

**REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
LCMS**

AGAPE' LOVE



**FEBRUARY 2021 PUBLICATION
VOLUME 14 ISSUE 2**

Redeemer **Reflection** Newsletter

Loving People To Christ

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REDEEMER REFLECTION

*From the Intentional
Interim Pastor's
Desk...*

AGAPE LOVE

by Reverend Carl Bassett,
Intentional Interim Pastor

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My lambs with My love." And after saying this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

John 21:15, 19

Dear Family in Christ,

You've probably heard the term, "Agape love," but many may not be really clear of what that strange Greek word that Jesus often uses means when He talks about love—especially His love for us and our love for others. So, what is this Agape love? How is it different from the dozens of other ways we use the word love?

First, let's understand what it is *not*. It's not romantic love, because people of faiths (and no faith) experience that kind of love. It's not brotherly love either, where you have that special,



close natural chemistry with another person. After all, even terrorists and violent criminals can express that kind of caring. There is nothing uniquely Christian about that.

Then, what *is* Agape love? Agape love is unreserved, selfless, sacrificial love. It is love that has no

boundaries, for it has no end. It is love that never fails, a love that gives hope. Agape love—the kind of compassionate caring that Jesus exemplifies and models for us—is unconditional love. It's a choice we make to love another person whether or not that person loves us back. It means that you choose to love someone even if he is your enemy. Agape love is *not* based on emotion at all. In fact, it might even be contrary to our emotion. It is an act of will.

Truly, Agape love presents a real challenge for us who believe. It's tough to live out because it's hard to love someone who doesn't respond to you the way you would desire. No doubt about it, all of us are going to have certain individuals—even within God's forever family—that we struggle to love. And yet, God's Word is very clear,

“Beloved, let us truly Agape one another, for that love is from God” (1 John 4:7). There is no clearer command about what we are called to do as followers of our Lord Jesus, than to feed each other—His sheep—with that amazing unconditional love, Agape!

Never forget that our heavenly Father gave us Agape love when He gave His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus, to die in our place. He gave all that He had and all that He loved to redeem us back to Him. Jesus gave us Agape love when He gave up His holy dwelling and the riches of Heaven to live among us and then die on the cross as the price for



our sins.
He gave us Agape love when He imparted His sweet Holy Spirit as the Comforter and Leader of our souls.

He gave His Agape love when He made the blind see and the lame walk, and the dead arise. There is no greater love than the love our Triune God has demonstrated toward us.

Share that Agape love with someone today, and the hope that is freely available through Jesus Christ, our Savior King. Spread the Good News as you follow Him. And as our mission statement says, “Agape People to Jesus!” Have a great month in the Lord!

Peace and Love, in Christ our Savior,

Pastor Bassett



FEBRUARY

James Taylor	02/04
David Lathrop	02/06
Katherine McFarland	02/06
Arynn Holmes	02/07
Cheryl Mack	02/08
Mikayla Richardson	02/08
Lilia Bahr	02/10
Karen Balcom	02/13
Amanda Kapp	02/17
Bethany Richardson	02/18
Brian Fall	02/20
Linda Tschabrun	02/20
Emily Byrd	02/26
Barb Knueppel	02/29

NEW WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY

A new Women’s Bible Study meets in the Connection Room in the lower level beginning Monday, January 25, 2021.

Women of all ages are welcome to attend this Bible study on Mondays at 10:00 a.m., or join live online. Please sign up in the narthex or contact the office to ensure enough materials are ordered for everyone.

*Masks/distancing guidelines will be the same as on Sundays.



Jesus Speaks to Us from the Cross

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES BEGIN FEBRUARY 17 AT 6:30 P.M.

As a part of our Easter preparations, we'll meditate on God's Word, especially the last words spoken by our Savior on the cross:

February 17	Words of Repentance and Forgiveness (A Service of Confession and Holy Communion)
February 24 March 3	A <u>Promising</u> Word A <u>Compassionate</u> Word
March 10 March 17 March 24	A <u>Faithful</u> Word A <u>Suffering</u> Word A <u>Dying</u> Word

MOBILE FOOD PANTRY AND GIVEAWAY

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

In February, we are collecting full-size shampoos and conditioners for hygiene kits for the next few months. The need is great in our community, and this is a way we can help with these very real needs.

