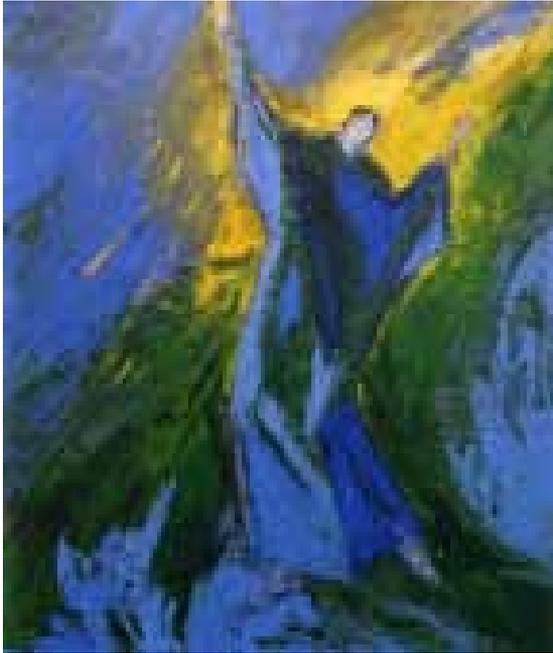


Redeemer Lutheran Church
Member Handbook

2009



I dream of a church that joins in with God's laughing
as she rocks in her rapture, enjoying her art:
She's glad of her world, in its risking and growing.
'Tis the child she has borne and holds close to her heart.

I dream of a church that joins in with God's weeping
as she crouches, weighed down by the sorrow she sees:
She cries for the hostile, the cold and no-hoping,
for she bears in herself our despair and dis-ease.

I dream of a church that joins in with God's dancing
as she moves like the wind and the wave and the fire:
A church that can pick up its skirt, pirouetting,
with the steps that can signal God's deepest desire.

I dream of a church that joins in with God's loving
as she bends to embrace the unlively and lost:
A church that can free, by its sharing and daring,
the imprisoned and poor and then shoulder the cost.

God make us a church that joins in with your living,
as you cherish and challenge, rein in and release:
A church that is winsome, impassioned, inspiring;
Lioness of your justice and lamb of your peace.

Kate Thompson

Welcome to Redeemer Lutheran Church

We are Christians who follow the Christian teachings as first taught by the 16th century church reformer, Martin Luther.

Who are Lutherans?

Lutherans are part of the whole Christian church. In the Apostles' Creed, we say that we believe in the "catholic" church. That means we believe that the church is universal, that we are part of all Christianity.

What makes us "Lutheran"?



It all started in the sixteenth century, shortly after Columbus discovered America! At that time the Roman Catholic Church was THE CHURCH and it influenced people's lives in political as well as religious ways.

One Roman Catholic monk saw things he didn't like going on — things like corruption and self-serving teachings. He had a lot of complaints — 95 of them to be exact. He took the bold move of outlining them in a document known as The 95 Theses. He posted this document on the door of a church at a busy time when he knew authorities and the public would notice.

This was Martin Luther.

THE CHURCH at that time carried political clout. It was dangerous to question its authority. To make a long but exciting story short, Martin Luther got into trouble and had to go into hiding. But his ideas could not be stopped. With the help of the newfangled printing press, his ideas spread across Europe. Eventually, Martin Luther was able to come out of hiding. His ideas had caught on, and the Reformation was underway. Martin Luther was a great thinker and teacher and lived to be respected as such.

Martin Luther had set out to reform THE CHURCH. It was not his intent to start a denomination named after him. But that is what happened.

All of Protestantism has been influenced in some way or can trace their roots to the daring acts of Martin Luther. Even modern Roman Catholicism recognizes his contribution to today's church. The great American leader, Martin Luther King, Jr., who was a Baptist preacher, was named for this great reformer and teacher.

What do Lutherans believe?

Lutheranism started in Germany and spread quickly throughout Scandinavia. Its passion for mission work created strong Lutheran churches throughout the world, including Japan, India, many African countries, and much of North America and South America. We at Redeemer are a living example of the diversity of the modern Lutheran church. Today, the Lutheran church honors, respects and builds on the thinking of Martin Luther. . . but we do not worship him! We worship the Risen Lord!

1. We believe that Jesus Christ is Savior.
2. We believe that Bible is the word of God and is a source of Christian love, guidance and doctrine.
3. We believe, with many other Christian groups, in the words of the Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed and the less frequently read Athanasian Creed.
4. We emphasize the belief that we are justified before God by faith. That we live in freedom of Christian love and not by strict lists of dos and don'ts.
5. We believe in working with other Christian churches.
6. We believe in Christian community, that as individual Christians we are part of community. Doing things together, as groups, is important to Lutherans. This includes worship and learning as well as fellowship and service.

