REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH LCMS

WITNESSES



APRIL 2021 PUBLICATION VOLUME 14 ISSUE 4

Redeemer Reflection Newsletter

Loving People To Christ

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REDEEMER REFLECTION

From the Intentional Interim Pastor's Desk...

WITNESSES

by Reverend Carl Bassett, Intentional Interim Pastor

"When you have received the power of the Holy Spirit,

you will become My witnesses...to the ends of the earth!" Acts 1:8

Dear Family in Christ,

In our Bible verse for this month, we find Jesus giving His disciples and us His final instructions. He said, "... You will become My witnesses!" But in order to become what our Savior wants us to be, we must understand what a witness is.

Plain and simple, a *witness* is a person who tells what they have seen. So Jesus is clearly saying that we are to become His *witnesses* of what has happened to us, how our lives have changed, and how others can be changed as well. Isn't it interesting that the risen Christ tells His followers that we shall be *"witnesses"*—not disciples, not pupils, not preachers, not followers, (although we certainly can fill



those roles also), but witnesses. Apparently, we're to be witnesses to the resurrection, a new life, a new beginning. A witness testifies to what has been personally seen and heard. A witness is not expected to come up with new information, but rather faithfully to testify to something that has

been seen and heard and is being experienced. So, we Christians are called to be *witnesses*, beginning in our churches, homes and families, and then moving out to the ends of the earth.

A witness simply states clearly and without embellishment, "Here's what happened to me." Maybe we need to get back to the simplistic approach that we find in Jesus' healing of the blind man in John 9. After being healed, the man was asked how it had happened, and he simply said, "I once was blind, but now I see." That was his story. That was his witness.

Folks, you and I can witness effectively by a simple statement. "I once was miserable, unhappy, critical of others, and selfish, but God opened my eyes to how I was and showed me how He could change me. God is

showing me how He can use me to change things around me. I still have a long way to go, but my sins are forgiven and God has changed me from the inside out. He can do the same for you and anyone who asks."

You see, when we witness, we are not forcing someone into seeing things as we see things; we are simply saying, "This is how it is for me. This is what I've seen and heard. Does any of this relate to what you have seen and heard? Does anything I've said to you make you want to change the way you think about yourself, others, and Jesus?"

Our work as a witness is to humbly, accurately tell others about the hope that we now have because we know Jesus personally. You and I are not Christians because we are intelligent, or because we are morally better than the other people around us and out in the world. We are Christians because of an undeserved, unearned, unmerited gift that we have heard about and have accepted through the working of the Holy Spirit. We are Christians because we have been given a better hope than all the hopes by which the world tries to live—the Good News of forgiveness, reconciliation with our awesome God. and everlasting life through Jesus Christ. our Savior!

Let's regularly examine the demand Jesus has placed on our lives if we are to call ourselves Christians. Are we the *witnesses* he intends for us to be? Are we faithfully telling and living out <u>our</u> story? May God help us to live our lives with a new priority and prayer: "Father, make me into that witness that is eager to tell others about Jesus and the hope He so graciously and lovingly gives!"

Have a great month for the Lord, full of many blessings *and* opportunities to be His *witnesses*!

Peace and Love in Christ,

Pastor Bassett



Mondays, Ongoing: Women's Bible Study: Pew Sisters. This Bible study will meet every Monday morning at 10:00 a.m. in the large Connection classroom in the lower level or live online. (Masks/distancing guidelines will be the same as on Sundays.) Sign up in the narthex or call the church office to get more information. This group WILL NOT MEET ON EASTER MONDAY!

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

Thursday, April 1: Maundy Thursday. Service at 6:30 p.m.

Friday, April 2: Good Friday. Two services offered, 12:00 noon and 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 3: Chancel Guild.
Begins at 10:00 a.m. This Saturday time change is for the Easter preparation by Chancel. Chancel usually meets the first Thursday of each month and welcomes new members at any time!