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

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/

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

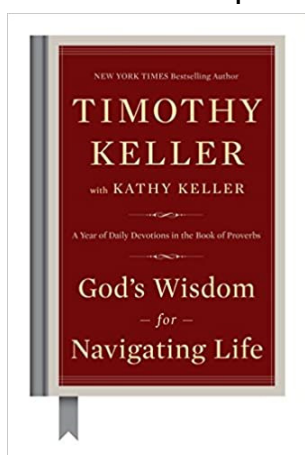
GOD'S WISDOM

by Peggy Bennitt

Someone recently told me that he "doesn't vote because Satan is the ruler of this world and he can't be party to such a ruler." While I don't agree with that reasoning applied to voting, I can definitely see how someone could come

to that conclusion. Especially in view of the destruction of property, lack of respect for human life, and violence bent on getting personal wants met at whatever the cost, during the deadly assault on the Capitol January 6, Epiphany 2021. This year, Epiphany, which is meant to be a celebration of “a Light in the darkness,” became a dark time in American history. It certainly appears as if the “ruler of this world” has taken complete control.

In a recent podcast, Pastor David



Maier, president of the Michigan District LCMS, addressed this heart-breaking event, stating that “a lot of evil was exposed...” He suggests, “Let’s all use [*this devotional based on God’s wisdom*] this year.” President Maier was

referring to the book pictured here, ***God’s Wisdom for Navigating Life: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Book of Proverbs*** by Timothy and Kathy Keller.

If ever we needed an abundance of God’s wisdom, it is now. Our God is always with us, as we have seen in the past year of 2020, but now we have to be *with Him* so that His wisdom can permeate us to make us better able to serve others who are filled with anger and fear. We need to be the calm voice of moral reason and common sense in a world made dark by the “ruler of this world.” God’s wisdom, and His peaceful and calm spirit, can be the light in the darkness for those who want to escape Satan and his control.

I think a study of Proverbs is just the ticket to guide our steps as we continue our journey into and through 2021. Isn’t it interesting that God’s rules are common sense steps to take, and are second-nature (conscience) to us if we’ll just pay attention to what God has placed inside the hearts of all of mankind?

“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.”

Proverbs 12:15

Let’s make Proverbs a part of our daily Bible devotion and re-acquaint ourselves with God’s Book of Common Sense for His ever-wandering sheep.

LENT FOR LIFE

by Craig Britton

“Lord God, heavenly Father, we beseech You by Your Holy Spirit to fix and confirm in our hearts true faith and hope in Your grace and mercy, that although, because of our conscience, sin, and unworthiness, we have cause to fear, yet in Your grace we may, like the Canaanite woman, persevere steadfastly and through Christ, find in You help and deliverance in every trial and need. Amen.”

Prayer on the Second Sunday in Lent, from *The Lutheran Prayer Companion* (CPH)

Admit it. Doesn’t it always seem that Ash Wednesday and Lent creep up and almost pounce on us following the ever-lengthening Christmas season? The church calendar says Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, and THEN Lent begins. But it feels like Christmas, Day Twelve, and then, Lent is just around

the bend. But I have to say, I am glad to see the front side of Ash Wednesday in the distance as I write this in the waning days of January. Perhaps 2020 has set this into my heart. Perhaps it's that it was just about a year ago that all the "joy" of 2020 began in earnest, in fact just past Ash Wednesday last year.

So perhaps this feels like an anniversary of sorts. Not one to celebrate. Or is it? Perhaps. The Lord has sustained me, and by His blessing, all my family. We lost a friend. We have seen people in difficulty and challenges have struck most of us. But Lent gives me pause this year, as every year, to reconnect with the issues of life and death that are precious and always timely. I say always timely because the challenges of a pandemic aren't necessary to convince me of my mortality, nor of my great need of a Savior. What I *do* need reminding of is that my Savior, and yours, is always present, always available, and has promised to meet us in the miracle of His Word, bread, wine, and water.



Ash Wednesday is the entrance to several weeks of not a morbid recollection, but a joyful and astounding one. I get to look forward to *true love* emptied out on the world. And

not just centuries in the past, but today, this moment, and every moment through Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and beyond. Christ is Risen! He is Risen, indeed! Alleluia! But wait, aren't you getting a bit ahead of yourself, you might ask? No, not at all. There is a season given to the celebration proper of Easter. But every day, you and I get to bask in and enjoy the gift of abundant life granted by the Father through His Son. And, perhaps in this "anniversary season," the celebration of God's love in Christ is more clearly seen than in many a year. Perhaps that's where "2020" finds its "focus." In any year and in any circumstance, the blessings brought to us in Lent are truly a treasure. Lent truly is for life.

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

NEW TO CHRISTIAN CARE MINISTRY

by Nyla Arvy

Redeemer's Christian Care Ministry is introducing the Care and Concern Greeting Card outreach. There will be an all-occasion greeting card file box located in the narthex for Redeemer members to select a card and mail to other Redeemer members as a way of showing that "we care." A list of



members who are in need of cheer, get well wishes, birthday greetings, etc. will be

available at the table.