Our basic understandings are:

- The Bible is the Word of God.
- God is understood through the Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We are separated from God by sin. We were created by God, we sinned, and we cannot return to God on our own, but we are reunited with God through God's grace and our faith.
- Jesus died to save the world from sin.
- We need to repent and ask for God's forgiveness.
- The church is made up of all God's people.
- There are two sacraments — Baptism, which establishes new life and remakes a person in God's spirit, and The Lord's Supper, which brings us in direct contact with God through the body and blood of Jesus. Seven other rites are recognized and practiced but are not called sacraments.
- Creeds, which we recite together regularly, summarize the Bible teachings.
- Religion and science are not in conflict.
- The Gospel teachings offer grace to all believers.
- Faith is a confessed sinner's acceptance of Christ as Savior.
- Prayer is communication directly with God.
- Evil is a reality. It goes by many names and is the enemy of God and his church.
- Religious education is a responsibility of all Christians, beginning with the Christian home.
- Church and State are separate. Christians can work within both.

The one overall teaching that characterizes Lutherans is that we are saved only by the grace of God through faith in Christ.



The Luther Seal

BLACK CROSS: Christ's sacrifice for our sin is central to our lives.

RED HEART: God placed us in a living world to do his work.

WHITE ROSE: The symbol of the Messiah, God's beautiful Son, sent to save a thorny world.

BLUE SKY: The promise of heaven.

GOLD RING: God's love and promises are as valuable as gold and have no end!

How do we worship?

Lutherans worship in many ways. Generally we follow a traditional liturgical format used by many Christian denominations. Within that format many things are possible!

The worship service can be viewed as a conversation between God and his people. The idea that we are worshipping as one people sets the tone of the Lutheran service. We are speaking to God as a group. All parts of the service are seen as part of this conversation. For example, a soloist or choir is singing to God, not performing for the entertainment of an audience.

The worship service starts with the people confessing their sins, quickly followed by the minister, speaking for God, absolving or forgiving them. The people of God respond with a hymn of praise, a plea for mercy and more hymns of praise scattered throughout the service.

We take a few moments to listen to scripture, God's word for us. The readings usually include an Old Testament lesson, a psalm (often sung responsively), a reading from the epistles or letters of the New Testament, followed by a reading from one of the four Gospels. We stand and sing a special hymn of praise in respect for the gospel.

The sermon follows the Gospel and adds insight into the day's readings. The readings follow a prescribed order in keeping with the season or theme of the day and are related to one another. The same readings are used in most major denominations. It is called the Common Lectionary. People who attend church weekly will have heard most of the Bible read every three years.

Following the sermon, the people stand to express their unity of belief by reciting either the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed. We greet one another with a Christian greeting. We then speak to God as a community in prayer.

On some Sundays, traditionally the first Sunday of the month at Redeemer, we share in God's sacrifice for us in Holy Communion. In thanksgiving for God's gracious love, we make our offerings to God to support his ministry. The service closes with God's blessing for his people (benediction) and music.

A Lutheran service has lots of music. Martin Luther was himself a musician. One of the world's greatest musicians, Bach, is part of our musical heritage. Today, we sing hymns from many Christian and even Jewish traditions. At Redeemer, we honor the hymns of all times, including the modern rock, folk, and gospel hymns, as part of our living tradition. We also enjoy dance, poetry, drama and the visual arts as expressions of Christianity.

Lutherans use symbolism in our worship space. Look throughout the sanctuary, especially at our stained glass windows to see images with special meaning to us as Christians. Our weekly bulletins include images to help us reflect on our faith.

Lutherans emphasize the importance of preaching and the study of God's word.

In addition to traditional Sunday worship, Redeemer offers several other worship opportunities that are freer in liturgical format. These include monthly Praise and Worship and weekly Bible Study.

How do we witness?



Lutherans believe in sharing the Good News! It is impossible to be a Christian in isolation. Christ demands otherwise. We believe that a relationship with a Christian community helps us to mature in our relationship with God. We believe in personal witness, in sharing scripture, in prayer, and by living lives of personal example.

We believe that as Christians we are responsible for each other. Community makes that possible. It is the responsibility of all in the Christian community to give time and talent to the church, whether it be in teaching or learning, singing or praying, visiting or witnessing, charity, service or leadership.

Lutherans see themselves as modern disciples, not just as church members.

At Redeemer, we believe that as active Christians we must be actively involved in the lives of our people and community. We cannot say we care on Sunday and do nothing Monday through Saturday. Our people are committed to finding ways to be actively involved in solving community problems in both a broad sense and in the lives of individuals we come to know.

Our mission extends beyond our community. We look for ways to contribute to the needs of people struggling across the nation and the world. For example, we recently renovated parts of our building and worked with a contractor who pledged profits to the building of an orphanage in Tanzania.

As part of our community you are invited to bring concerns, whether they are personal or for the betterment of society, to the congregation and to help us find solutions. We will begin with prayer and see where the Spirit takes us in ministry.