Sunday, April 4: Easter Sunday.

Alleluia! Three services with communion are offered: 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m. Join us as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord!

Thursday, April 15: LWML Women of Redeemer. Meeting begins at 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, April 20: VBS Planning Meeting. Meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. in the Connection Room in the lower level.

Saturday, April 24: Mobile Food

Pantry at Trinity. From 10:00-11:30
a.m. Ongoing event, the fourth
Saturday of each month. Redeemer
partners with Trinity in this outreach to
serve the community. We need
volunteers to be available from 9:00
a.m. until Noon.

Monday-Wednesday, June 21-23: Vacation Bible School. Evenings, 6:00-7:45 p.m.

LET'S CELEBRATE!

The Reflection newsletter will include wedding anniversaries of members each month beginning with this month, along with the birthday list. Please help us make this a complete and accurate registry by sending your anniversary information to the church office, and co

it to the newsletter as well. The church office email address is:

office@redeemerjackson.org and the newsletter email is

bennitt49@yahoo.com. Please include the names of both spouses and the date of the marriage. Celebrating marriages and the commitment of couples to their marriage promise is a way of recognizing a covenant honored and blessed by God.

Sharing these special occasions with our church family helps build and cement relationships within the church body, as well as providing encouragement to engaged couples and newlyweds by the examples of successful marriage commitments viewed all around them.

Please help us with this new opportunity to celebrate special events with each other.



Pastor Bassett is offering a Bible Class on the Letters of Paul to the Church at Thessalonica titled "The Lord is ALWAYS Faithful."

Although these inspired words of God were written over two thousand years ago, they are especially pertinent to us during these trying and threatening times in which we live. Through a chapter-and-verse study of these letters, the Spirit will help us

learn more about His faithfulness to us, the power of God, the importance of living a God-pleasing life, and His desire for us to be faithful to Him and His teachings.

Class meets in the Connection Room, in the lower level directly below the sanctuary, every Sunday beginning at 9:30 am.

MOBILE FOOD PANTRY AND GIVEAWAY

The former Community Care Day, in partnership with Trinity Lutheran Church over the past few years, is now a monthly Mobile Food Pantry. Each month we also provide non-food specialty items to fill additional personal needs, as we become aware of them in our community.

We are now collecting bar soap and deodorant/antiperspirants. The need for personal health-care items is great in our community, and this is a way we can help with these very real needs. Items needed for giveaways may be put in the bin in the narthex.

The food items that we distribute are provided through Compassionate Ministries of Jackson County. This is a wonderful organization in the Jackson area, and more information can be found online at www.cmjackson.org/

If you'd like to volunteer and get involved with these *fourth-Saturday-of-the-month* opportunities to serve our community, please contact the church office at 517-750-3100.

Thank you all for being so generous during these unusual times.



APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

Larry & Sara Finton Greg & Donna Wait 04/04/2003 04/13/1985



TOPIC FOR MAY

We've received a request to include more "news" from our community and personal experience stories in the *Reflection* newsletter. We can only do this with the input from volunteer members and leaders who have such news and information made available to them. If you have knowledge of or information about events, classes, books, or news items that would benefit our members and community, please send data/articles/stories to bennitt49@yahoo.com and we will do our best to include them in future newsletters.

Our print media, and all other communication from and through Redeemer Lutheran Church, is designed to *reflect* His light to a searching world. The writing prompt for May is *Memories*.

Send articles, information, and/or photos by the 15th of each month, to be included in the following month's newsletter. All submissions are appreciated and prayerfully considered.



Special Worship Services

Maundy Thursday, April 1 6:30 p.m.

† A service of Confession and Absolution, remembering the Lord's institution of His Holy Supper.

> Good Friday, April 2 12:00 noon and 6:30 p.m.

† A somber service of the Word remembering Christ's death on the Cross for us.

Easter Sunday, April 4 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m.

