are from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., and on Saturday, from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Please bring your gently used, clean items and plastic or paper bags to church soon and leave them in the designated room in the lower level education wing for use during the annual sale.

Yes, you read it right! We're extending the Sale from two to three days for the convenience of the many who haven't been able to enjoy the sale or help with it because of work or school schedules. So, we'll need more help, particularly on the sale-days themselves.

We could use extra help on Saturday for the last-minute shoppers and beginning of the cleanup. Donation of your time and talents, at any point and for any amount of time during the set-up, the sale itself, and the cleanup, is a blessing to this area of service to the community.

We also need willing and able men and women to assist with loading and unloading donations the week before and the days during the Sale. Yes, it's work. But it's also fun, and a great fellowship experience. Please join us. The training is free. The fellowship...priceless!

"The new recipient for the funds raised through our Rummage Sale will be the local St. Luke's Clinic, a not-for-profit medical clinic here in Jackson," says Debbie Rockwell, who will be the point-person for the event this year.

The Backpack Program has been the focus of the funding for many years now, but that program is well-funded through at least 2020.

Last year, it was suggested by the highly organized and experienced crew of volunteers for the Sale, that some other group or groups within our congregation should be offered the opportunity to schedule, organize, and conduct this year's Rummage Sale as a fundraiser for their group, ministry area, or community agency. Since Debbie Rockwell has stepped forward to take this on, we pray that those with past



experience in running this large sale would be willing to offer guidance and support to her (and to new volunteers) where needed. The value of those who have worked this event for years cannot be over-emphasized, and we invite one and all to volunteer their time and experience as they have in the past. Help in training the next generation/group of volunteers is invaluable and coveted by the newbies on-the-job. If you've never been involved before, now would be a great time to jump in and join the fun!

There is a room in the lower level designated for clothing and small items that can be brought in early, but please do not bring in large items until the week of the Sale.

As always, we truly thank and praise the Lord for His continued blessings and provision of all necessary resources (food, funds, and volunteers) to carry out this community service ministry. To Him be the glory!

### TOPIC FOR JUNE

The topic for June is *Persevere*. The *Reflection* 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 in Redeemer church for 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 articles or information to [bennitt49@yahoo.com](mailto: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.

### MAY

Jerimiah Bigelow 05/01



Kelly Schnebelt	05/03
Tiffany Kane	05/04
Art Drake	05/07
Dennis Dixon	05/08
Rick Scouten	05/08
Dave Althouse	05/09
Jim Weatherwax	05/09
Logan McFarland	05/20
Trenton Schnebelt	05/20
Jerry Rockwell	05/21
Barb Hock	05/22
Deanna Brandt	05/23
Kim Britton	05/25
Nancy Bryant	05/27
Megan Bahr	05/31

"If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, 'thank you,' that would suffice."

— MEISTER ECKHART —



## **NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER**

**Thursday May 3, 2018**

Excerpt from:

<http://www.annegrahamlotz.org/events/national-day-of-prayer-task-force/> retrieved on April 2, 2018.

The theme for the National Day of Prayer this year blends 2 Chronicles 7:14 with Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9:19: For Your Great Name's Sake! ...hear us...forgive us...heal us.

All of us can agree that our nation needs healing. And God promises to do so, but on the condition that we pray humbly, seek His face, and turn from our own sin.

Will America be healed? We won't know until we join together and pray. So please, join me in prayer on behalf of America. And invite others to join us.

Redeemer will have a Prayer Service in our sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 3 in support of this essential prayer focus.

## **NATIONAL PRAYER**

Retrieved from:

<http://www.nationaldayofprayer.org/> on April 2, 2018.

### **2018 NATIONAL PRAYER FOR AMERICA**

Our Dear Heavenly Father, while we come to You in complete humility, we

also come to You with boldness in the authoritative name of Your One and Only Son, Jesus Christ, who is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. In Jesus' name, fill us now with Your Holy Spirit and lead us as we pray in Jesus' name for America.

Oh God, we are burdened for our nation today. We turn from the sins that we have committed against your Word and your Name. We turn away from our contentious words and ways toward one another that has led us to division and polarization. We turn away from our disrespect and lack of dignity toward each other, and we turn away from our continual devaluation of all human life from the womb until death in this world. We also turn away from and refuse to participate in skepticism, criticism, and cynicism in our nation. We turn away from anything that divides us, and we run toward the gospel of Jesus Christ that is the only thing that has the power to unite us together.

Lord, in this critical hour in our nation, we pray for unity in America. Only You can bring unity, harmony, and oneness in America. As your Word calls us in Ephesians 4:3, "*Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace,*" we ask You to empower us to make every effort to live in unity, to call for unity, and to forward unity in America continually.