Major Documents of Our Faith

The Bible

The scriptures which comprise The Bible were written over thousands of years. Not one word was written in English but in ancient forms of Hebrew and Greek. Therefore, all English Bibles are translations. We do not endorse any particular translation.

The Apostles' Creed

This is the oldest Creed of the church, written within 100 years of Jesus death. We recite it together as the people of God weekly.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic (or Christian) church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen

The Nicene Creed

This Creed was written by church leaders of the fourth century, in the time of Constantine. It is traditionally recited on Communion Sundays.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

The Athanasian Creed

This creed dates to the eighth and ninth centuries. It is credited with laying the foundation for the explanation of the Trinity—the belief that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are wholly separate and wholly united as God. The Trinity is central to our understanding of God.

Whoever wants to be saved should above all cling to the catholic faith.

Whoever does not guard it whole and inviolable will doubtless perish eternally. Now this is the catholic faith: We worship one God in trinity and the Trinity in unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the divine being. For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Spirit is still another. But the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory, coeternal in majesty.

What the Father is, the Son is, and so is the Holy Spirit. Uncreated is the Father; uncreated is the Son; uncreated is the Spirit. The Father is infinite; the Son is infinite; the Holy Spirit is infinite. Eternal is the Father; eternal is the Son; eternal is the Spirit:

And yet there are not three eternal beings, but one who is eternal; as there are not three uncreated and unlimited beings, but one who is uncreated and unlimited.

Almighty is the Father; almighty is the Son; almighty is the Spirit: And yet there are not three almighty beings, but one who is almighty. Thus the Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Spirit is God:

And yet there are not three gods, but one God. Thus the Father is Lord; the Son is Lord; the Holy Spirit is Lord:

And yet there are not three lords, but one Lord.

As Christian truth compels us to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so catholic religion forbids us to say that there are three gods or lords.

The Father was neither made nor created nor begotten; the Son was neither made nor created, but was alone begotten of the Father; the Spirit was neither made nor created, but is proceeding from the Father and the Son. Thus there is one Father, not three fathers; one Son,

not three sons; one Holy Spirit, not three spirits. And in this Trinity, no one is before or after, greater or less than the other; but all three persons are in themselves, coeternal and coequal; and so we must worship the Trinity in unity and the one God in three persons.

Whoever wants to be saved should think thus about the Trinity. It is necessary for eternal salvation that one also faithfully believe that our Lord Jesus Christ became flesh. For this is the true faith that we believe and confess: That our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and man. He is God, begotten before all worlds from the being of the Father, and he is man, born in the world from the being of his mother—existing fully as God, and fully as man with a rational soul and a human body; equal to the Father in divinity, subordinate to the Father in humanity.

Although he is God and man, he is not divided, but is one Christ. He is united because God has taken humanity into himself; he does not transform deity into humanity. He is completely one in the unity of his person, without confusing his natures.

For as the rational soul and body are one person, so the one Christ is God and man. He suffered death for our salvation. He descended into hell and rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

At his coming all people shall rise bodily to give an account of their own deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, those who have done evil will enter eternal fire. This is the catholic faith.

One cannot be saved without believing this firmly and faithfully.

Luther's Small Catechism

Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism to help parents teach their children the fundamentals of the Christian life. This Small Catechism is so simple in form that it can be memorized. He also wrote a Large Catechism which expands on these topics.

The Ten Commandments

The First Commandment.

Thou shalt have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

The Second Commandment.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

The Third Commandment.

Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it.

The Fourth Commandment.

Honor thy father and thy mother.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not despise nor anger our parents and masters, but give them honor, serve, obey, and hold them in love and esteem.

The Fifth Commandment.

Thou shalt not kill.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need [in every need and danger of life and body].

The Sixth Commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may lead a chaste and decent life in words and deeds, and each love and honor his spouse.

The Seventh Commandment.

Thou shalt not steal.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not take our neighbor's money or property, nor get them by

false ware or dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and business [that his means are preserved and his condition is improved].

The Eighth Commandment.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, or defame our neighbor, but defend him, [think and] speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

The Ninth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not craftily seek to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, and obtain it by a show of [justice and] right, etc., but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

The Tenth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.

What does this mean?

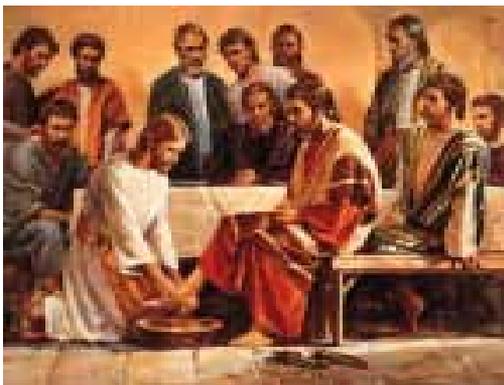
We should fear and love God that we may not estrange, force, or entice away our neighbor's wife, servants, or cattle, but urge them to stay and [diligently] do their duty.