† Festive communion services remembering our Savior's glorious resurrection.



APRIL

Angela Martin	04/01
Charles Lewis	04/02
Judy Speed	04/03
Greg Wait	04/03
Rev. Carl Bassett	04/07
Ron Jones	04/10
Jacob Lockwood	04/11
Ron Spangler	04/14
Carolyn Vandriessche	04/14
Rowen Hendricks	04/16
Isaac Kestner	04/20
Don Moyer	04/22
Linda Kline	04/23
Jerry Kestner	04/25
Rob Albertson	04/26
Christine Richmond	04/26
Bill Pohanka	04/27
Donna Zastrow	04/28
Sharon Harshe	04/29

TWO WORDS FOR WITNESSES

by Craig Britton

It's interesting to me how much can be learned about authors from reading words from their pens. In the Bible, it is no different. In fact, it is one of the

things that points to the Bible's inspiration and truthfulness. God allowed the hopes, desires, perspectives, and personalities of the authors to stay on the page, and we are the richer for meeting each one as we open the Scriptures.

Luke is an interesting soul. He loves historical accuracy. He loves detail and since he is most notably a physician, we get lots of "goodies" when he writes of the healing ministry of Jesus. Luke also has a special heart for the nativity, and I believe, was quite taken with Jesus' mommy. He gives us her inspired song of rejoicing. No one else does. But Luke is also our blessed "pneumatologist." I iust made that one up. But it stands to reason, since in theology the study of the Holy Spirit is "pneumatology," that Luke gets the title. He IS the theologian of the Holy Spirit. He is taken with His place and performance and among the gospel writers, Luke gets us closer to the Holy Spirit than anyone else.

The Holy Spirit is the "seed" of our witness to the good news. It is the Holy Spirit's primary ministry to shine the light on the second Person of the Trinity. So, I want to briefly look at some words from Luke in this regard; one from his gospel and one from his second volume, the Book of Acts. "You are witnesses of all these things" (Luke 24:48). What things? The treasure of Jesus' death and resurrection, the treasure of all the writings which pointed to them for untold centuries. and the treasure of the message which would and has changed the world. You are witnesses of all these things, says Jesus to His disciples following His resurrection. But know this: The Greek word beneath "witnesses" is the word "martyr." Oh, I wish I could have been

there to hear Jesus speak those words. Since He had defeated death and was standing close enough to them to cast His shadow upon them, did the word "martyr" take on a meaning different from what it would have meant before His crucifixion? Perhaps they were still in transition and death was still securing a new definition in their minds. But martyr. It is so pointed and direct. "You are witnesses."

One other passage like it: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit

has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Here Luke gives



clue to the power of their witness, their martyrdom. And to the scope of it. In Luke, Jesus was instructing His band to wait for power from the heavens. Here, He makes that reality certain. The Holy Spirit will thrust them out and it will clarify at least something their witness will mean. The giving of their lives will be neither their end nor the end of their message. For we are fruit of their witness. And all to whom we will open our mouths about the Savior. Theirs and ours. The Holy Spirit and His power are just the same. The Savior is the same. The message unchanged. Will vou be a witness?

HELP THE QUILTERS

by Donna Zastrow

Clean out those closets and cupboards. The Redeemer quilters need cotton



fabric and queen-size flat sheets for backings so we can continue making quilts for LWML and Lutheran

World Relief. You can drop off fabric at the church office or our quilting room (former music room in lower level).

If you have any questions, please call Donna Zastrow at 517-315-4284.

WITNESSES

by Kimber Walsh, Family Life Educator

There are some things that we've all witnessed—the trees regaining their leaves after a long winter, the moon making an appearance in the middle of the day, a rainbow that graces the sky at the end of a storm as if from nowhere, and the grass that turns bright green after a good rain. We are witnesses of these simple beauties by the grace of God. Some of the things that we witness are not shared experiences, though.