I encourage your participation in this endeavor as another way of reaching out in friendship to uplift the spirits of our Redeemer family.

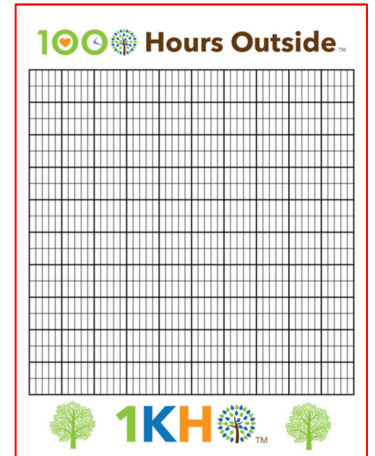
GET OUT(SIDE)!

by Leah Anderson

As I am writing this, it is the second day of the new year. Have you made any New Year's resolutions? Several years ago, I set a resolution to get outside more with my kids. I didn't set a specific time or amount, but I can definitely say it made a difference. We did get out more and had fun doing it. I even assigned the kids outdoor activities to do while they were home with their grandmas while I was at work. However, this year, I have made a goal; I guess you could call it a resolution. I stumbled across a website in December called 1000hoursoutside.com. I can't remember if I first saw it on Facebook or someplace else, but it intrigued me. I have only perused the site quickly a few times, but I was inspired by the challenge to be outside 1000 hours in a year. I downloaded a tracker sheet for each of my kids and myself (it has many different kinds, but you shade in a circle, square, etc., for each hour

spent outside). I have "liked" the site's Facebook page and signed up to get their emails for inspiration as well.

Several statistics I have come across say that children spend over 1000 hours a year in front of screens. In 2020, the year of COVID and virtual school, I am guessing that time increased in many households across the country. I have been grateful for the distraction of screens and online gaming during this time (as well as the gift of FaceTime and Zoom for connecting with families and friends), but it has also been the source of



frustration when I have to persuade my kids to go outside for even 15 minutes instead of sitting on the couch staring at a screen. It is hard to enforce and encourage this when I am working at home for 8 hours a day (on a screen) and helping with virtual school for a few hours, too. It seems like there is not much time left. But there can be, if we work at it like we work at

everything else that is important to us – church time, family time, exercise, etc. While screen time has increased this year, so has the number of walks the kids and I have taken. Some weeks, we have gone for a 20-30-minute walk each day. And judging by the folks we regularly pass on the way, I am guessing we are not the only ones.

The first day of this new year was kind of a yucky one. Freezing rain did not make for a lot of outdoor fun. I desperately kept checking outside for a stop in precipitation so I could go out for a walk on my way to my 1000 hours for the year. However, it didn't come. Finally, around 5 o'clock, I bundled up and took the dog outside anyway, determined to be outside for at least 15 minutes. I walked around the yard and breathed in the fresh air. I instantly felt better, even though I really hadn't been feeling that bad. After 10 minutes, the dog wimped out, so I sent him inside and stayed out 5 more minutes. There, I was outside for day 1 of the new year. The next day, my daughter and I headed out for a walk since the precipitation had ended. Without a dog or a 12-year-old to slow us down, I let her take the lead as we went different routes beyond our "usual" path, and we walked for an hour. We were both excited to mark the first hour on our 1000 hour sheets. Walks with your kids are a great way to spend time together, and it is one thing I have enjoyed about our year of isolating—we have fun. Sometimes we're silly, sometimes we barely talk, but we are together—outside with no screen attached.

Research has shown that being outside is important and crucial for our health, both mentally and physically. If ever there has been a time when we

need to be doing extra for our mental health, it is now. As the strain of almost a year of social distancing and isolating closes in, we need a break. Going outside provides us with just that.

Besides the physical and mental health benefits of getting outside, I don't know about you, but I always feel closer to God when I am out in His creation. How can you not think of Him



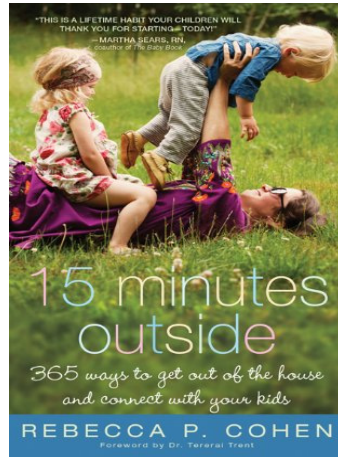
when you look around at the beauty of snowy winter woods or a beautiful sunset over a lake? Taking a walk through the woods, you see and hear so many of God's creatures scurrying about. Have you visited some of our state or national parks? What wonder! How can you look at Sleeping Bear Dunes and not see the wonder of God's creation? Or look at Michigan's Great Lakes and not be awed by His might?