We pray for the churches in America to unify in Jesus Christ and to pray as one unified spiritual family for America. May Your Church pray for America passionately, perpetually, privately, and publicly.

We pray for God's power to unify families, workplaces, communities, and cities in America. By Your Spirit,

lead us to forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, and unity.

We pray for people of all ethnicities and races in America to come together as one, living in peace and unity together. Oh Lord, because each of us is created in Your image, please give us the courage to stand against all racial and ethnic division, denouncing it as evil and sinful, while simultaneously coming together in unity with all persons knowing this is God's will for us.

We pray in unity for the security of our nation. We ask You to preserve the United States of America from the forces of evil that are threatening our lives and our future. God, please guard all persons in public and private settings from anyone or anything that desires to harm us or take our lives. Our future is in Your hands.

We agree clearly, unite visibly, and pray extraordinarily for the next Great Spiritual Awakening in America. Oh Lord, wake up Your church spiritually and convict Your people to agree clearly, unite visibly, and pray extraordinarily until the next Great Spiritual Awakening occurs in our generation.

Oh God, we stand together upon Your words in *Psalms 133:1*, "*How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony.*" Through Jesus' name and by the Holy Spirit's power, we pray for all Americans to unify and to live together in unity.

In the mighty and majestic name of Jesus Christ who is the Only Savior and the Only Hope in this world, we pray. Amen.

Dr. Ronnie Floyd  
President, National Day of Prayer Task Force  
Senior Pastor, Cross Church

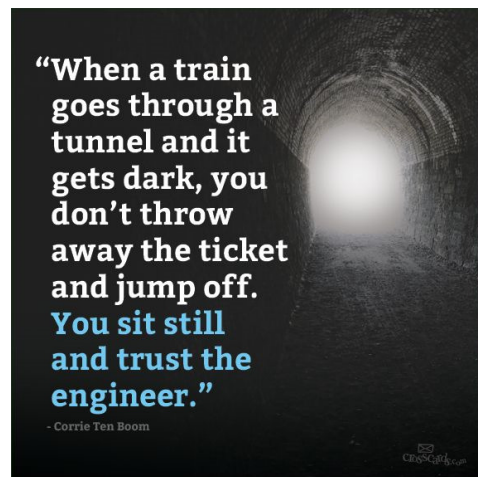


## WOMEN OF REDEEMER (LWML)

by Trudy Gatz

All Women of Redeemer are invited to get involved in ministries that unite women in serving our Lord. LWML (Lutheran Women's Missionary League) is just one of many ways that we serve within, as well as outside, the church doors. Any women of Redeemer who are serving the Lord in any way—including within the home—are invited to attend the meeting on Wednesday, May 16 at 10:00 a.m. in the church library. Come find out more of what is being planned for the future and how we can unite women's ministries under one *umbrella* to avoid duplications in service and to make our ministries more productive. We will also have a Bible study from the LWML Quarterly.

Everyone is welcome! Please join us and help us chart a new combined course for the future of women's ministries at Redeemer.



---

## FAMILY FAITH LIFE

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



### Back-to-School Community Event

Redeemer and Trinity will again be partnering to coordinate efforts to serve our community this August (exact date TBD). We served nearly 500 people in 2017 and we need to start collecting now to reach our goal to be ready to serve 600 guests this year! Each month between now and then we'll have a challenge item. These items will be in the bulletin to remind you and can be turned in in the narthex.

#### May's Challenge Item:

Boys & Girls Underwear (**New!** All sizes.)

Besides items, we need a coordinator to work with Kimber Walsh for this event. This person would be involved in planning alongside the rest of the team and help coordinate logistics like schedule, donors, and finances to help make the event a success. Please contact Kimber at [kimberwalsh@comcast.net](mailto:kimberwalsh@comcast.net) or 517-750-3100 for more information or if you're interested.

We also are in need of church and non-profit partnerships in the community, corporate sponsorship, bulk in-kind donations, and volunteers to

work in each area of the event. If you have contacts or information that may be helpful or if you'd like to volunteer in the early planning phase, please also contact Kimber.

---

**Pictures for new website!** A team of volunteers is in the process of creating a new website for Redeemer. We need your help! If you have any high-resolution digital pictures from Redeemer ministries or events that we're currently doing that you'd be willing to share and allow us to use on our new website, please contact Kimber Walsh at 517-750-3100 or [kimberwalsh@comcast.net](mailto:kimberwalsh@comcast.net) to coordinate the best way to get those files.

---



As the school year ends, there are students who are being invited to honors and awards ceremonies to recognize what they've accomplished. Many would view these students as successful. There are also students who are signing up for summer school; those who failed classes or barely scraped by. Many would view these students as having failed. I think the measures of success and failure are a little harder to pin down than that. What if we measured success by giving it your all, rather than by what awards were won? What if we measured failure by not trying at all, rather than by not meeting someone else's standards?

