

Redeemer's Christian Connection

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Pastor's Page



As a result of the recent death of my dad, I have been thinking more than usual about death. Even though, in this *valley of the shadow of death* (Psalm 23:4), it's hard not to think about death, our society manages (at least on the surface) to do a pretty good job of keeping busy with the pretty, more pleasant things of this life. That's why an article in The Federalist, by Chad Bird, caught my eye. It was called "The Tragic Death of the Funeral" and focused on society's "Celebration of Life" services in place of the funeral. The word "funeral" comes from an old Latin word which means "death," but our society's trinitarian focus on Me, Myself, and I, continues to distract us from the truth about death by stuffing us with more of the lifeless fluff of this world.

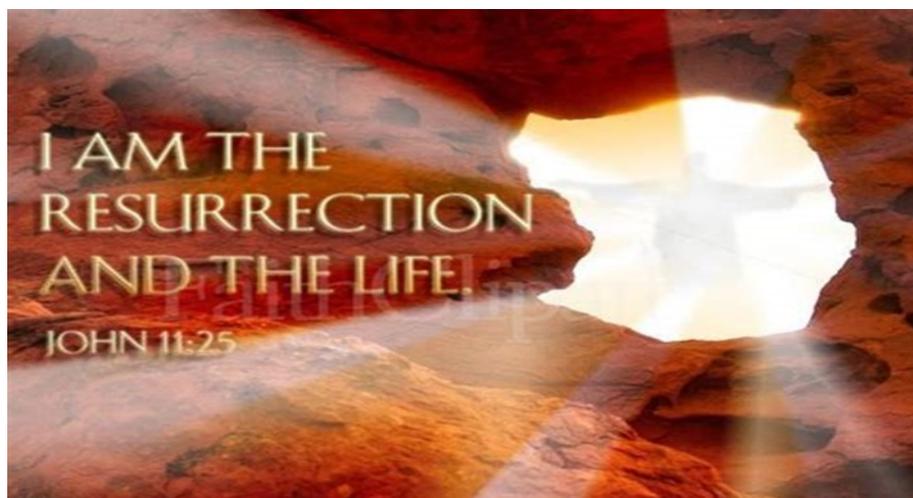
Most "Celebration of Life" services try to ignore the horror of death by focusing on the past life of the person who died. Evidently, to say that the person who died "lived life to the full" is suppose to make us feel better—to assure us that everything's okay. Unfortunately, for the family and friends of the person who died, everything is not okay. No matter how many happy memories you may have of the person who died, the truth is that you're not going to share any more happy memories with that person in this life. And happy memories in this life assure us of nothing about any future after this life for ourselves or our dead loved ones.

Of course, if the person who died was suffering at the end of their life in this world, we are thankful that they are no longer suffering. This, however, is a truly comforting thought only to us as Christians, and only if the deceased was also a Christian. But even this comfort doesn't erase the grief of being separated even temporarily from someone we love. No matter how you look at it or what you call it, the death of anyone, especially our loved ones, is horrific. It's a taste of the hell we all deserve because of our sins. Simply focusing on happy memories of the person who died doesn't begin to deal with the hellish horrors of death, which includes man's absolute inability to prevent it. Instead, it's another one of sinful man's attempts to live in a dream world where he is in control. By ignoring the truth about death, we miss out on the truth about life—Jesus Christ who is *the way and the truth and the life* (John 14:6).

If, however, the life we celebrate at a funeral is first and foremost the eternal life of our crucified, dead and buried Savior, Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead on the third day, as He promised, then we have plenty to celebrate even in the midst of this *valley of the shadow of death*. The eternal Son of God became flesh and blood not to help us ignore our sins, death and all the other shrapnel of sin floating around in this fallen world, but to face it all head on as our Savior. He did that through His damning death for our sins, the very thing that the world try's to not think about. Through Jesus' death on a Roman cross (which had come to remind people of eternal death), together with His resurrection from the dead, He enables us to think about death in a whole new way—as not only the end of suffering and death in this fallen world, but also the beginning of true and eternal life in paradise. That's because of His promise that He, as true God and true man, did it all to save us from our sins and eternal death. Through Jesus Christ's death, resurrection and ascension He gives us the everlasting assurance that, *He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; and with His wounds we are healed* (Isaiah 53:5)—that, *Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ* (1Corinthians 15:54-56).

We should not be surprised at the unbelieving world's "Celebration of Life" services which cling to nothing but past memories of the person who has died. Without faith in Jesus Christ, they have nothing else to cling to. But what a tragedy it is when Christian church's echo the same hopeless ways of the world when it comes to the funerals of our baptized and believing loved ones, instead of sharing the Good News of our certain hope of eternal life through the way, the truth and the life of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For it's through this Good News that God works to give and sustain eternal life in others as well—to enable them to be able to cling to the rock of our salvation, Jesus Christ.

While I grieve my dad's death, I do not *grieve as others do who have no hope*. Instead, in the midst of my grief, I rejoice that my dad was baptized, and that God, through His Word and Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, enabled my dad to cling to His promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ to the time of his temporal death. Therefore, our happy memories together will not end with this life, but will be even happier in the life to come. *For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words* (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).