Only a few can claim witnessing the birth of my children—and yours. Only a few can claim to know "how the sausage gets made." And then there are those who were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time and witness that which they never wanted to see.

Witnessing something firsthand can be a gift, but it can also be a burden.

From the first time that I learned what the witness protection program was, I've found it fascinating. People see something firsthand, they are willing to speak of what they've seen, and their lives are forever changed because of it. That's incredible to me. Certainly, some of those protected witnesses are accomplices to crimes, but some were simply innocent bystanders. I often wonder how I would handle witnessing something so big a

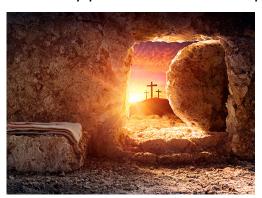
life or lives were on the line with my testimony. Would I be willing to speak up to save them? Would I be willing to



have my whole life radically changed forever? Or would I keep my mouth shut because it's easier?

The human authors of Scripture saw the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea. deliverance from the hands of enemies time and time again; they saw God, Himself, in the flesh, and His many healings and miracles. They also saw so many other things and just wrote down some so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ and that by believing we may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31). They witnessed firsthand, they spoke and wrote of what they'd seen. and their lives were forever changed because of it. No U.S. Marshals whisked them off to safety. Some did receive new names, though. Not as aliases, but to further identify what God had done or was doing in them.

Every Christian has witnessed something so big that the life of others is on the line if we don't speak up. We have seen that the God of the Universe sent His only Son, Jesus, into the world to live, die and be resurrected to defeat sin, death and the power of the devil for every person. Not with our physical

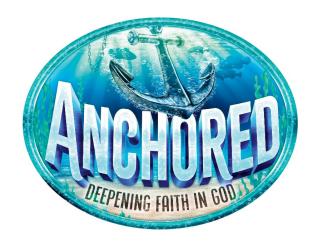


eyes, but we know it to be true. It would be easier to keep our mouths

shut. But if we don't proclaim Him, the rocks will cry out instead. (Luke 19:40). Our lives have been forever changed because of Jesus. God gives us a new name, "Child of God," to identify us by what He's done for us. We've seen and we must now speak. We are witnesses.

To some this witness status may seem a burden, I suppose, but I think it's another gift God has given to us. So these questions are ringing in my mind today:

- What have I seen firsthand that God has done in my life and in the lives of those around me?
- What have I spoken of the things I've seen? To whom have I spoken this?
- How has my life been forever changed because of what I've seen?
- How does my new name, "Child of God," change the person that I am?



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

By Kimber Walsh, CFLE

Make a splash at VBS this summer! This opportunity to share Jesus with 4-10 year-olds in our congregation and community will be offered June 21-23, 2021, daily from 6:00-7:45 p.m.

We invite you to come hear how God can use your gifts to share His Word in the work of this ministry. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, April 20 at 6:30 p.m. in the Connection Room in the lower level of the church. No commitment needed, just come and learn! If you'd like to register children, visit redeemerjackson.org.



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CHRISTIAN CARE MINISTRY

by Nyla Arvy

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord you labor not in vain."

I Corinthians 15:58

Redeemer members have been busy in recent months assisting other members in the "Meal-a-Month" program and utilizing the newly established greeting card outreach.



The "once-a-month" meal has been very well received by the Thomas and Williams families and has provided opportunities for them to interact with Redeemer friends in their home setting. They are grateful and look forward to a delivered meal and seeing friendly faces once a month. If you haven't had a chance to participate but would like to, please sign up on the sheet in the narthex.



The greeting card file is also located on the table in the narthex and is available for Redeemer members to select cards and mail to those on the monthly birthday list, or

individuals listed on a separate sheet that are on our prayer list. Please consider mailing a card even if you don't really know a person. Greeting card wishes are *always* a blessing and a nice surprise!