The end of the school year is a time when children, and all of us, can be reminded of our successes and failures. We look back with pride on the moments we feel we gave our all and we look back wishing we could get do-overs for the moments we didn't try at all. I don't know about you, but I hate having failure on my record. Even if no one knows about it but me, I want to do the work again to prove to myself that I can give it my all.

Success and failure and reflecting on the past school year give many opportunities for faith talks in your family. Here's a few ideas to get you started, but you can talk about faith anytime, anywhere as Deuteronomy 6:5-7 reminds us to talk about the things of God "as you sit at home, as you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up."

- Report Cards—Regardless of what grades your children earned on their report cards, they indicate a season of the year coming to a close; a term ending. Though our school work is graded, our faith is not. Talk about how we get our faith, how our faith grows, and what role we have in what our faith looks like.
- Yearbooks—A picture book of the school year that captures memories can be a fun way to capture a little bit of history that you were a part of. It's important to remember things that happen in our lives. How does the Bible capture real history within its pages? Why is it important to have that record of history?
- Move Up—Typically, the end of a year means children are moving up a grade. There is much excitement and anticipation

surrounding this event. What are some examples from the Bible that people felt great excitement or anticipation? Why? What can we learn from these examples?

- Say Goodbyes—Every year ends with several goodbyes—mostly to people in our class and our teachers—but also to a stage of life. Talk about some easy goodbyes and difficult goodbyes in life. Goodbyes are a precursor (almost always) to hellos. What are some hellos you look forward to because of other goodbyes? How is this like our earthly goodbyes and heavenly hellos will be some day?

What other opportunities for faith talks is God giving your family?

---



### **BUILDERS: Tool Time for Families**

Have you ever wanted to make something and had the idea in your mind of what it would be like, but you lacked the skills to execute some or all the steps to make it the way you imagined? Or thought something like "I want to have faithful kids that know how to make good decisions" or "I want to have a marriage that can withstand the storms of life that will inevitably come"?



Families today need a lot of tools to go about life implementing Biblical principles in all they do. It's no easy feat! Builders is a new gathering time we're launching to give families tools, so they can be built up and together build up the body of Christ. It will be a monthly offering where family related topics will be shared, or activities will be done together with the purpose of building up families and the body of Christ. We will meet the **first Sunday of every month from 3:30—6:00 p.m.** Dinner will be provided, and childcare will be arranged, when fitting, after families have signed up so we know how many we need to accommodate. This exciting opportunity will give us all the chance to add Biblical tools to our toolboxes! The aim is that we'll cover various topics for families, beginning with parenting on June 3.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, we'll begin "Visionary Parenting" by Rob & Amy Rienow which will help you capture a God-sized vision for your family. Through studying the Bible, families will be equipped, inspired, and changed for the glory of God. Do you know why God brought your family together? You'll discover why God created families, why He gave you your children and God's grand vision for the family. This topic is relevant to any family with kids at home.

Please look for the sign-up sheet in the narthex and contact Kimber Walsh, Family Life Educator, with questions. A full schedule will be released soon so you can mark your calendar for the coming months' topics.

**Proverbs 1:8-9**

*Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.*

**FAILURE**

by Peggy Bennitt

Do you ever feel like a failure? As I look back over my life, I see lots of failure. Lots. It can be very depressing when I realize how often I've failed. And, the sad part is, I'll continue to fail as long as I live! Yikes! What kind of future is that?

Scary. Morbid. Miserable. Traumatic. Worthless. Wretched. Painful. Shameful. Dark. Is that what life is all about? Is failure the end? Why do we have failure in our lives, anyway? What's the point to it all?

Failure. Why on earth do we have to deal with failure? Can we trust God to give us answers to these questions and to get us through to a new tomorrow? Does He give us any advice or encouragement? Hmmmm. Let's see. Where can we find Him and connect with Him and get feedback and help from Him? Can books and stories and the experiences of others help us avert failure today? Can history keep us from repeating failure? Can *His Story* soothe the wounds of past failure and set us on the road to Life?

I have a well-marked Bible (actually, "falling apart and should be replaced")



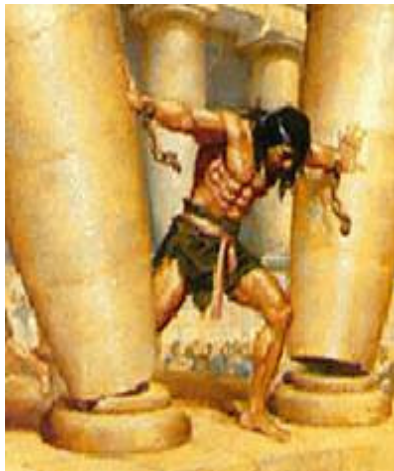
that I turn to often, because God's Word is so alive and focused on us, He always tells me something each time I open His

Book of Books. Highlighted or starred or underlined are thousands and thousands of words that have helped me through failures and missteps in the past, and better still, will help me through more in the future.