I encourage you to join me in the 1000 hour challenge (or whatever number might work for you and your family). I read a post on their Facebook page that said "what happens if I fail" at the 1000 hour challenge? The answer is, so what? You will be better off for it, most likely having spent more time outside than you would have if you hadn't tried it.

Parents, I encourage you most to spend more time outside. Reconnect with your kids and nature. Several years

ago, I read the book “15 Minutes Outside” by Rebecca Cohen. It is a book I totally recommend and in which I have highlighted many passages.

It offers 365 things you can do outside each day with your kids and tips on how to make getting outside easier in all types of weather. It has inspired me often, and it began by the author’s New Year’s resolution to get outside for 15 minutes each day. To do this, especially during a Michigan winter, be sure to be prepared. Anyone that knows me, knows I hate to be cold! But I have lived in Michigan my whole life, so I do know how to dress warm. Layer it up! Once you and the kids are outside and get moving, you will warm up and likely begin to take layers off. But if anyone is too cold, no one is having fun. During the warmer times, the author recommends thinking “Can this be done outside?” Homework? Can we do our work outside at the picnic table? Lunch? Can we eat on a blanket in the grass? Reading a book? Why not sit in a hammock or a comfy lounge chair?



This summer, I even spent several hours in the late morning outside on my laptop working. It was so much more enjoyable in the sunshine and fresh air, and my son tried it a few times with schoolwork as well. I can’t wait until it warms up so I can do that again! This summer, we had several outdoor meals/gatherings and outdoor play dates to minimize the risk of COVID, but still enjoy

ourselves and see friends. Even when social distancing ends, I hope these outdoor activities and play dates continue, because really they are so much more fun than being inside. Take this opportunity of having less places to “go” to “go outside” instead. And you can even take this opportunity to talk to your children about God’s creation while you are outside enjoying it! Get to it and have fun!



Most of us remember being outside all day as kids, but most of us cannot say our kids today do the same.

😊 **Mondays, Ongoing: Women’s Bible Study.** 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.

😊 **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.

😊 **Wednesday, February 3:**

Leadership Board. Beginning at 6:30 p.m.

😊 **Thursday, February 4: *Chancel Guild.*** Beginning at 10:00 a.m. Chancel meets the first Thursday of each month and welcomes new members at any time!

😊 **Sunday, February 14: Valentine's Day Worship.** Attend either Divine Worship Service, 8:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m. Please remember to pre-register for whichever service you plan to attend. Holy Communion will be celebrated at both services. Agape love at its best!

😊 **Wednesday, February 17: *Ash Wednesday.*** Service begins at 6:30 p.m. and Holy Communion will be celebrated at this service. **Topic: Words of Repentance and Forgiveness**

😊 **Thursday, February 18: *LWML Women of Redeemer.*** Meeting begins at 10:00 a.m.

😊 **Wednesday, February 24: *Lenten Service.*** Service begins at 6:30 p.m. **Topic: A Promising Word**

😊 **Saturday, February 27: *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.

AGAPE LOVE

by Peggy Bennitt

"Agape is the term that defines God's immeasurable, incomparable love for humankind. It is his ongoing, outgoing, self-sacrificing concern for lost and fallen people. God gives this love without condition, unreservedly to those who are undeserving and inferior to Himself.

'Agape love,' says Anders Nygren, 'Is unmotivated in the sense that it is not contingent on any value or worth in the object of love. It is spontaneous and heedless, for it does not determine beforehand whether love will be effective or appropriate in any particular case.'"

<https://www.learnreligions.com/agape-love-in-the-bible-700675>

- ♥ A simple way to summarize *agape* is God's perfect, unconditional love.
- ♥ Jesus lived out agape love by sacrificing himself on the cross for the sins of the world.
- ♥ Agape love is more than an emotion. It is a sentiment that demonstrates itself through actions.

We are not capable of agape on our own. We are much too self-centered to put anyone else's needs before our own; at least not on a constant or forever basis. Sin has stripped that capability from us. Only through the agape love of our Lord can we even attempt to model or emulate that kind of love for others.

His self-sacrifice on the cross, paying the price of death for our sinfulness, only through that gift of agape love to

the world can we even begin to take in and understand what it cost our Lord to make us right again.

Maybe this Valentine's Day we could all focus more on His agape love rather than our tainted, worldly view of love. Let's try to put our romanticized feelings on love aside and bask in the glow of being loved completely (even to dying in our stead so that we can live forever) by our compassionate and loving God.



by Pastor Bassett

Let's Get to Know Our Awesome Staff at Redeemer!