On behalf of the Redeemer recipients of the Easter food boxes, we express gratitude to those of you who donated food items to make their holiday meal a good experience.

Let's continue to praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Anyone who is interested in participating in other areas of our care ministry may call the church office to inquire.

CONTENT WITNESSES

by Peggy Bennitt

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

Philippians 4:11(NIV)

Are you content? Are you a reflection of the optimism and hope of the resurrection? Can people look at you and see a witness to godly living? As children of God, we can take a lesson from St. Paul and be content in whatever situation we find ourselves. That contentment can be a witness to others of what we have through faith.

Easier said than done. Right?
As I've struggled with DDD
(Degenerative Disc Disease) for more than 15 years, osteoarthritis and other related and unrelated issues tended to complicate the situation. Even before my first back surgery, I knew I needed God's help to get me to the place where

I could deal with the pain and be as content as possible with whatever the next steps would look like. Not only that, but I begged Him to help me adjust to the circumstances no matter what and appreciate what I still had.

Those 15 years have been a hard fought battle, with myself being my biggest obstacle to contentment. Acceptance and humility were two of the first hurdles I had to overcome.

- Accepting the very fact of chronic pain was part of the difficulty; adjusting to the **need** for surgeries and long recovery periods while still dealing with pain, was a daunting hurdle.
- Being humbled by the need to be cared for by someone else was a huge hurdle. To put oneself unconditionally into another's hands for basic needs is a very humbling experience. I thank God every day for a husband who has the gift of helping. God showed me a whole new meaning to the term helpmate through Blair.

I thought those first two hurdles had been jumped, but I must have still needed some heavy tutoring in humility by God. After the second surgery, it was apparent that some nerves in my legs "may have been damaged,"



according to the doctors. I began to have balance issues. After many falls, I surrendered to the use of a cane. Acknowledging the need for still another type of help was again part of that learning process. And as I continue to "eat

humble pie" more often, I'm learning to be content with what is already mine.

*"Now it seems to me, some fine things
Have been laid upon your table,
But you only want the ones
That you can't get…"

*Lyrics from the song "Desperado," by The Eagles

Since childhood, I have loved to write and have kept journals; they help me

"vent" and keep "my living" in perspective. I read and reread parts occasionally, to remind myself that I've made progress (or not) in my relationships and in



my appreciation of what God gives me daily. What amazes me is how much more content I am now than years ago when I was busier and healthier. Maybe I've gotten lazy. Maybe I just got old. But I am content to "just be," even during this COVID-19 pandemic. Time is in God's hands, and I'm content to leave it there now. Everything is in God's hands, and that "thorn in the flesh" of mine is dependent on Him and His grace and mercy as well.

In my journals, I find that I have written a lot more about the beauty of nature, now that I don't get out in it as much, and more often have a "window view." I'm more thankful for and aware of the little things that make life worthwhile.

I am content. Life is not perfect, but we were never promised that. No one can *make us* content. Just as no one can *make us* happy. But God will provide for our contentment, if we ask Him to help us be content with whatever He provides.

God, help us to be witnesses for You with our lives.

"The Lord is my Shepherd. I have everything I need."

Psalm 23:1 (GNB)

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED PARENTING

by Abby Watts. Excerpts from https://www.imom.com/how-the-pandemic-has-changed-parenting/

Remember around this time last year, when we kicked off the longest spring break ever? Yep, we've been at this for 12 months. And while we kept hearing the warning that this was the "new normal" (which brought pain to my gut every time I heard it), it takes some hindsight to see exactly how the pandemic has changed parenting. We've had to take temperatures more



than our
thermometers
could handle, have
extra
conversations
about online
safety, and
constantly shout,
"Don't forget to
grab your mask!"
But some changes
are more subtle
than those. Here
are 5 ways moms

[and dads] have changed, learned, and grown during this crazy year.