Now, you need to know that He does *not* always tell me nice things about myself.

*“Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep Your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.”* Psalm 19:12-13

But He always shows me examples of others who have walked through what I’m going through, He gives me advice



through a psalm or a parable or a prophet, or relates to me a tale of days gone by where someone else failed big time, and He used it for the good of a whole nation.

Sampson’s life is a good example of failures-turned-to-success and used by God. You can read more in Judges 13-16.

The woman at the well is an amazing look at how Jesus can use a failure to



evangelize a village (John 4:1-42).

Through all my failures, He has shown me how to fail-forward. Through His Word and answered prayers, He teaches me, each day of my life, to trust Him to guide me around or through obstacles and pitfalls.

“I will heal their waywardness and love them freely...” Hosea 14:4a

When my failures begin to overwhelm me, He puts someone in place to say just the right thing, or just to give a nice hug or smile to let me know I’m cared for. He shines through the faces and actions and touches of those around me, and I boldly then can step over the lumps and bumps and would-be deathtraps of my failures.

Failures keep us humble, but not cowed or scared.



Failure: why on earth do we have to deal with failure? Can we trust God to give us answers to these questions and to get us through to a new tomorrow?

The answer to these questions is a resounding, “YES!” We can trust Him to turn our most bitter failure into a wonderful expression and admission of faith and confidence in our Lord. Failure is human. Failing-forward is God working through our human weaknesses. Let’s let Him use us, failures and all, to bring His kingdom, His love, to those

who do not yet know Him. Bring them Jesus, and we cannot fail.



## REDEEMER LIBRARY

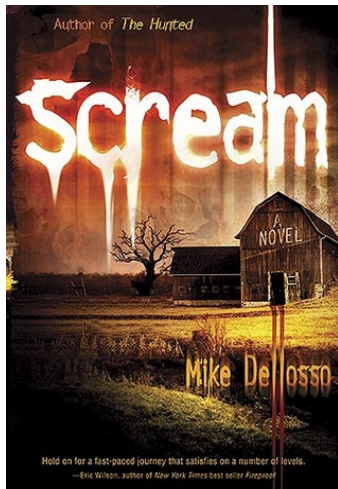
### Book Review

by Peggy Bennitt

### SCREAM by Mike Dellosso

Good people **do not** always go to heaven. That's a statement of fact. Unless we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as our Savior, we will go to hell! Harsh. But true. "Weeping and gnashing of teeth" true. In 1 John 5:12, we find, "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever **does not have the Son of God** does not have life." There is no middle ground between the saved and the damned. You either are or you aren't. Tough truths.

Hard to understand maybe, but author Mike Dellosso makes this reality oh, so real and scary that you can hear the **SCREAM**. "28 *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell,*" Matthew 10:28



Mark Stone is an everyday working stiff like most of us. He's a mechanic who is dealing with a marriage-in-crisis and a rash of sudden phone calls interrupted with maniacal screams and wailing. Those on both ends of the phone hear the blood-chilling screams. It's not a delusion. The screams chill Mark, and bring back childhood memories of Biblical descriptions of hell, long lost to his unbelief and cynicism.



*"...and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,"*

Matthew 13:50.

Deaths follow. A maniac is abducting women. A sheriff is in denial of a possible serial kidnapper or even a killer on the loose. Then Mark's wife is taken.

As he struggles with his tattered faith and his damaged marriage, the phone calls and screams persist, and a madman has Mark's wife. The search for the kidnapper is now terrifyingly personal.

This is the first Dellosso novel I've ever read and it does not disappoint. I struggled to put it down when mundane daily life became insistent. If you want real Scriptural truths described in terror-arousing realities, this book is for you. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life,**" John 3:16.

A plus for me with this novel, was the author holding his readers accountable to



“DO” something with the faith that they have...share it! A Great Read!

It only costs you time in the Library browsing through some wonderful literature, movies, and inspiring tomes. Caution: you may get captured by the awesome adventures waiting for you there! Check it out in our own Redeemer Library.



## ANSWERED PRAYERS

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Thank you all for the prayers offered on behalf of my daughter-in-law, Erin. Her surgery on Wednesday was long and difficult, but the doctors say it went well. They removed the cancerous tumor, part of the pancreas, and her spleen.

There have been some issues with pain control, but I think that is mostly resolved now. She will be at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit for at least a few more days and then home to recover.