Since I've been blessed to be your Intentional Interim Pastor these past several months, I want you to know what a very special blessing our staff is here at Redeemer!

All of you don't have the same privilege I do of working with them "in between Sundays," so I wanted you to know about some of the great things they do for our Lord and you, God's forever family. Last December, I began using our newsletter to help you get better acquainted with these talented and wonderful partners in ministry who serve you in this place: Office Manager, Director of Ministries, Family and Youth Facilitator, and Director of Worship.

This month, let me share with you the duties of

**Kimber
Walsh, our
Family and
Youth
Facilitator.**



What a blessing was sent to Redeemer when Kimber was

issued a Divine Call to our church in 2016. She arrived here with very special gifts that would enhance our ministries to our families and youth. She possesses a wealth of knowledge in these special areas of the church that are often neglected due to lack of qualified church staff and volunteers willing to serve. Her deep and abiding love for the Lord is evident in all that she does. She enthusiastically approaches all tasks, and is an outstanding teacher, facilitator, and encourager to all who serve. Her love of the Lord and knowledge of His Word ("which we know is true") shines brightly for all to see. Kimber is very creative and well informed in information technologies, which enables us to discover new ways and improve on current methods of communicating the Gospel in all of its truth to people of all ages.

As Family and Youth Facilitator, Kimber coordinates, encourages, and supervises the activities of over twenty congregational members in the following important areas of the church:

➤ Youth group activities and education

- ✂ Sunday School (Pre-K through high school)
- ✂ Vacation Bible School
- ✂ Transitional Spiritual Ministries, including training for parents with children ages 0—8 about how to teach faith at that age
- ✂ Prepares and produces helpful family-oriented Bible studies and devotions
- ✂ With pastoral cognizance and approval, assists in Family Life exploration, development, and implementation
- ✂ Helps build up families with scriptural and practical instruction in all Family Life areas
- ✂ Develops family worship resources, including weekly guidance through scriptural texts
- ✂ Offers regular children's messages in our weekly worship services
- ✂ Encourages and facilitates family events that assist with faith development and fellowship, especially around Christmas and Easter

Please join me in expressing thanks and appreciation to Kimber for all that she does to the glory of God at Redeemer and beyond. Kimber, you are truly a blessing!

NEXT MONTH, WE'LL GET TO KNOW OUR WORSHIP DIRECTOR, DEBBY FALL!

In His Service and Yours,

Pastor Bassett

AGAPE

by Kimber Walsh, Family Life Educator

“God gave freely, so should we.” I can still hear the voice of the speaker from a junior high youth gathering I attended nearly 20 years ago ringing in my mind. It was the first time I heard the word “agape” and was shortly before making my Confirmation. It struck me so profoundly that I used it as the theme for an invitation to my Confirmation. I think that voice lingers in my head, because the Holy Spirit is still using it to work in my heart.

What does it look like for me (for you?) to give freely? We can only be givers through the Holy Spirit at work, but here's some things we can learn to give:

According to Colossians 3:5-17...

- ♥ Give compassion to those who are suffering. Even (maybe especially) if they “got themselves into it.”
- ♥ Give kindness to those who have been rude and hurtful toward you or others.
- ♥ Give meekness to those who are brash and arrogant.
- ♥ Give patience to those who are short and hurried.
- ♥ Give support to the single parent who is struggling; the poor who are

working three jobs just to make ends meet; the couple who lost their first three pregnancies; the widow who doesn't want to get out of bed to live without their beloved spouse.

- ♥ Give forgiveness to those who have sinned against you without keeping track of how many times it's been and even if you're pretty sure it will happen again. (It will.)
- ♥ Give love to the outcast who doesn't get much love; to the annoying person that you interact with regularly; to the heartbroken who feels rejected.
- ♥ Give thanksgiving and praise to God for all He's done for you because you never, ever deserve it.

And otherwise...

- ♥ Give a genuine listening ear to grandpa who has dementia while he loops the same story for hours on end.
- ♥ Give mom a call just to check in and visit.
- ♥ Give to another when they have need, without keeping track of how much they've been given.
- ♥ Give time even when there's other things that could be done with it.
- ♥ Give talents even when there's other priorities.
- ♥ Give treasures even when living within a tight budget.

- ♥ Give in a sacrificial way, not just "extras."
- ♥ God, help me give freely as You have given us in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.