1. We became less commercial.

Before the pandemic, my family filled our weekends with the latest thing that had been marketed to us, like a movie or a theme park. When those options went away, we had to **get creative and think outside the box**—or building, I guess. My family went kayaking, geocaching, and explored our neighborhood, none of which were promoted to me in my Instagram feed.

2. We learned to value silly.

Silliness in parenting is undervalued. I could feel the tension evaporate in **the moments when we just got silly**. In stressful times, our kids need to see us



smile, be weird, dance, and look relaxed, so they feel the permission to relax too. I think this is one of the best examples of how the pandemic has changed parenting for the better.

3. We got real in our friendships.

No one parents alone. Who else did a Zoom happy hour or small group with girlfriends? It's no secret that women need connection, but these 12 months have shown us that the connection needs to be deep. Most of us probably had very real conversations, like ones that included, "I can't do this again tomorrow" or "I'm really scared." Thank

God for real friendships that help us be better moms.

4. We learned about our stressors. If you went from commuting to an office to working from home, you probably saw a change in your stress level. I know I did. Not sitting in traffic twice a day has made me so much more patient with my family. Now if you've been home with your kids trying to manage the eLearning circus, maybe you are *dreaming* of going back to bumper-to-bumper traffic. Either way, I think this disruption has revealed

5. We settled for less and it was just fine.

how our tempers are closely tied to our

routines.

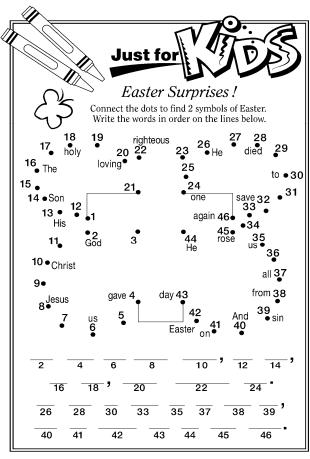
Over the past 12 months, we've done a lot less. Less dining out, fewer trips to amusement parks, fewer playdates. I know the economic impact of "less" has been tough, but I've seen my family adapt and get by just fine with more white space on our calendar.

*What did you learn about parenting (and/or about yourself) throughout this past year? Can you share it for the *Reflection* next month? Your solutions or ideas may be a help to someone else. Please consider it.

HIDDEN PICTURES

Do you see the two animals in the following drawing?





Answer: God gave us Jesus Christ, His Son, the holy, loving righteous one. He died to save us all from sin, and on Easter day He rose again!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			2 0 2 1 c—Holy Communion	Maundy Thursday Service— C 6:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday Thursday this is my blood given for YOU."	GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE 12:00 p.m., Noon & 6:30 p.m.	3 Chancel 10:00 a.m.
EASTER Divine Services 8:00 a.m.— C 9:30 a.m.— C 11:00 a.m.— C	Women's Bible Study WILL NOT MEET TODAY! Have a GREAT EASTER MONDAY!	Hour of Prayer 7:15 p.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	7	8 Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	9	10
Divine Service— C 8:00 a.m. Adults & Children Bible Classes 9:30-10:15 a.m. Contemporary Service— C 10:30 a.m.	Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	Hour of Prayer 7:15 p.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	Quilters 9:30 a.m.	LWML-Women of Redeemer 10:00 p.m. Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Newsletter Deadline	16	17
Divine Service 8:00 a.m. Adults & Children Bible Classes 9:30-10:15 a.m. Contemporary Service 10:30 a.m.	Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	Hour of Prayer 7:15 p.m. VBS planning 6:30 p.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	21	22 Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	23	24 Mobile Food Pantry @ Trinity 10:00-11:30 a.m. Need Volunteers from 9 'til Noon
25 Divine Service— C 8:00 a.m. Adults & Children Bible Classes 9:30-10:15 a.m. Contemporary Service— C 10:30 a.m.	Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	Hour of Prayer 7:15 p.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	Quilters 9:30 a.m.	29 Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	30	