Join me in prayers of thanks and praise to our Almighty God who is so good and hears His children's prayers!

In His name,

Sara Finton

## ROBERT AND ROBYN AND ME

by Cathie Miller

Robert and Robyn came to visit us again this spring. For several years now,

Teddy and I have had a pair of robins make their home beneath our deck. We have had the pleasure of observing the “husband and wife” team build their nest, lay their eggs, and succeed in producing a batch of red-breasted babies. At times we have witnessed a setback, such as the afternoon a large cat attacked the speckled eggs, leaving nothing but a pile of shells and yolk on the pebbles below the untended nest. Another day we passed by the window at the perfect moment to catch four small fluff balls skimming across the ground on their very first attempt at flight into the soft azure blue sky above.

But, our feathered friends have not always been welcomed houseguests. Robyn is easy-going and content. She patiently does her job each day, seemingly unfazed by the drama unfolding in the world around her. With single-minded determination, she handles the tragedy of broken eggs, with the same grace and skill she displays on the day her offspring are finally able to fly the coop!

Robert, however, is another story. As a male, his job appears to be primarily that of defender of the realm. He must protect his mate, and his future progeny, from the threat of the birds inhabiting the woods, just past the safe emerald green lawn of our back yard. In so doing, Robert must fend off each intruder...including that particular one he “sees” staring back at him each time he spies his own reflection in our kitchen windowpane! In anger, he will fly at the supposed rival, only to crash into the glass with a sickening thud, leaving bits of feathers, and splotches of fluid residue splattered on the plate glass. Neither bodily damage, nor obvious pain, will halt this activity. Robert is duty bound to destroy his perceived

enemies, even to the point of being the cause of his own death.

Teddy and I have tried countless ways to stop Robert from his suicidal quest. We have pasted strips of newspapers to the windows. Taped photographs of nonsensical human beings to the glass. Tethered balloons to the deck railing. Even pounded on the window and hollered, to no avail. Nothing...nothing has been able to stop Robert's fanatical behavior. Until Ronald Reagan. Yes, President Ronald Reagan has proven to be a success at ending this aviary spectacle once and for all!

One Halloween, when our boys were in high school, Teddy purchased a large blow-up caricature doll of Ronald



Reagan. Kind of like a punching bag. Over the years, we have had fun with Ronnie, taking him for car rides and such to the delight and amusement of the neighbors. But, we found him

most useful this spring in eliminating the dive-bombing kamikaze raids of Robert the Robin. We discovered that Robert will completely avoid the house if Ronald Reagan is sitting on his step-ladder on our deck! Either he fears this pretend man more than his own shadow, or he foolishly trusts in what he perceives to be his savior from renegade neighbors. In either case, our windows are now clean. And, our homestead is peaceful once again, thanks to the likeness of a former president of the United States.

Robyn seems to instinctively sense that her Creator knows and cares for her. In both sorrow and joy, she continues to live her life as God in Heaven intends. She faithfully trusts and accepts each outcome, understanding that each of her days is cradled in His love and protection. Even as a lowly bird, Robyn knows the peace that passes all understanding.

If only Robert felt the same. If only Robert could realize that no tangible threat exists in the windowpane he fights so fiercely. And, that there is no safety to be obtained via a child's rubber doll. Robert flaps and flutters to the point of death because he simply will not learn to trust that what he "sees" is not real.

In times of trouble, I have sadly too often been like Robert, and found myself peering into that same windowpane. Too often I have found the face of worry and despair staring back at me. Yet, as a Christian, I must learn to be more like Robyn. I must learn to look for a different face in that window. The face of my Savior. The Son of God, who willingly and purposefully struggled and fought for me. Who died and rose for me. Who won life eternal for me. Who with His Father in Heaven numbers the very hairs of my head. And, through the Holy Spirit, guides and protects me through all the sorrows and the joys of my life, granting me, by grace, the peace that passes all understanding.

Robert and Robyn and me. If

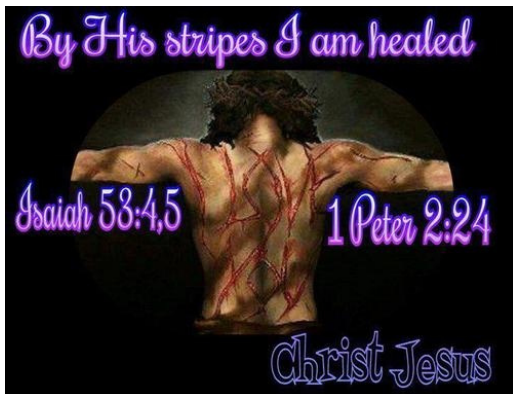


not one bird shall fall to the ground apart from my Father, what then have I to fear? For am I not of more value than many robins...