What does God say of all these commandments?

Answer. He says thus (Exod. 20, 5f): I the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all that transgress these commandments. Therefore we should dread His wrath and not act contrary to these commandments. But He promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these commandments. Therefore we should also love and trust in Him, and gladly do [zealously and diligently order our whole life] according to His commandments.



Jesus humbly washes the feet of the disciples.

The Apostles' Creed

The First Article.

Of Creation.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them; in addition thereto, clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and homestead, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all my goods; that He provides me richly and daily with all that I need to support this body and life, protects me from all danger, and guards me and preserves me from all evil; and all this out of pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I owe it to Him to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

The Second Article.

Of Redemption.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won [delivered] me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, in order that I may be [wholly] His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

The Third Article.

Of Sanctification.

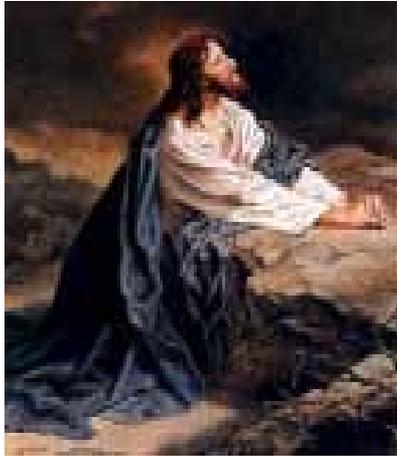
I believe in the Holy Spirit; one holy Christian (or catholic) Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and

keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at

the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean?

God would thereby [with this little introduction] tenderly urge us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may ask Him confidently with all assurance, as dear children ask their dear father.

The First Petition.

Hallowed be Thy name.

What does this mean?

God's name is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may become holy among us also.

How is this done?

When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God also lead holy lives in accordance with it. To this end help us, dear Father in heaven. But he that teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, Heavenly Father.

The Second Petition.

Thy kingdom come.

What does this mean?

The kingdom of God comes indeed without our prayer, of itself; but we pray in this petition that it may come unto us also.

How is this done?

When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life here in time and yonder in eternity.

The Third Petition.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean?

The good and gracious will of God is done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is this done?

When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow the name of God nor let His kingdom

come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh; but strengthens and keeps us steadfast in His Word and in faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.

The Fourth Petition.

Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean?

God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all wicked men; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to know it, and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread?

Everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as meat, drink, clothing, shoes, house, homestead, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful magistrates good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

The Fifth Petition.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins, nor deny such petitions on account of them; for we are worthy of none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them; but that He would grant them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much, and indeed deserve

nothing but punishment. So will we verily, on our part, also heartily forgive and also readily do good to those who sin against us.

The Sixth Petition.

And lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean?

God, indeed, tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us, nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome and gain the victory.

The Seventh Petition.

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from all manner of evil, of body and soul, property and honor, and at last, when our last hour shall come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself into heaven. Amen.

What does this mean?

That I should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and heard; for He Himself has commanded us so to pray, and has promised that He will hear us. Amen, Amen; that is, Yea, yea, it shall be so.



The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

First.

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's Word.

Which is that word of God?

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Matthew: Go ye into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Second.

What does Baptism give or profit?

It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are such words and promises of God?

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Mark: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Third.

How can water do such great things?

It is not the water indeed that does them, but the word of God which is in and with

the water, and faith, which trusts such word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is simple water and no baptism. But with the word of God it is a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, Titus, chapter three: By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.

Fourth.

What does such baptizing with water signify?

It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise; who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul says Romans, chapter 6: We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that, like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.



The Sacrament of Holy Communion

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.

Where is this written?

The holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul, write thus: Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.

After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Take, drink ye all of it. This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

That is shown us in these words: Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of

sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them, but the words which stand here, namely: Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins. Which words are, beside the bodily eating and drinking, as the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins.

Who, then, receives such Sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation is, indeed, a fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins.

But he that does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unfit; for the words For you require altogether believing hearts.

This ends Luther's Small Catechism

The Church Year

Lutherans, like many other denominations, follow a church year which is based on the life of Christ. The church year is woven into our worship and parish life.

Christmas

marks the birth of Christ. It begins on Christmas Eve and includes the twelve days of Christmas, ending with the coming of the Wise Men.

Epiphany

January 6 is the day which marks the arrival of the Wise Men in Bethlehem to worship the newborn King. Their involvement in the Christmas story points the way for the Messiah's importance to all people, not just the Jewish people. The next seven weeks of the Church year, the Epiphany season, expand on how Jesus was sent to save all people.

Lent

begins on Ash Wednesday and marks the 40 days before Easter. It is a season of repentance and reflection, contemplating Christ's sacrifice. At Redeemer we traditionally join with other neighborhood churches for weekly Wednesday Soup Dinners and shared services.