Our Hymn of the Month for July, “Seek Ye First,” is in both our hymnals, #712 in Lutheran Service Book (LSB), and #274 in One and All Rejoice (OAR). The only difference is that this hymn in One and All Rejoice includes an accompanying descant of the word “alleluia” which can be sung at the same time as part of the congregation or choir sings stanza’s 1-3. To avoid confusion we’ll start by using LSB without the descant.

The three stanza’s of this hymn are three quotes from the Bible. After Jesus tells us not to be anxious about our lives in this world, *what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on*, for Gentile/unbelievers seek after all these things, *and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all*, He tells us to ***seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*** (Matthew 6:33).

When Jesus talks in His parables and elsewhere about the *kingdom of God*, He is referring to His reign and rule in our lives through the message of the cross. Once He re-establishes His rule and reign in our lives by giving us faith in all that He has done and continues to do to save us from our sins, death and the devil, thus making us a part of His kingdom for all eternity, we can rest assured that He will continue to give us all we need to in this life and in the next. As God’s eternal children through His gift of faith in Jesus Christ we, therefore, continue to come to God with all our needs, trusting Jesus promise: ***Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you*** (Matthew 7:7), in ways that are good not only for us but for those around us.

When the troubles of this world seek to shake our confidence in God’s promise of love and salvation through Jesus Christ, God reminds us through His Word that ***Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God*** (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3). Through these words God draws us away from trusting in the things of the world for life, to the Creator of this world for life. This brings us back to stanza 1 about seeking first and foremost the kingdom of God and His righteousness, namely, God’s saving activity and righteous, redemptive deeds in Jesus’ death and resurrection, which He gives us through His Word and Sacraments to wash away our sins and give us eternal life. “Allelu, Alleluia!”



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Planning is underway for Vacation Bible School, which will be held from in the mornings on August 2-5 (Monday through Thursday) for children who are preschool age through Grade 5. As “rainforest explorers,” the kids will discover the Bible truths that:

- + God keeps His promises.
- + God gives direction for our lives.
- + God is always with us.
- + God heals us.
- + Jesus is our greatest Treasure.

We need volunteers to help with **Bible story time, songs, games, crafts and snacks**. We will also need assistance with **setting up, registration, and taking photos**. Watch the Sunday bulletin for needed food items so that the kids can make (and eat) their own snacks to reinforce the Bible stories.

Please contact VBS director Janell Oberheu (970-778-1134, janelloberheu@gmail.com) or Alissa Heinecke (970-901-9075, alissacheinecke@gmail.com) if you are willing to help in any of these areas. Be sure to invite your friends’ and neighbors’ children to attend VBS!

Board of Evangelism

Mission Sunday! The Board Of Evangelism is excited to announce that Mission Sunday will be August 8th! Our guest pastor and speaker will be Rev. David Buss. Pastor Buss, previously of Trinity Lutheran Church of Baton Rouge, is now Executive Assistant to Rocky Mountain District LCMS President. We look forward to his visit to our church and hope you can join us! There will be an INTERNATIONAL POTLUCK! Please bring your favorite international dish to share!

CALL TO SERVICE!

Help is needed. Three committees are looking for more members and volunteers: Stewardship, Trustees, and Evangelism are all in need. These three groups help our church with inreach, outreach, and upkeep. If you are interested please speak with Pastor Van, Herb Kruger, Holly Kruger, or Amber Miller.

May 12, 2021

Board of Evangelism—Redeemer Lutheran Church

Attn: Chairperson

1000 Pioneer road

Delta, CO 81416

To the members of the Board and other donors of Redeemer,

A happy and blessed Easter Season to you all! During this season where we look to Christ's death and resurrection proved by the empty tomb, I am reaching out again to you to thank you for the support which you have provided to me in February, this time with \$3,500. This amount is enough for me to completely cover all of my room and board expenses for the entire Spring Quarter (3/15 through 5/20) at CTSFW. Your continued generosity is truly appreciated! To keep you updated, these are the classes which I am taking during this quarter and have nearly finished:

- Catechetics (How to teach in the Church, specifically the Catechism)
- Hebrew II (my second quarter learning Hebrew, building on the Winter Quarter)
- Dogmatics II (looking to who Christ is and what His work on earth has accomplished)
- Confessing Christ in Today's World (looking at the Lutheran view of missions, both domestic and overseas)
- Lutheran Confession I (working through the Apostle's, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as well as the Augsburg Confession of 1530, where Lutherans declared their faith in front of the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire)

It is a true blessing to be able to focus on my studies rather than having to spend time fundraising or taking out loans. Because of this, I have been able to get more out of my classes and class readings and continually feel better prepared for going out into the world as a pastor.