Biblical Tasks of Grandparenting

For this article and others on Godly Grandparenting, visit redeemerjackson.org/faithful-family

You just got the very exciting news that you're becoming a grandparent; now what? Besides seriously considering if you prefer Papa, Papaw or Poppy, or if Grandma or Grammy sounds a little less old, understanding your role as a Christian grandparent will be helpful. Sure, you can buy the cute little sneakers and the giant pink bow, but then grab your Bible and let's look at some new responsibilities you'll have.

"But we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise."

Psalm 79:13

Time and time again throughout Scripture, God is using generational

language and concepts to help us understand that He is eternal, and He didn't just come once for one, but once for all people for all of time. We wouldn't have the Word of God today nor any idea who God is or what He's done if those before us didn't take seriously the generational pattern they were to develop. Do you have a generational pattern for faith formation developed? It may be time to develop one...



1. Pass on the Faith

Declare God to the next generation—His mighty and miraculous deeds, His covenant of love, His keeping of promises. It's very likely that you've already begun this task with your children.

"One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts."

Psalm 145:4

2. Perpetuate the Faith

As you have passed on faith to your children, encourage and join with them in sharing God with your grandchildren as well. This *passing on of faith* will continue indefinitely.

"Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation."

Joel 1:3

3. Teach Two Generations

Talk about the ways that God has been at work in your life. Don't take for granted that somehow your personal experiences of God's faithfulness will transfer through osmosis. To "make known," you first need to open your mouth. Often. Grab a pen and write, hire a skywriter, summon a carrier pigeon, take up Morse code, learn to text, tweet, and snap, build a memorial—whatever you need to do to teach your children and grandchildren the things your eyes have seen.

"Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children..."

Deuteronomy 4:9



4. Think 'More Generations'

Consider all the generations still to come. Consider how what you do with your grandchildren now, will impact your great-grandchildren and your great-great-grandchildren and your eight-great-grandchildren. Silence can't be passed down, but modeling the simple practice of sharing God's goodness can.

"For the Lord builds up Zion; he appears in his glory; he regards the prayer of the destitute and does not despise their prayer. Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord..."

Psalm 102:16-18

"He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children..."

Psalm 78:5-6

So, Gramps, Gran, let's get talking—our grandchildren now and in the generations to come need to know about God!

TOPIC FOR MARCH

The writing prompt for March is *Rejection*. The *Reflection* newsletter is meant to help us reflect and share our Lord through the daily life and actions of His people, particularly with our activities and worship services here at Redeemer. Our print media, and all

communication from and through Redeemer Lutheran Church, is designed to reflect His light to a searching world.

Rejection can be a dismissal, denial, rebuff, or refusal. But it is almost always a negative experience. In spite of its negative connotations, rejection can also be a learning experience that can positively affect one's life. I wonder how many of us have had positive results from a rejection. Can you relate?

Articles on the topics of Family, Prayer, and Outreach are always welcome, as are other aspects of the Christian life.

Send articles, information, and/or photos to bennitt49@yahoo.com, by the 15th of each month, to be included in the following month's newsletter. This is the most easily accessed means of getting your information to me, especially now. All submissions are appreciated and prayerfully considered.

BE ALERT!

by Pastor Carl Bassett



In these troubling times in which we live, we often feel like the sentry on the gates of the fort, keeping our “eyes peeled” for any unwanted intruder that tries to climb up our walls with destruction in mind! It can be exhausting, can’t it? But as always, God helps us to “be alert” and not be overwhelmed and discouraged, even when we are under attack by Satan and his evil crew. But how?

I love what Martin Luther often said: “He who sings, prays twice!” So we’re encouraged to uniquely pray to our heavenly Father for strength during these days of virus, violence, uncertainty, and threat. Here are four ways you can be alert, keeping watch over your heart as we meditate on simple spiritual hymns and God’s incredibly mighty Word!

Use them in your daily devotions. All you need is your Bible and a hymnal!

Remember your Baptism, which connected you to Jesus: Hymn #594, “God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say!”...Words and melody that echo 1 Peter 3:18-22.

Stay connected to God’s Word: Hymn #655, “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word.”...A beautiful song that urges us to keep our hearts and minds joined to God’s mighty Word. This sentiment is reinforced by Psalm 119:5-10.

Have friends who share the hope grounded in Jesus: Hymn #475, “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing”...Expresses the joy of being brothers and sisters in

Christ, that Paul is inspired by God to write about in Colossians 3:13.

Come to church regularly: Hymn #904, “Blessed Jesus at Your Word”...Join together and be strengthened in worship, receive the Lord’s precious Body and Blood often in the Sacrament; make it a “holy habit,” because it truly reminds us that we are never alone as we keep alert.