Holy Week

begins with the joyous celebration of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The following Thursday (Maundy Thursday) marks the remembrance of the Christ's command, given at the Last Supper, for us to love one another just as He has loved us. Good Friday is the saddest day of the church year, marking his crucifixion and death.

Easter

(and later Christ's Ascension into heaven) are the high points of the church year. The season lasts 50 days but it is such an

important event that each Sunday is "a little Easter." The earliest Christians began celebrating the "Sabbath" on Sunday instead of Saturday because of Christ's resurrection on a Sunday morning.

Pentecost or Trinity

is the longest season of the year. Summer and early fall honors all of Christ's ministry. During this season, we examine all of Christ's teachings along with related Old Testament and Epistle (New Testament) readings.

Liturgical Colors

If you attend church services regularly, you will notice subtle changes in the sanctuary as we move through the Church Year. The colors of the clothes covering the altar change with the season. The color for Advent is blue, a color of hope. The most important festivals are noted with white and gold colors. Therefore, on Christmas, Easter, and a few other dates such as All Saints Day, the altars are covered with white clothes. Green is the color for seasons of growth, Epiphany and Pentecost. Purple, the color of kings, is used during Lent. The altar will be bare for Good Friday and there are two special days which call for red. Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to form the church and Reformation Sunday, the last Sunday in October, a day important to Lutherans as it marks Martin Luther's posting of the 95 Theses and the start of our denomination.

Redeemer's History

We include our history for our members because our history represents our congregation's personality, which is one of strong independent thinking, creative and adaptive programming and dedication to ministry in the East Falls neighborhood for the last 120+ years. Redeemer members have long worked hard in ministry alongside many dedicated pastors but has often relied on a knowledgeable and able lay membership to work for the betterment of the East Falls corner of God's Kingdom.

Redeemer's history dates to 1888, when the Rev. F. Keever canvassed the East Falls neighborhood and determined there was sufficient interest to form a Lutheran Church. On March 24, 1889, the first service was held in the Old Academy, with seminarian Mr. Elson conducting the service. Subsequent services were conducted by the Rev. Garner in the German language. They were so poorly attended that they were soon replaced by English services conducted by students from the Lutheran Seminary at Mt. Airy. Redeemer has been an English-speaking church until recent years when the Swahili language became part of our community life with new members from East African nations. However, English remains the dominant language.

The first pastor, the Rev. L. Geschwind, came in May 1890 and worked with Redeemer Mission as well as officiating at the Manayunk Mission. Under his leadership, the congregation was organized on February 15, 1891. It was agreed that the title by which the Mission had been known for a year should be the name of the church for the future: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. The first council was elected. There were 22 charter members.

In June, 1891, the Rev. Geschwind resigned. Services were conducted by seminary students until the arrival of Pastor I. H. Stetler in March 1895. One of the seminary students became pastor a year leader — the Rev. George A. Kercher.

During the pastorate of Rev. Kercher, which lasted until 1904, the congregation secured its first property, a residence on Indian Queen Lane, opposite the Old Academy. The membership grew from 42 to 87, of whom 58 were communicants. The Sunday Church School then numbered 150, with 15 officers and teachers.

The Rev. Allen Apple succeeded him, after almost a year as interim. He served from June 1905 to December 1906.

It was during the pastorate of the Rev. Henry F. Hale from February 1907 to November 1913 that the congregation built the present church. The property on Indian Queen Lane was sold and the proceeds used to purchase the corner lot at 35th Street (now Conrad Street) and Midvale Avenue in 1908. The cost was \$876. A Mr. Supplee was authorized to draw plans for the new building.

On March 14, 1909, the cornerstone was laid, and the completed edifice, a beautiful stone structure, was dedicated on October 24 of the same year. The builder was Mr. Herman Voigt, and the contract price was \$13,300.

Following Pastor Hale, the Rev. Paul S. F(B)aringer was pastor from June, 1914, until August 1916, while continuing post graduate studies at the seminary in Mt. Airy. Upon his resigna-

tion, The Rev. G.H. Bechtold assumed charge of the field in conjunction with his work in the Inner Mission. In the following year, on Saturday afternoon, February 10, 1917, the greater part of the interior of the church was destroyed by fire. Under the able leadership of Pastor Bechtold, faithfully assisted by the church council and the congregation, the building was renovated and rededicated in August of the same year.

The Rev. Arthur T. Michler became pastor in September 1917 and continued to his death in May 1927. During his pastorate an indebtedness of \$8,850, a considerate burden, was reduced to \$2,500. Also a 40-foot lot adjacent to the church, extending from Midvale Ave. to Penn Street was purchased and paid in full to serve as a building site for a future parsonage. The cost was \$4,800.