## IS UNFROGIVENESS FAILURE?

by Peggy Bennitt, FLE

I struggle with forgiving others when they hurt me. Repeatedly, hurt me or mine. I feel justified, but then I feel guilty. I feel that they don't deserve my forgiveness. Then, I feel mean-spirited. But they keep doing it over and over again, and seem to have no regret and/or no clue that they are being unkind or spiteful, so why should I forgive them?



Does God feel this way when I am hurtful or mean-spirited? How can He tolerate me when I behave in this same shameful manner myself? Am I a failure if I don't forgive? Why don't we forgive? Here are a few reasons why:

*🕯 We don't know how.*

Many of us think forgiving someone means saying that it's all okay and forgotten. Sometimes we think it means that the offending person must admit guilt for trust to be reestablished. We may think that forgiveness frees the offenders from the consequences of their

actions. These *can* be a part of forgiveness, but really, forgiveness is simply giving up your right to condemn and handing that justice over to God. It's not neat or necessarily pretty like we want though. We need to let go of our orneriness and make peace, which is not always an easy task.

*🕯 We need to let go of resentment.*

Anger and resentment often help us feel righteousness in our indignation. We need to realize that our bitterness and unforgiveness hurts only us, and possibly loved ones we may be trying to protect. Resentment and bitterness are a security blanket that will not provide comfort or peace for our wounded hearts. To forgive, we must let go of bitterness and expose our wounds to be healed by our Lord.



*🕯 We have to give our forgiveness to someone who is unworthy.* We want people to get what they deserve, especially when they hurt us. The problem is no one deserves forgiveness. They deserve to get what they gave. Forgiveness means they escape the "just desserts" of their offense to us.

*🕯 We need to abandon our pride.*

We are right and they are wrong. That makes me feel good about myself. The person may be wrong, abusive, cruel, manipulative, controlling, a liar, or a bully. But forgiveness forces us to think about what made them that way. What happened to them? We don't excuse their behavior, but it helps us see a new perspective. Forgiveness also challenges us to think about the pain we have inflicted on others and our own need for forgiveness.

🕯️ Forgiveness is an act of a full heart. When we forgive, we act from a position of strength, a strength many people don't have. It requires resilience, love, faith, empathy, openness, and vulnerability. Many of us are so damaged by our own wounded spirits that forgiveness is next to impossible for us to handle. As we lean on our Lord for His constant and continual forgiveness, how can we NOT extend that gift to those who offend or wound us? Forgiving others gives us life from a position of strength rather than weakness, through God's grace and His daily forgiveness.



## OLD DOG, NEW TRICKS!

by Kristin Rathje, guest writer, with selections and/or excerpts from her Blog, *Next Chapter*; used with permission.

Today and yesterday, as I was driving to and from work, appointments, and errands, I was listening to an episode of

the podcast *Invisibilia*, called “Emotions.” The episode discusses a different way to look at emotions (most of which was over my head but some of which was quite healing and liberating). One liberating part was the idea that emotions are learned and so can be re-learned or re-directed. The podcast, which cites the research of a professor at Northeastern University, in no way implies that emotions should be stifled or disregarded. (I’ve tried that strategy, thankyouverymuch.) Instead, it suggests that we often experience emotions in light of constructs that we have been taught or have believed about ourselves or about the world. For instance, I have, for whatever reason, long held the unspoken belief that I have to be right, even perfect—getting it wrong is unacceptable. This simple subliminal construct—“I need to be right”—has shaped the way I have experienced failure. If I miss an item on a test, let down a friend, or break a glass while doing dishes (which I do about once a week), I have failed. Imagine all the mistakes an average human makes in any given day and you will have a rough estimate of how many times a day I consciously or unconsciously give myself the message that I am unacceptable.

Yeah. It’s pretty toxic.

Now imagine if I shifted my thinking to be based on the construct that “All of life is a series of missteps that provide opportunities for growth.” If I lived my life based on this construct, I would *expect* myself to make several mistakes during the day, and rather than judging or belittling myself, I would instead search around each “oops” for the growth or learning opportunity. I would make no fewer or no more mistakes, I

would just have a different emotional experience...

I am hoping over time to shift from self-deprecation to tender grace. It's gonna take some time, but I do believe this old dog can learn this new trick.

Romans 12:2

*“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind”*

## PRAYER THOUGHTS

The *Prayer Thoughts* series, by our former Pastor Wm. Gatz, will be deferred for now while he and Trudy enjoy a vacation out of state. When I talked to him by phone recently, they were having a wonderful time visiting and catching up with family.

Please pray for a relaxing and refreshing time for them during this visit, and bless their travel when they return home.