Satan delights when we cower and run scared through life, forgetting about the power and hope of Christ that offers to keep us safe and alert! Remember the Lion of Judah—Jesus—is with us! Let’s follow the inspired words of King Solomon, the wisest man ever, in Proverbs 4:23:

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of everlasting life.



FLASH BACK

The following article is a reprint, written by our former pastor, Reverend Michael Geml, for the January 2020 *Reflection* newsletter. My daughter mentioned that it reads a bit like prophesy, in retrospect, so we asked him to write a follow-up article to compare his thoughts *AFTER* 2020. He was kind enough to agree, and his follow-up article is included here after the original. Enjoy a new “word” from Pastor Geml, as well as a look at a modern-day prophesy.

OUR 2020 VISION

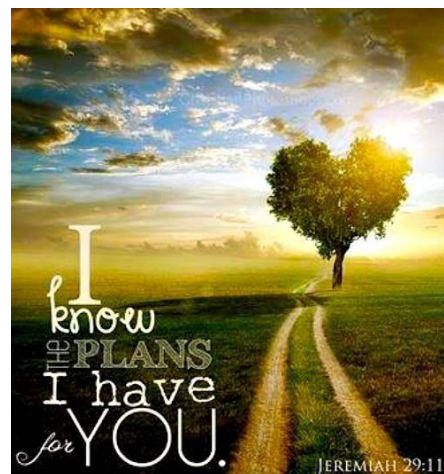
by Pastor Michael Geml

First, allow me to apologize for the title of this January article. “2020 Vision”—how cliché. But what’s done is done; let us move on.

“Let us move on.” Now *there’s* a more appropriate and less cliché title for the year ahead. We may have a vision for the Year of our Lord 2020, but is it His vision for us? I’ll let you know this time next year. Planning is not a bad thing provided we hold on loosely and we are ever prepared to relinquish control to the One who has only our good in mind. (See Romans 8:28)

On the theme of moving on, think back to the beginning of this year, January 2019. Maybe you had some big plans related to a vacation, a promotion, or crossing off something on your bucket list. As the line from the poem reminds us, “The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry.” All too often our best laid plans go awry. Sometimes this happens by our own doing,

and
sometimes
our plans
are derailed
by
unforeseen



circumstance. A job is lost, which may require a move to another state. A loved one is taken to heaven, which means numerous changes to every aspect of life. It is in those moments when moving on is so hard. Disappointment and discouragement take hold, and we wallow in self-pity, doubt, and frustration.

When the Lord Jesus said, “I am with you always...” He meant it! His promise becomes especially precious when we feel we can’t move on. His love and His strength shine most brightly in our weakness. In December, we anticipate and then celebrate the coming of the Lord Jesus into the flesh. He is truly Immanuel, God with us. We must take special note and take to heart that Jesus is with us, He is with you, not just in the moments of celebration. He is with you when you just can’t move on. His presence remains with you as we come together to worship Him in this New Year. His presence is with you in a most glorious way when you receive His True Body and Blood in the Holy Supper. His presence is with you, and the world will see the Savior living in you and through you.

Dear friends, the vision for 2020 is clear. It is a vision of Jesus, our Lord and our Savior who is with you always.

A most blessed and Christ-filled New Year!

Pastor Geml

WHEN YOU RUN OUT OF WORDS

by Reverend Michael Geml

"This is so weird, so strange, so confusing." After a year of social distancing, mask-wearing, and seclusion, we have run out of adjectives in our attempts to somehow describe how we feel during these tumultuous times. Yes, "tumultuous" is on the list. Adjectives describe the times, but verbs describe how we are affected. We are tired, scared, confused, restless, mad.

When I was asked if I would submit an article for Redeemer's newsletter, I thought, "This is so weird, so strange, and so confusing."

After all, Ruth and I have been gone for almost a year. But someone in your midst (Peggy B.) has the gift of loving encouragement. How could I refuse? Besides, since I am not the pastor there in Jackson, I can only assume there will be some financial remuneration for this submission. (Kidding, of course). It is my pleasure and privilege to connect with our dear Redeemer family as it was my pleasure and privilege for ten blessed years.

The reason I was asked to write this article was due to the article I submitted last year. In the article, I wrote this, *Planning is not a bad thing provided we hold on loosely and we are ever prepared to relinquish control to*



the One who has only our good in mind. (See Romans 8:28) I am not tooting my own horn, but that sentence does describe what much of 2020 has been. We have had to be extremely flexible when it came to plans we made, individually and corporately.

The need for flexibility was evident right away when Ruth and I got to North Carolina. The congregation here had been vacant for three years. As one could imagine, there was great anticipation and a great celebration was planned for my installation. The service was to have choirs, bells, professional brass and a big reception afterward. On the day I was to be installed, March 15, 2020, everything shut down due to the pandemic.