The Rev. George Seaman acted as Pastor until the arrival of the Rev. Ulla Edwin Bauers in February, 1928, who was to enjoy a long and prosperous pastorate. The rear of the church was graded and paved, the interior of the church renovated, the rustic copings removed and the graded Sunday Church School system introduced. During this time, 141 persons were received into membership and the communicate membership surpassed all previous records. After a pastorate of 17 years, Pastor Bauers resigned in April 1945.

During the Depression years, Redeemer weathered the gravest financial difficulties. At times the council would pay its obligation and offer the pastor, the only paid worker, what little remained.

An extremely active Luther League gave way to the formation of a club which was to have a long life. The 25-45 Club became the social arm of the church of the post-Luther League age-group. Its last original member died in 2006.

Better times came. The Rev. Orval C. Hartman was called to be pastor of Redeemer in June, 1945. During his time of service, a parsonage at 3448 Midvale Avenue was purchased for \$7500, and the church continued to grow. His pastorate ended in January, 1949.

The Rev. John A. McConomy was pastor from March 1944 to January 1956. The interior and exterior of the grounds and church were improved, and the membership continued to grow. In 1950, the Sunday Church School Room in the lower part of the church was renovated and the rededicated, but soon became inadequate for the growing church school.

In June 1956, the Rev. Robert J. Wilde assumed the pastoral duties at Redeemer and serviced until June 1960. He was succeeded by the Rev. A. Curtis Paul in August 1961. At the annual congregational meeting in 1962, the congregation voted to consider building as parish educational building on the lot adjacent to the church. Shortly after the preliminary reports on the project were given, Pastor Paul was called to be librarian at Northwestern Lutheran Seminary. He left in June 1963. When he left Redeemer, had 402 baptized members of whom 209 were communing members, the highest in our history. It should be noted that the services of deaconesses helped to grow our church.

When the Rev. William J. Drucker became Pastor in July 1964, the congregation had voted to build the parish building and had already begun to raise funds. Under his leadership the project was brought to completion and the new building was dedicated on November 1, 1964. Cost was \$60,413.80. Further improvements were made in the sanctuary during the next years. Pastor Drucker retired in July 1970. During the next six years pastoral service was provided by three vice pastors, each serving a term of approximately one year: The Rev. O. Crosby Deaton, September

1970 to September 1971; the Rev. Russell E. Fink, September 1972 to December 1973; the Rev. David J. Paterno, June 1974 to April 1975, when he was called as pastor.

During these years, Redeemer led the way in making possible the increased involvement of women in its decision-making bodies. During the 1970s, the council membership became equally divided between men and women.

The parsonage on Midvale Avenue, was sold for \$29,000 and money was invested. Membership began falling largely due to the urban unrest of the 1960s. Young families began moving to suburban areas.

In 1979, Redeemer entered into a yoked pastorship with Grace Lutheran Church in Roxborough. The Rev. J. William Berglund served Redeemer for the next seven years. Upon his retirement, council leadership determined that the only avenue to growth was to have a dedicated full time minister. Our modest investments had tripled in value due to the faithful oversight of council member Andrew Leach. Redeemer called the Rev. William M. deHeyman in 1986. Shortly after his call Redeemer received a \$300,000 bequest at the death of longtime member, Louise Steinle. Membership at this time hovered around the 100-member mark.

A church council and congregational commitment was made to build programming which would serve a changing neighborhood. Working with the community, especially to improve the public schools in the neighborhood was determined to be a priority.

During Rev. deHeyman's pastorate Redeemer initiated increased educational programming for both children and adults and the ambitious Vacation Church School and summer program flourished. At the death of member Carolyn Hardcastle, who had faithfully run a church day care program for the neighborhood in our parish building, Redeemer partnered with the Lutheran Social Service Agency to sponsor an Early Intervention Day Care program. Its program mainstreamed developmentally delayed children with normally developing children in a valued and respected neighborhood school. Redeemer was at the forefront of reestablishing interchurch relations and the revival of a Ministerium. Lutheran Women also thrived. However, the relationship with Pastor deHeyman became troubled after he proposed using our endowment to call a second pastor to serve as treasurer, which many in the congregation questioned and as it ended up the synod would not support. Pastor deHeyman retired in 1996.

In 1988, Redeemer became a member of the newly established Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, a merger of the existing Lutheran Church in America, of which Redeemer was part, and the American Lutheran Church. Our relationship with this new entity soon brought trouble as our substantial endowment became an attractive target.

In late 1996, Synod appointed the Rev. Robert Matthias for an 18-month interim ministry, but Synod abruptly broke the contract after four months at the end of March 1997. No further assistance was offered by synod. In January 1998, the synod came to our annual congregational meeting and attempted to force us into closure. Taking our church records, they visited our bank the next day and withdrew \$90,000 leaving a balance of only \$3000. They declared us to be under their administration and encouraged the resignation of two thirds of our church council.