## SUMMER DIGGING

by Craig Britton



I don't even pretend to know if we will have a summer season in 2018, but all history testifies that we probably will. So here goes. Summer is that season for the famous trek to the beach, pail and shovel in hand, with the kids or

grandkids. It's also the season for kicking back, soaking in the sunshine and for church members ... well, dialing back a bit. Now please don't



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

misunderstand. We all need respite, and this is not a plea for summer giving or attendance at worship. This is about taking some of that needed break time and making personal spiritual investments. And while I am not talking about pails and shovels and sand, I am advocating some “spiritual” digging. So, what do the tools look like?

I want to advocate for some terrific Lutheran tools for summer digging. We have a tremendous amount of materials to aid summer treasure hunting and even sand castle building for God's Kingdom.

Of course, the premier tool in our cadre is the Bible. And while it isn't a

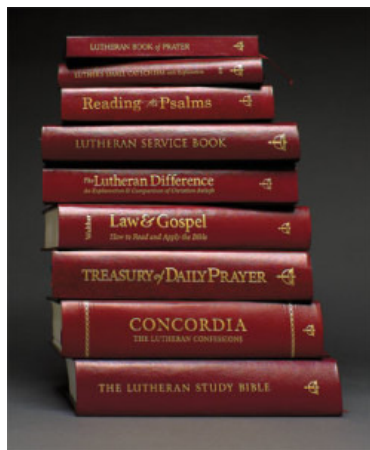


specifically Lutheran tool, the other tools in the box for the summer can refine our



use of and love for it. The translation is up to you although any of the other tools that are published by CPH will reflect the Synod's choice of the English Standard Version (ESV) as their preferred text. Choose a Bible you enjoy reading. I have been enjoying getting acquainted with the time-honored King James Version in my personal reading of late. The language is not that difficult and reading more slowly can produce some great results as well.

Our classic place to begin, after Holy Scripture, is "Luther's Small Catechism." The latest edition is just out. It retains the text common since the old blue editions of the eighties but includes some tremendous new commentary and study materials that help sort out the Bible's take on the most current of



family discussion applications. Next, I suggest getting familiar with our most current Lutheran Hymnal known as "Lutheran Service Book" (LSB). That's right, a hymnal.

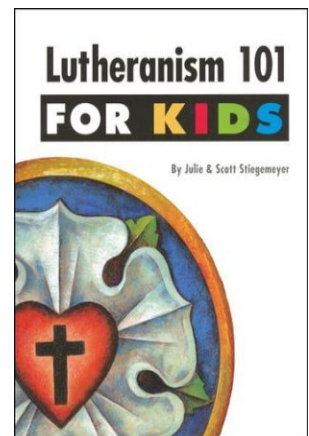
There are tremendous resources in addition to the hymns themselves. And while I am at it, may I encourage you to make a regular habit of reading the hymns. Treasure troves they are. Great theology and commentary on the Bible come straight from much of what we sing together. But there are wonderful sections with prayers for many situations, the prayer services of the church, the various settings of the Divine Service, and various liturgies as well as

lectionary schedules and helps for reading the Psalms daily. The LSB is available from CPH in a personal edition as well as the pew version. In my view, every Lutheran home should have one.

"Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions" is a recent CPH publication housing all the confessions of the Lutheran Church. It is reader friendly and includes great articles on Reformation History that really help you "place" the development of the teaching on which we stand. It's a big book available in both hard cover and paper. It includes both the Small and Large Catechisms, Luther's Treatise on the Papacy and all our founding documents. Anything but dry, this is a feast for any Bible-lover. Reading just a few pages a day will go a long way in helping you learn, review, and pass on the faith handed to us. One of my favorite resources is CPH's "Reading the Psalms with Luther." This volume includes all 150 Biblical psalms, along with comments by Dr. Luther and prayers to help us integrate the psalms with everyday life.

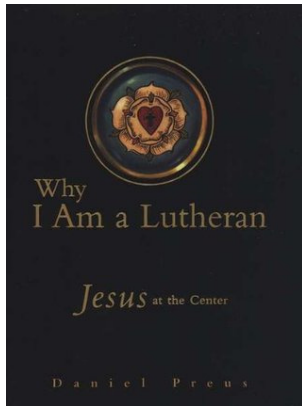


One category of publications that are very recent are the books of the "Lutheranism 101" series also published by CPH. The flagship volume named for the series is a summary of Lutheran teaching in an extremely accessible and fun format. Other



books in the series include “*Lutheranism 101 for KIDS*,” “*The Lord’s Supper*,” “*Baptism*,” and most recently, “*Lutheran Worship 101*,” which really helps to reconnect us all with the historic roots of the Divine Service.