But that was just the start of some very trying days. Since our arrival, this area of the United States has had record days of heat, a record amount of rainfall, and an earthquake. It was the biggest earthquake this area has seen in 100 years. There was no real damage or injuries. Then, a windstorm came through and two large trees fell on the church. The people here are very kind. They don't think we Michiganders are a jinx yet, but if it snows here, we may have to move back.

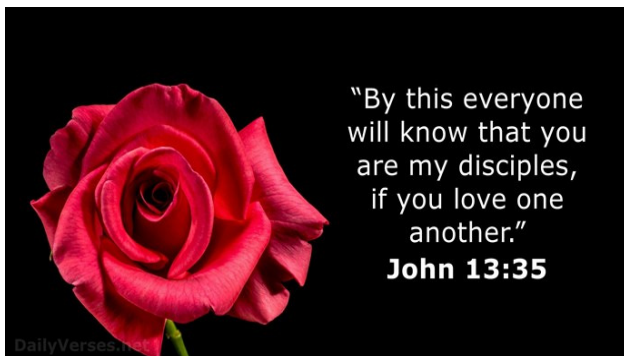
In all honesty, there was nothing prophetic or shocking in my article from last year. If I may be so bold, I will offer a statement for the coming year that I am confident will play out. In the year of our Lord, 2021, our faith will be tested and we will struggle with fears and doubts. Here's the Good News. Regardless of what 2021 brings, we will never run out of Words. *"For the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..."* (John 1). We have the promise and the presence of Jesus, and we have the

living Word of God. Allow me to close this article with a special passage from Holy Scripture, "...love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding Word of God; for all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the Word of the Lord remains forever. And this Word is the Good News that was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:22-25).

Dear friends, as you seek the Lord in prayer that He would send a faithful shepherd to be your new pastor, one who will continue to preach that Good News, be encouraged that no matter what 2021 brings, we are ever and always in God's loving, eternal care. God's peace and His presence be with you all.

Your friend in Christ's love,

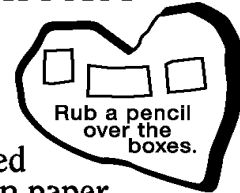
Pastor Geml



And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Make a Valentine for Someone Special







You will need:

- ♥ a sheet of red construction paper
- ♥ a sheet of white copier paper
- ♥ glue or a glue stick
- ♥ scissors
- ♥ pencil
- ♥ red marker
- ♥ fine-point black marker



How to make it:

1. Cut a large heart out of the red paper.
2. Using the leftover scraps, cut out letters (about 1 inch high) to spell "I LOVE YOU" or "GOD LOVES YOU." Glue the letters in the center of the heart.
3. Cut a heart out of the white paper. Make it about 1 inch smaller than the red one.
4. Glue the white heart on top of the red one so that a 1 inch red border shows and the letters are covered.
5. Feel where the red letters are under the white paper and draw a box around each word using the red marker. Below the last box write: Rub a pencil over the boxes to find a special message!
6. Sign your name.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
C—Denotes Communion Services	1 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	2 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	3 Leadership Board 6:30 p.m.	4 Chancel 10:00 a.m. Bethel Bible Class 6:30 p.m.	5	6
7 Divine Service 8:00 a.m. Adults & Children Bible Classes 9:30-10:15 a.m. Contemporary Service 10:30 a.m.	8 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	9 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	10 Quilters 9:30 a.m.	11 Bethel Bible Class 6:30 p.m.	12	13
14 Divine Service— C 8:00 a.m. Adults & Children Bible Classes 9:30-10:15 a.m. Contemporary Service— C 10:30 a.m. VALENTINE'S DAY	15 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. REFLECTION DEADLINE	16 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	17 Lenten Service— C Words of Repentance and Forgiveness 6:30 p.m. 	18 LWML-Women of Redeemer 10:00 p.m. Bethel Bible Class 6:30 p.m.	19	20
21 Divine Service 8:00 a.m. Adults & Children Bible Classes 9:30-10:15 a.m. Contemporary Service 10:30 a.m.	22 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	23 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	24 Quilters 9:30 a.m. Lenten Service A Promising Word 6:30 p.m. 	25 Bethel Bible Class 6:30 p.m.	26	27 Mobile Food Pantry @ Trinity 10:00-11:30 a.m.
28 Divine Service— C 8:00 a.m. Adults & Children Bible Classes 9:30-10:15 a.m. Contemporary Service— C 10:30 a.m.	<div> <div>2021</div> <div>   </div> </div>					