Remaining council members reestablished the council following constitutional provisions and

challenged the synod's action. J. Stephen Woodside was engaged as our attorney and after one year, Synod released their claims of administration. A year later they returned \$80,000, having subtracted their expenses from the sum.

Bishop Roy Almquist offered one name for consideration as pastor, the Rev. Jesse Brown. We accepted his leadership under a one-year term for 12 hours a week. At the end of the term call he expressed a desire to cut back to 10 hours a week but wanted his call to be regularized beyond term status. The congregation voted against this arrangement as Redeemer longed for more pastoral service, not locking into a minimal call. Synod asked us to vote three times, each time the congregation turned down this call arrangement.

Since then, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod has provided no called leadership to our congregation. Our council asked to work with a retired supply pastor we had come to know. The Rev. Harvey Davis served on a limited basis for three years and began attracting young families to our parish, including the Meena family who were Tanzanian immigrants living in East Falls. Pastor Davis's influence resulted in a remarkably mixed membership. In addition to the Meena family, new members and regular visitors included German, French, Indian and Chinese. Age and ill health made it impossible for Pastor Davis to continue and he attempted to find leadership before he fully retired, but SEPA Synod offered no assistance. We advertised and found a Church of God pastor, the Rev. Michael Shreve, who served for two years, partly as Pastor Davis' assistant and later independently. He was unhappy in the Lutheran Church. Since his departure, we have enjoyed long-term relationships with retired supply pastors including, the late Rev. John Parkinson and the Rev. Russell Jenkins.

In 2005 and 2007, we shared our building with Epiphany congregation of Roxborough, whose building had been condemned. We also shared the services of their pastor, the Rev. Timothy Muse. We adopted a covenant which we hoped would lead our two congregations in merger, but Epiphany abruptly voted to close in the spring of 2007. We had been joining our church councils which left Redeemer's council short in number, but upon Epiphany's decision to close, Redeemer lost no time in reestablishing our own council to constitutional provisions. This group of people, which included our newer Tanzanian members began an outreach to other East Africans in the Philadelphia area. They quickly identified two pastors to help. Under the leadership of the Rev. Ipyana Mwakabonga and the Rev. Festo Mutashobya, 49 new members joined as full or associate members of Redeemer. Many, but not all, were East African immigrants.

Once again, SEPA Synod targeted Redeemer, its endowment and property which is now valued at more than \$2.5 million. Under the leadership of Bishop Clare Burkat, Synod once again announced closure of our congregation. Redeemer is currently challenging their actions.

Our current membership is now 82 with a core group of dedicated workers numbering about 20. We are actively working to develop our Christian community which has become a melting pot for varied population of the East Falls neighborhood. We encourage all new members to use their skills to contribute and help to shape our vibrant ministry as we work to resolve issues and once again call a pastor.

Our Church Structure

God intended for His People to live in fellowship and work in community. Our church is structured so that all can find a way to serve within the community of Christ.

We are part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Congregations call ordained pastors to serve as the congregation's spiritual leaders. The pastor works with the Congregation Council and Church Officers and is a voting member the Congregation Council.

There are four membership classifications:

Full Adult Membership in the congregation includes participation in the voting community which meets at least once a year (last week in February) and at other times as duly noticed to the entire membership.

Associate Members are considered as full members but do not participate in voting. This is an option often chosen by people who hold membership elsewhere but have a close attachment to our church as well.

Children join the church upon their baptism and become voting members at the time of their confirmation. Until this time they are listed as **Baptized Members**. Adults who have been baptized join through affirmation of faith or by letter of transfer from another congregation.

Inactive Members have not partaken of Holy Communion or contributed financially to the church in the past year. Membership can be restored at any time by communing or contributing. After two years of inactivity, inactive members will be removed from the parish role. Membership must be restored to participate in congregational votes.

The congregation's business is conducted by a Congregation Council, a body of 10, including the pastor. The congregation votes for three new council members each year. We occasionally appoint a youth member, to represent youth viewpoint and to learn about church business. Youth members have no vote.

The work of the church is done through a committee system, including the following areas of mission:

- **Worship and Music:** plans all worship activities, choirs, etc.
- **Education:** plans Bible Study, Sunday School and any special educational ventures
- **Property:** Cares for the church property, all maintenance issues
- **Finance:** Oversees the church budget, income and expenses, monitors investments
- **Stewardship:** Promotes giving among the congregation and further sees that church resources are used wisely toward ministry goals
- **Outreach/Social Ministry:** Promotes Christian outreach beyond existing membership to the community and world. Alerts congregation to community needs we need to address
- **Mutual Ministry:** Members and professional staff meet regularly to make sure all our working in harmony toward congregational goals

As a church member, we encourage you to choose a committee which suits your talents and interests. We need everyone! Don't wait to be asked as the congregation may not be aware of your interests and skills! The work of the church requires everyone's help.