In Christ,

Jared Rudolph

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Box 102

Fort Wayne, IN 46825

Email: jared.rudolph@ctsfw.edu

Wholly Citizens: Facing the World or How not to Sin the Voting Booth

Martin Luther carefully distinguished between the work of God in the realms of church and state, and his successors have come to term the distinction “the two kingdoms.” Unfortunately, what Luther taught and what is practiced by his followers too often have little in common. A careful study of Luther’s teaching will orient participants more adequately to address pressing questions about the right relationship between church and state, the responsibility of the church toward the surrounding culture, the role of the pastor in civil affairs and the role of the ordinary Christian living his or her faith in engagement with the surrounding culture. Contemporary issues will be addressed zealously including elections, shifting understandings of sexual identity and marriage, and the “rights” of Christians. Specific avenues of action will be proposed.

Dr. Joel Biermann

Professor of Systematic Theology and Waldemar A. and June Schuette Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Dr. Joel Biermann is known for his clear articulation of theology and no-nonsense approach to today’s questions. Having completed his first book on virtue ethics, he is now nearly finished on a book dealing with the two kingdoms distinction in today’s world (hence the above topic!). With this workshop, participants will learn more about his latest research



DAY TIME

Day one	1-4 p.m.
Day two	9 -11:30 a.m. 1-4 p.m.
Day three	9 a.m.-noon

Start:

August 5th, 6th & 7th

Registration cost: \$100

Continuing Education

Phone:

314-505-7286

Lutheran Church of Messiah (Grand Junction, CO)

Registration deadline: July 21, 2021

Location contact: Rev. Mike Redeker

Note: The schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the workshop presenters.

Birthdays

Tim Hinz—July 1
Brenda Moseman—July 5
Michael Miller—July 6
Ayla Kruger—July 6
Jo Ann Wilks—July 7
Norm Sunderland—July 12
Casey Bieth—July 15
Pastor Van Fossan—July 19
Everett Tunget—July 20
Brooks Oberheu—July 21
Joey Gates—July 22
Joseph Cumins—July 22
Madyson Scarborough—July 24
Joshua Heinecke—July 25
Sheri Gates—July 28
Sandy Oeltjenbruns—July 28

Baptismal Birthdays

Bobbi Koppes—July 1
Paul Althaus—July 2
Linda Wacker—July 8
Brenda Moseman—July 8
Thomas Howell—July 9
Michael Miller—July 10
Sarah Weber—July 14
Jace Holden—July 14
Dave Burgess—July 15
Bill Sinner—July 21
Beth Gilleece—July 22
Tim Hinz—July 30

Wedding Anniversaries

Paul & Sharon Althaus—July 2
Gary & Sheri Gates—July 21
Joshua & Alissa Heinecke—July 21

THE LORD'S MINISTRY

Redeemer Lutherans attendance figures and financial blessings that were given for the month of June to further maintain the Lord's ministry.

Date	Attendance	Communicants	Offerings Received	Needed Operating Budget
6 - 6 - 2021	104	78	\$4,046.50/\$3,945.00.00	\$4,455.06
6 - 13 - 2021	84	70	\$2,955.50/\$8,941.00	\$4,455.06
6 - 20 - 2021	90	76	\$3,311.50/\$38.00	\$4,455.06
6 - 27 - 2021	140	95	\$6,919.50/\$10.00	\$4,455.06



Life Thoughts in the Church Year

July 4 – Pentecost VI (Proper 9B) – Many in the world and some in the churches won't listen to the sanctity of human life. It doesn't mean we've failed. Both Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:5) and Jesus (Mark 6:3) experienced rejection. So, we may borrow their boldness. The Lord perfects His power (2 Corinthians 12:9) even in surprise pregnancy or terminal diagnosis. His creating, redeeming, and calling grace prevails in our weakness as well. And all ages, appearances, and abilities will know He Himself has been among them.

July 11 – Pentecost VII (Proper 10B) – Was John's Gospel proclamation about Herod's marriage a political issue (Mark 6:18)? Or was it the Word of the Lord warning a neighbor against danger and pledging a better way? We may feel like neither prophets nor prophets' sons (Amos 7:14-15), but we have heard the Word of truth and the Gospel of everyone's salvation (Ephesians 1:13). However politicized or unpopular the sanctity of life becomes, we have been predestined to proclaim and celebrate it (Ephesians 1:11-12).

July 18 – Pentecost VIII (Proper 11B) – Abortion and assisted suicide may appear to be compassionate measures. But while they deaden the culture to some discomforts, they actually deny support to unborn and impaired persons. By contrast, Jesus has compassion on the whole multitude with no exceptions, because He perceives how the world has abandoned them (Mark 6:34). He feeds them instead of forsaking (Mark 6:41). And the Gospel extends abundant life from fertilization to forever.

July 25 – St. James the Elder, Apostle – Supporters of physician-assisted suicide might label the martyrdom of St. James as undignified. He did not choose the timing of his death. He had no control over the manner of his passing. But history and heaven celebrate both his life and his last breath. He met his demise with courage and purpose that allowed him to go gracefully with a Savior whose presence and promises to dignify and sanctify even lives death attempts to humiliate.