Let me offer just a few books from contemporary Lutheran authors. These are books that are among my favorites and perhaps they would be helpful to you. Gene Veith’s “*Spirituality of the*



*Cross*” is a yearly read for me. It highlights the distinctives of Lutheran teaching and gives an account of what brought the author through nearly every flavor of Christianity, to solid conviction

that Lutheranism is the most faithful read of the Bible. Daniel Preus’s “*Why I Am a Lutheran*” is great to focus on the central issue of Lutheranism: Jesus the Savior. A couple more titles are future classics. John Kleinig’s “*Grace Upon Grace*,” and Gene Veith and Trevor Sutton’s “*Authentic Christianity*” are well worth your time, as well as Matt Richard’s “*Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?*”

I better stop now. You do need to spend some time with your spouse and family at a real beach near you. But while you dig in the sand, manage your bar-b-que, and slather on that tanning lotion, don’t forget to do maintenance and renewal work on your soul. Hopefully some of these tools will help.



Happy Digging!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ☺ **National Day of Prayer: May 3<sup>rd</sup>.** Prayer gathering for all at 12:00, Noon at *Bucky Harris Park* in downtown Jackson.
- ☺ **Redeemer Rummage Sale: May 3—5,** 9:00 a.m. –6:00 p.m., Thursday and Friday; 9:00 a.m. –2:00 p.m. Saturday
- ☺ **Prayer Walk: May 6<sup>th</sup>:** 2:00 p.m. meet at Prospect Street McDonald’s
- ☺ **Mothers’ Day: May 13<sup>th</sup>,** Last Sunday Confirmation/Sunday classes before summer break
- ☺ **Confirmation Sunday: May 20<sup>th</sup>,** 10:00 a.m. –One Service
- ☺ **Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>: 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.
- ☺ **Vacation Bible School: June 18—22, 5:15—8:00 p.m.** Evening VBS, with a meal provided.
- ☺ **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<sup>th</sup>,** 10:00 a.m. –One Service with the Picnic following in the church Pavilion. Tentative theme: *Christmas in July*.
- ☺ **Relay for Life: August 3—4.**
- ☺ **Community Back-2-School Event:** Tentatively planned for **Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup>,** in various locations, TBA. Contact Kimber Walsh for more information.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<p>1</p> <p>C—Denotes Communion Service</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Craig's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.—Countryside</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study— 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Craig's Bible Study 2:30 p.m., Ganton's, S. A.</p> <p>National Day of Prayer 7:00 p.m. Prayer Service</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Men's Choir 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Men's Buddy Ball 10:00 a.m.</p>
<p><b>RUMMAGE SALE</b> May 3 &amp; 4, 9:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m., May 5th, 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.</p>						
<p>6</p> <p>Divine Service— C 8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Bible Classes for Adults, Youth, Children and Confirmands— 9:20 a.m.—10:20 a.m.</p> <p>Praise Service 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Prayer Walk 8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Adult Choir 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Behold Your God II 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Handbells 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Elders' Meeting 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Quilters 9:00 a.m.</p> <p>Craig's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.—Countryside</p> <p>Ministry Council 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study— 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Craig's Bible Study 2:30 p.m., Ganton's, S. A.</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Men's Choir 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Men's Buddy Ball 10:00 a.m.</p>
<p>13</p> <p>Divine Service 8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Bible Classes for Adults, Youth, Children and Confirmands— 9:20 a.m.—10:20 a.m.</p> <p>Praise Service— C 10:30 a.m.</p> <p></p>	<p>14</p> <p>Adult Choir 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Behold Your God II 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Handbells 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>15</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>REFLECTION DEADLINE</b></p>	<p>16</p> <p>Craig's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.—Countryside</p> <p>Women of Redeemer 10:00 a.m.—Library</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study— 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Craig's Bible Study 2:30 p.m., Ganton's, S. A.</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Men's Choir 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Men's Buddy Ball 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>VBS Planning 10:00 a.m.</p>
<p>20</p> <p>Confirmation Service— C 10:00 a.m.</p> <p></p>	<p>21</p> <p>Adult Choir 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Handbells 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Quilters 9:00 a.m.-12:00 Noon</p> <p>Craig's Countryside Bible Study 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Leadership Board 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study— 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Craig's Bible Study 2:30 p.m., Ganton's, S. A.</p>	<p>25</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHURCH OFFICE WILL CLOSE AT NOON FOR MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY</b></p>	<p>26</p> <p>Men's Choir 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Men's Buddy Ball 10:00 a.m.</p>
<p>27</p> <p>Divine Service 8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Praise Service— C 10:30 a.m.</p> <p></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Memorial DAY</b></p>	<p>28</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Church Office</b></p> <p></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Will Be Closed:</b></p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Craig's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.—Countryside</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study— 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Craig's Bible Study 2:30 p.m., Ganton's, S. A.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit</b></p> <p></p>	