Our Church Budget

Churches exist in the real world and bear the expenses of the world and always have! It is interesting to note that Jesus addressed the issue of money often. The Bible further notes that even the disciples had a keeper of the group's finances (Judas!). The opening chapters of the Acts, which record the first days of the Christian Church, address the Christian Community's need for funding.

Churches must have sound financing in order to exist.

This is a broad outline of what it costs to run Redeemer Lutheran Church for a year.

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Pastor: Full time | \$60,000 |
| Organist/Sexton/Bookkeeping | 15,000 |
| Electricity | 2,000 |
| Gas | 20,000 |
| Phone | 1,000 |
| Office | 1,000 |
| Property Maintenance | 10,000 |
| Programming | 3,000 |
| Insurance | 8,000 |
| Debt service (money borrowed for renovations, etc.) | 20,000 |
| New needs to be identified | 10,000 |
| TOTAL | \$150,000 |

While this is a fairly bare bones budget. There are many things we could do with more money, such as hire a youth leader or an office manager — all things which are part of vision for Redeemer. We can begin renewing our ministry with lesser numbers closer to \$100,000 if we start with a part-time minister and are frugal within other categories. It is also important to note that as a church we must begin considering how to use our gifts for others in need. But first we must achieve an operational budget.

Ideally, we should rely on making our budget entirely on offerings. Redeemer has been fortunate that we have a rental property which has helped significantly. We have relied on this income to meet our budget for the last 25 years and will continue to do this for the short term. It is the ultimate goal of our congregation to return the parish building to parish and ministry purposes as we grow our membership and financial base.

Weekly Stewardship Goals

The scriptures clearly expect offerings to be a part of our commitment to God. We must address financial needs in order to support a pastor and a ministry. We do not have to be a huge church to support a ministry. If everyone contributes regularly and consistently at whatever level they choose, we will be well on our way to a solid financial basis.

Your gifts to your church are entirely a result of your families' prayerful decisions. No one at Redeemer will tell you what to give. But we will let you know the costs of operating a church so that you can decide for yourself your level of commitment.

Your church council has developed a stewardship program to help members understand these costs.

Traditionally, churches rely on biblical teaching of tithing, or the giving of ten percent of income. The model presented here is based on the modest annual income of \$30,000. Fitting into this model should not present a strain for most people and together will support a starter annual budget of \$93,600. Modest offerings of 35 giving units as outlined here will support our ministry and we can grow from there. No one person can do this alone, but together we can become a strong church.

For reference: A \$40,000 salary means approximately \$30,000 is brought home. (This is allowing "first fruits" to go to the government!) Ten percent of \$30,000 is \$3,000 or a weekly gift of approximately \$60. We understand that there are other factors in people's lives — fixed incomes, etc. But this is an achievable goal. We ask each member to prayerfully consider the needs of our Christian community.

To pay for a full time minister, we will eventually need to have an income of \$2300 per week. It would be overwhelming to start with this high goal when we can take some measured steps to reach that level of support over time. The plan presented here is doable. It represents a significant start to our overall long-term goals. If we can achieve this within a year, it will provide \$1800 per week. Let's start here and see what we can achieve with God's grace, prayer and effort.

RENTAL of PARISH BUILDING

(Goal: \$900 per week)

SIXTY DOLLAR WEEKLY GIVING LEVEL

(Goal: 5 Members to give \$60 per week for a total of \$300 weekly income)



INDIVIDUAL ANNUAL COMMITMENT (\$3120)

THIRTY DOLLAR WEEKLY GIVING LEVEL

(Goal: 10 Members to give \$30 per week for a total of \$300 weekly income)



INDIVIDUAL ANNUAL COMMITMENT (\$1560)

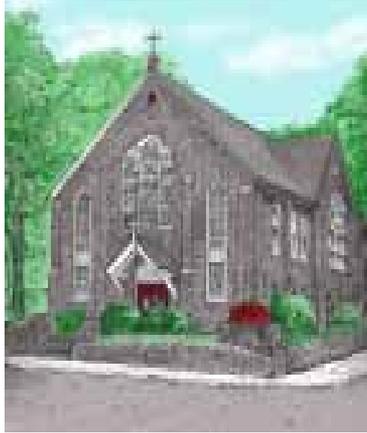
FIFTEEN DOLLAR WEEKLY GIVING LEVEL

(Goal: 20 Members to give \$15 per week for a total of \$300 weekly income)



INDIVIDUAL ANNUAL COMMITMENT (\$780)

THIS OFFERING BREAKDOWN WILL PROVIDE \$900 per week in offerings. Added to the projected rental income of \$900 per week, our minimum budget will be met and we can engage a pastor to help us build our community and begin rebuilding our savings.



Certificate of Membership

Welcome to our community of faith!

has been accepted as a member of
**The Evangelical Lutheran Church
of the Redeemer**
3462 Midvale Avenue
East Falls, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
in the membership category _____

Date: _____

Council President: _____

Pastor: _____